

WVDN JUN 10, 2021

THE WEST VIRGINIA
DAILY NEWS
MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2021

LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS
Meet Recycle Lady
Dear Abby
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Rupert Library To Host W.Va. Heritage Celebration
The Rupert Library will host the West Virginia Heritage Celebration on Monday, June 14, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The celebration will feature a variety of activities, including a book signing by author John L. Nease, a presentation by the West Virginia Historical Society, and a performance by the West Virginia State Band. The library is located at 100 N. Main St., Rupert, W.Va. For more information, call 304-838-2222.

Successful River Festival Returns
The West Virginia River Festival returned to its original location on the West Virginia State Fairgrounds in Martinsburg on Saturday, June 12. The festival featured a variety of activities, including a parade, live music, and a fireworks display. The festival was a success, with over 10,000 people attending. The festival is a popular annual event in the region.

June At The Alderson Library
The Alderson Library is celebrating the month of June with a variety of activities. The library is hosting a book signing by author John L. Nease on Monday, June 14. The library is also hosting a presentation by the West Virginia Historical Society on Tuesday, June 15. The library is also hosting a performance by the West Virginia State Band on Wednesday, June 16. The library is located at 100 N. Main St., Alderson, W.Va. For more information, call 304-838-2222.

Bookley Bookstore Offers To Assist City Officials In Changing The Harwood Old Black Bridge
Bookley Bookstore is offering to assist city officials in changing the Harwood Old Black Bridge. The bookstore is offering to provide the materials and labor needed to repair the bridge. The bridge is a historic landmark in Harwood, W.Va. The bookstore is located at 100 N. Main St., Harwood, W.Va. For more information, call 304-838-2222.

West Virginia Democratic Party Meets With Internal Diversity And National Headlines
The West Virginia Democratic Party met on Monday, June 14, to discuss the party's platform for the upcoming general election. The meeting was held at the West Virginia State Capitol in Charleston. The party's platform focuses on issues such as education, healthcare, and economic development. The party is also focused on increasing diversity within the party and addressing national headlines.

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West Virginia Democratic Party wrestles with internal diversity and national deadlines

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN JUN 10, 2021



The West Virginia Democratic Party drew criticism from its own executive committee members on Friday, June 4, after a plan to increase diversity drafted without input from those communities was approved to be submitted to the Democratic National Committee (DNC).

“We had no input on this plan. We weren’t asked our opinion,” said Hollis Lewis, cochair of the black caucus. “You can’t draft something on behalf of us. We just now threw these affirmative action committees together within the last two or three weeks — we’ve had no time to review the plan, we didn’t see the plan. We should be able, at the very least, to have a thorough review of it before a vote takes place on it.”

The issues emerge from challenges filed against the state party that “raised concerns about how the State Party has conducted its delegate selection process, including issues” around “affirmative action and outreach to traditionally underrepresented groups.”

The new affirmative action plan was due June 4, the day following the meeting. This deadline was established in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in July 2020 by West Virginia Democratic Party Chair Belinda Biafore, the Rules and Bylaws Committee of the DNC, and Selina Vickers on behalf of challenges filed against the West Virginia Democratic Party.

“About two years ago, myself and some other grassroots reformers began a journey of trying to recognize major problems, no transparency, closed meetings, no diversity, not letting even women have a fair opportunity to participate in the party,” Vickers explained in a press conference the day following the meeting. “We began filing a series of challenges that went to the Democratic National Committee. ... In 1974, West Virginia ... was required to have an affirmative action plan to provide for representation. ... From what we understand, West Virginia has never, ever implemented or developed [an affirmative action] plan. ... [Now], when it was time to implement it, instead of acting in good faith, they tried to ram through a plan that [ignores those it should be representing].”

The affirmative action committees responsible for creating an affirmative action plan were not formed until shortly before a February 15, 2021, deadline. However, after this was not met, the deadline was extended to June 4. During the Thursday, June 3 meeting of the West Virginia Democratic Executive Committee, Biafore

explained the plan was developed and intended to be a draft.

“Over the last year, we have worked very hard to make things and changes happen,” said Biafore. “We have met all of our goals that we need to present to the rules and bylaws committee. Our deadline is tomorrow. When we first adopted this plan, the affirmative action committee as we know it now, was not in place. I certainly didn’t expect them to come up with a plan overnight. Let me stress that this is simply a draft. ... The passage of an affirmative action and outreach plan by this executive committee does not prevent further amendments and revisions in the future, as a matter of fact we encourage them and want to make them happen.”

However, pushing the plan through without input from the affirmative action committees, even in draft form, was met with ample criticism, both during the meeting and after.

“In March, they passed bylaws establishing that we would have an affirmative action committee,” said Mary Ann Claytor during a press conference the next day. “Those meetings, set up by the West Virginia Democratic Party leadership, were not scheduled until around May. Our very first meeting wasn’t until June 2 or 3.”

“I get that I’m supposed to be appreciative right now apparently,” said Susan Miley during the executive committee meeting. “I get it. I’m not though. We didn’t set these deadlines. We didn’t ask for an extension to be a part of drafting an affirmative action plan. I’ve never had to ask for an extension, if you guys had given me a deadline, I would have had a drafted plan. I would’ve done it myself. I would’ve reached out to people myself. ... I had no idea this was a looming thing. I don’t think it’s wise, I really, to my core, don’t think it’s wise to have a draft affirmative action plan without any minorities that actually wrote it for the state of West Virginia. I just think that’s a bad idea.”

The looming deadline of the MOU pushed many party members to move forward anyway.

“An hour ago [the DNC] denied [a second] extension,” said Rod Snyder. “I [don’t] know how to state that any more clearly. I’m tired, this has been emotional. I appreciate where everyone is coming from, but I’m speaking up because I do not think we can afford to not meet the terms of the MOU.”

Despite this, several members still objected to the plan, such as Walt Auvil asking “When the DNC is informed that the affirmative action plan that we adopted ... with zero input from the committees we created, in violation of the bylaws we passed, do you think they’re going to accept that as compliance?”

In response to Auvil, Biafore explained the plan “is just the end result of what we had to do for the MOU. We start fresh from here. We turn it over to the affirmative action committees, they do what they want. Nobody is going to make this a permanent document, nobody said that from day one. Earlier, she noted that the plan’s deadline had “been extended once. We’ve just got to get this put to bed with the DNC according to the memorandum of understanding, then we can move forward with all the discussion.”

Delegate Cody Thompson motioned for the plan to be tabled, seconded by Auvil, but the committee voted 35 to 14 to continue with the approval. Kim Felix voted to table “as a representative of two caucus’ that have yet to meet and/or be established with a chair.”

A second motion from Pamela Van Horn was approved, placing the word “draft” and other language into the plan expected to go to the DNC. No other motions were considered after this, bringing more criticism from members.

“We didn’t get a chance for if anyone else wanted to make amendments,” said Mary Ann Claytor.

“We’ve discussed this around and around. We’ve moved that we’ve put it to a vote, so that’s what we’re going

to do,” Biafore said.

“Oh okay so that means we don’t have any voice in this,” Claytor responded. “I don’t even know why y’all have a caucus.”

“As a member of the black community, this is a slap in the face,” Lewis said.

“I move we adjourn,” said Nick Casey, just before the motion was approved and the meeting ended.

The tense executive committee meeting also saw the approval of new members recommended by the affirmative action committee shortly before the vote. Technology issues also plagued the meeting, in which the expected appointees were not able to log in to the direct zoom meeting. Instead, the new members were placed in a waiting room and could only watch the meeting on Youtube until they were approved.

The next day, several members of the caucus called for a press conference to voice their disappointment with how the vote and plan were handled.

“I’m no stranger to this type of treatment from the West Virginia Democratic leadership,” said Mary Ann Claytor. “... [Due to technology issues], every time I tried to unmute myself to make a statement, I was muted. By the time they actually let me say something, they said well we called for a vote. I asked if no one else could make amendments. I had attempted, several times before that, to let my voice be heard, to represent my caucus. My caucus, we met, [and] they instructed us to reject what Belinda Biafore sent out.”

“I listened to and watched the entire meeting and, as a long time member of the party, this is the most disgusting display of discrimination and racism that I’ve ever seen overtly occur in a space for the Democratic Party,” said Kaylen Barler, cochair of the LGBTQ caucus. “People of color were told to sit down, shut up, and wait their turn. LGBTQ people were told to sit down, shut up, and wait their turn. This is an affirmative action committee. This is a plan for the party to reach minority voters and if this is the way that they’re going to treat the people inside the party that are trying to help to build a cohesive and effective plan ... after years of significant losses to the party, this isn’t the way to get this started. ... These spaces are lead primarily by older, white, cisgender, straight women and men, and there’s not representation of the people that make up the Democratic Party in West Virginia.”

Dear Abby: Thursday, June 10

By Abigail Van Buren | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

Woman Spurred To Action By Grandkids’ Plight

Dear Abby: I have a grandson (25) and granddaughter (22) who are both extremely overweight (300 pounds each). They not only have health issues, but also mental issues. Both work part-time at the same company as their mom and dad — and still live at home. They don’t date, don’t drive and are very dependent on their parents because their parents encourage it. My granddaughter is being treated with meds; my grandson is not. I’m very close to him, and he shares a lot with me. He has issues with both of his parents, but more so with his mom. They were raised in a VERY Christian home. There were always weight issues for the entire family because they eat most of their meals out. My daughter-in-law rarely cooks, and the house resembles a “Hoarders” home. In the past, I tried talking with my son and his wife but they have a convenient excuse for everything I bring up. During my last conversation with my grandson, he was so unhappy he mentioned

suicide. PLEASE can you help me? How can I get through to my son and his wife? — **Distraught Grandma in Texas**

Dear Grandma: Do your son and his wife know their son is depressed to the point of talking about suicide? If they are unaware, put them on notice. While you're at it, give him the number of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-8255. Because you have already tried talking to his parents and found them unreceptive, would you consider inviting your grandson to live with you for a while? It would be a way of teaching him healthier eating habits, and if he needs medication, you might be able to see that his doctor prescribes it. Living apart from his parents might also be an incentive for him to become more independent in other ways, such as continuing his education if he is able, which would improve his employment prospects.

Dear Abby: There is a trend happening these days. Young people live together for several years, get pregnant and go to the justice of the peace to get legally married. Then, a year or more later, they sometimes decide to have a formal wedding ceremony. Friends throw them a shower, and the wedding is often elaborate. I thought a shower gift or wedding gift was to help the new couple to get their household set up. These couples already have everything in their house. I feel this is a slap in the face of tradition. What are your thoughts? — **Old-Fashioned**

Dear Old-Fashioned: Yes, it's a break with tradition. These changes have occurred because of changes in social mores, the economy and gender roles. The tradition used to involve a young woman going directly from her parents' house to that of her husband. More recently, young people have postponed marriage, established themselves in the workplace and achieved economic independence before coupling up. This is a positive step because if the marriage fails or the spouse dies, the widowed spouse isn't left without the tools to support themselves and their family. While you may think the couple "already has everything they need," take a peek at their bridal registry because it may be an eye-opener. And remember, if you cannot celebrate happily with the couple, no rule of etiquette dictates that you must attend the wedding.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Dear Recycle Lady: Thursday, June 10

By dear recycle lady | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

Hi Recycle Lady,

My biggest conundrum with recycling is the apparent absence of options for utilizing green and/or brown glass bottles. Although they cannot be "recycled" into new containers is there not some way they can be utilized? I'm not talking about putting them in walls or gardens, but on a large scale. Can they not be crushed and returned to a "sand" state and used as fill? I am probably not giving up wine or beer in the near future and being able to "do something" with the empties would make it so much tastier. I buy cans when available, but... — **What Do To**

Dear What To Do,

Have you considered calling Greenworks Recycling? (304-661-7793) They are proud to be one of the last glass recyclers in West Virginia. Greenworks is unable to provide glass collection for free as processing glass is very expensive. Two plans are available for collection. One of the plans is a monthly fee of \$14 for the biweekly collection of recyclables in the Lewisburg area. The other plan is payment of a flat fee of \$25 to come pick up glass at your location, as well as all other recyclables. Greenworks must charge for this service as they must pay their buyer to come pick up the glass and take it to the processor. The processed glass is then sold to

several buyers, the largest of which is Pink Panther insulation. According to science.howstuffworks.com › glass-recycling in the U.S. is broken. There seem to be several reasons for this. One of the biggest reasons is that 80% of U.S. communities use single-stream recycling where all recyclables are put in the same bin. This method doesn't work very well when glass is included as glass containers often break causing shards of glass to be mixed with other recyclables.

Hopefully, manufacturers are looking for ways to improve the recycling of glass as glass is 100% recyclable and can be recycled endlessly with no loss in quality. Deposit laws have improved glass recycling and states with deposit laws collect three times as much glass as states without deposit laws do. However, this rate doesn't begin to match the 90% rate of glass recycling by European Countries. Perhaps our legislature should consider a deposit law for glass bottles and containers.

Dear Recycle Lady,

I use a sponge to wash dishes every day, but now they say that this is not a good thing to do. What are sponges made of that make them a poor choice. — **Dishwasher**

Dear Dishwasher,

Sponges were first used some 2.5 billion years ago, according to www.shapeoflife.org and were made from sea sponges. They came in many shapes and sizes and were the very first animal. Ancient Greece competitors in the Olympic Games bathed themselves with sea sponges soaked in olive oil. Today, most all kitchen sponges are made with plastic. They hold water, which breeds bacteria and can spread germs. There are plastic-free, planet-friendly, sponge alternatives — made of coconut. They're perfect for pet dish scrubbers too. Over 400 million sponges that are made of plastic are thrown away every year and take centuries to break down.

Have questions about recycling, or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com . Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.

'Extraordinary Session' of WV Legislature Commits Millions To State Agencies

By bobby bordelon wvdm | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

The West Virginia Legislature came back into session to allocate hundreds of millions of federal dollars to state agencies on Monday, June 7.

Governor Jim Justice called for an Extraordinary Session in a proclamation, bringing the legislature back after the first session closed earlier this year. In a press release, he noted the session would give various agencies "spending authority for federal funds that have been received since the end of the Regular Session for various programs."

On June 7, the legislature passed seven bills, six on allocating federal funds throughout state agencies and one fixing a U.S. Code citation in the WV State Code.

House Bills 101 and 102 appropriate \$150,000,000 to the State Road Fund under the Division of Highways. On social media, Senate Minority Leader Stephen Baldwin announced "Great news!!! Today, the legislature approved \$151 million in new paving, bridge repair, and slips/slides all across WV."

Baldwin included a list of projects in Greenbrier and Monroe counties:

- Pave 1.4 miles of Seneca Trail North
- Pave 3 miles of Rupert Rd
- Pave 2.1 miles of Blakers Mill-Asbury Rd
- Widen 0.69 miles by Lewisburg Elem & Aviagen
- Replace 1.2 miles of guardrail on Ronceverte Hill (which is already scheduled for replacing also)
- Pave 2.7 miles of Monitor-Greenbrier CL Rd
- Pave 1.8 miles of Linside Rd

Drawing contrast with other Greenbrier County representatives, Delegate Todd Longanacre voted against H.B. 101.

S.B. 1001 allocates funds to the Department of Health and Human Resources for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. This includes:

- \$14,959,019 to Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment under the Division of Health.
- \$12,477,493 to Community Mental Health Services under the Division of Health.
- \$40,464,237 to the Energy Fund of the Division of Human Services.
- \$4,617,546 to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families in the Division of Human Services.
- \$330,722,313 to Child Care and Development under the Division of Human Services.

S.B. 1002 set funds to the Department of Health and Human Resources for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022:

- \$4,886,344 to the Consolidated Medical Service Fund.
- \$248,917,788 to the Division of Health, Central Office.
- \$151,642,105 to the Division of Human Services.

S.B. 1003 gave funds to the Department of Education for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021:

- \$1,246,924 to the State Board of Education
- \$40,000,000 to the School Lunch Program

S.B. 1004 also gave funds to the Department of Education, but this time for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022:

- \$1,246,924 to the State Board of Education.
- \$52,000,000 to the School Lunch Program.

S.B. 1007 corrected an “incorrect citation to federal law” dealing with “exemptions of property in federal bankruptcy proceedings, allowing a debtor in bankruptcy to use the federal law exemptions under 11 U.S.C. 522(d)” and updating the effective date.

In addition, Senate Resolution 103 deals with the appointment of a nonmember committee on redistricting after the 2020 census. The resolution was unanimously passed by the House of Delegates.

Although not related to a bill, Senator Randy Smith (R – Tucker, 14th) took to the floor to criticize Justice’s recent announcement of vaccine incentives, such as the potential to win a lottery, trucks, or guns.

“The people in my district are extremely upset about what’s going on with our governor,” said Smith. “All the sudden he thinks he’s a game show host or something, Bob Barker or Pat Sajak. ... They’re spending CARES money on lotteries and giving out gifts for the vaccine. I’m not for the vaccine or against the vaccine. My feeling is if you want the vaccine, you should get the vaccine. If you don’t, don’t, and that’s one of the good things about living in the United States of America and, supposedly, the free state of West Virginia. I don’t believe we should be using money to bribe people to do something that should be their personal choice.”

Smith also touched on the recent revelations about Justice’s finances from the Wall Street Journal, which revealed Justice was personally liable for \$700 million in loans.

“Everyone knows what’s in the news, \$700 million he signed off on for loans after he signed an ethics paper that says he doesn’t have anything to do with his businesses while he’s governor,” Smith said. “Evidently, he does. Nobody really cares it seems. ... I’m fed up with it. He needs to start taking some responsibility and acting like the governor and we need to take responsibility, as an elected body, to make sure that these issues don’t happen.”

Smith’s comments received a response from Minority Whip Michael Woelfel (D – Cabell, 5th).

“I look around the room and I see that no one has a mask on, which is good. That means we’ve all been double vaccinated. Right? Or we’d have a mask on,” said Woelfel. “I don’t think the governor is a bully. ... [The governor] is in litigation and there are always two sides to that litigation coin and I don’t think it’s appropriate for us to take cheap shots at the governor on what his family [or his] businesses interests, what his indebtedness may be. To the extent that the governor is encouraging people to be vaccinated, which is what he’s doing, and every governor is doing, they’re ... encouraging people to be safe. This disease is a killer. It’s killed a lot of West Virginians. It’s killed by cousin. So if the governor wants to incentivize people to get a vaccination by giving them a lottery ticket ... I applaud that. I think we should encourage that. It’s ironic that we’re all double vaccinated and we somehow oppose encouraging all of our fellow citizens to be vaccinated.”

More Water Lines Approved For Ronceverte, Council Approves Election Results

By bobby bordelon wvdn | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

By Bobby Bordelon

Missing sections of 10-year-old water lines, the canvas of the recent election, progress on a sewer line passing under the train tracks, and more were considered by the Ronceverte City Council on Monday, June 7.

E.L. Robinson Engineer Bob Hazelwood explained the need for more line installation than was expected for the downtown water infrastructure project.

“We had some additional lines we needed to install [on Maple Street],” Hazelwood said. “We intended to connect to what was supposed to be a pretty new line that was only ten years old. Supposedly it was constructed during the last project, ... but we didn’t find that to be the case. There is a 200 foot section, Main Street to Edgar Avenue, that we need to add a few lines to the contract. ... Our goal is to abandon the lines on Main Street, Edgar Street, and all the streets in between. We didn’t want to leave in an old line right there in the middle of all of the other brand new lines. There are two whole lines down Maple Street, there’s a cast iron line and also a concrete line as well. We didn’t want to reconnect to either one of those.”

Council approved a change order to Pro Contracting, totaling \$46,429.37, to pay for the unexpected new line installation. After a question, Hazelwood noted this was not a one time occurrence.

“Unfortunately we’re finding several places of lines that were shown to be built in 2010, in that project, and we’re not finding that to be the case,” Hazelwood said. “They kind of skipped and jumped, a little here, a little there, and somewhere along the lines, somethings were shown as being constructed that we’re finding not to be the case. ... We’re finding multiple lines everywhere we go. There’s at least two water lines -

“Three or four,” interjected Steve Williams with the city’s water department.

“The previous project didn’t make much headway in abandoning lines,” Hazelwood said.

“They didn’t fill them up [or abandon them] once they laid the line,” Williams agreed. “So all four are live when only one should be.”

“They constructed a new line in 2010, but they didn’t switch all services over to the new line,” Hazelwood agreed. “The services are still going to the old line.”

Despite this, the project is making progress.

“The upgrade project ... is about 19 or 20 percent complete,” Hazelwood said. “The other project, the work mostly in town on the main streets, by Pro Contracting, is about 50 percent complete. As far as actual water lines, they’re about 90 percent complete. The rest of the contract would be the meter setters and all the pavement repairs. ... They’re making really good progress on the contract.”

In other business:

- City Council met with the board of canvas for the recent election, approving the results. In addition to the votes previously announced, 16 provisional ballots were also considered. Of the provisional ballots, some were thrown out because the voter did not live within city limits. Council approved the results, which will be final after the 48 hour period during which someone can call for a recount. The provisional ballots did change the final number of votes for each candidate, but did not affect the results of the election.

- Council celebrated the resumed work on a critical sewer line that passes under the train tracks. Due to unneeded pipe size difference, the pipe has been a huge throttle for the system. Council celebrated the sewer department getting the needed parts in with a round of applause. Williams explained, on their behalf, that the team “got the bore in, they’re laying the pipe now to the parking lot to Southern Estates. The big, expensive head ... got them through the rock, no problem. Then they got into soft dirt and it wouldn’t do it. ... Those guys dug, by hand, through a 36 inch pipe, for five or seven days. They had a homemade wheelbarrow ... putting [the dirt] out with a cable. ... They’re halfway in the parking lot now.”

- Council approved a cable lease agreement with Shentel for the city, with many of the modifications to the contract spearheaded by former Councilmember Adam Rosin. The agreement is a five-year plan, but began in 2019, meaning there are three years until it expires.
- Patty Dillon was reconfirmed to another term on the Ronceverte Library Board. Councilmember Cherie Davis abstained from the unanimous approval due to her position with the library.
- A bank account for American Rescue Plan funds expected by the city was created, with Councilmember Kathy King abstaining from voting due to her position at the bank.

Ronceverte Planning Commission Agenda

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

The City of Ronceverte, West Virginia will host their next Planning Commission Meeting On Monday, June 14 at 5 p.m. at Ronceverte City Hall. located at 200 Main Street West in Ronceverte.

Agenda:

- Call to Order
- Approval of Minutes
- Request for Sign@ Rt. 219/174 Frankford Road Carwash
- Adjournment

Beckley Resident Offers To Assist City Officials In Changing The Narrative Of Black Knight

By autumn shelton wvdn | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

Beckley resident Dr. Kristi Dumas has offered the city of Beckley help with changing the public perspective of the Black Knight municipal park following a controversial decision regarding the seasonal closure of the New River pool, while the Black Knight pool opened to the public.

Dumas spoke before the Beckley Common Council on Tuesday, June 8, about the racist perception of the historical Black Knight — once a popular country club for the city's white elites.

"Let me say that I realize I do not have the same history with Black Knight as many African-Americans do around town because I am not originally from West Virginia," Dumas said.

She added that she and her husband had attended many events at the Black Knight before they began to realize the truth.

"The stares and quiet whispers didn't register for us at first as this is commonplace in most predominantly white spaces we find ourselves in," Dumas continued. "It took someone in town chastising my husband for

wearing a Black Knight bucket hat . . . that we quickly began to understand the angst some around town feel.”

Dumas noted that those with Black Knight are currently doing some great things throughout the city, but those things are not being publicized.

“We can’t rewrite history, but we can tell a different story from here,” Dumas said. “Pools, people, and propaganda positions will quickly consume the citizens and derail the positive momentum of much that is going on in our town. I understand the need for day-to-day decisions to be made in many areas of the city, but all too often those decisions seem curdled in exclusivity, as opposed to inclusivity. The narrative of Black Knight must shift.”

Beckley Mayor Rob Rappold responded that he welcomes input from those willing to help Beckley and the Black Knight move forward, including creating a special committee where folks can offer ideas.

Following the public outcry regarding New River’s closure, Beckley officials held a special workshop on Monday, June 7, to address some of the statements that had been made on social media.

Ultimately, the decision to open the Black Knight pool came down to the fact that the smaller facility could be run with just three lifeguards, according to city officials. The Olympic-sized New River pool needed a much larger staff to ensure the safety of visitors.

Councilmember Robert Dunlap asked Rappold if the city could post a recording of the special workshop meeting to give all residents the opportunity to hear how the decision to close New River Pool came about.

Rappold responded that he will look into posting that special workshop meeting.

Also during the regular council meeting, area resident Christina Baisden spoke regarding the pool and the lifeguard shortage.

She stated that other avenues for finding lifeguards should be pursued by the city. One idea would be creating a partnership with the YMCA.

Additionally, Baisden invited the council to the Beckley Pride event on Saturday, June 12, from noon-6 p.m. at the Beckley Intermodal Gateway.

“Everyone is welcome and it’s going to be a great time,” Baisden said.

June at the Alderson Library

By by rebecca stalnaker | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

The Alderson Public Library is preparing for a month full of fun and excitement. Not only does the Summer Reading Program begin in June, but the library will also play host to the famous superhero Batman! The Friends of the Library group is also getting in on the fun by holding a raffle for a handmade quilt.

Tails & Tales is the theme for the Summer reading program. Activities for the reading program will take place at 6 p.m. every Tuesday at the library beginning on June 15. The program is for children between the ages of six and 12. The program will continue through July 20. To view the cute animal-filled poster for the program,

visit the library's Facebook page at Alderson Public Library.

As a kick-off for the Summer reading program, Batman and his Batmobile are making a visit to the library. Originally, he was supposed to arrive on June 9, however mechanical issues (which may or may not have been caused by the Joker) have delayed The Bat. Instead, he will now be at the Alderson Library on Friday, June 11 at 11:30 a.m. Be sure to stop by, say hello and check out the awesome Batmobile!

The Friends of The Library group is now selling chances to win a "beautiful quilt, handmade by Debbie Bryant." Chances to win this quilt are \$5 each or \$10 for three. The drawing will take place on July 16 so be sure to get your chances before then.

For more information on any of these events call or stop by the library during open hours. To reach the library by phone, call 304-445-7221. The library is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. For updates on the events, follow the library's Facebook page.

Rupert Library To Host W.Va. Heritage Celebration

By carol mcclung rupert public - library guest columnist | WVDN JUN 10, 2021



The Rupert Public Library is hosting a celebration of West Virginia Heritage, Tuesday, June 22, from 12 noon until 2 p.m.

We will feature John Wyatt as the guest speaker on Appalachian Heritage. We will have on display a barrel from the WV Great Barrel Company. Someone will be available to give information about the construction of the barrels.

There will be other displays of West Virginia-made items for the public to observe. Light refreshments will be served. Be sure to ask for a free West Virginia State flag.

Please come have some fun with us and learn some of our heritage.

Meadow River Valley Association Hosts 'Down On The Farm' Event, Breaks Ground On School Project

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUN 10, 2021



Down on the farm:

The “Down on the Farm” Festival returns Saturday, June 19 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Rainelle City Park. Sponsored by the town of Rainelle, it’s a fun day for the whole family to enjoy!

Little Critters Petting Zoo will have creatures great and small, including \$5 pony rides. Children can also play on the inflatable maze and slides. LZ Rainelle, WV Veterans Reunion is sponsoring a kids’ Murbles contest — think giant marbles!

And if you’re feeling lucky, get in on the cakewalk for your chance to win a tasty treat.

Hobby by Heart Carving is giving a demonstration. And don’t forget your lounge chair! Harmony Junction has the stage throughout the morning with the Thomas Taylor Band playing that afternoon. Vendors will be selling food and drinks.

Vendors may contact Robin Williams, event coordinator, at 304-661-2883 to reserve space. Hope to see everyone “Down on the Farm!”

Rupert school project groundbreaking:

The Meadow River Valley Association took a big step forward in the groundbreaking of the Rupert School Project at the former elementary/high school property. In May, MRVA partnered with Woodlands Development Group to rehabilitate the former school site into low-income senior housing units with a public health clinic on the first floor.

The Woodlands Group is headed up by Dave Clark of Elkins, West Virginia, with Dustin Smith acting as the project manager. The Woodlands Group has more than 25 years of experience revitalizing and building community projects, including low-income housing, senior housing and community centers. Typically, Woodlands focuses its efforts in the Elkins/Randolph County area but could not resist the opportunity to provide community development for the Meadow River Valley.

Dustin Smith notes, “We really want to expand our impact to other areas of the state. MRVA is a perfect partner for reaching areas that need support.”

Woodlands and MRVA established the Rupert School LP and are in the process of applying for state and federal funding. Once complete the former school will house ten one-bedroom units, 4 two-bedroom units, a health clinic, elevator and landscaped grounds.

The project is part of the Meadow River Valley Community Center, which houses the Rupert Volunteer Fire Department, The West End Youth Sports League, and The Meadow River Valley Early Learning Center which includes a garden and cafeteria.

The target ground-breaking for the Rupert School project is early 2022.

Ronceverte River Festival Returns

By by matthew young | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

After a year-long pandemic-imposed hiatus, the Ronceverte River Festival returns, beginning this Friday, June 11.

This year marks the event's 33rd year, and has been advertised under the banner "Come back to the river!"

Familiar festival events, such as live musical performances, as well as the rubber duck race, are scheduled Friday evening and all day Saturday. The event will conclude with a fireworks display at 10 p.m. on Saturday night.

"We're glad to be back, even in a shortened form," said River Festival Treasurer Ben Anderson. "Our committee has rebuilt this organization from the ground up and put the festival in a position where it is not only succeeding financially but is giving back to the community like never before."

The 2021 River Festival will kick off with "The Grand Parade" at 7 p.m. Friday evening. Special guests for the parade will include West Virginia Governor Jim Justice, Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, the WVU Mountaineer, and the Dark Knight himself...Batman!

"There are also lots of new things this year," Anderson continued. "Sensory friendly Saturday, a full circus, tons of vendors, the biggest fireworks display we've ever had and great music!"

Rubber duck race tickets are available at roncevertewv.org/store. Schedule updates and event details are available at roncevertewv.org/festival.

City Of White Sulphur Springs Unofficial Municipal Election Results

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

Mayor:

Bruce Bowling — four precincts reporting / 35 total votes

City Recorder:

Kathy Glover — four precincts reporting / 40 total votes

Councilperson:

Mary Buskirk Collins — four precincts reporting / 37 total votes

George "G P" Parker — four precincts reporting / 38 total votes

Chris Hanna — four precincts reporting / 30 total votes

Mark D. Gillespie — four precincts reporting / 34 total votes

Audrey Burns Van Buren — four precincts reporting / 33 total votes

Girl Scouts Donate 15,000 Boxes Of Cookies To Local Veteran Orgs

By jaine schmidt wyatt | WVDN JUN 10, 2021



CHARLESTON, West Virginia—The Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council donated nearly 15,000 boxes of cookies to local veteran organizations as part of the Girl Scouts’ Gift of Caring program.

The Girl Scouts of Black Diamond partners with the West Virginia Gold Star Mothers Association, a service organization of women who have lost sons and daughters in the military. They distribute to VA hospitals, nursing homes, disabled and paralyzed veterans, and more.

“Girl Scouts are passionate about giving back to their communities, and the Gift of Caring program is one way they can do so,” said Beth Casey, chief executive officer of Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council. “We are proud to partner with these organizations and work together to help make the world a better place.”

As part of the Girl Scout Cookie Program, customers have an opportunity to purchase products for themselves, as well as contribute a donation to the Gift of Caring program, which uses the donations to purchase products to send to veterans and military members.

“This program is a great way to connect Girl Scouts and veterans,” said Shirley White, president of the West Virginia Gold Star Mothers. “The Girl Scouts work hard to sell cookies, and they are able to see how that helps

benefit our service personnel. And, of course, our veterans are happy for that relationship — as well as the cookies!”

Through the Gift of Caring program, Girl Scouts across the country have used Girl Scout products to show their appreciation for those in uniform or to support those in need in their local communities. Girls choose an organization they want to benefit and give customers the opportunity to purchase additional products as a donation. With this program, even customers who don't purchase cookies for themselves can give to others and support Girl Scouting at the same time.

Second West Virginia coal miner killed in 2 days

By jaine schmidt wyatt | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A West Virginia coal miner was killed Thursday, the second coal death in the state in two days, Gov. Jim Justice said.

Nicholas David Adkins, 43, of Racine, a section foreman, was fatally injured Thursday morning when he was hit by an underground shuttle car, Justice's office said in a news release.

The accident was at Marfork Coal Co.'s Horse Creek Eagle Mine near Naoma in Raleigh County, the release said. Raleigh County is in southern West Virginia.

“This second tragedy in as many days is a terrible blow to all West Virginians and to our mining community,” Justice said. “Please pray for this man and his loved ones, and for all of our miners and their families, just as Cathy and I continue to do everyday.”

On Wednesday, Trenten J. Dille, 26, of Littleton, a section foreman, died while working in the underground section of a Marion County Coal Resources mine in northern West Virginia.

Longtime lawyer who worked on media cases dies in I-79 crash

By jaine schmidt wyatt | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — A personal injury lawyer who had served as legal counsel to the news outlets including the Charleston Gazette-Mail has died in an interstate crash.

An Interstate 79 crash Thursday killed Sean McGinley near the Frametown exit in Braxton County, according to West Virginia state police Capt. Shallon R. Oglesby. He was returning from a hearing in Morgantown. He was 55.

McGinley was a partner at DiPiero Simmons McGinley & Bastress PLLC, he was traveling to Charleston from a hearing in Morgantown before he died, his law partner Lonnie Simmons said.

“Sean was a brilliant lawyer,” law partner Tim DiPiero told the Gazette-Mail. “Just amazingly talented. Had a keen sense of right and wrong and seeking justice.

Along with being a longtime respected personal injury lawyer, he worked with many media companies on cases regarding the First Amendment and other issues.

Doug Reynolds, managing partner of HD Media, which publishes the Gazette-Mail and the Herald-Dispatch,

called his death devastating.

“His long association with the Charleston Gazette-Mail was based not only on his great skill as a lawyer but on the friendship he formed with all those with whom he worked, not only the leadership of our company but also many of our journalists now and over the years,” Reynolds said.

McGinley is survived by his wife and two sons.

Agency identifies remains of WV Army soldier killed in WWII

By jaine schmidt wyatt | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — The remains of a West Virginia soldier killed during World War II have been identified, officials said.

Army Pfc. John J. Sitarz, 19, of Weirton was accounted for by using DNA, dental and anthropological analysis as well as circumstantial evidence, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced Monday in a statement. Sitarz was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion, 110th Infantry Regiment, 28th Infantry Division when he was declared missing in action on Nov. 2, 1944, while his unit was engaged in battle with German forces, the statement said. His body could not be recovered due to ongoing fighting and his status was changed to killed in action the following year.

After the war, the American Graves Registration Command began investigating and recovering missing American personnel in Europe, but Sitarz’ remains were not identified, officials said.

A historian with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency studying unresolved American losses in the Hürtgen area determined that one set of unidentified remains recovered from a minefield in 1946 possibly belonged to Sitarz, the statement said. The remains were disinterred from Ardennes American Cemetery in 2018 and sent for analysis.

A rosette will be placed next to Sitarz’s name on the Tablets of the Missing at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Hombourg, Belgium to indicate he has been accounted for. Sitarz will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery at a date to be determined.

Raleigh County Commission Approves Community Corrections Grant Program Funding Resolution

By autumn shelton wvdcn | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

The Raleigh County Commission held a special meeting on Tuesday, June 8, to approve a resolution for the Community Corrections Grant Program.

According to Commissioner Dave Tolliver, the special meeting had to be called because the grant was required to be approved by Friday, June 11. The amount approved totaled \$145,000.

The grant program allows for the development and maintenance of community-based programs, which are used as sentencing alternatives keeping adult offenders out of institutional custody.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Raleigh County Commission will take place on Tuesday, June 22, at 10 a.m. in the Raleigh County Commission Chamber located on Heber Street.

Raleigh County Library, Others Provide Tax Assistance To Over 100 Area Residents

By autumn shelton wvdn | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

A volunteer-driven tax drop-off program helped over 100 Raleigh County citizens complete their taxes this year.

According to information provided by the Raleigh County Public Library, the library, along with Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) members, the West Virginia Alliance for Sustainable Families and the IRS, was able to provide this service for those who needed it.

Due to the pandemic, the tax service looked a little different this year.

Community members would schedule appointments with the library and bring in all their tax information such as driver's licenses, social security cards, W-2s, and other forms. Library staff, who completed financial and tax confidentiality training prior to the start of this program, would then make copies of all of these documents and seal them in specific envelopes, along with VITA tax paperwork. The VITA volunteers would pick those envelopes up at the library, file each person's taxes, and return the envelopes to the library. Community members could then sign the last of the paperwork and pick up the copies of their documents once everything was done.

"I was a little nervous this program may be difficult to hold during Covid, but it actually went off so smoothly," said Addie Gilkerson, service coordinator for the library's drop-off program. "We assisted more individuals and families from our county and those surrounding us than I ever imagined. Kim Canterbury, the EITC Director for the West Virginia Alliance for Sustainable Families headed up the program and was so patient with us and always available to help. We couldn't have done this without her."

VITA will likely be partnering with the library again for the 2022 tax season. More details will be available at that time.

June Pride Event Returning To Beckley

By autumn shelton wvdn | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

The June Pride Month event will once again be returning to Beckley and will be hosted by the non-profit Beckley Pride.

The event will take place on June 12 from noon-6 p.m. at the Beckley Intermodal Gateway located at 501 Neville Street.

Over 60 vendors and organizations will be on site providing food, entertainment and information to all those in attendance. There is no fee and everyone is welcome to attend.

The event will feature musician/band Lady D & the Mission, fire hooper Tori Lilly, magician David Taylor, drag performers and free HIV and other medical screenings.

For more information, visit Facebook at Beckley Pride.

Civil rights leaders don't budge key senator on voting bill

By brian slodysko and nicholas riccardi associated press | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin was unswayed Tuesday by civil rights leaders who implored him to rethink his opposition to a sprawling election bill that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said is crucial to countering a “Republican assault on our democracy.”

Manchin, from deeply Republican West Virginia, told reporters “I don’t think anybody changed positions” in a meeting he described as “excellent.” A participant said Manchin was “fairly well dug in.”

The bill, known as HR1, is a top priority for Democrats and is viewed by many in the party as the antidote to a wave of Republican-backed laws that are being passed on the state level that restrict people’s ability to vote. It touches on almost every aspect of voting and was already passed by the House.

But Manchin threw a wrench into the works Sunday when he said he would oppose the bill. That effectively dooms the measure in a narrowly divided Senate where it is universally opposed by Republicans.

His decision also sent voting rights groups and members of his own party scrambling for options, raising the prospect that no voting legislation would pass Congress to address what experts say is the greatest attack on voting rights in a generation.

Manchin has said “inaction is not an option” when it comes to voting rights. But he’s also exasperated fellow Democrats and voting rights groups by insisting his support for any legislation would be contingent on some Republicans voting for it as well. He also opposes eliminating the 60-vote requirement to break a filibuster, a step that would allow Democrats to pass the legislation without Republican votes.

“We may get to a point where the dialogue reaches a dead end,” Rev. Marc Morial, who attended Tuesday’s meeting with Manchin, told CNN. “And Joe Manchin was fairly well dug in.”

Manchin’s comments came after Pelosi told House Democrats there is no substitute for the bill.

“It is my hope that the passage of (the bill) will create a legacy for all of us who want to strengthen our democracy,” the California Democrat wrote in a letter to colleagues.

Now Democrats and voting rights groups are grasping for an alternative.

Some said they’d follow Manchin’s suggestions and get behind a narrower piece of legislation known as HR4 that updates the Voting Rights Act to reinstate a requirement that new voting laws and legislative districts in certain states be subject to federal approval.

Others said they wanted to increase the pressure on Manchin. Still others insisted that Democrats needed to bring HR1 to the Senate floor this month, even if it’s certain to fail, to draw attention to Republican opposition and Manchin’s.

“It’s going to get messy,” said Fred Wertheimer, president of the good-government organization Democracy

21, who helped draft HR1 in 2017. “What Manchin said is not the final word, as far as we’re concerned. “I don’t believe he is prepared to go down in history as the senator that denied millions of eligible citizens, and in particular people of color, the opportunity to vote.”

The Rev. William Barber II, a key liberal activist who leads the Poor People’s Campaign, represented the breadth of liberal anger at Manchin, tweeting Monday that his group would lead a march in West Virginia to “challenge Manchin.”

Manchin explained his opposition in West Virginia’s Charleston Gazette-Mail on Sunday. “Voting and election reform that is done in a partisan manner will all but ensure partisan divisions continue to deepen,” he wrote. Only one Republican senator, Alaska’s Lisa Murkowski, has signed onto Manchin’s preferred Voting Rights Act update, an indication of how politics on the issue have shifted since the Senate unanimously renewed the Voting Rights Act in 2006. And the newly aggressive constellation of conservative voting groups that mobilized against H.R. 1 say it will now campaign to keep the GOP united against HR4 as well.

“The end result of HR4 is the same — it’s a federal takeover of the election system,” Jessica Anderson, executive director of the conservative policy organization Heritage Action for America, said in an interview. “As long as you have consensus on the right, standing together in lockstep, you’re not going to have a bipartisan break.”

After former President Donald Trump’s lies about how he lost the 2020 election because of widespread fraud, voting has become a polarized partisan issue much like abortion or taxes. That has almost guaranteed inaction in Congress, where the filibuster allows a unified minority party to block most major legislative initiatives.

“I think it’s likely Congress doesn’t do anything” on voting, said Rick Hasen, a University of California-Irvine law professor and election law specialist.

If there is one bill that could get any GOP support, it would be HR4, Hasen argued, noting the Republican Party did once support the Voting Rights Act. That was before a 2013 Supreme Court opinion written by the court’s conservative majority struck down the way the act was used to require 13 states to “pre-clear” changes to voting laws with the Justice Department. The new bill, named after late Democratic Rep. John Lewis, would reinstate those preclearance requirements.

In contrast, Hasen said, HR1 was a “Democratic wish list” that included provisions neutering voter ID laws and implementing federal financing of elections that would never draw GOP support. “It was a kind of cheap signaling device for Democrats,” Hasen said.

But HR1’s backers insist the bill remains the antidote to the recent wave of Republican legislation curtailing access to mail voting, cutting early voting hours and making it easier for partisan poll watchers to challenge voters’ qualifications.

Wendy Weiser of the Brennan Center for Justice, a public policy group that advocates for voting access and backs HR1, noted that the Voting Rights Act update would address only future laws, not ones passed this year. It would only allow the federal government to weigh in to protect the rights of racial minorities rather than address other discrimination, like a new law in Montana that removes student IDs as an allowable form of identification for voting. And it is silent on provisions like the drawing of legislative district lines for partisan advantage, something barred in HR1.

“Those provisions in HR1 still need to be adopted, somehow, or we’re not going to be able to stem this really scary attack on our democratic institutions,” Weiser said.

Activists and lawmakers stressed that the voting rights update, HR4, is also crucial. It’s been delayed by having to go through a complicated process to comply with the Supreme Court’s 2013 ruling. In the end, they say the fate of an election overhaul will be clearer once Manchin tries to round up the 10 Republicans needed to break a filibuster.

At that point, they hope the West Virginia Democrat will have to confront the realities of the partisan politics of voting.

“They are not showing a readiness to stand up and do what’s right, so the notion you could get 10 of them to come along is farfetched,” said Rep. John Sarbanes, D-Md., a primary sponsor of HR1. “You are not going to get real change without filibuster reform.”

Riccardi reported from Denver.

Last stretch of upgraded West Virginia highway to reopen

By jaine schmidt wyatt | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

WINFIELD, W.Va. (AP) — The last stretch of U.S. 35 to be widened to four lanes is expected to open to traffic by the end of August after years of planning, West Virginia officials said.

The 15-mile segment is the last part of U.S. 35 from Interstate 64 to the West Virginia-Ohio state line to be upgraded, according to a news release Tuesday from Gov. Jim Justice and the state Department of Transportation. The project's cost was \$255 million, the release said.

The section goes from the Beech Hill community in Mason County to the Buffalo Bridge in Putnam County. The project included eight bridges and a new interchange at the junction of U.S. 35 and West Virginia 869. It is a public-private partnership between the Division of Highways and Bizzack Construction Co. of Lexington, Kentucky.

West Virginia audit: Mine reclamation fund needs oversight

By jaine schmidt wyatt | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — West Virginia's coal mine cleanup fund has no known backup plan if it goes insolvent, according to a new state audit.

The legislative audit report released Monday said that the mine reclamation program within the state's Department of Environmental Protection is at risk of insolvency due to the risk of bond revenues not raising enough to guarantee the fund's future.

Among several recommendations, the auditor calls on the department to not approve applications for permit renewals for companies that have not paid taxes for the special reclamation fund. Its review found that 70 mining companies that filed coal reclamation tax returns were delinquent on \$5.3 million in total funds. Reclamation of shuttered coal mine sites is crucial to preventing environmental pollution and returning the land to its habitat. Contaminants can seep into waterways and harm wildlife if not properly handled after a mine closes.

"West Virginia's coal mining reclamation program will continue to require hundreds of millions of dollars to reclaim permit sites in accordance with federal regulations," the audit said. "The program has no known contingency plans if the reclamation funds were to become insolvent."

Insolvency could also pose a dramatic hit to the state budget, and mismanagement of the funds could lead to federal control over the program, according to the audit.

The report calls for a legislative commission to study the state's reclamation program and ensure its long-term viability.

Republican Senate President Craig Blair told the Charleston Gazette-Mail that lawmakers should aim to attract federal funding for the program. "Otherwise, we're looking at a billion-dollar program of our own to begin with," he said.

He added the miners who lost jobs in the industry can be employed to go back in and work on reclamation. "It's a win-win scenario from that standpoint if we've got mines that are closing down," he told the newspaper.

EXPLAINER: The differences between Democrats' 2 voting bills

By nicholas riccardi associated press | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

DENVER (AP) — The Democratic Party's hopes of passing a massive overhaul of elections may have suffered a fatal blow when West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin became the first member of the party to say he wouldn't support it, ensuring the bill, known as HR1, would not pass the Senate.

Instead, Manchin prefers an update to the Voting Rights Act known as HR4, or the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, named after the late congressman and civil rights leader.

There's a big difference between the two bills. HR1 is an ambitious proposal that would transform every aspect of elections and campaigns across the country, including how they're financed. Written in 2017, when Democrats were out of power, it is what is often referred to as a messaging bill — a proposal for candidates to tout on the campaign trail and not crafted specifically to garner enough votes to pass a narrowly-divided Congress.

In contrast, the John Lewis Act is a comparatively narrow bill designed to fix a specific problem, in this case, addressing a 2013 Supreme Court ruling that made it harder for the federal government to block racially discriminatory voting laws and redistricting proposals.

Democrats will struggle to get either bill through Congress, as they look for a way to combat what they view as a Republican-assault on voting rights in state legislature. Here's a look at the differences between the bills: **WHAT'S IN THE BILLS?**

HR1's number shows its importance to Democrats. Also known as the For the People Act, it became HR1 because it was the first bill on the House floor after Democrats retook the chamber in the 2018 elections. (The Senate version is known as S1.)

The bill does a little about a lot of topics. It changes the way people vote by automatically registering every eligible citizen, guaranteeing mail and early in-person voting options in every state and effectively neutering voter identification laws.

The legislation would also establish bipartisan commissions to draw the lines for legislative districts and require redistricting not favor either major party. The provision has the potential to create scores of newly competitive districts and, supporters say, would combat the partisan polarization in the House.

The bill would provide \$6 in public money to campaigns for every \$1 in small-dollar donations they raise. Finally, it'd require groups currently shielded from disclosing their donors to identify their funders. The last provision targets a 2010 Supreme Court ruling, known as the Citizens United decision, that lets "dark money" groups hide their contributors even while getting involved in elections.

The John Lewis Act was written in reaction to a different Supreme Court decision. It tries to effectively reverse the 2013 Shelby County case, in which the court's conservative majority threw out the formula the federal government used to determine which states had such a history of racial discrimination in elections and were, under the Voting Right Act, required to have Justice Department approval before implementing new voting laws or redrawing legislative districts.

HR4 would put in place an updated formula designed to meet the court's Shelby County test. That would once again require about a dozen, mostly Southern, states to get approval from the Justice Department's civil rights division before making those changes.

The bill would also make it easier for the department to send election observers and for courts to block election law changes for violating the constitutional protections guaranteeing voting rights for all U.S. citizens. And, of course, some of the elements from HR1 could always be added in if the John Lewis Act becomes Democrats' primary vehicle for an election overhaul.

HOW WOULD THE BILLS EFFECT THE NEW STATE LAWS ON VOTING?

The Democrats' voting push isn't happening in a vacuum. Republican-controlled states are passing new voting restrictions at a remarkable clip — the Brennan Center for Justice, a group that supports both HR1 and HR4 bills, tallied up 14 states that have passed 22 laws putting new restrictions on when and how Americans vote. The GOP push has been fueled by former President Donald Trump's lies that he lost the election due to fraud. HR1 could neutralize some of these laws because it creates national standards for voting access. For example, new laws in Arizona and Florida that potentially remove people from the states' mail voting lists could be moot, because all voters would now have a right to cast ballots by mail.

But the John Lewis Act would have no impact. The Justice Department would only be required to approve new laws, not ones that passed before the bill was approved. What's more, the bill's "preclearance" provision would only affect about a dozen states and some additional counties or cities that meet its standard. Manchin has talked about expanding preclearance nationwide, but that could run into problems with the Supreme Court.

Additionally, future laws could only be blocked under the bill's new legal formula if they were deemed to be racially discriminatory by making it harder for specific racial groups to vote. Laws that present new hurdles for other groups — such as no longer accepting student IDs as voting identification, as Montana has done — could still be allowed.

Most importantly, neither bill would stop a trend of Republicans making it easier for partisan political officials to interfere in elections. In Georgia, for example, the GOP-controlled state legislature now will appoint most members of a board that can replace local election officials. In Texas, Republicans are considering legislation that would make it easier for a judge to overturn an election.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF EITHER BILL PASSING?

Not good. Democrats control the House and Senate, but only narrowly. HR1 has passed the House but is stuck in the Senate, where Manchin's opposition means the bill doesn't even get a majority and is nowhere near the 60 votes it needs to break a filibuster and pass. Currently, no Republican backs the bill.

The John Lewis Act hasn't even been introduced in this Congress because of a lengthy fact-gathering and hearing process required to meet the Supreme Court's new standard. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in a letter to colleagues Tuesday predicted the bill won't be introduced until the fall.

Prior updates to the Voting Rights Act passed the Senate unanimously — 98-0 as recently as 2006 — but earlier versions of HR4 have only drawn one Republican sponsor, Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska. That's a testament to how partisan even the basic act of voting has become, a phenomenon that predates Trump. Indeed, the Republican senate leader, Mitch McConnell, on Tuesday blasted the John Lewis Act. "It's against the law to discriminate in voting on the basis of race already, and so I think it's unnecessary," McConnell said. Time is not on Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer's side, said Jessica Anderson, executive director of Heritage Action, a conservative group that opposes both bills. "Every day we inch closer to 2022, the harder it is for Schumer to get this to the finish line."

WHAT'S MANCHIN'S PLAN?

It's unclear. He's the former West Virginia secretary of state and warns that any voting reform that's too partisan will simply increase distrust in elections. On the other hand, he says there needs to be some new election overhaul to protect voting rights.

One of those principles may have to give.

Mary Katherine Greene Webb Alvis

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUN 10, 2021

ALVIS

Mary Katherine Greene Webb Alvis

August 2, 1920-December 16, 2020

Mary Katherine Greene Webb Alvis (beloved Mom and Grandma Kay) passed away of Covid-19 at North Pointe Assisted Living in Mayodan, NC. Even though she was 100 years old, she never lost memory of her beloved West Virginia.

She was preceded in death by her parents, T.B. and Ethel Greene; her fourth husband, John Alvis; her brothers, Basil M. Greene and Thomas B. Greene; sons, Robert B. Webb, Sr. and Richard W. Webb; granddaughter, Robin Webb Morgan; grandson, Rodger Webb; great-grandsons, Robert (Bobby) Webb, III and Kenneth Damien Pearman.

Surviving are her children, Carolyn Sue Webb DeCao (Steve), Michael Ray Webb (Martha); daughters-in-laws, Karon Banton Webb and Deborah Meadows Webb; grandchildren, Mike Morgan, Robert Webb, Jr. (Leslie), Philip R. Webb, Rick Webb, Scott Webb, Stephen Dale Webb (Rainy), Jackie DeCao Stone (Craig Davis), Steve (Danny) DeCao (Vem), Katie Webb York (Zack), and Mandy Fitzgerald Wray (Shane); 20 great-grandchildren and 20 great-great-grandchildren.

They are bringing her back home to West Virginia; and on June 12, 2021 at 11 a.m., her family will hold a small memorial and burial of her ashes at Riverview Cemetery in Ronceverte, WV.

Information submitted by Triad Cremation & Funeral Service of Greensboro, NC.

Mary Frances Dillon

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUN 10, 2021



DILLON

Mary Frances Dillon, 85, of Lewisburg passed away June 8, 2021 at Peyton Hospice House in Lewisburg, WV.

Mary was born April 14, 1936 in Creamery, WV and was the daughter of the late George Dewey and Althea Spade Lawrence.

She was of the Baptist Faith and worked as an aide and cook at the White Sulphur Springs Family Care Center.

Preceding her in death, other than her parents, was her husband, Loyd Dillon, and her brothers, George Lawrence, Jr. and John Edward Lawrence.

Surviving Mary is her daughter, Dawn Thomas of Lewisburg; grandson, Josh Long; great-grandsons, Logan Long and Bradley Linton; sister, Grace Lawrence Reynolds of Fairlea.

There will be no services scheduled for Mary; her cremains will be buried in her plot next to her husband at Riverview Cemetery, Ronceverte, WV.

Please send online condolences by visiting www.WallaceandWallaceFH.com.

Wallace & Wallace Funeral Home in Lewisburg is in charge of arrangements.