

## Religious Groups Challenge Health Law

DENVER (AP) — In the latest religious challenge to the federal health care law, faith-based organizations that object to covering birth control in their employee health plans argued in federal appeals court Monday that the government hasn't gone far enough to ensure they don't have to violate their beliefs.

Plaintiffs including a group of Colorado nuns and four Christian colleges in Oklahoma argued in the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver that a federal exemption for groups that oppose contraceptives, including the morning-after pill, violates their beliefs.

The groups don't have to cover such contraceptives, as most insurers must. But they have to tell the government they object on religious grounds in order to get an exemption. They argued Monday that because they must sign away coverage to another party, the exemption makes them complicit in providing contraceptives.

"It is morally problematic" to sign the forms, argued Greg Baylor, lawyer for Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma.

"There are plenty of other ways the government could put (emergency contraception) in the hands of the people without us," Baylor said.

## Six Killed When Md. Home Hit By Jet

GAITHERSBURG, Md. (AP) — A small, private jet crashed into a house in Maryland's Montgomery County on Monday, killing a woman and her young sons inside the home and three people on the aircraft, authorities said.

The jet slammed into the home just before lunchtime in Gaithersburg, a Washington, D.C., suburb, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Chief Steve Lohr said during a news conference.

Authorities quickly said three people in the plane had been killed but it took hours for them to sweep the home and confirm that three people were inside when the plane crashed. They were later identified as a woman and her two sons, a month-old infant and a 3-year-old, said Montgomery County Police Chief J. Thomas Manger.

He would only identify them by their last name: Gemmell.

Neighbors and property records identify the home's residents as Ken and Marie Gemmell.

## US, NATO Wrap Up Afghanistan Mission

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — American and NATO troops closed their operational command in Afghanistan on Monday, lowering flags in a ceremony to mark the formal end of their combat mission in a country still mired in war 13 years after the U.S.-led invasion toppled the Taliban regime for harboring those responsible for 9/11.

The closing of the command, which oversaw the day-to-day operations of coalition combat forces, is one of the final steps in a transition to a support and training role that begins Jan. 1. But with President Barack Obama's recent move authorizing U.S. forces in Afghanistan to carry out military operations against Taliban and al-Qaida targets, America's longest war will in fact continue for at least another two years.

Obama's decision to give American forces a more active role than previously envisioned suggests the U.S. is still concerned about the Afghan government's ability to fight. And agreements signed by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to allow U.S. and NATO troops to remain in the country are seen as a red line by the Taliban, further narrowing any hope of peace talks.

Not only are the Taliban a resilient insurgency, a new generation of extremists inspired by Osama bin Laden threatens the entire region. American forces are now also involved in a burgeoning military campaign against Islamic State group militants in Syria and Iraq, where Obama had hoped to end combat operations three years ago.

As NATO's International Security Assistance Force's Joint Command lowered its flag in the capital, the Taliban carried out yet another bloody attack, this time killing a police officer and four civilians at a police station in southern Afghanistan.

## Chokehold Case Stirs Legal Debate

NEW YORK (AP) — After a police officer wasn't indicted in a fatal chokehold caught on video, some officials are re-evaluating calls to entrust such cases to special prosecutors, rather than local district attorneys.

The city's elected public advocate and some state lawmakers are pressing for appointing special state prosecutors for police killings, saying Eric Garner's death has bared problems with having DAs lead investigations and prosecutions of the police who help them build cases. State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman asked Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday to give Schneiderman's office the authority to investigate deaths at the hands of police.

Similar legislation has been proposed in Missouri since the police shooting of an unarmed 18-year-old in Ferguson.

"This is a watershed moment," New York Public Advocate Letitia James said by phone. "It's clear that the system is broken and an independent prosecutor is needed."

She's advocating appointing such prosecutors whenever police kill or seriously injure someone. Assemblymen Karim Camara and Marcos Crespo are proposing special prosecutors for police killings of unarmed people.

## Chicago Museum Lifts Lid On Coffin

CHICAGO (AP) — Not until the lid was off the wood coffin — exposing the 2,500-year-old mummified remains of a 14-year-old Egyptian boy — could J.P. Brown relax.

The conservator at Chicago's Field Museum and three other scientists had just employed specially created clamps as a cradle to raise the fragile coffin lid. Wearing blue surgical gloves, they lifted the contraption and delicately walked it to safe spot on a table in a humidity-controlled lab.

"Sweet!" Brown said after helping set the lid down, before later acknowledging the stress. "Oh yeah, god, I was nervous."

The much-planned procedure Friday at the museum, revealing the burial mask and blackened toes of Minirdis, the son of a priest, will allow museum conservators to stabilize the mummy so it can travel in an upcoming exhibit.

"Mummies: Images of the Afterlife" is expected to premier in September at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, then travel to the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in fall 2016.

## Royals Get A Taste Of New York City

NEW YORK (AP) — Britain's Prince William sat down with President Barack Obama in Washington on Monday and unveiled an effort to curtail illegal wildlife trading while his wife, Kate, made an impression of a down-to-earth duchess on preschoolers and prominent British expats in New York.

In the first full — very full — day of the popular royal couple's first visit to either place, William went to the White House and spoke at a World Bank conference. Kate wrapped Christmas gifts and helped children decorate picture frames while touring a child development center with New York City's first lady, then talked technology, theater and more with a British-success-story guest list at a lunch at the consul general's home.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are on their first official trip to the U.S. since 2011. William, speaking at the World Bank, announced a new task force to develop recommendations within a year on how the transportation industry can help stop wildlife trafficking, calling it "one of the most insidious forms of corruption and criminality."

Meanwhile, the duchess and first lady Chirlane McCray met with families and heard about the work of the Northside Center for Child Development, which offers mental health and educational services.

# US Prepares For Security Risks From Torture Report

BY JULIE PACE  
AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON — American embassies, military units and other U.S. interests are bracing for possible security threats related to Tuesday's planned release of a report on the CIA's harsh interrogation techniques, the White House says.

The report from the Senate Intelligence Committee will be the first public accounting of the CIA's use of torture on al-Qaida detainees held in secret facilities in Europe and Asia in the years after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks. The committee is expected to release a 480-page executive summary of the more than 6,000-page report compiled by Democrats on the panel.

"There are some indications that the release of the report could lead to a greater

risk that is posed to U.S. facilities and individuals all around the world," White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Monday. "The administration has taken the prudent steps to ensure that the proper security precautions are in place at U.S. facilities around the globe."

Likewise, Army Col. Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, said that "there is certainly the possibility that the release of this report could cause unrest" and therefore combatant commands have been directed to take protective measures.

According to many U.S. officials who have read it, the document alleges that the harsh interrogations failed to produce unique and life-saving intelligence. And it asserts that the CIA lied about the covert program to officials at the White House, the Justice Department and congressional

oversight committees.

Earnest said that regardless of whether the U.S. gleaned important intelligence through the interrogations, "the president believes that the use of those tactics was unwarranted, that they were inconsistent with our values and did not make us safer."

While the White House has said it welcomes the release of the summary, officials say they do have concerns about potential security threats that could follow.

On Friday, Secretary of State John Kerry asked Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the committee chairwoman, to "consider" the timing of the release. White House officials said Obama had been aware that Kerry planned to raise the issue with Feinstein, but they insisted the president continued to support the report's release.



KARL MONDON/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP/TNS  
Cal students clean up a mess left by protesters along Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley, Calif., late Sunday evening, Dec. 7, 2014, during a second consecutive night of unrest in the city over the killings of two unarmed black men by police in Ferguson, Mo., and New York.

## Chokehold Protests

# Demonstrations, Violence Go On In Bay Area Cities

BY KRISTIN J. BENDER AND PAUL ELIAS  
Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — Protests in New York and Missouri have died down, but angry crowds in one California city famous for activism spent much of the weekend blocking traffic and clashing with police in this ultra-liberal bastion thousands of miles from the where Michael Brown and Eric Garner were killed.

Although many activists in other parts of the country have gone home, protests in Berkeley and Oakland are still active, reflecting the area's long history of protest dating back to the 1960s. The demonstrations are also unfolding in a place with strict limits on local police powers.

The crowds that came out to protest in Berkeley numbered only a few hundred, but some are not college students or residents so much as full-time demonstrators who protest anything — war, prison conditions and economic inequality — and sometimes use demonstrations as a pretext for violence and vandalism, just as they did during the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates said a tiny fraction of protesters are obscuring the wider message calling for reform of policing policies nationwide.

"The people in the Bay Area are sensitive to worldwide issues," Bates said. "Unfortunately, there is a small element that uses violence at times to make their point."

Merchants on Monday cleaned up broken glass and took stock of the previous night's looting from downtown Berkeley stores.

Bates called the violent elements of the demonstration "cowards and thugs who need to take off their masks."

It was not immediately known how many businesses were damaged, and no damage esti-

mate was offered. Five people were arrested, police said.

Aakash Agarwal, a sophomore at the University of California at Berkeley, witnessed the looting of a Radio Shack. He said about three dozen people cheered when the store's front window shattered.

"The whole peaceful protest thing went out the window," Agarwal said.

In keeping with the city's protest history, Berkeley leaders have put limits on their police. Officers cannot have search dogs, stun guns or helicopters and are restricted in the type of gear they can wear, said Berkeley police union President Sgt. Chris Stines.

"All of us are out there wearing what we wear on patrol, and as a result, we are getting pretty banged up," he said, explaining that shin and chest guards and padded vests would help prevent injuries. At least three officers suffered minor injuries.

Stines said he did not believe there was any "legitimate political message" behind Sunday's protest. "It was just criminal behavior."

The unrest is not limited to Berkeley. Seattle police arrested seven people Saturday during a protest that included a group trying to block a state highway. Rocks were also thrown at officers and storefronts smashed. More protests were scheduled for Monday.

The protests started after a Nov. 24 decision by the grand jury not to indict officer Darren Wilson in the killing of Michael Brown. A New York grand jury on Dec. 3 declined to prosecute a police officer captured on video applying a fatal chokehold on Eric Garner. That decision set off another series of demonstrations nationwide.

Oakland police have arrested about 200 people since the protests started.

## City

From Page 1

Todd Larson had recommended the name. At Monday's meeting, Larson said going ahead with his recommendation wouldn't force any logistical changes or create additional expenses.

"The scoreboard says Riverside Field, and the sign outside (the stadium) says, 'Welcome from Yankton Riverside Field,'" he said.

At the same time, the new name would recognize Tereshinski, the long-time MMC baseball coach who led the program to regional and national prominence.

YBA president Jeff Benjamin said he supported the recommended name. The change would keep the familiar "Riverside" name while recognizing MMC's support of the stadium and Tereshinski's role.

"They should leave it Riverside Field at Bob Tereshinski Stadium, on behalf of Mount Marty and what Bob did for Mount Marty," Benjamin said.

Current MMC baseball coach Andy Bernatow said he was agreeable with the recommended name.

Commissioner Pauline Akland questioned whether the

recommended name should be reversed "so it flows better" and would emphasize the stadium was part of the field. Commissioner Jake Hoffner countered that most visitors will continue to refer to the stadium as Riverside Field, regardless of the formal name.

In the end, the commission approved the recommended name change. The 20-year period runs from Jan. 1, 2015, to Dec. 31, 2034.

In another issue, Riverboat Days (RBD) co-chairman John Kraft spoke to the commission about the RBD committee's interest in leasing city property at the intersection of Second and Mulberry.

The committee wants to build a permanent, year-round headquarters on the property, the site of a Brownfields land restoration project. The leased property would be located west of Eisenbraun and Associates and the National Park Service headquarters.

Year-round headquarters would be desirable for a number of reasons, Kraft said. The committee currently stores its equipment, trailers and rides such as inflatables at various sites around Yankton.

"We have things all over the city, from one end to another," he said.

The RBD committee envisions the building would not

only house all the equipment but also providing meeting space and a heated workshop, Kraft said. The RBD building would be located only one block from Riverside Park, providing the committee and other workers with easy access to the RBD site and activities, he said.

The RBD committee has no definite cost figures at this time, Kraft said. Instead, the committee is focusing on one step at a time.

"We're looking at securing the land, then exploring then options with (Yankton community development director) Dave Mingo and the other city staff," he said. "We know your ideas for building design and would make it fit into the area."

Kraft envisions the project taking two to four years. "We will definitely need fundraising for the building," he said.

Kraft described the proposed building as "a sizeable project." He estimated a structure of around 80 by 150 feet to start, leaving the east wall open to expansion, he said.

Aklard express support for the idea. "I think it's a win-win for all of us," she said.

Mayor Dave Carda said the RBD committee could give direction to City Manager Amy Nelson. In turn, Nelson said she could negotiate a long-term lease with the RBD committee

## James, Irving, Nets Wear Shirts To Show Support

BY BRIAN MAHONEY  
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK — LeBron James, Kyrie Irving and multiple Brooklyn players wore "I Can't Breathe" shirts while they warmed up for Monday night's game between the Cleveland Cavaliers and the Nets.

Kevin Garnett and Deron Williams were among four Nets wearing the shirts in support of the family of Eric Garner, who died July 17 after a police officer placed him in a chokehold when he was being arrested for selling loose, untaxed cigarettes.

Chicago star Derrick Rose wore one before a game Saturday and James said Sunday he wanted one. He got it from Nets guard Jarrett Jack, who provided them to players on both teams. A few NFL players had the saying written on different items of gear and shirts during pregame warmups before games on Sunday, including St. Louis Rams guard Davin Joseph, Detroit Lions running back Reggie Bush and Cleveland Browns cornerback Johnson Bademosi.

"Obviously as a society we have to do better, we have to have empathy better for one another no matter what race you are, but it's more a shout-out to the family more than anything," James said before Cleveland's 110-88 victory.

Irving had already gone to the court in his shirt as James spoke. James said at the time it was a "possibility" he would do the same, and he was wearing the shirt when he unzipped his yellow and gray jacket in Cleveland's layup line.

The statement from the players came before a game that was to be attended by Britain's Prince William and his wife, Kate, as well as NBA Commissioner Adam Silver.

"I respect Derrick Rose and all of our players for voicing their personal views on important issues but my preference would be for players to abide by our on-court attire rules," Silver said.

Players are required to wear attire of Adidas, the league's official apparel provider.

for the commissioners' final action.

In other action during Monday's meeting:

- The commission approved purchasing a 2015 motor grader for \$230,946 from RDO Equipment Company of Sioux Falls, using a Minnesota state bid. The bid came under the \$250,000 estimate.

- The commission awarded a bid of \$57,950 for a 2010 model truck to replace a truck that suffered fire damage. The bid came from Truck, Trailer Sales and Services of Yankton.

- Nelson provided an update on efforts to upgrade the city's Christmas decorations for future years. She noted the current decorations "have seen some better days." By planning now, the city could lower costs by taking advantage of after-holiday sales and possible bulk purchases, she said.

- Nelson informed the commission it was invited by Yankton Area Progressive Growth (YAPG) to a Dec. 11 presentation on tax-increment finance (TIF) districts for housing units.

- The board went into executive session to discuss contractual and personnel matters.

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