

TODAY

Today is Friday, Feb. 5, the 36th day of 2021. There are 329 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 5, 2020, the Senate voted to acquit President Donald Trump, bringing to a close the third presidential trial in American history, though a majority of senators expressed unease with Trump's pressure campaign on Ukraine that resulted in the two articles of impeachment.

In 1631, the founder of Rhode Island, Roger Williams, and his wife, Mary, arrived in Boston from England.

In 1811, George, the Prince of Wales, was named Prince Regent due to the mental illness of his father, Britain's King George III.

In 1917, Mexico's present constitution was adopted by the Constitutional Convention in Santiago de Queretaro. The U.S. Congress passed, over President Woodrow Wilson's veto, an act severely curtailing Asian immigration.

In 1918, during World War I, the Cunard liner SS Tuscania, which was transporting about 2,000 American troops to Europe, was torpedoed by a German U-boat in the Irish Sea with the loss of more than 200 people.

In 1922, the first edition of Reader's Digest was published.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed increasing the number of U.S. Supreme Court justices; the proposal, which failed in Congress, drew accusations that Roosevelt was attempting to "pack" the nation's highest court.

In 1971, Apollo 14 astronauts Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell stepped onto the surface of the moon in the first of two lunar excursions.

In 1983, former Nazi Gestapo official Klaus Barbie, expelled from Bolivia, was brought to Lyon, France, to stand trial.

In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act, granting workers up to 12 weeks unpaid leave for family emergencies.

In 1994, white separatist Byron De La Beckwith was convicted in Jackson, Mississippi, of murdering civil rights leader Medgar Evers in 1963, and was immediately sentenced to life in prison.

In 2001, four disciples of Osama bin Laden went on trial in New York in the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

Ten years ago: The leadership of Egypt's ruling party stepped down as the military figures spearheading the transition tried to placate protesters without giving them the one resignation they were demanding, that of President Hosni Mubarak.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama used a new jobs report to continue his victory lap on the economy, declaring the U.S. had "the strongest, most durable economy in the world."

One year ago: With white sheets covering them, people infected with the new coronavirus were led off of a Japanese cruise ship in the port city of Yokohama, while the rest of the 3,700 people on board faced a two-week quarantine in their cabins.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Stuart Damon is 84. Tony-winning playwright John Guare (gwayr) is 83. Financial writer Jane Bryant Quinn is 82. Actor David Selby is 80. Singer-songwriter Barrett Strong is 80. Football Hall of Famer Roger Staubach is 79. Movie director Michael Mann is 78. Rock singer Al Kooper is 77. Actor Charlotte Rampling is 75. Racing Hall of Famer Darrell Waltrip is 74. Actor Barbara Hershey is 73. Actor Christopher Guest is 73. Actor Tom Wilkinson is 73. Actor-comedian Tim Meadows is 60. Actor Jennifer Jason Leigh is 59. Actor Laura Linney is 57. Rock musician Duff McKagan (Velvet Revolver) is 57. World Golf Hall of Famer Jose Maria Olazabal is 55. Actor-comedian Chris Parnell is 54. Rock singer Chris Barron (Spin Doctors) is 53. Singer Bobby Brown is 52. Actor Michael Sheen is 52. Actor David Chisum is 51. Country singer Sara Evans is 50. Country singer Tyler Farr is 37.

— Associated Press

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

Blumenauer and prominent Senate Dems push for climate change emergency order

BY PETER WONG

Oregon Capital Bureau

U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer has renewed his push for legislation requiring a presidential declaration of national emergency related to climate change.

The Oregon Democrat joined two other prominent figures on Thursday to call for the declaration, which he says would mobilize every resource available to prepare for and mitigate the effects of the crisis.

The others are Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, an independent who sought the Democratic presidential nomination in 2016 and 2020, and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. They advocated a similar resolution two

years ago, when Donald Trump — a denier of climate change — was still president.

"Last Congress, I worked with Oregon environmental activists to draft a climate emergency resolution that captured the urgency of this moment," Blumenauer said in a statement Thursday.

"President Biden has done an outstanding job of prioritizing climate in the first days of his administration, but after years of practiced ignorance from Trump and congressional Republicans, an even larger mobilization is needed."

Democrat Joe Biden has taken several steps toward re-



Blumenauer

versing Trump's executive orders in the first days of his presidency, notably having the United States rejoin the 2015 Paris accord that committed nations to set voluntary targets for reduction of greenhouse gases.

The new measure would go further than the 2019 proposal (House Concurrent Resolution 52), which was co-sponsored by 102 members, including Oregon Democrats Suzanne Bonamici and Peter DeFazio. The 2019 resolution never advanced beyond the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

It would require the president to invoke a 1976 law gov-

erning national emergencies and report annually until the emergency is over about specific actions he has taken to deal with it.

Among the potential actions are investments in large-scale mitigation and resiliency projects, upgrades to public infrastructure, modernization of millions of buildings to cut pollution, investments in public health, protections for public lands, and regenerative agriculture investments that support local and regional food systems.

Blumenauer said there are plenty of incentives to act.

Damage from climate-related natural disasters has cost the United States more than double the long-term average from 2014 through 2018, at

an estimated \$100 billion per year. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimated that 22 events, each causing at least \$1 billion in damage, cost the nation a total of \$95 billion in 2020.

According to the fourth National Climate Assessment, released in 2018, climate change increases the risk to public health from air and water pollution, wildfires and insect infestations.

The latest effort has drawn support from dozens of organizations.

Its fate is uncertain. Democrats have tenuous majorities in the House and the Senate, where Vice President Kamala Harris holds the tie-breaker in a 50-50 chamber.

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Bentz

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"I find Representative Greene's previous comments and actions deeply offensive and totally unacceptable," said Bentz, the first-term congressman from Oregon's 2nd Congressional District. "However, she went to the House Floor to say she regrets her comments and actions."

Bentz said Democrats should have gone to House Ethics Committee first.

"I cannot support an unprecedented vote by House Democrat majority to strip the congresswoman of her committee assignments."

The House debate included a 10-minute address by Greene, trying to reassure her new colleagues that she was not dangerous and disconnected from reality, as some claimed.

Her defense included statements that hinted at how far she had gone in the past.

"I also want to tell you, 9/11 absolutely happened," said Greene, who wore a "Free Speech" face mask. Also real: mass shootings at schools.

Democrats said the vote was about blocking an advocate of bizarre conspiracy theories from a key role on legislation.

Republicans said that while Greene's comments were odious, racist and bizarre, Georgia voters had sent her to Congress. Democrats were overstepping their authority of how elected Republican members serve in the House.

Oregon's four other House members, Suzanne Bonamici, D-Beaverton; Earl Blumenauer, D-Portland; Peter DeFazio, D-Springfield; and Kurt Schrader, D-Salem; voted in favor of her removal.

The showdown over Greene was the second major test of Republican unity in less than 24 hours.

The House Republican Conference on Wednesday night turned back an effort by some members to remove Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyoming, as its chair. Some Republicans wanted to punish Cheney for being among 10 GOP House members who voted for the impeachment of President Donald Trump.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.,

had asked members during the closed-door vote to retain Cheney. He also advocated for them to oppose the Democratic-led effort to remove Greene from committees.

Bentz declined to say which way he voted in the Cheney matter. NBC News, citing House members at the meeting, reported Cheney won 145-61 in the secret ballot.

Greene has a long history of statements calling school shootings and the 9/11 attacks hoaxes. She had backed the conspiracy group QAnon, which has been linked to violence, and she had posted her approval online of a post calling for the murder of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., with a "bullet to the head."

She has speculated that "space solar generators" were used to ignite wildfires in the western United States.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., made a rare comment on a House member, saying Greene would damage Republicans' credibility.

"Looney lies and conspiracy theories are cancer for the Republican Party and our country," McConnell said Monday.

No Republican House members defended Greene's statements, but said that as a duly elected member of the House, she should not be removed from her assignments due to statements made prior to being sworn-in last month.

Democrats had called on McCarthy to remove Greene,

but when he refused, they made the rare motion on the floor to have the entire House vote on her assignments.

Democrats were especially enraged by Greene's appointment to the House Education Committee, which helps set national policy for schools.

Greene has said that school shootings had been staged by gun-rights opponents.

Greene had harangued David Hogg, a survivor of the February 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, that killed 17 people.

"He is very trained. He's like a dog. He's completely trained," Greene said in a 2019 video interview with a gun-owners website. "I confronted David Hogg twice, and he ran away from me."

Greene also said the December 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, that killed 26 people, including 20 children, was a hoax.

Within the past three years, Greene has also supported the conspiracy group QAnon, saying the content on their websites was nothing but "patriotic."

QAnon adherents were a significant presence during the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol that left a police officer and four demonstrators dead and more than 140 police injured.

Right-wing groups, including QAnon, the Proud Boys, the 3 Percenters and others launched the violent assault

and were joined by a mob of Trump supporters who had marched from a rally where President Trump repeated his false claims that Democrats had stolen the election from him.

Security teams rushed members of Congress to safe areas moments before the vanguard of the assault entered the House and Senate chambers.

Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Massachusetts, led the argument that Greene should be removed from her assignments, saying her incendiary comments had helped drive the mobs at the Capitol.

"I never want to see that again," he said.

Defending herself on the House floor, Greene echoed arguments by her GOP House colleagues that it was unfair that she was being punished for statements she made prior to her election.

"During my campaign, I never said any of these things," she said. "Since I have been elected for Congress ... These were words of the past, and these things do not represent me. They do not represent my district, and they do not represent my values."

Greene claimed that her positions had been misrepresented by the media, which she equated with QAnon.

"I'm a very regular American, just like the people I represent in my district and most of the people across the country," she said.

Greene said she had been apolitical until Trump ran for president in 2016.

"He was someone I could relate to. I enjoyed his plain talk — not the offensive things — but just the way he talked normally."

After the election, she felt "CNN and Fox News were not reflecting what I saw going on."

"So I start looking things up on the internet, asking questions, like most people do, every day, use Google," she said.

That's when she found QAnon.

"I got very interested in it," she said. "So I posted about it on Facebook. I read about it. I talked about it. I asked questions about it. And then more information came from it."

For reasons she didn't specify, Greene said she "stopped believing it."

"I was allowed to believe things that weren't true," she said.

It was an involvement "that is absolutely what I regret."

Greene blamed the "cancel culture" of "big media" for drawing attention to things she said prior to running for Congress last year.

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