

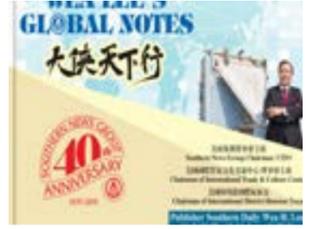


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Mr. Lee's Commentary and Dairy



Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

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Southern Daily News is published by Southern News Group Daily

Thursday October 15, 2020 | [www.today-america.com](http://www.today-america.com) | Southern News Group

## Trump's nominee Barrett says Supreme Court 'can't control' a president



"If I were on the court, and if a case involving the ACA came before me, I would approach it with an open mind," Barrett told Republican Senator John Cornyn.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett on Wednesday said it is an "open question" as to whether Trump could pardon himself while adding that the top U.S. judicial body "can't control" whether a president obeys its decisions.

On the third day of her four-day Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing, Barrett also sought to allay Democratic fears that she would be an automatic vote to strike down the Obamacare healthcare law in a case due to be argued Nov. 10, promising an "open mind."

Trump has said he has the "absolute power" to pardon himself, part of his executive clemency authority. Asked by Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy whether a president could pardon himself for a crime, Barrett said the "question has never been litigated."

"That question may or may not arise but it's one that calls for legal analysis of what the scope of the pardon power is. So because it would be opining on an open question when I haven't gone through the judicial process to decide it, it's not one on which I can offer a view," Barrett added.

Trump faces a criminal investigation into the conduct of himself and his businesses by a New York City prosecutor who is seeking his financial records and tax returns. Trump also has issued executive clemency to political allies and friends.

Barrett, a conservative federal appellate judge, is Trump's third selection for a lifetime Supreme Court post. Trump has asked the Senate, controlled by his fellow Republicans, to confirm Barrett before the Nov. 3 U.S. election.

While saying "no one is above the law," Barrett twice declined to answer directly when Leahy asked whether a president who refuses to comply with a court order is a threat to the U.S. constitutional system of checks and balances within the three branches of government.

"The Supreme Court can't control whether or not the president obeys," Barrett said.

Supreme Court rulings, Barrett said, have the "force of law" but the court lacks enforcement power and relies on the other branches of government.

### RELATED COVERAGE

Factbox: Not 'a royal queen' - Supreme Court nominee Barrett's Senate testimony

"A court can pronounce the law and issue a judgment but it lacks control over how the political branches respond to it," Barrett added.

Barrett declined to discuss whether Trump is violating the U.S. Constitution's "emoluments" clause with his business dealings. The provision bars presidents from taking gifts or payments from foreign and state governments without congressional approval.

"I don't know if I would characterize it as an anti-corruption clause," Barrett said, disagreeing with Leahy, adding that it was designed to "prevent foreign countries from having influence."

### OBAMACARE CASE

Barrett could be on the high court for arguments in a challenge by Trump and Republican-led states to the 2010 law formally called the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that has helped millions of Americans obtain medical coverage and includes protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

Responding to Democratic suggestions that she would vote to strike down Obamacare in its entirety if one part is deemed unlawful, Barrett said if a statute can be saved, it is a judge's duty to do so.

Barrett indicated she favors of a broad reading of the "severability doctrine" under which courts assume that when one provision of a law is unlawful, Congress would want the rest to remain in place. The Supreme Court has taken such an approach in recent years.

When judges address the legal question raised in the Obamacare case, the "presumption" is that Congress did not intend the whole statute to fall, Barrett added. "If I were on the court, and if a case involving the ACA came before me, I would approach it with an open mind," Barrett told Republican Senator John Cornyn.

Barrett has criticized previous Supreme Court rulings upholding Obamacare.

**ABORTION RIGHTS**  
Barrett, 48, would be the fifth woman ever to serve on the court. As a devout Catholic, Barrett personally opposes abortion.



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# WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

10/14/2020

## CORONAVIRUS DIARY

# The Hotel Industry Is Suffering In The Pandemic Crisis



The Presidential election is on Tuesday, November 3rd, but early voting in Texas with long lines and hour-long wait times for thousands of voters at some location has begun. U.S. election projections show several states have already exceeded 20% of their total votes cast at this point in 2016 including Wisconsin, Minnesota, Virginia and Vermont. In Georgia, people stood in voting lines as

long as 9 hours to cast their votes.

With only three weeks until Election Day, many states are already seeing historical levels of early voting as people cast their votes through the mail in the middle of pandemic.

In this pandemic crisis, the hotel industry got hit the hardest, according to Best

Western CEO David King who said, "Almost 38,000 of the nation's 57,000 hotels will close within six months without further government assistance."

America's hotels are on life support as the coronavirus pandemic drags on with hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue and some two million related jobs in jeopardy. In 2020, the hotel business in general has shrunk down 65% when compared with 2019.

The bottom line is: It will be a long time before people feel comfortable checking into hotels again. And even longer before international tourists start filling up rooms again around the world.

We are urging the Congress to take immediate action to get the Stimulus Bill passed soon and come to the rescue of our economy.



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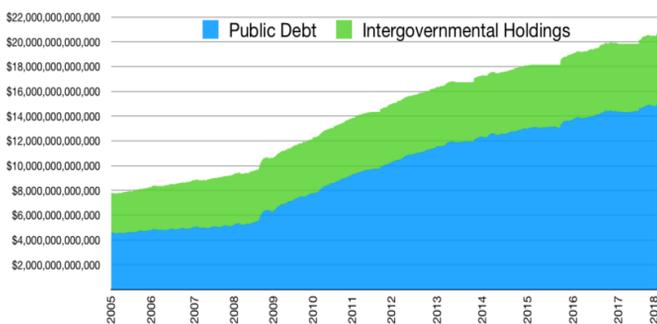
Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Stay Safe!

# Business

Wear Mask!

## Federal Debt Tops \$27 Trillion for First Time National Debt



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

(CNSNews.com) - The US national debt has just reached 120.5 percent of the nation's annual economic output, breaking a record set in 1946 for the highest debt level in the history of the United States. The previous extreme of 118.4 percent stemmed from World War II, the deadliest and most widespread conflict in world history.

The debt of the federal government topped \$27 trillion for the first time on Thursday, October 1, when it climbed from an opening balance of \$26,945,391,194,615.15 to a closing balance of \$27,026,921,935,432.41, according to data published by the U.S. Treasury Department.

The table below from the Treasury Department's "Debt to the Penny" page shows the value of the federal debt at the close of business on each of the last twelve business days:



It then climbed another trillion dollars in just 35 days, topping \$26 trillion for the first time on June 9. Only 114 days elapsed from when the debt topped the \$26-trillion threshold on June 9 to yesterday, when it topped \$27 trillion for the first time.

Table III-C of the Daily Treasury Statement for Thursday, October 1, 2020 (shown below) indicates that the total public debt of the federal

Effective Date	Intragovernmental Holdings	Public Debt	Total Debt
10/01/2020	\$6,011,595,792,557.12	\$21,015,326,142,875.29	\$27,026,921,935,432.41
09/30/2020	\$5,926,439,114,229.52	\$21,018,952,080,385.63	\$26,945,391,194,615.15
09/29/2020	\$5,886,484,323,074.26	\$20,903,722,526,048.68	\$26,790,408,849,122.94
09/28/2020	\$5,898,453,746,116.10	\$20,912,955,980,381.15	\$26,811,409,726,497.25
09/25/2020	\$5,897,284,418,828.47	\$20,913,614,093,095.84	\$26,810,898,511,924.31
09/24/2020	\$5,895,022,952,779.60	\$20,891,109,397,593.75	\$26,786,132,350,373.35
09/23/2020	\$5,887,336,011,247.80	\$20,890,465,946,735.07	\$26,777,801,957,982.87
09/22/2020	\$5,900,581,969,606.90	\$20,890,403,542,124.78	\$26,790,985,511,731.68
09/21/2020	\$5,891,148,909,254.73	\$20,903,518,934,800.92	\$26,794,647,844,055.65
09/18/2020	\$5,887,264,062,964.45	\$20,903,123,720,719.24	\$26,790,387,783,683.69
09/17/2020	\$5,887,707,509,965.64	\$20,902,736,906,992.54	\$26,790,444,416,958.18
09/16/2020	\$5,880,471,466,881.62	\$20,901,066,700,028.11	\$26,781,538,166,909.73

government rose from a closing balance of approximately \$26,945,391,000,000 on September 30 to a closing balance of approximately \$27,026,922,000,000 on October 1:

Balance Transactions	Closing balance today	Opening balance		
		Today	This month	Fiscal year
Debt Held by the Public	\$ 21,015,326	\$ 21,018,952	\$ 21,018,952	\$ 21,018,952
Intragovernmental Holdings	6,011,596	5,926,439	5,926,439	5,926,439
<b>Total Public Debt</b>	<b>27,026,922</b>	<b>26,945,391</b>	<b>26,945,391</b>	<b>26,945,391</b>
Less: Debt Not Subject to Limit:				
Other Debt	478	478	478	478
Unamortized Discount	17,294	17,271	17,271	17,271
Federal Financing Bank Hope Bonds	7,262	7,262	7,262	7,262
Plus: Other Debt Subject to Limit	0	0	0	0
Guaranteed Debt of Government Agencies	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Public Debt Subject to Limit</b>	<b>\$ 27,001,888</b>	<b>\$ 26,920,380</b>	<b>\$ 26,920,380</b>	<b>\$ 26,920,380</b>
Statutory Debt Limit	SUSP-1	SUSP-1	SUSP-1	SUSP-1

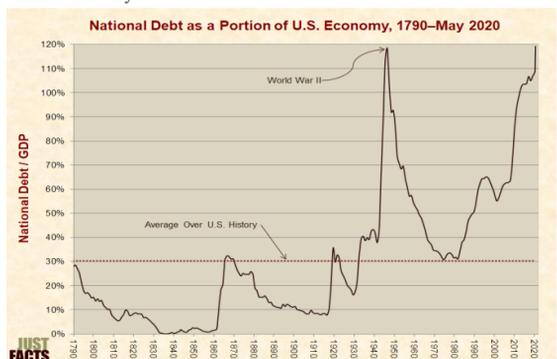
## COVID Policies Drive National Debt to All-Time Record for Highest Portion of US Economy



Today's unprecedented debt-to-economy ratio includes \$2.5 trillion in new debt since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the course of US history, the government's debt-to-GDP ratio has averaged 30.3 percent and has stayed around or below this level except for a massive spike from World War II and during the modern era. The WWII record of 118.4 percent held for the past 74 years but was toppled on May 22, 2020 when it reached 118.5 percent. By the end of May, it had reached 119.5 percent, or four times its average over the

nation's history:



The debt continued growing in early June and reached 120.5 percent by the 8th day of the month. These debt-to-GDP figures are based on the latest available yearly data from the US Treasury and the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, the federal agency that calculates official GDP figures.

## COVID-19 Responses & Impacts

From the day that the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic (March 11) through June 8th, the US national debt rose by \$2.5 trillion or 11.5 percentage points of GDP. This was mainly due to:

1. Four federal bills passed to address the pandemic and buffer the economic fallout of business shutdowns imposed by state governments. These will cost about \$2.5 trillion, or an average of \$19,000 for every household in the nation.
2. Lost tax revenue from business shutdowns.
3. Debt increases that were already baked into the federal budget for 2020.

Because the latest available GDP data is for the first quarter of 2020, and the business shutdowns didn't begin until mid-March, they affect only half a month out of a year of data. Thus, the shutdowns have a relatively small effect on the latest annual GDP figure, reducing it by about 0.4 percent.

As in response to COVID-19 and the shutdowns, the Federal Reserve created trillions of dollars in new money to purchase federal government debt and other financial assets. The effects of such policies don't necessarily manifest in the national debt but can impact people in other ways. (Courtesy fee.org)



# Editor's Choice



Apple CEO Tim Cook poses with the all-new iPhone 12 Pro at Apple Park in Cupertino, California. Brooks Kraft/Apple Inc.



Police officers protect themselves with their shields during a protest against the new so-called omnibus law, in Jakarta, Indonesia. REUTERS/Willy Kurniawan



A message reminding about social distancing appears on the screen before a drive-in premiere for the film "The Trial of the Chicago 7" at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. REUTERS/Mario Anzuoni



U.S. President Donald Trump throws face masks to the crowd as he arrives to hold a campaign rally at John Murtha Johnstown-Cambria County Airport in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst



U.S. Supreme Court nominee Judge Amy Coney Barrett removes her face mask when she returns from break during the second day of her confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. Kevin Dietsch/Pool



ER technician Marjorie Lynar, center, waits in line to cast her election ballot at a Cobb County polling station after working a 12-hour shift in Marietta, Georgia. REUTERS/Elijah Nouvelage



Texas A&M Aggies fans cheer during a scoring drive in the second quarter against the Florida Gators at Kyle Field in College Station, Texas. Scott Wachter-USA TODAY Sports



The Soyuz MS-17 spacecraft carrying the crew formed of Kathleen Rubins of NASA, Sergey Ryzhikov and Sergey Kud-Sverchkov of the Russian space agency Roscosmos blasts off to the International Space Station (ISS) from the launchpad at the Baikonur Cosmodrome, Kazakhstan. Andrey Shelepin/GCTC

**The Free Press Is In Decline, Even In Strongest Democracies**



Illustration/Axios

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

The corruption indictments issued for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last week include charges that he sought to manipulate the media to secure more favorable coverage.

**Why it matters:** Such interventions have become more prevalent around the world, including in democracies. As we've seen in places like Russia and Turkey, one of the surest signs democracy is being eroded is a crackdown on independent media.

**Driving the news:** Netanyahu was indicted for an arrangement he allegedly brokered with a telecom magnate, in which the prime minister offered favorable business regulations in return for positive coverage of him and his wife Sara.

•The deal was with Shaul Elovitz, who was formerly the majority shareholder of telecom group Bezeq. Bezeq owns a popular Israeli news website called Wala.

•Netanyahu was also indicted on charges that he struck another deal with a Tel-Aviv-based daily newspaper called Yedioth Ahronoth to limit the circulation of its competitor in exchange for less critical coverage.

**Be smart:** Israel still has a vibrant media ecosystem, but such attempts to delegitimize negative coverage and control the press are not limited to Israel. They can

range from subtle to brutal.

•**In Hungary,** Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his allies have “systematically taken control of roughly 90% of the country’s media outlets,” per NPR, consolidating dozens of print, radio and TV outlets into one giant conglomerate that Orbán has exempted from Hungarian media or competition rules. There have also been reports that Orbán has “systematically starved” independent outlets of state advertising money if they do not provide favorable coverage of his administration.

•**In Turkey,** President Erdogan’s allies in the business community have bought up a handful of mainstream-media outlets that have subsequently adopted a pro-government stance. According to The Atlantic, the government has in many cases enabled those sales. That consolidation has occurred in conjunction with an increase in free press penalties, including fines and jail time, that have grown more severe as Erdogan’s reign has become more autocratic.

•**In the Philippines,** President Rodrigo Duterte’s government has used an aggressive “cyber libel” law to lodge several cases against independent media site Rappler and its CEO Maria Ressa, per Poynter. Earlier this year, the government revoked Rappler’s news registration in a move that press freedom groups

called politically-motivated.

•**In Venezuela,** U.S. journalists were arrested and detained by the country’s military counter-intelligence agency earlier this year at the command of President Nicolás Maduro. Maduro’s crackdown on journalists comes after years of autocratic actions that have eroded the country’s democracy.

**Zoom out:** In fully autocratic countries, the simple act of reporting can be dangerous. Just this past week:

•**In Egypt,** security forces raided the offices of the last major independent media company and temporarily detained three of its top editors, per the New York Times.



**Murdered Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi**

•**In Saudi Arabia,** the government detained “at least eight people, mostly intellectuals and writers ... amid a two-year crackdown on free expression in the kingdom,” per Reuters. The move follows the one-year anniversary of the murder of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi, which U.S. intelligence officials say was ordered by the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman himself.

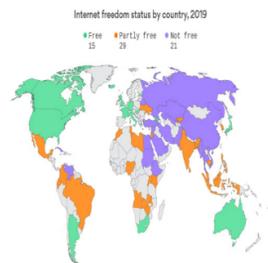
**The big picture:** Internet freedom is in decline around the world, with governments using social media to monitor their citizens and spread disinformation at home and overseas, according to an annual Freedom House report.

Even in the U.S., President Trump has been accused of attempting to punish outlets whose coverage he objects to.

•Last year, activist group PEN America filed a federal lawsuit against the president for having “directed his threats and retaliatory actions at specific outlets whose content and viewpoints he views as hostile.”

•In April, The Justice Department filed a motion asking a district court to dismiss the lawsuit.

**Related**  
**Internet freedom declines in U.S. and around the world**



Reproduced from a Freedom House map; Note: Score based on obstacles to access, limits on content and violation of user rights; Map: Axios Visuals

Rising levels of political disinformation and government surveillance are making the internet less free in the U.S., according to a new report by Freedom House, a democracy and human rights research group.

**The big picture:** Internet freedom is in decline around the world, according to the report, as governments increasingly use social media to monitor their citizens and spread disinformation at home and overseas.

•The U.S. has long been a bastion of internet freedom and still ranks sixth out of 65 countries assessed, but its status has fallen each of the past three years.

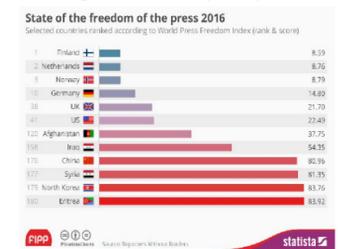
**Details:** The authors cite monitoring of social media platforms by immigration and law enforcement agencies as a particular concern in the U.S., along with political disinformation that has been “at times exacerbated by top government officials and political leaders.”

•**Most free:** Iceland, Estonia, Canada, Germany, Australia.

•**Least free:** China is “the world’s worst abuser of internet freedom,” followed by Iran, Syria, Cuba and Vietnam.

•**Of China,** the authors write: “Censorship and surveillance were pushed to unprecedented extremes as the govern-

ment enhanced its information controls, including in the lead-up to the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre and in response to persistent antigovernment protests in Hong Kong.”



Countries in decline:

•Sudan saw social media blocked during mass protests against now-former President Omar al-Bashir, and harsh repression during a lengthy state of emergency.

•Kazakhstan’s government “temporarily disrupted internet connectivity, blocked ... news websites, and restricted access to social media platforms” during its stage-managed presidential transition.

•Brazil saw a rise of cyberattacks and “social media manipulation,” mostly from supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro — who then hired consultants accused of “spearheading the sophisticated disinformation campaign.”

•Bangladesh’s government, in response to protests over road safety and electoral irregularities, “resorted to blocking independent news websites, restricting mobile networks, and arresting journalists and ordinary users alike.”

•Zimbabwe became a more difficult place to access the internet, both because of economic chaos and crackdowns from the government.

**The other side:** Ethiopia was one of the few countries in which internet restrictions were loosened this year, under reform-minded Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Improvements were also seen in Malaysia and Armenia.

**The bottom line:** “What was once a liberating technology has become a conduit for surveillance and electoral manipulation,” the authors write about social media. (Courtesy axios.com)

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