

Biden targets virus as White House transition begins

Democrat clinched victory on Saturday

By **WILL WEISSERT, PHILIP MARCELO and AAMER MADHANI**
Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Dela-ware — President-elect Joe Biden signaled strongly on Monday that fighting the raging pandemic will be the immediate priority of his new administration, an abrupt shift from President Donald Trump’s more unworried approach to the virus, as the nation surpassed 10 million COVID-19 cases.

Biden began with a direct appeal to all Americans to wear masks, a departure from Trump, who has mocked Biden and others who make a point of always wearing protective face coverings when around others. In an official move, the president-elect formed a coronavirus advisory board dominated by scientists and doctors, while Trump has had a falling out with the medical experts on his own virus task force.

The swift actions come at a critical moment in the U.S. effort to combat the coronavirus. Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer announced progress with its vaccine trial, helping send financial markets soaring. But surging case-loads, including new infections among leading figures



Andrew Harnik/AP Photo

President-elect Joe Biden gestures to supporters Saturday in Delaware.

in Trump’s administration, offered a fresh reminder that the nation is still in the grip of the worst pandemic in more than a century.

“The challenge before us right now is still immense and growing, and so is the need for bold action to fight this pandemic,” Biden said after being briefed on the virus. “We are still facing a dark winter.”

He called on Americans to separate politics from the virus and embrace mask-wearing.

“We could save tens of thousands of lives if everyone would just wear a mask for the next few months. Not Democratic or Republican

lives, American lives,” Biden said. “Please, I implore you, wear a mask.”

Over the past two weeks, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases has risen nearly 65%. The seven-day rolling average for daily new cases in the U.S. went from 66,294 on Oct. 25 to 108,736.7 on Sunday. In the past week, one of every 433 Americans was diagnosed with COVID-19, and hospitals in several states are running out of space and staff.

Pfizer said Monday that its COVID-19 vaccine may be a remarkable 90% effective, based on early and incomplete test results. The drug-maker said it was on track to

file an emergency use request with regulators later this month.

Throughout his ultimately unsuccessful campaign, Trump insisted the nation was “rounding the corner” on the coronavirus and that a vaccine was imminent even as infection rates grew. The president, who has yet to publicly acknowledge Biden’s victory, seized on Pfizer’s announcement and the positive reaction in financial markets.

“STOCK MARKET UP BIG, VACCINE COMING SOON. REPORT 90% EFFECTIVE. SUCH GREAT NEWS!” he tweeted. Vice President Mike Pence

held a meeting of the White House coronavirus task force on Monday. He tweeted that Pfizer’s reported progress was “HUGE NEWS” and suggested it was the result of a “public-private partnership forged” by Trump.

In fact, Pfizer has funded all its own research. It has a contract to sell doses to the U.S. government if a vaccine is approved but has insisted on handling its own shipping.

The White House task force, which includes the federal government’s leading infectious disease expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, has been diminished in recent months as Trump grew impatient with efforts to slow the virus that were having a deleterious impact on the economy.

A top Trump administration health official delivered much the same message as Biden, although the timing was coincidental and the occasion apolitical.

Brett Giroir, assistant secretary for health administration, said that Americans must “double down” on the “3 W’s” — watching their distance from others, wearing masks when that’s not possible, and washing their hands frequently. He also said states and local communities must ramp up testing.

The advisory board that Biden announced on Monday includes doctors and scientists who have served in previous administrations,

many of them experts in public health, vaccines and infectious disease.

It will be led by former Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David Kessler and Yale University public health care expert Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith.

Rick Bright, a vaccine expert and former head of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, is also on the board. He had filed a whistleblower complaint alleging he was reassigned to a lesser job because he resisted political pressure to allow widespread use of hydroxychloroquine, a malaria drug pushed by Trump as a COVID-19 treatment.

Other members include Dr. Luciana Borio, who had senior leadership positions at the FDA and National Security Council during the Obama and Trump administrations; Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, who served as a special adviser for health policy in the Obama administration; Dr. Atul Gawande, a senior adviser in the Department of Health and Human Services in the Clinton administration and medical writer; and Michael Osterholm, an epidemiologist who served as an adviser to Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson during the George W. Bush administration.

Trump faces long odds in challenging vote counts

By **MARYCLAIRE DALE**
Associated Press

Republican surrogates for President Donald Trump resumed their legal fight Monday to try to stop the vote count in key battleground states, including Pennsylvania and Michigan, but faced long odds given the Electoral College tally and recent court rulings that found no evidence of widespread vote fraud.

While some Republican officials invoked the Trump mantra that only “legal votes” should be counted, others emerged to counter the campaign narrative and urge voters, and perhaps the president, to support the results.

“The process has not failed our country in more than 200 years, and it is not going to fail our country this year,” said Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who won her reelection bid and has congratulated President-elect Joe Biden on his victory.

Still, Trump lawyers soldiered on six days after the election, just as personal counsel Rudy Giuliani had promised they would during a surreal weekend press conference outside a landscaping storefront in northeast Philadelphia.

Giuliani denounced the city’s vote count — which fell about 4 to 1 for Biden, giving the Democrat the win



Rebecca Blackwell/AP Photo

A woman wears a Trump flag as a cape as supporters of President Donald Trump protested outside the Pennsylvania Convention Center, where vote counting continued in Philadelphia.

Saturday in both Pennsylvania and the U.S. election — as “extremely troubling.”

Across the country, Republicans have complained about problems with the signatures, secrecy envelopes and postal marks on mail-in ballots, the inability of their poll watchers to scrutinize them and the extensions granted for mail-in ballots to arrive. They filed another lawsuit Monday evening in federal court in Pennsylvania.

However, judges have largely rejected the Republican challenges over the past week, when the campaign sought to interrupt the vote count as it leaned toward Biden. Trump has yet to concede the election, even as the former vice president claimed victory and got to work on his transition plans.

At the U.S. Supreme Court, 10 Republican state attorneys general filed an amicus brief Monday to support a challenge to Pennsylvania’s decision to count mail-in ballots that arrived through Friday. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court had unanimously upheld the three-day extension set by Democratic state officials concerned about U.S. Postal Service delays and the COVID-19 pandemic. The attorneys general say the court usurped a power reserved for state lawmakers.

The U.S. Supreme Court had declined to fast-track the challenge, but the vote was 4-4, and three justices expressed reservations. Republicans now hope to try again with new Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett on the court. The

attorneys general believe the extra time meant “unscrupulous actors could attempt to influence a close presidential election.”

Still, it’s far from clear that enough ballots came in after Election Day to change the results of the presidential race in Pennsylvania.

White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany, asked Monday for any tangible evidence of wrongdoing, said Republicans were trying to gather affidavits from witnesses.

“All we are asking for is truth, transparency and sunlight here,” McEnany said.

Earlier in the day, an anti-abortion law center in Michigan filed suit to complain about vote counting procedures in Wayne County. An appeals court in Michigan, meanwhile, asked the Trump campaign to refile a case submitted last week, saying the appeal was incomplete.

And in Arizona, the Trump campaign asked in a lawsuit filed Saturday for the right to inspect thousands of in-person ballots filled out on Election Day in the Phoenix area, alleging that poll workers had mishandled them.

In Georgia — where

Biden has a small lead over Trump but the race remains too early to call — a state election official pledged Monday to investigate any ballot problems they find.

“When the margins are this tight, every little thing matters,” said Gabriel Sterling, who led the state’s implementation of a new voting system for the secretary of state’s office.

Still, he expressed frustration over efforts to shake the public’s faith in the electoral system.

“The facts are the facts, regardless of outcomes,” Sterling said.

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
52 39	51 41	51 44	52 45	53 43	52 42	51 41
A couple of showers	A stray morning shower	Breezy with rain	Breezy with rain	Breezy with rain	Showers possible	Showers possible

ALMANAC

Astoria through Sunday

Temperatures

High/low	49/28
Normal high/low	55/41
Record high	71 in 2016
Record low	28 in 2020

Precipitation

Sunday	0.00"
Month to date	2.07"
Normal month to date	2.56"
Year to date	48.46"
Normal year to date	49.03"

Forecasts and graphics provided by
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UNDER THE SKY

Tonight’s Sky: Orion and friends emerging above the eastern night sky before midnight.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

SUN AND MOON

Sunrise today	7:10 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:49 p.m.
Moonrise today	1:03 a.m.
Moonset today	3:00 p.m.

New	First	Full	Last
Nov 14	Nov 21	Nov 30	Dec 7

TODAY’S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks	Time	High (ft.)	Time	Low (ft.)
9:07 a.m.	7.2	2:33 a.m.	0.8	
8:55 p.m.	6.8	3:15 p.m.	2.4	
Cape Disappointment				
8:47 a.m.	7.2	1:44 a.m.	0.8	
8:34 p.m.	6.6	2:37 p.m.	2.7	
Hammond				
8:58 a.m.	7.5	2:05 a.m.	0.6	
8:44 p.m.	7.1	2:51 p.m.	2.6	
Warrenton				
9:02 a.m.	7.6	2:17 a.m.	0.9	
8:50 p.m.	7.2	2:59 p.m.	2.5	
Knappa				
9:44 a.m.	7.5	3:34 a.m.	0.6	
9:32 p.m.	7.1	4:16 p.m.	2.0	
Depoe Bay				
8:03 a.m.	7.4	1:13 a.m.	0.7	
7:45 p.m.	6.9	2:03 p.m.	2.8	

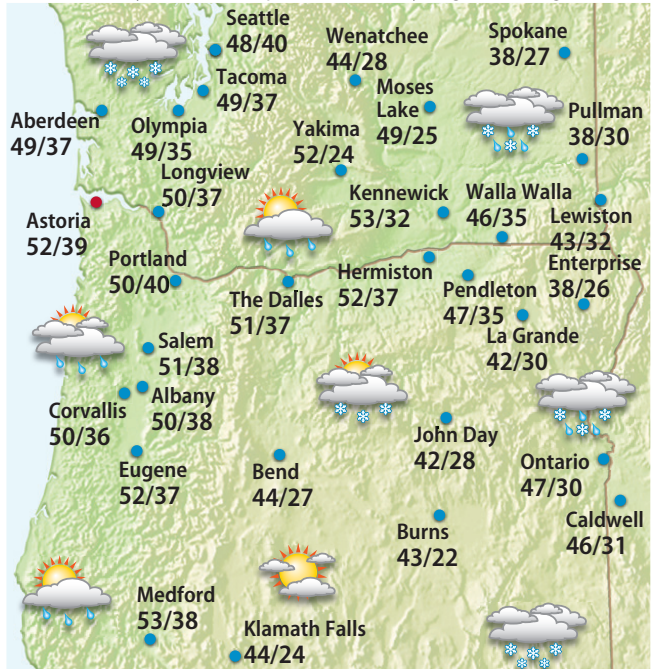
NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today Hi/Low/W	Wed. Hi/Low/W
Atlanta	73/70/c	76/68/r
Boston	69/58/s	68/60/c
Chicago	71/34/r	49/35/s
Dallas	73/44/c	73/52/s
Denver	45/24/s	47/24/s
Honolulu	85/75/pc	85/74/sh
Houston	82/63/c	82/61/pc
Los Angeles	66/47/s	68/44/s
Miami	84/78/sh	86/78/c
New York City	70/60/pc	70/60/r
Phoenix	66/45/s	70/48/s
San Francisco	61/47/pc	61/45/s
Wash., DC	74/63/pc	73/66/r
Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, l-ice.		

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REGIONAL FORECAST

Shown is today’s weather. Temperatures are today’s highs and tonight’s lows.



City	Today Hi/Low/W	Wed. Hi/Low/W	City	Today Hi/Low/W	Wed. Hi/Low/W
Baker City	43/25/pc	42/18/pc	North Bend	55/42/pc	55/40/pc
Brookings	54/43/pc	54/43/pc	Roseburg	50/39/sh	53/35/pc
Ilwaco	51/42/sh	51/43/pc	Seaside	51/40/r	51/41/pc
Newberg	50/35/sh	50/37/pc	Springfield	51/39/sh	51/35/c
Newport	51/41/sh	50/40/pc	Vancouver	50/39/sh	50/39/sh