

# WVDN JUL 01, 2021



# Table of Contents

- Coal City Man Arrested For Wanton Endangerment Involving A Firearm ..... 1**
- Central Greenbrier Little League Qualifies For State Tournament ..... 2**
- Morrisey Calls For Bipartisan Commitment In Fight Against Fentanyl ..... 2**
- Dear Abby: Thursday, July 1 ..... 3**
- Dear Recycle Lady: Thursday, July 1 ..... 4**
- Lady Spartans' Great Season Will be Remembered Fondly ..... 5**
- Rainelle Pool Set To Open ..... 6**
- VVA Chapter #1072 Raises Funds During Father's Day Outing ..... 7**
- WVSOM's Class Of 2021 Had 97% Residency Match Rate ..... 7**
- Communities In Schools Of Gbr. County Receives Grant ..... 9**
- West Virginia artist creates puzzle to showcase the state ..... 10**
- Health officer in WVa's largest county stepping down ..... 11**
- 8 WVa middle schools receive grants for musical instruments ..... 12**
- Legislation Puts WV On California Travel Ban List ..... 12**
- Senators to watch as Dems debate changing filibuster rules ..... 14**
- Woman Arrested After Allegedly Starting Fire In Residence ..... 16**
- Monroe County Man Adds Obstruction To List Of Charges ..... 17**
- PSC Opens Formal Proceeding to Investigate Suddenlink Complaints ..... 18**
- George Edward Piercy ..... 20**

# Coal City Man Arrested For Wanton Endangerment Involving A Firearm

By autumn shelton | WVDN JUL 01, 2021



A domestic violence incident in Coal City led to one man being arrested after he fired shots into the air.

On Wednesday, May 12, a West Virginia State Trooper responded to a 911 call stating that a domestic was currently in progress at a home in Coal City.

Upon arrival, a witness allegedly told the officer to “be careful” that the suspect, Christian Michael Gilbert, 31, “has a long gun and is crazy,” according to the criminal complaint filed in Raleigh County.

The officer was able to restrain Gilbert and noted that he was “very intoxicated” and “uttered that he had drank a half gallon of whiskey,” the complaint states.

During the investigation, the victims stated that Gilbert had been drinking heavily all day. After an argument over unacceptable behavior, Gilbert “became belligerent . . . pulled out a 9mm loaded Taurus G3C pistol and pointed it at [one victim].”

After shouting at his victims, Gilbert started shooting rounds into the air near one victim’s home and surrounding homes, the complaint continues.

The officer was able to recover the firearm and shell casings found at the scene.

Gilbert was placed under arrest and is currently at Southern Regional Jail on three felony counts of wanton endangerment involving a firearm, one misdemeanor count of brandishing, two misdemeanor counts of

domestic assault, one misdemeanor count of shooting within 500 feet of a dwelling and one misdemeanor count of prohibited person in possession of a firearm. A surety/cash bail has been set at \$15,000.

## Central Greenbrier Little League Qualifies For State Tournament

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUL 01, 2021



The Central Greenbrier Little League 8-10 Year Old All-Star team qualified for the state tournament last week by finishing as the runner-up in the District 5 tournament. CGLL defeated Shady Spring 18-0 to clinch the spot. The team will report to the state tournament in Shinston/Fairmont on July 8. Eric Dixon is the team manager, with Eric Workman and Jason DeHaven serving as coaches. Team members include Acen Workman, Alex Hanna, Bo Bundy, Carter Huffman, Colton DeHaven, Drew Brown, Elijah Sherman, Evan Dixon, James Godby, Michael Boothe, Noah Martin, Peyton Ervin, Remington Waid and Sam Gabbert. In order to raise funds for the travel to the tournament - including lodging and hotel costs - the team will be holding two events on Saturday, July 3. They will be set up at IGA in Fairlea from 8 a.m. until noon for a bake sale. During that same time, other players will be at Greenbrier Ford in Lewisburg for a car wash.

To support the team, please attend one of those events, or make a cash donation to any player or coach.

# Morrisey Calls For Bipartisan Commitment In Fight Against Fentanyl

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey called upon President Joe Biden to nominate federal prosecutors who will tackle fentanyl trafficking in a cooperative, bipartisan manner.

The Attorney General's letter, sent Wednesday, underscored the importance of the President's choice of U.S. Attorneys in the state's northern and southern districts. During normal times, the Attorney General wrote those positions are important, but now they are critical as the state faces a crisis related to the trafficking of illegal fentanyl.

"West Virginians have fought this battle for years, but the illegal distribution and sale of fentanyl has recently increased dramatically, with devastating and deadly results," Attorney General Morrisey wrote. "We cannot tackle this crisis alone, and I ask that the federal government show its commitment to protecting the people of West Virginia and States like her that are struggling under the weight of this unprecedented illegal overdose crisis.

"This is not a policy issue or a talking point for my State and her people. Lives are at stake, and we must take action to change the situation, together. It is my hope that United States Attorney nominees will recognize the severity of the situation and put aside any other policy differences in combating the crisis," he added.

The letter urged the President to put forth nominees who are willing to work closely with state and local law enforcement. He wrote that collaboration and teamwork are central to any strategy to affect real change in confronting the state's fentanyl epidemic.

In demonstrating such collaboration, the Attorney General pledged to work with the incoming U.S. Attorneys and said he believes other leaders will do the same. He added that the people of West Virginia are determined to rally together against illegal fentanyl trafficking as the issue affects everyone in the state.

Read the Attorney General's letter at <https://bit.ly/3hkj6Pc>.

## Dear Abby: Thursday, July 1

By Abigail Van Buren | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

### Longtime Friendship Goes Up In Smoke

**Dear Abby:** I recently took a cross-country trip to visit my pregnant best friend before she gives birth. She has a new fiance and soon-to-be stepdaughter I hadn't met before. She is 12, and we enjoyed some outdoor activities together. I have a marijuana vape pen I smoke occasionally to relieve nausea and anxiety. We both live in states where it is legal. While we were outside, I discreetly hit my vape pen. The stepdaughter noticed and later asked my friend if I was smoking weed. My best friend proceeded to get extremely mad at me for doing it in the presence of the girl, and she no longer wants to be my friend. I have apologized profusely. I

have little experience with kids, and now I'm scared that I have lost my best friend, who refuses to speak to me. Abby, was what I did a friendship-breaker? Was I so in the wrong, or is my friend being extreme and overreacting? — **Former Friend in Oregon**

**Dear Friend:** Your friend is not being extreme or overreacting. You vaped in front of the child she is going to be responsible for. Underage children should not use marijuana because it can negatively affect their still-developing brains. Your friend may have ended the friendship because she wants to teach the girl by example to avoid people who do this. What you did showed extremely poor judgment, and I don't blame her.

**Dear Abby:** I dated a man for a year and eight months. It seemed to be going great. The relationship took a turn around the eight-month mark. I realized through thorough observation (we lived together) that he was a textbook narcissist. He responded just like my research showed he would. He claims he has no mental issues, but I learned a lot from this relationship about narcissism and how to recognize abuse. Narcissism is real, but most people don't know much about the signs and difficult behavior. As a result of the relationship, I am now in therapy. My question is, how (when I'm ready) do I approach the dating scene again so I don't encounter an experience like this? — **Burned in Pennsylvania**

**Dear Burned:** Continue working with your therapist. By the time you are finished, you will know what to look out for. You may also realize that there aren't narcissists lurking behind every bush. We form healthy relationships by getting to know people before jumping into a live-in relationship. Abusers of both sexes try to gain an advantage over their victims by chipping away at their self-esteem and making them doubt themselves. Keep your eyes open and listen to your intuition, and you won't subject yourself to this kind of relationship again.

**Dear Abby:** My wife and I have been married for 35 years. She's the best. However, for the last few years I feel like she fits our relationship in between her texting and emails, and not the other way around. Should I feel hurt or just roll with the times? — **Neglected in Florida**

**Dear Neglected:** Neither one. What you should do is tell your wife of 35 years that she is making you feel like No. 3 on her list of priorities. The squeaky wheel gets the grease.

*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](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.*

## Dear Recycle Lady: Thursday, July 1

By dear recycle lady | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

**Dear Recycle Lady,**

I know that only bottles and jugs can be recycled and to be a bottle or jug, the cap on top must be smaller than the bottom. What do I do with a bottle whose top appears to be very close to the same size as the bottom? Will it recycle? Puzzled Recycler

**Dear Puzzled Recycler,**

You are correct in saying that the only plastics that recycle are bottles and jugs. Accepting other plastics, such as clam shells or black plastics, could cause the buyer to reject an entire batch. When considering what to do with a bottle that appears to have the same size top and bottom, remove the top. Now the upper part of the bottle is probably smaller than the bottom part and will recycle. It's always good to remove the tops from



plastic bottles and jugs as the tops and bottoms of a bottles are made from different types of plastics.

### **Dear Recycle Lady,**

Are masks recyclable? Not Wearing Them Now

### **Dear Not Wearing Them Now,**

It depends on whether your masks are disposable or cloth. Disposable masks are not recyclable and are a problem for disposal. The United Kingdom estimated that one disposable mask used each day by their citizens would create 72,763 tons of contaminated waste and 62,832 tons of plastic packaging waste. According to earth911.com, an eco-entrepreneur in India is working to convert disposable masks into construction bricks. Abaca, a biodegradable fiber from banana plants, is a possible replacement for the polyester and plastics used in making biodegradable medical masks.

If your masks are made of cloth, are machine-washable, and you live in a community that offers textile recycling, your cloth masks may be recyclable. However, because of the health risk, many communities that accept textiles do not accept masks. Currently, there is no textile recycling in this area.

Never dispose of masks, disposable, or cloth, in open trash cans or outdoors where they could become litter. Masks that find their way into the environment release microplastics and if they have been exposed to a virus, they are a potential health risk to anyone who may pick them up. Before disposing of a mask, be sure to cut the strings. Wildlife and marine life can get tangled up in them. It is recommended that used masks, disposable or cloth, be sealed in a small bag before putting them in a trash bag.

### **Dear Readers,**

Have you taken the Plastic Free July challenge? Earthday.org is working to reduce the millions of tons of plastics being used. The plastics of today will outlive not only us, but our children's children. Please consider joining 326 million participants worldwide who have taken the challenge. Make just one change, such as refusing single-use plastic utensils for take-out or taking a reusable bag when shopping. It all adds up over time!

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

## **Lady Spartans' Great Season Will be Remembered Fondly**

By by brandon baker | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

Even though the Greenbrier East Lady Spartans failed to make the state tournament after falling to St. Albans in the regional finals, they still put together a memorable season with memorable players and moments.

East finished 19-8 on the year with some impressive wins and all of their losses coming to really good teams.

The obvious high point to the year was the first game in the regional championship series against St. Albans when the Red Dragons rolled into Fairlea at 28-0 and ranked number 1 in the state. Thinking they would roll easily, St. Albans was beaten by the Spartans when Annabelle Honaker hit a game-winning, walk-off two-run single that handed the Red Dragons their first loss of the year.

St. Albans went to the state championship game but lost two straight to Cabell Midland who were crowned the champs.

East was led in hitting by senior Taylor Graham. She hit .386 with one home run and 22 RBI's. She was also second on the team with 27 runs scored. Lindsey Black (.385), Josie Patterson (.365), Annabelle Honaker (.357) and Brooke Davis (.333) all also hit over .300.

Black led the team with four homers and second on the squad with 19 runs driven in. Patterson led East with nine doubles and had 15 RBI's along with a home run. Honaker had five doubles and drove in 13. Davis, who missed the first several games because of an overlapped basketball schedule, had five doubles and played good defense at shortstop.

But the Spartans still featured more good hitters.

Olivia Plybon was just under the .300 mark at .286 and was second on the team in runs batted in with 20. Josi Ervin hit .284 with two homers and 14 RBI's, and Riley Norman (one HR, eight RBI's) also put up offensive numbers.

On the pitching mound, Graham and Ervin were the featured starters.

Ervin threw 85.1 innings and had 123 strikeouts with an ERA of 3.36. The left-handed sophomore will lead the Spartans for two more years.

Graham had 103 strikeouts in 70.2 innings pitched. Her ERA was an impressive 2.08. The future nurse practitioner graduated and exhausted her eligibility, but will go down with impressive career numbers.

The Spartans will return all but the two seniors in Honaker and Graham next season so the core nucleus will still be there. If the coaches can replace some of Graham and Honaker's production, they should enjoy another successful 2022 season.

Stats courtesy of team score-keeper, Jen Ervin.

## **Rainelle Pool Set To Open**

By autumn shelton | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

Although the lifeguard shortage has prevented many area pools from opening this summer, the Rainelle pool has overcome the odds and will welcome swimmers soon.

According to Debbie McCall, town of Rainelle pool manager, the facility will open on Tuesday, July 6.

"We had a terrible time trying to get lifeguards," McCall said. Fortunately, the pool now has five certified lifeguards, which will allow them to open on a part-time basis.



The pool will be open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m., McCall noted.

There is a bathing limit as to how many pool-goers can be swimming at one time and this limit is based on how many lifeguards are available, she explained. The capacity for the pool is 240 people with a full staff.

At this time, McCall is unsure what the limit will be on any given day as the new lifeguards are only part-time and the pool is not quite at full staff. She hopes that during opening week, no one must be turned away.

"I have been keeping my fingers crossed that this doesn't happen," McCall stated. "It usually has never been a problem."

The town is still accepting applications for certified lifeguards in the hopes of increasing pool capacity and opening more than three days a week. The positions are part-time and pay starts at \$9 an hour. Those aged 15 and over may apply by contacting McCall at 304-661-3950.

There will be concessions available while the pool is open offering items like soda, water, chips and ice cream.

"The chairs are out and we are busy cleaning. We are all very excited," McCall concluded. "We know the kids are anxious for it to open."

## **VVA Chapter #1072 Raises Funds During Father's Day Outing**

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

On Father's Day weekend, June 19-20, members of the Vietnam Veterans of America Eastern Highlands Chapter #1072 traveled to the information center on I-64 West bound for a fundraiser.

The VVA Chapter was at the center on Saturday and Sunday to offer soft drinks, bottled water, sweets, and a variety of produce to travelers.

Chapter members expressed that "A BIG thanks goes to Food Lion Store #826 manager Howard Fraley; Brandy Moore, manager of Hardees in White Sulphur Springs; and to ALL the travelers for their generous donations. The generated monies will be used to help our fellow VETERANS who may need some financial help. The goal of Chapter #1072 and the VVA (State/National) is to be there for our fellow veterans."

## **WVSOM's Class Of 2021 Had 97% Residency Match Rate**

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUL 01, 2021



LEWISBURG, W.Va. – For medical students, receiving a degree after four years of intense studying and arduous clinical schedules is a rewarding milestone. But months before they receive the title distinguishing them as physicians, students take part in Match Day, a process that determines where they will begin residencies and which medical specialties will define their careers.

Match Day, which takes place the third week of March every year, allows thousands of medical students to learn where they will train for residency. Residency programs typically last between three and seven years and are a key requirement in obtaining a medical license.

The West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine’s (WVSOM) graduating class consisted of 179 graduates, with a 97 percent residency match rate for the class.

“This is a big deal, especially since there are not enough residency positions in the nation for the number of medical school students who apply,” said WVSOM President James W. Nemitz, Ph.D. “It was a particularly difficult year since students were restricted as to where they could go for clinical rotations, essentially eliminating audition rotations for many students.”

Victoria Shuman, D.O., WVSOM’s associate dean for graduate medical education, said that the lack of in-person interviews required students to distinguish themselves on a virtual platform.

“Our students did very well considering there were more than 40,000 applicants for a little more than 35,000 first-year residency positions,” she said. “During this Match season, students had to show they were desirable candidates via virtual interviews — more than 95 percent of interviews were held virtually — and not through the traditional process of being in person and showing their strengths to prospective program directors.”

The 2021 Main Residency Match was the largest in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) history, according to the organization's website. There were 38,106 total positions offered — the most ever — and 35,194 first-year positions offered, an increase of 928 (2.7 percent) over 2020. In the past five years, the number of Match-participating programs has increased by 845 (16.7 percent), spurred in part by the completion of the transition to a single accreditation system for allopathic and osteopathic programs.

NRMP match data for 2021 shows that primary care specialties remain strong, with 17,649 of 35,194 (49.6 percent) first-year positions offered in family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics.

That was also the case for WVSOM, whose mission is focused specifically toward educating students who will practice in primary care specialties. In the Class of 2021, 116 graduates (65 percent) will enter a primary care residency.

"WVSOM is one of the top medical schools in the country, D.O. or M.D., for graduating students who enter primary care residencies," Nemitz said. "In fact, WVSOM was recognized again for this by U.S. News & World Report."

Non-primary care specialties are also an option for WVSOM students. In this year's class, 22 graduates are entering emergency medicine residencies, six are entering anesthesiology, three are entering physical medicine and rehabilitation, two are entering neurology, one is entering pathology, one is entering osteopathic neuromusculoskeletal medicine, six are beginning a transitional year and six are entering a form of surgery.

Additionally, 100 percent of eligible WVSOM graduates matched into a military residency.

Some of the locations where WVSOM graduates will work include Brown University, the Cleveland Clinic, Mount Carmel Health System, Allegheny General Hospital, Mount Sinai Beth Israel, Charleston Area Medical Center, West Virginia University and Marshall University.

Results of the 2021 Main Match were highly anticipated given the recruitment season's pivot due to the pandemic.

"The NRMP is honored to have delivered a strong Match to the many applicants pursuing their dreams of medicine," Donna Lamb, DHSc, MBA, BSN, president and chief executive officer of NRMP, said in a press release. "We admire all the Match participants for their hard work and their commitment to train and serve alongside their peers."

*WVSOM is a national leader in educating osteopathic physicians for primary care medicine in rural areas. Visit WVSOM online at [www.wvsom.edu](http://www.wvsom.edu).*

## **Communities In Schools Of Gbr. County Receives Grant**

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

Communities In Schools of Greenbrier County is the proud recipient of the Hollowell Dawkins Foundation's 2021 grant award.

The grant award will assist in the continuation of free services CISGC provides to Greenbrier County's at-risk and disadvantaged youth in addition to whole school supports. More than 4,400 students benefited from services CISGC provided county-wide last school year and the number of students needing individualized services are expected to rise this fall.

Communities In Schools of Greenbrier County is a 501©3 and relies on the generosity and support of foundations and community members. CISGC could not carry out our mission "to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life" without partnerships such as this.

For more information about CISGC, please call (304) 661-1018, email [director@cisgc.org](mailto:director@cisgc.org) or visit [www.cisgc.org](http://www.cisgc.org). You can also stay up-to-date through our Facebook page.

## West Virginia artist creates puzzle to showcase the state

By fred pace the herald-dispatch | WVDN JUL 01, 2021



ONA, W.Va. (AP) — Ona resident Linda Childers says she hopes to use her art to promote love for West Virginia and encourage people to explore the state for themselves.

In 2020, she hosted an art show with 30 paintings in her yard. Childers said most of her paintings, besides the

florals and occasional landscapes, are images of Huntington or Marshall University.

"I wanted to do something that had a statewide appeal," she said.

She said she was working on a puzzle last year that showed the artist's brush strokes and that led to her creating a map of West Virginia with over 130 miniature paintings of cool things to do in the Mountain State.

"I've had it manufactured into a thousand-piece, 24-inch by 30-inch puzzle," Childers said. "My husband, Rick, and I rented a 16-foot Budget truck and hauled them back from Kansas City, Missouri, this month, and they're already in eight shops from Huntington to Charleston."

Childers said her plan is to have them in gift shops across the state.

"Selling puzzles is just a part of my puzzle project. My goal is to promote tourism, learning and love of West Virginia and to encourage people to turn their ideas and dreams into real things," she said.

With the help of videographer Bobby Lee Messer, Childers is creating two video series.

"One series, Travel WV with Linda, will be short videos shot as I travel with friends or my husband all over the state to every single place I've painted on the map," she said. "And having fun and delivering puzzles. My goal is to educate people about these places, and I'm hoping that will in turn encourage them to travel to places they may live just an hour or two or three away from and have never been."

Childers says the other series will be called Create WV.

"I'll be interviewing West Virginians who have created something — a business, a cleanup project, a garden, a book club — to encourage people who have an idea, a dream or a spark of a create notion to follow that to fruition," she said. "I know that fear and doubt can stop people from following their dreams, and our state needs the creativity of its people to help it continue to grow and prosper."

Childers said they started filming the videos recently in Charleston at J.Q. Dickinson Salt-Works and Taylor Books.

"It was absolutely fabulous," she said. "This coming week I'm going to Fayetteville."

More information is online at [artbylinda.org](http://artbylinda.org).

"I've turned my website into my puzzle project hub," she said.

You can also find her on Facebook at Art by Linda.

Childers says in recent years, her art has moved away from the decorative purpose to involve social engagement and political motives.

"I love to paint and I love to create, so I look for ways to combine my art with making a difference in people's lives," she said.

Childers said when she quit teaching in 2012 she was able to totally focus on her art.

"At that same time, I had always been curious about politics, but never gave it any attention," Childers said. "I started listening to 'The Daily Show' while doing paintings and started to become aware of politics."

In 2015, Bernie Sanders ran for president and Childers said she realized she was a progressive.

"So then I realized I just can't be painting," she said. "I was so concerned about the climate crisis that for a while I would put on my Facebook page all of my proceeds would go to issues related to the climate crisis." Childers said she realized how privileged she is and so she wanted to help those who are not. Her front yard art show was a way to do that.

"Last year I had an art show with 30 paintings in my yard," she said. "I let people who bought paintings make the choice to have the proceeds go to the local food bank, to the animal shelter or to a progressive political candidate for U.S. Congress, Hilary Turner. I got \$800 for the food bank, \$500 for the animal shelter and a couple thousand for Hilary Turner."

But Childers said her West Virginia Puzzle Project is her long-term assignment.

"I have lots more of this great state to see," she said. "I plan to go to all the places I've painted on this map and to share my adventures. In fact, if I couldn't fit it on the map, but it's cool or interesting, I'll also be going there."

# Health officer in WVa's largest county stepping down

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — The health officer for West Virginia's largest county is stepping down after two years.

Dr. Sherri Young is taking an undisclosed job opportunity, the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department said Monday in a news release.

Young led Kanawha County's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

She will remain as interim health officer while the health department's board of directors conducts a search for a replacement.

"I was presented with an opportunity that I could not pass up, and for that reason, I am leaving my position," Young said.

# 8 WVa middle schools receive grants for musical instruments

By The Associated Press | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Eight West Virginia middle schools will receive grants to support their music programs.

Gov. Jim Justice, state arts curator Randall Reid-Smith and Chiho Feindler, senior director of programs and policy for the Save The Music Foundation, announced the grants Tuesday.

The schools are in Barbour, Cabell, Fayette, Mason, Mercer, Mingo, Wayne and Wyoming counties. They will receive an average value of \$40,000 in musical instruments and ongoing program management and materials, the governor's office said in a news release.

The nonprofit Save The Music Foundation has been equipping West Virginia schools with instruments since 2009 and has reached schools through investments and partnerships in all 55 counties.

# Legislation Puts WV On California Travel Ban List

By by bobby bordelon | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

Representatives of the state of California won't be traveling to West Virginia with taxpayer funds as a result of the legislature's ban on young transgender-athletes playing sports.

In September of 2016, the California Legislature and then-Gov. Jerry Brown approved AB 1887, a bill prohibiting any California state agency or the Legislature from "requiring any of its employees, officers, or



members to travel to, or approving a request for state-funded or state-sponsored travel to any that that ... has enacted a law that voids or repeals ... protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.”

“Assembly Bill 1887 is about aligning our dollars with our values,” said California Attorney General Rob Bonta. “When states discriminate against LGBTQ+ Americans, California law requires our office to take action. These new additions to the state-funded travel restrictions list are about exactly that. It’s been 52 years to the day since the Stonewall Riots began, but that same fight remains all too alive and well in this country. Rather than focusing on solving real issues, some politicians think it’s in their best interest to demonize trans youth and block life-saving care. Make no mistake: We’re in the midst of an unprecedented wave of bigotry and discrimination in this country — and the State of California is not going to support it.”

According to the press release issued by Bonta’s office, “West Virginia is being added to California’s state-funded travel restrictions list as a result of House Bill 3293. Signed into law on April 28, House Bill 3293 prevents transgender women and girls from participating in school sports consistent with their gender identity. Given the effective date for the new law, West Virginia, pursuant to AB 1887, will be added to California’s travel restrictions list on July 8, 2021.”

Currently, there are 17 states on California’s state-funded travel restrictions list.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey criticized the ban on state-sponsored travel, citing the Constitutional ability of each state to govern itself, stating “federalism works best when individual states can pursue policies supported by their own constituents.”

“States should not penalize other states because of policy differences,” Morrisey said. “The economic coercion demonstrated by California is an affront to the dignity of other co-sovereign states and amounts to legislating across state borders in an effort to force the radical world view of large states onto those living elsewhere. ... West Virginia is a beautiful state, and I continually urge everyone - in California and elsewhere - to experience its magnificent hills, streams and adventure, as well as its loving people.”

In a recent COVID-19 press briefing, West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice again dismissed the genders of these young women and cited a gut feeling about “fairness” in supporting the ban, rather than the more nuanced guidelines of the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission and National Collegiate Athletic Association, which had been in place for years before H.B. 3293 was signed.

“They’ll make their way through the courts, I think it’s way premature to decide. ... From the standpoint of West Virginia, I don’t think anybody here is discriminating against transgender people,” Justice said. “My whole thought, and I can’t speak for all people, is that I thought it was terribly, terrible unfair to our girls who are trying to compete athletically to have to compete against those folks that are transgender. I think that’s the whole thing from my standpoint, it has nothing to do with discrimination in any way. I hope and pray that West Virginia is always a very welcoming state and loves everyone.”

Justice doubted the economic impact would be enough to make a difference and noted the “state of California does some pretty strange stuff from time to time.”

Meanwhile, the case brought against West Virginia by the ACLU on behalf of an 11-year-old girl who wants to run track at school continues.

Recently, the Department of Justice advised the court overseeing the lawsuit “of its view that Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment do not permit West Virginia to categorically exclude transgender girls from participating in single-sex sports restricted to



girls.”

“No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws,” reads the 14th amendment of the United States Constitution.

Meanwhile, the plaintiff in the ACLU’s lawsuit just wants to be a prepubescent kid.

“I just want to run, I come from a family of runners,” said 11-year-old Becky Pepper-Jackson. “I know how hurtful a law like this is to all kids like me who just want to play sports with their classmates, and I’m doing this for them. Trans kids deserve better.”

## Senators to watch as Dems debate changing filibuster rules

By mary clare jalonick associated press | WVDN JUL 01, 2021



WASHINGTON (AP) — Looming over Senate Democrats this year is a decision that could fundamentally change Congress: whether to change or eliminate the rules of the filibuster to enact President Joe Biden’s agenda. Liberal advocates have pushed hard for the change, urging the Senate to modify or eliminate rules that now

require a vote by 60 of the 100 senators to advance most bills. Many Democrats are on board, arguing that Republicans are determined to block almost every one of their priorities in the 50-50 Senate even though Democrats hold Congress and the presidency. But others in the party are wary, fearing it will end bipartisanship in the Senate.

Yet most of the skeptical Democratic senators say they are ultimately open to some changes to the rules if Republicans won't negotiate on their major policy goals, particularly legislation — filibustered by Republicans just last week — that would overhaul elections and make it easier to vote.

The two biggest Democratic obstacles to filibuster changes, for now, are Sens. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona. Both have reiterated their opposition in recent weeks. A simple majority can change the Senate's rules, but getting all 50 Democrats to agree could prove difficult.

Changes won't come easily, and it could be months or more before Democrats decide what to do.

Some senators to watch as Democrats ponder a consequential vote:

SEN. JOE MANCHIN, D-W.VA.

Manchin has been a defender of the filibuster for many years, and he has stuck to that position as many of his Senate colleagues have shifted on the issue. Manchin said in an op-ed in the Charleston Gazette-Mail earlier this month that he could not explain to voters in his state, increasingly dominated by the GOP, why he was "blowing up the Senate rules to expedite one party's agenda."

Still, he has not completely ruled out changes. Earlier this year, he suggested he might be open to the "talking filibuster," requiring senators to slow a bill by holding the floor, but then grants a simple majority vote if they give up. It's unclear if other senators would be open to that option, and enacting it could prove complicated.

SEN. KYRSTEN SINEMA, D-ARIZ.

Sinema has said it is time to debate the legislative filibuster. But she has also made a persuasive case against eliminating it.

Narrowly elected in 2018 to represent her swing state, Sinema has vowed to be independent-minded and to work with Republicans. She wrote in a Washington Post op-ed this month that bipartisan cooperation is the best way to achieve lasting results, and that eliminating the filibuster would enable temporary victories that would be constantly reversed when the other party takes power.

She said removing the filibuster could increase "the likelihood of repeated radical reversals in federal policy, cementing uncertainty, deepening divisions and further eroding Americans' confidence in our government."

SEN. TOM CARPER, D-DEL.

Carper, a 20-year veteran of the Senate, has been reluctant to consider nixing the filibuster and has repeatedly pointed to bipartisan successes to argue for keeping it. But he said in an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday that "it could be an option."

Carper said senators should not be able to "phone it in" when they want to block a bill, like they can now.

Senators should have to "actually stand there and filibuster," he said.

For now, he says, he's following negotiations on the elections bill to see if there can be compromise. But he says that if something "that important" falls apart in the end, "and we're unable to make progress to better ensure people's ability to vote and register to vote," then the Senate might have to change the rules.

"But that would not be my first option, that would be my last option," Carper said. "But it could be an option."

SEN. CHRIS COONS, D-DEL.

Coons has made a name for himself by touting bipartisanship, though he rarely bucks his party.

In recent interviews, he has argued both sides of the filibuster question.

He told NPR last week that "we have to strike a balance" and noted that Republicans did not change the legislative filibuster rules on legislation when they controlled Congress and the presidency just four years ago. But, he said, "I won't stand by this entire Congress and watch President Biden's agenda blocked, so I think this is an important moment of decision for Republicans."

SEN. JACK REED, D-R.I.

One of the quieter and more policy-focused members of the Senate, Reed has said very little about the filibuster rules. In a statement, he was not fully forthcoming on the issue but hinted that he's in line with other Democrats who have said it is a last resort.

"I'm focused on the Senate passing legislation that addresses the pandemic, the economy, our defense and our environment," he said. "The onus is on Senate Minority Leader (Mitch) McConnell. He can either be a constructive part of that effort or create a wall of partisan obstruction and further threaten the Senate's traditions."

SEN. MARK KELLY, D-ARIZ.

Kelly, who won a special election to replace the late Sen. John McCain in 2020, must run for reelection in 2022 and will face inevitable comparisons to Sinema.

He told NBC News last week that he is open to looking at any changes in the rules, and he will ultimately make a decision based on what is in the best interest of Arizona and the country. "And I'm not looking for something that is in the best interest of just Democrats," he said.

SEN. DIANNE FEINSTEIN, D-CALIF.

Feinstein, who has been in the Senate for nearly three decades, has long been a champion of bipartisanship and has opposed eliminating the filibuster. But that is out of line with her deeply blue state.

In recent comments, she has said she may be open to changes.

"I've received many calls and letters from constituents and groups that are frustrated by the lack of action in the Senate on important issues, and I agree with them," she said in a statement. "I understand their concern and I'm giving the matter a lot of thought. I look forward to continued discussions with my colleagues on how to solve problems for the American people."

SEN. JEANNE SHAHEEN, D-N.H.

Shaheen, a former New Hampshire governor who often works across the aisle, said on a New Hampshire radio show Friday morning that she thinks the filibuster should be reformed but "I have reservations about eliminating it." She did not say what reforms she favors.

"Everything from reproductive rights to support for education to health care would be on the line if we eliminate the filibuster entirely," Shaheen said. "So I think we really need to be thoughtful about that."

SEN. ANGUS KING, I-MAINE

King, an Independent former Maine governor who caucuses with Democrats, said Thursday that "I haven't given up" hope that Democrats and Republicans can find compromise on major issues.

In a March op-ed in The Washington Post, King said he had long been wary of changing the filibuster rules. "The reality is that once the filibuster is gone, it will never come back," he wrote. "Why would a future majority ever impose such a limitation on its own power?"

Still, he said, that only works if Republicans are willing to find agreement over obstruction. And he said voting rights are a "special case" as many GOP-led states have moved to change voting laws.

"All-out opposition to reasonable voting rights protections cannot be enabled by the filibuster; if forced to choose between a Senate rule and democracy itself, I know where I will come down," King wrote.

## **Woman Arrested After Allegedly Starting Fire In Residence**

By by autumn shelton | WVDN JUL 01, 2021

Investigators with the W. Va. State Fire Marshal's Office have charged a Wyoming County woman with attempting to kill two people by setting fire to a home in which she had been residing.

Bridget Avonelle Cozort, 30, of Kopperston, is charged with one count of first-degree arson and two counts of attempted murder.

Investigators allege Cozort had been staying at an area residence with two other women when she was told on May 21 to move out. The following morning, Cozort set fire to living room curtains before leaving the home with the other two women still inside.

One of the residents found the fire and called 911, and after alerting the other resident both women escaped the home safely. Responding firefighters were able to contain the fire to that room.

Cozart was later arrested May 28 on other Wyoming County charges. Held since then at the Southern Regional Jail, she was charged in the arson on June 9

## Monroe County Man Adds Obstruction To List Of Charges

By by matthew young | WVDN JUL 01, 2021



A Monroe County man was arrested on the afternoon of Saturday, June 26 after being found to be in possession of multiple hypodermic needles. Ryan Preston Flanagan, 25, of Wayside, has been charged with obstructing an officer, as well as trespassing and shoplifting related to previous incidents dating back five weeks.

On Thursday, May 20, law enforcement officers were dispatched to the Dollar General store on Nicholas Street in Rupert to investigate reports of an alleged shoplifter.

According to the criminal complaint, Ryan Preston Flanagan was captured on surveillance video placing unpaid for items into a backpack before leaving on foot.

Approximately one month later, on Tuesday, June 22, and while investigating an unrelated incident at the Lewisburg Walmart store, law enforcement was notified that Flanagan had been identified via security footage exiting the store with a shopping cart earlier that morning. While the criminal complaint makes no indication that any merchandise had been stolen by Flanagan that day, a “trespass order” had been filed against Flanagan on behalf of Walmart on July 21, 2020, barring him from the store.

Three days later, on Friday, June 26, officers with the Lewisburg Police Department, while patrolling North Jefferson Street, identified Flanagan walking down the sidewalk. Officers report that Flanagan was allegedly “yelling at a male subject that was ahead of him.”

The complaint states that officers issued a warning to Flanagan regarding “disorderly conduct” before attempting to “pat Ryan down for weapons.”

Officers report that Flanagan was displaying suspicious behavior, such as “scratching his skin around his neck or abdomen.”

Officers then asked Flanagan if “he had any open hypodermic needles in his pockets,” to which he reportedly responded that, “he might.” Flanagan then allegedly removed one capped hypodermic needle from his right pocket.

The subsequent “pat down” search of Flanagan resulted in the discovery of an additional hypodermic needle.

Ryan Preston Flanagan is currently being held at Southern Regional Jail on a \$3,000 cash-bond or surety.

## **PSC Opens Formal Proceeding to Investigate Suddenlink Complaints**

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUL 01, 2021



The Public Service Commission has ordered Suddenlink Communications to show why it should not be required to take specific remedial steps to improve service to customers and why the Commission should not impose penalties as authorized by state law.

On May 6, 2021, Chairman Charlotte Lane met with representatives of Suddenlink to discuss the more than 1,900 quality of service complaints the Commission has received, including delays in service restoration, billing errors, the inability to place orders for service or contact personnel regarding the status of service. Chairman Lane directed Suddenlink to provide the Commission a correction plan within 30 days. Suddenlink sent a letter to Chairman Lane on June 7, 2021, that contained neither a correction plan nor details of the steps that Suddenlink has taken to improve cable television service.

“Suddenlink’s response to our request for a corrective plan to its disastrous customer service problems was completely inadequate,” said Chairman Lane. To characterize over 1,900 complaints in a positive fashion as ‘less than 1%’ of its customer base, is particularly concerning.”

Today, the Commission ordered Suddenlink to file information within 30 days, including details on completed and projected improvement projects to its cable television service; specific outage information; the processes used to issue and track trouble tickets; customer complaint call logs; a

copy of all Suddenlink’s current franchises for cable television service in the state; metrics regarding training, personnel, office locations and hours of operation. The Commission has scheduled two public comment hearings on August 24, 2021, and an evidentiary hearing on August 26, 2021, at the PSC headquarters in Charleston. All hearings will be held in person and streamed live on the Commission’s website.



Suddenlink offers cable television service to more than 300,000 households and small businesses and has over 133,000 cable television customers in West Virginia. The Company provides service over a hybrid fiber optic-coaxial network with more than 8,500 plant miles and eight headends across the state. Additional information, including today's Order and Suddenlink's June 7, 2021 response to Chairman Lane, is available on the Commission website: [www.psc.state.wv.us](http://www.psc.state.wv.us) by referencing Case No. 21-0515-CTV-SC-GI.

## George Edward Piercy

By WV Daily News | WVDN JUL 01, 2021



### **PIERCY**

George Edward Piercy passed away at his home in Fairlea, WV, on Monday, June 28, 2021, at the age of 94.

George is survived by his wife, Leila "Lee" Camp Piercy; his two daughters, Donna Piercy and Leann Piercy-McMillion; his son-in-law, Bill McMillion; his two sisters-in-law, Dorothy Camp Gill and Adrienne Camp Landrum; his grandchildren, Ben McMillion, Kelby Seanor, Kylie McMillion, and Kris McMillion; and his many nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his brother, Lourie Piercy; his brothers-in-law, Charlie Wise, Lacy Conrad Gill, and Fred Landrum; and his sister-in-law, Betty Camp Wise.

George was born in Fairlea, WV, on June 17, 1927, to A.K. Piercy and Ola (Hughart) Piercy. He attended



Greenbrier High School until his senior year, when he enlisted in the United States Navy during World War II and was stationed in Bermuda. After the war, he attended Greenbrier Military School, graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from Davis and Elkins College, and received a master's degree from West Virginia University.

Upon graduation from D & E, George met the love of his life, Leila "Lee" Camp, and they married in 1952 for 69 years. George was a loving husband, father, and grandfather, but he was known by most as Coach Piercy or Mr. Piercy. He began his career working as a high school teacher and coach at Smoot, Frankfort, and White Sulphur Springs. Mr. Piercy was well-known for his passion for coaching high school baseball, football, and basketball, which resulted in many teams advancing to the state playoffs and many of his athletes receiving collegiate scholarships.

George was a man of many talents and took pride in his work, as he served many roles throughout his life: a WV Rehabilitation Counselor; the first Assistant Principal at the newly consolidated Greenbrier East High School; the Personnel Director and Associate Superintendent for Greenbrier County Schools; he taught classes at the Greenbrier Community College (New River Community College); and he was the first educator to teach at the Federal Prison for Women in Alderson. Post-retirement, Coach Piercy continued to mentor and coach young athletes, worked as a starter at the Greenbrier Resort Golf Courses, directed his WV State Fair parking and camping lot, and enjoyed playing golf.

The family will be receiving friends on Friday, July 2, 2021, from 6-9 p.m. at the Wallace and Wallace Funeral Home in Lewisburg, WV. A graveside military funeral service will be on Saturday, July 3, 2021, at 11 a.m. at the Wallace Memorial Cemetery in Clintonville, WV. In addition, family and friends are invited to celebrate George Piercy's life at his home in Fairlea, WV, at 5 p.m. on July 3, 2021.

The pallbearers for the graveside funeral service are Leann Piercy-McMillion, Bill McMillion, Ben McMillion, Kelby Seanor, Kylie McMillion, Kris McMillion, and Ralph McMillion. The honorary pallbearers are Bill Huff, C.C. Parker, Jackie Joe Robinson, and Tom Sweeney. The posthumous pallbearers are Dixie Ayers, Tom Bill Dudley, Kelly Ford, Dick Gunnoe, Jim Hayes, Coach Toddy Laudin, Jimmy McMillion, Coach Abe McLaughlin, Skinny Minniweather, Alvin Porterfield, and many friends and students.

The family would like to thank Dr. Belinda Smith and the staff of Home Care Plus and Palliativecare of Lewisburg for all of their love and support; and thank you to Kenny Baker and Robert McClintic for officiating.

Please send online condolences by visiting [www.WallaceandWallaceFH.com](http://www.WallaceandWallaceFH.com).

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