

## Education Law Rewrite Passes Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — Those federally mandated math and reading tests will continue, but a sweeping rewrite of the nation's education law will now give states — not the U.S. government — authority to decide how to use the results in evaluating teachers and schools.

The Senate on Wednesday voted overwhelmingly, 85-12, to approve legislation rewriting the landmark No Child Left Behind education law of 2002. On Thursday, President Barack Obama will sign it into law.

One key feature of No Child remains: Public school students will still take the federally required statewide reading and math exams. But the new law encourages states to limit the time students spend on testing, and it will diminish the high stakes for underperforming schools.

Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, who leads the Senate Education Committee, called the legislation a "Christmas present" for 50 million children across the country. Alexander was a chief author of the bill along with Democratic Sen. Patty Murray of Washington — and in the House, Education Committee Chairman John Kline, R-Minn., and ranking Democrat Bobby Scott of Virginia.

"You'll see states taking the opportunity to serve kids better, meaning it's not just a conversation about labeling schools but also a conversation about when a school's not doing right by kids," Chris Minnich, executive director of the Council of Chief State School Officers, said in an interview.

## US Willing To Do More To Help Iraqis

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a steady escalation of the fight against Islamic State militants, the U.S. military stands ready to send more American personnel and attack helicopters to Iraq, especially to help retake a key city seized by the extremists, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Wednesday.

In recent days, Iraqi forces advanced on Ramadi, the provincial capital of Anbar province, retaking a military operations center and a neighborhood on the outskirts of the city in western Iraq.

"The United States is prepared to assist the Iraqi army with additional unique capabilities to help them finish the job, including attack helicopters and accompanying advisers" if circumstances dictate the extra assistance, and if requested by Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, Carter told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Carter outlined the steps as the Obama administration faces criticism from both Republicans and Democrats about its strategy to defeat the IS militants, reflecting a nation's growing fears about the threat of terrorism. It was the first time that Carter has testified before the committee since IS claimed responsibility for bombing a Russian airliner, attacks in Beirut and Paris, and the deadly shooting in San Bernardino, California, by a self-radicalized couple.

Carter said that during the past several months, the U.S.-led coalition fighting IS in Iraq and Syria has provided specialized training and equipment, including combat engineering assistance such as bulldozing, and munitions such as AT-4 shoulder-fired missiles to stop truck bombs, to the Iraqi army and counter-terrorism service units entering Ramadi neighborhoods from multiple directions.

## Mayor Apologizes For Teen's Death

CHICAGO (AP) — Mayor Rahm Emanuel, known for keeping vise-like control over Chicago and his own political image, finds himself in the weakest position of his long public career as he struggles to respond to a police scandal, claims of cover-ups at City Hall and calls for his resignation.

But the former White House chief of staff has said repeatedly that he will not step down. The nation's third-largest city has no process for a mayor to be recalled, though a state lawmaker from Chicago introduced a proposal Wednesday to allow for it. And most of the cries for Emanuel to resign have come from grassroots activists and residents, not from the city's political powerbrokers. The next election — should he seek another term — isn't until 2019.

On Wednesday, the mayor used a special meeting of the Chicago City Council to try to calm the firestorm, apologizing for the fatal shooting of a black teen by a white officer and promising "complete and total" reform.

"I take responsibility for what happened because it happened on my watch. And if we're going to fix it, I want you to understand it's my responsibility with you," Emanuel said during a sometimes-emotional speech that lasted nearly 45 minutes. "But if we're also going to begin the healing process, the first step in that journey is my step. And I'm sorry."

## Women Go Against Men In Elections

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Outside of the Saudi capital, in one of the country's most conservative provinces, Jowhara al-Wably is making history. She's running in this weekend's elections.

Saturday's vote for local council seats marks two milestones for Saudi women: Not only can they run in a government election for the first time, it is the first time they are permitted to vote at all.

The municipal councils are the only government body in which Saudi citizens can elect representatives, so the vote is widely seen as a small but significant opening for women to play a more equal role in Saudi society.

Still, women face challenges on the campaign trail: Because of Saudi Arabia's strict policy of segregation of the sexes, they cannot address male voters directly and have to speak from behind a partition — or have male relatives speak for them.

In an effort to create a more level playing field, the General Election Committee banned both male and female candidates from showing their faces in promotional flyers, billboards or in social media. They're also not allowed to appear on television.

# California Shooters Radicalized At Least 2 Years Ago

BY ERIC TUCKER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The two San Bernardino shooters were radicalized at least two years ago — well before one of them came to the U.S. on a fiancée visa — and had discussed jihad and martyrdom as early as 2013, FBI Director James Comey said Wednesday in providing the most specific details to date about the couple's path toward extremism.

Investigators are also looking at whether the husband accused in the shootings was planning an attack in 2012 but abandoned those plans, according to two people familiar with the investigation who were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

One week into its investigation, the FBI now believes that Syed Rizwan Farook and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, embraced radical Islamic ideology even before they had begun their online relationship and that Malik held extremist views before she arrived in the U.S. last year, Comey told the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Though the FBI believes the pair was inspired in part by Islamic State ideology — Malik pledged allegiance to the group's leader in a Facebook post around the time of last week's massacre — agents are still looking for other motivations and sources of radicalization, especially because the couple's interest in extremism predates the terror group's emergence as a household name.

"ISIL inspiration may well have been part of this, but these two killers were starting to radicalize towards martyrdom and jihad as early as 2013," said Comey, using an acronym for the Islamic State. "And so that's really before ISIL became the global jihad leader that it is."

The latest disclosure also suggests that the government's vetting process failed to detect Malik's radicalization when she applied for the visa, though Comey said he didn't know enough to say whether weaknesses in the visa process enabled her to enter the U.S.

"After this hearing today, every American will be asking the question, how did this woman come in on a fiancée visa?" said Sen. Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat and member of the committee.



JOSE M. OSORIO/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS  
Protesters attempt to access the Chicago Board Options Exchange building in the Loop as Chicago police officers keep them back on Wednesday, Dec. 9 in Chicago.

Malik came to the United States in July 2014 from Pakistan after being approved for a K-1, or fiancée visa, and married Farook the following month. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson said the Obama administration is now reviewing the program. He did not say what changes were being considered.

Malik's father, reached in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, condemned his daughter's actions and said he is "very, very sad. ... I am in such pain that I cannot even describe it."

The father, Gulzar Ahmed Malik, has been a resident in the kingdom since the early 1980s, the Saudi Interior Ministry says. His daughter was from Pakistan but traveled to Saudi Arabia. A former classmate, Afshin Butt, said Malik showed drastic changes after a trip to Saudi Arabia in late 2008 or early 2009.

Last week's shooting attack at a holiday party killed 14 people and left 21 injured. Former neighbor Enrique Marquez bought the two rifles used in the attack, officials say.

One law enforcement official briefed on the investigation says Marquez has told investigators that he and Farook planned an attack in the United States in 2012 but abandoned the idea. Marquez is a relative of Farook's through marriage. The official says it's unclear what spooked

them into cancelling the apparent plot.

Comey described the couple as an example of homegrown violent extremists who appear to have radicalized "in place," drawing a distinction between the San Bernardino attack and the one last month in Paris that officials suspect involved planning and training in Syria. He said the FBI did not yet know if the marriage was arranged by a foreign terrorist organization.

The FBI has revealed little else of what it's learned about Farook and Malik and their planning, except for details about the weaponry they had, materials they had to make more pipe bombs and that both had been taking target practice.

A U.S. official said Tuesday authorities are looking into a deposit made to Farook's bank account before the attack. The official, who had been briefed on the investigation but was not authorized to discuss it by name and spoke on condition of anonymity, would not characterize further the nature of the deposit or why it had caught the attention of investigators. A second official confirmed that the deposit was for \$28,500.

Though Comey declined to answer questions about whether encrypted communication had been used before the attack, he did use the appearance to reiterate his longstanding concerns that

criminals, terrorists and spies can use encryption applications on their smartphones to evade detection from law enforcement.

"Increasingly, we are unable to see what they say, which gives them a tremendous advantage," he said.

He said one of the gunmen in last May's shooting outside a Prophet Mohammed cartoon contest in Garland, Texas, had exchanged more than 100 messages with an overseas suspected terrorist prior to the attack that investigators still had been unable to access. Investigators were concerned that the location might be targeted, and ensured that law enforcement officers were ready. The two gunmen were shot dead by police.

"We have no idea what he said because those messages were encrypted," Comey said. "And to this day, I can't tell you what he said with that terrorist 109 times the morning of that attack. That is a big problem. We have to grapple with it."

America's counterterrorism infrastructure has had success flagging individuals who try to travel abroad to fight alongside militants, fund operations overseas or who communicate online with overseas terrorists. But it's been far more challenging for law enforcement to identify each individual who self-radicalizes online.

## Trump's Knack For Controversy Drowning Out His Rivals

BY THOMAS BEAUMONT  
Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Even campaigning half as much as his rivals, Donald Trump is drowning them out in an echo chamber of insults and charged pronouncements that have taken over the presidential campaign. Frustrated GOP candidates trekking across Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina are struggling to be heard.

All the while, some Republican officials worry the intense Trump focus is letting Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton escape serious scrutiny as she works to strengthen her case to general election voters in the 2016 contest.

"He's playing you like a fine Stradivarius violin," former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush told reporters who mobbed him after a campaign stop in New Hampshire this week — to get his reaction to Trump's remarks. "This is what he does. He's an expert at this. He's phenomenal at garnering attention."

Perhaps no one is more frustrated than Bush, the former Florida governor once thought the likely nominee but now fighting for relevance as Trump leads most Republican polls.

Bush spoke at length during his campaign stops about his strategy to stop the Islamic State, which he said President Barack Obama and Clinton, as secretary of state, had foolishly dismissed.

Yet the first question he faced from voters at a Tuesday night stop in southern New Hampshire had nothing to do with his policies. "I'm going to say two words, probably the last two words you want to

hear right now," said Tim Chrysostom, one of 125 in attendance. "Donald Trump."

"What about him?" Bush replied curtly. With Trump's call to ban Muslims from entering the United States, just the latest example of his provocative statements, the billionaire businessman has found a way to dominate the conversation even when he's not in the room.

On Wednesday, Bush touted a plan to return more power to states. Ohio Gov. John Kasich addressed national security in New York. And retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson outlined his plan to reshape the U.S. health care system.

Each made hardly a ripple in the race. Trump's newest comments on Muslims, however, got attention.

"I'm doing good for the Muslims," he declared in an interview to be aired Wednesday night on CNN. "Many Muslim friends of mine are in agreement with me."

Tens of millions of dollars in campaign spending aren't helping Trump's adversaries break through.

Trump spent \$5.6 million through the end of September. The rest of the GOP field spent more than \$76 million over the same period.

Bush and his supporters alone have invested some \$32 million in television and radio commercials. Trump? About \$300,000.

Even Trump's critics, like New Hampshire Republican national committeeman Steve Duprey, admires the real estate mogul's ability to dominate the conversation with such a modest investment of time and money.

"No one can deny he's running a brilliant campaign," Duprey said.

Trump has all but abandoned traditional retail campaigning in which candidates court smaller groups of voters in key states. Instead he's focusing on massive rallies and most often on national media interviews — frequently conducted on the phone from Manhattan's Trump Tower.

Extraordinary statements have become ordinary for Trump. At the same South Carolina rally where he read his no-Muslims statement aloud, he also suggested "closing that Internet up in some way," saying it had become a breeding ground for radicalization.

Some rivals have tried to emulate Trump's fiery rhetoric.

Texas Sen. Ted Cruz explained his preferred approach to the Islamic State militants by promising to rain violence on their strongholds. "We will carpet bomb them into oblivion," he said at a tea party rally in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on Sunday. "I don't know if sand can glow in the dark, but we're going to find out."

At a rally Tuesday night in Atlanta, Carson suggested that U.S. citizens should train for terrorist attacks much as schoolchildren once conducted air-raid drills during the Cold War. "We need to start teaching people what to do once again in those situations," he said.

Such tactics concern some Republican donors and operatives.

"You're not going to get earned media unless you're outrageous, but it is foolish to try to out-Trump Trump," said John Jordan, a California donor backing Florida Sen. Marco Rubio.

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