

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Dick's ends sales of assault-style rifles in stores

NEW YORK — Dick's Sporting Goods, a major U.S. retailer, will immediately halt sales of assault-style rifles and high-capacity magazines at all of its stores and ban the sale of all guns to anyone under 21.

The announcement today comes as students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, return to class for the first time since a troubled teenager killed 17 students and educators with an AR-15 two weeks ago.

"When we saw what the kids were going through and the grief of the parents and the kids who were killed in Parkland, we felt we needed to do something," Chairman and CEO Ed Stack said on "Good Morning America."

Dick's, one of the most well-known gun retailers in the U.S., had cut off sales of assault-style weapons at Dick's stores following the Sandy Hook school shooting. But sales had resumed at its chain of stores under the name, Field & Stream.

The decision to overhaul its own rules on gun sales puts the company out front in a falling out between corporate America and groups like the National Rifle Association.

A number of major U.S. corporations including MetLife, Hertz, Delta Airlines and First National Bank of Omaha, one of the nation's largest privately held banks, cut ties with the NRA in the days following the Parkland shooting.

Stack today called for significant changes to U.S. gun policy, and called on lawmakers to act now. He also revealed that Nikolas Cruz, who killed the students in Florida using an AR-15 assault-style rifle, had purchased a shotgun at a Dick's store within the past four months.

Trump invites lawmakers to talk school safety, guns

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump was convening a bipartisan group of lawmakers today to discuss school safety, as Republican leaders showed little interest in pursuing stricter gun control laws and Democrats pushed new restrictions following the Florida shooting.

Ahead of the session, Senate Democrats urged the president to follow through on his call for "comprehensive background checks" by endorsing legislation to extend the pre-purchase reviews to online and gun show sales.

Legislation has been revived in the Senate to close the gun show and online sales loophole. Democrats appealed to Trump to use his influence on Capitol Hill, saying that if he endorses a background check bill it would have a better



The body of Rev. Billy Graham is carried into the Capitol Rotunda.

AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

Graham praised by Trump, politicians as 'America's pastor'

WASHINGTON — He felt stung by the politics that helped define his life — and resolved to keep a distance. But in death, the Rev. Billy Graham today received a rare tribute from the nation's top political leaders under the Capitol Rotunda.

"Here lies America's pastor," said House Speaker Paul Ryan, gesturing to Graham's casket under the eye of the dome, surrounded by family, friends, lawmakers and a ring of paintings of the nation's founders.

President Donald Trump said his father was an admirer of Graham's and that the "legendary" American figure deserved to be recognized in the place "where the memory of the American people is enshrined."

Graham died a week earlier at age 99. Some 30 family members are accompanying Graham's casket to Washington, where he befriended presidents of both parties and counseled others over seven decades. He is lying in honor before a funeral Friday near his home in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Though he met every president since Harry Truman and counseled most, Graham grew wary of politics after Watergate. He was closest to Richard Nixon but later said he felt used by him.

Nonetheless, Graham ministered to other presidents until his health began to fail about 10 years ago.

Graham is only the fourth private person to lie in honor since 1998. The others are two U.S. Capitol Police officers who died in the line of duty in 1998 and civil rights hero Rosa Parks in 2005.

chance at passage.

Among those headed to the White House are Sens. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., and Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., who are pushing their bill, which failed twice in the Senate after the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, to broaden background checks.

Trump had floated the idea of an age restriction immediately after the Florida shooting but has not talked about it in recent days. Trump lunched recently with leaders of the National Rifle Association, which opposes the proposal.

Republican leaders, who have majority control of the House and Senate, are reluctant to lead on legislation without knowing they have Trump's full support and can rely on his popularity with a core flank of the GOP electorate to shield them from political blowback.

But Trump, who is meeting with 17 senators and representatives from both parties, has proven an inconsistent partner in such policy debates, offering sweeping proposals — including his tweet for stronger background checks — only to drift from them.

White House downgrades Kushner's security clearance

WASHINGTON — The security clearance of White House senior adviser and presidential son-in-law Jared Kushner has been downgraded, significantly reducing his access to classified information, according to two people informed of the decision.

Kushner had been operating with an interim clearance at the "top secret/sensitive compartmented information" level for more than a year. Now he is authorized to access information only at the lower "secret" level.

Tuesday's news set off rampant speculation among Trump allies that Kushner's days in the White House might be numbered. On the same day, the departure of a third Kushner ally in the West Wing in as many months was announced. And the selection of a Kushner ally to serve as Trump's 2020 campaign manager appeared to suggest the campaign could provide Kushner with a convenient place to land after his White House duties end.

Kushner lost his access to the nation's deepest secrets after chief of staff John Kelly ordered that White House officials with interim clearances pending since before June 1, 2017, be cut off if they hadn't received permanent clearances by last Friday. A White House official confirmed to The Associated Press that Kelly's order has been implemented.

President Donald Trump could have reversed Kelly's decision and unilaterally offered Kushner a clearance, but deferred to Kelly.

Manafort pleads not guilty, gets September trial date

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort maintained his innocence today to new charges he acted as an unregistered foreign agent and directed an international money-laundering conspiracy.

Manafort appeared at the federal courthouse and entered a formal plea of not guilty to a second indictment brought against him by prosecutors working for special counsel Robert Mueller. It was his first court appearance since his co-defendant and longtime business associate, Rick Gates, pleaded guilty and agreed to cooperate with prosecutors.

Manafort had previously pleaded not guilty in the case, but the latest indictment, which mirrored the charges filed against him last October, required him to formally enter a second plea.

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