

[Joe Biden and Kamala Harris both flew on flights with people who tested positive for Covid-19 - as it happened](#)

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Byline: Maanvi Singh (now), Joan E Greve, Jessica Glenza and Martin Belam (earlier)

Highlight: Biden was never in close contact, says campaign manager Harris abruptly cancels travel Senate to vote on Amy Coney Barrett nomination on **22** October Trump and Biden events tonight Mail-in ballot tracker: counting votes in US swing states Sign up for Fight to Vote - our weekly US election newsletter

Body

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Summary

- Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden will face voters - but not each other - at dueling town hall-style events on Thursday night, in lieu of a presidential debate. The candidates were originally scheduled to participate in the second of three presidential debates in Miami, until Trump abruptly withdrew from the forum after the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates announced it would be held remotely due to concerns the US president might still be infectious with coronavirus. Follow the events live [here](#).
- Joe Biden and Kamala Harris both flew on planes this week with people who have tested positive for coronavirus. A senior aide to Harris and a flight attendant on her campaign plane tested positive, as did an aviation administrator who flew with Biden. The campaign said neither Biden nor Harris had recent close contact with any of the three people, but Harris has canceled her in-person campaigning through Sunday out of an abundance of caution.
- There were 898,000 new claims filed for jobless benefits in the US last week. This marks the thirtieth week of elevated unemployment claims since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, and it was the highest number recorded since late August.
- Amy Coney Barrett's nomination hearings have concluded. The Senate judiciary committee will hold a vote on her supreme court nomination next Thursday, and the full Senate will then vote on her confirmation. Given that Republicans control the Senate, Barrett is expected to be confirmed.
- C-SPAN has indefinitely suspended political editor Steve Scully for lying about his Twitter account being hacked. Scully, who was supposed to moderate the second presidential debate before it was canceled, claimed his account had been hacked after he sent a controversial tweet to former Trump adviser Anthony Scaramucci.
- Trump attacked Dr Anthony Fauci during his campaign rally in North Carolina today, after the infectious disease expert criticized the president's reelection campaign for featuring him in a political ad. "He's a

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Democrat; everybody knows that," Trump said. In reality, Fauci, who has led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, does not have a party affiliation, according to his voter registration.

Updated at 12.01am BST11.47pm BSTTonight, Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden will face voters - but not each other - at dueling town hall-style events on Thursday night, in lieu of a presidential debate. The candidates were originally scheduled to participate in the second of three presidential debates in Miami, until Trump abruptly withdrew from the forum after the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates announced it would be held remotely due to concerns the US president might still be infectious with coronavirus. Shortly after Trump's decision, the Biden campaign proceeded to set up a telecast with ABC News in Philadelphia and the commission formally cancelled the debate. But Trump, slipping farther behind in national and battleground state polling, was unwilling to cede the prime-time coverage to his opponent. On Wednesday, NBC news announced that it would hold a town hall with Trump in Miami on Thursday night, at the same time ABC will air its forum with Biden. Speaking on Fox Business ahead of the event Trump bashed NBC News and claimed he was being "set up tonight" in what amounted to "a free hour on television". And he previewed the event during a rally in North Carolina by swiping at moderator Savannah Guthrie and other network anchors. "So you know, I'm being set up tonight, right. I'm doing this town hall with Con-cast," Trump said, mocking the name of NBC's parent company.

"So I'm doing it and it's NBC. The worst." The Guardian will be following the events live tonight. Related: Town halls live: Trump and Biden hold dueling events after canceled debate Updated at 12.01am BST11.15pm BSTChris Christie, the former New Jersey governor and Trump ally who has been convalescing from Covid-19, said he was "wrong" to not wear a mask while he attended an event at the White House and while spending time with Trump. Christie attended the Rose Garden event honoring supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett that has been linked to several infections in an outbreak at the White House and helped Trump prepare for the first presidential debate. In a statement to the New York Times, he said: I believed when I entered the White House grounds, that I had entered a safe zone, due to the testing that I and many others underwent every day. I was wrong. I was wrong not to wear a mask at the Amy Coney Barrett announcement and I was wrong not to wear a mask at my multiple debate prep sessions with the president and the rest of the team. I hope that my experience shows my fellow citizens that you should follow C.D.C. guidelines in public no matter where you are and wear a mask to protect yourself and others. Christie spent time at an Intensive Care Unit, and was especially vulnerable to complications from the infection due to his asthma. While he has at times been critical of the president, Christie has on the whole been a loyal ally of the president - who has it was "a blessing from God" that he caught the virus and has continued to draw maskless supporters to campaign rallies across the country. In an interview with the New York Times, Christie did not directly blame Trump for his infection. Updated at 11.49pm BST10.55pm BSTDonald Trump and Lindsey Graham are leading in South Carolina, per a new New York Times/Siena College poll. Graham, whose flip-flopping on whether he - as chair of the Senate judiciary committee - would support the nomination of a Supreme Court justice during an election year, has been fighting the toughest reelection race of his senate career. The poll, which questioned 605 likely voters, shows Trump with an eight-point lead and Graham with a 3-point lead. The margin of error on the poll is 4.5%. No Democratic presidential candidate has won in South Carolina since 1976. Updated at 10.55pm BST10.45pm BSTCaroline Rose Giuliani has endorsed Joe Biden for president in an essay for Vanity Fair which details how her politics diverges from her father's. "My father is Rudy Giuliani," the younger Giuliani writes. "We are multiverses apart, politically and otherwise. I've spent a lifetime forging an identity in the arts separate from my last name, so publicly declaring myself as a 'Giuliani' feels counterintuitive, but I've come to realize that none of us can afford to be silent right now." Caroline Rose had endorsed Hillary Clinton in 2016, and writes that since childhood she has engaged in debates with her father about LGBTQ rights, policing and other issues. She writes: "It felt important to speak my mind, and I'm glad we at least managed to communicate at all. But the chasm was painful nonetheless, and has gotten exponentially more so in Trump's era of chest-thumping partisan tribalism. I imagine many Americans can relate to the helpless feeling this confrontation cycle created in me, but we are not helpless. I may not be able to change my father's mind, but together, we can vote this toxic administration out of office." Giuliani and his daughter and son at his wedding. Photograph: Carmen Valdes/Ron Galella Collection/Getty Images Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, is a personal lawyer to Donald Trump and one of the president's loudest endorsers. He has been in the news lately after he claimed to have found incriminating evidence on a discarded computer of Joe Biden's son Hunter. Twitter has been blocking the dissemination of the New York Post article reporting the unlikely and unsubstantiated claim. "If being the daughter

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of a polarizing mayor who became the president's personal bulldog has taught me anything, it is that corruption starts with 'yes-men' and women, the cronies who create an echo chamber of lies and subservience to maintain their proximity to power," Caroline Rose writes. Read the piece here. Updated at 10.52pm BST10.11pm BSTHi there, it's Maanvi - reporting from the West Coast. Here are the key moments from Amy Coney Barrett's confirmation hearings. 10.00pm BSTToday so farThat's it from me for now. I'll be back later tonight to blog Trump and Joe Biden's dueling town halls. Here's where the day stands so far:

- Joe Biden and Kamala Harris both flew on planes this week with people who have tested positive for coronavirus. A senior aide to Harris and a flight attendant on her campaign plane tested positive, as did an aviation administrator who flew with Biden. The campaign said neither Biden nor Harris had recent close contact with any of the three people, but Harris has canceled her in-person campaigning through Sunday out of an abundance of caution.
- There were 898,000 new claims filed for jobless benefits in the US last week. This marks the thirtieth week of elevated unemployment claims since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, and it was the highest number recorded since late August.
- Amy Coney Barrett's nomination hearings have concluded. The Senate judiciary committee will hold a vote on her supreme court nomination next Thursday, and the full Senate will then vote on her confirmation. Given that Republicans control the Senate, Barrett is expected to be confirmed.
- C-SPAN has indefinitely suspended political editor Steve Scully for lying about his Twitter account being hacked. Scully, who was supposed to moderate the second presidential debate before it was canceled, claimed his account had been hacked after he sent a controversial tweet to former Trump adviser Anthony Scaramucci.
- Trump attacked Dr Anthony Fauci during his campaign rally in North Carolina today, after the infectious disease expert criticized the president's reelection campaign for featuring him in a political ad. "He's a Democrat; everybody knows that," Trump said. In reality, Fauci, who has led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, does not have a party affiliation, according to his voter registration.

My west coast colleague, Maanvi Singh, will have more coming up, so stay tuned.9.48pm BSTThe president is previewing his NBC News town hall tonight by attacking the network."I will be doing a major Fake @NBCNews Town Hall Forum, live tonight from Miami, at 8:00 P.M.," Trump said in a new tweet."They asked me to do it in place of the Rigged Steve Scully (he is now suspended from @cspan for lying) Debate. I wonder if they'll treat me as well as Sleepy Joe? They should!"I will be doing a major Fake @NBCNews Town Hall Forum, live tonight from Miami, at 8:00 P.M. They asked me to do it in place of the Rigged Steve Scully (he is now suspended from @cspan for lying) Debate. I wonder if they'll treat me as well as Sleepy Joe? They should!- Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) October 15, 2020Joe Biden participated in an NBC News town hall last week, and he is holding another town hall with ABC News tonight, at the same time as Trump's event.The dueling town halls are occurring in place of the second presidential debate, which was canceled after Trump refused to agree to a virtual format to limit the potential spread of coronavirus after he tested positive.9.33pm BSTAccording to Joe Biden's campaign, the aviation administrator who has tested positive for coronavirus flew with the nominee on Monday and Tuesday of this week."This individual traveled on the plane during the vice-president's trip to Ohio on Monday and Florida on Tuesday, and was stationed in the last row of the 737 aircraft - over 50 feet away from the vice-president - throughout all of the flights," campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said in her statement."This distance is well beyond the standard two rows (in front and behind) of distance the CDC generally uses when conducting contact investigations on aircraft for infectious diseases."Dillon noted that this individual last tested negative on 11 October and sought another test today after developing coronavirus symptoms and being contacted as part of the contact tracing effort from the two other positive test results reported earlier today.Because of the minimal contact between Biden and this individual, the nominee will not be quarantining or changing his travel plans, as Kamala Harris did."As we announced earlier today, Senator Harris' contact with the crew member on her flight, and her staffer, were so incidental that she is not required to quarantine. Nonetheless, we postponed her travel plans out of an abundance of caution given even this incidental contact," Dillon said."Given that the vice-president had no physical proximity at all with this administrative crew member, and that his plane is larger than Senator Harris' plane, and the

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distance from the individual is significant (over 50 feet), there is no reason to even undertake such a caution."Updated at 9.38pm BST9.25pm BSTAviation administrator on Biden's campaign plane tests positive for coronavirusAn aviation administrator who flew with Joe Biden on his campaign plane has tested positive for coronavirus, the Democrat's campaign manager announced in a statement."Around noon on Thursday, October 15th, we learned - as part of our contact tracing of the crew member on Senator Harris' plane that tested positive for Covid last night - that an administrative member of the aviation company that charters Vice President Biden's aircraft tested positive for Covid-19," said Jen O'Malley Dillon in a statement.Dillon noted that Biden "was not in close contact" with the person, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention."In fact, the vice-president did not even have passing contact: this individual was over 50 feet from VP Biden at all times, entered and exited the aircraft from a rear entrance, and both the individual and the vice-president wore masks for the entire flight," Dillon said. "Given these facts, we have been advised by the vice-president's doctor and the campaign's medical advisors that there is no need for the vice-president to quarantine."The news comes just hours after the campaign announced one of Kamala Harris' senior aides and a flight attendant on her plane tested positive for the virus.Updated at 9.41pm BST9.18pm BSTWe'll let the 17-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg speak for herself on US supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett's climate crisis conversation yesterday with Senator and VP-nominee Kamala Harris.To be fair, I don't have any "views on climate change" either. Just like I don't have any "views" on gravity, the fact that the earth is round, photosynthesis nor evolution... But understanding and knowing their existence really makes life in the 21st century so much easier. <https://t.co/R7oOlyBsHC> - Greta Thunberg (@GretaThunberg) October 15, 2020During her nomination hearing yesterday, Barrett refused to say whether she believed climate change was happening and threatening Americans' health.Barrett told Harris, "I will not express a view on a matter of public policy, especially one that is politically controversial."Harris replied, "Thank you, Judge Barrett. You've made your point clear that you believe it's a debatable point." 9.06pm BSTTrump took a victory lap after C-SPAN announced it was indefinitely suspending Steve Scully for lying about his Twitter account being hacked.I was right again! Steve Scully just admitted he was lying about his Twitter being hacked. The Debate was Rigged! He was suspended from @cspan indefinitely. The Trump Campaign was not treated fairly by the "Commission". Did I show good instincts in being the first to know?- Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) October 15, 2020"I was right again! Steve Scully just admitted he was lying about his Twitter being hacked. The Debate was Rigged! He was suspended from @cspan indefinitely. The Trump Campaign was not treated fairly by the 'Commission'. Did I show good instincts in being the first to know?" Trump said in a tweet.It should be noted that Scully sent the tweet at the center of this controversy after the president attacked him as a "never Trumper" because he interned for Biden's Senate office more than four decades ago.8.46pm BSTC-SPAN suspends political editor for lying about Twitter hack - reportsC-SPAN has reportedly suspended political editor Steve Scully, who was supposed to moderate the second presidential debate, for lying about his Twitter account being hacked.The AP reports : A week ago, after Trump had criticized him as a 'never Trumper,' Scully tweeted "@Scaramucci should I respond to Trump." [Anthony] Scaramucci, a former Trump communications director and now a critic of the president, advised Scully to ignore him. Scully said that when he saw his tweet had created a controversy, 'I falsely claimed that my Twitter account had been hacked.'He had been frustrated by Trump's comments and several weeks of criticism on social media and conservative news outlets about his role as moderator, including attacks directed at his family, he said.'These were both errors in judgement for which I am totally responsible for,' Scully said. 'I apologize.'Scully was supposed to moderate the second debate tonight, but the Commission on Presidential Debates canceled the debate after Trump refused to agree to a virtual event to prevent him from potentially spreading coronavirus.8.30pm BSTTrump attacks Fauci after criticism over campaign adTrump also attacked Dr Anthony Fauci during his North Carolina campaign rally today, after the infectious disease expert criticized the president's reelection campaign for featuring him in a political ad.Trump brings up Fauci, prompting boos at his rally. Trump then lies about Fauci's statements, suggested he once said "do not wear a mask under any circumstances," which he never did. "He's a nice guy, so I keep him around," Trump says, dismissively pic.twitter.com/8zBv1E9qVk - Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) October 15, 2020The president mocked Fauci for altering his advice to Americans on wearing face masks to limit the spread of coronavirus."He said do not wear a mask, do not wear a mask under any circumstances" Trump told the crowd. "Then they say, 'Oh, wear a mask'."The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention initially said healthy people without any known exposure to coronavirus did not have to wear masks, but the agency altered that guidance after evidence showed masks could help limit the spread of the virus from people who are asymptomatic or not yet showing symptoms.Trump also said of Fauci: "He's a Democrat; everybody knows that."Fauci, who has led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since

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1984, actually does not have a party affiliation, according to his voter registration. In North Carolina, President Trump claims "everybody knows" that Dr. Fauci, who has worked under presidents from both parties, is a Democrat. His voter registration: pic.twitter.com/PYliifkz6q - Kaitlan Collins (@kaitlancollins) October 15, 2020. Fauci has also explicitly said he did not want to be featured in Trump's campaign ads because "it's so clear that I'm not a political person." "I have never - either directly or indirectly - endorsed a political candidate," Fauci told CNN on Monday. "And to take a completely out-of-context statement and put it in which is obviously a political campaign ad, I thought was really very disappointing." Updated at 8:37pm BST. 8:14pm BST. During his campaign rally in North Carolina, Trump suggested the coronavirus pandemic is going to "peter out," even as cases rise across the country. "It's going to peter out, and it's going to end, but we're going to help the end," Trump said, offering very rosy predictions about the development of a coronavirus vaccine and therapeutics. "It's going to peter out and it's going to end" -- Trump lies about the trajectory of the coronavirus outbreak in the US. Trump then shouts out Ronna McDaniel, who is apparently traveling to political rallies again after her own bout with Covid. pic.twitter.com/zs1CYN26ev - Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) October 15, 2020. But the number of new coronavirus cases is actually rising in many states. The seven-day national average of new cases has reached 53,124, up from 38,216 a month ago, according to the New York Times. Many experts have said the rise in the Midwest is particularly worrisome, as Americans in those states huddle inside more frequently due to falling temperatures. 7:52pm BST. The Guardian's Oliver Laughland and Tom Silverstone report from Atlanta, Georgia: A Republican congressional candidate and high-profile ally in Donald Trump's fight to win over Black voters has admitted to believing a baseless QAnon-related conspiracy theory that the online furniture retailer Wayfair is secretly selling trafficked children over the internet as part of a deep-state plot. Angela Stanton King, who is running in Atlanta, Georgia, for the congressional seat once held by the late civil rights icon John Lewis, told the Guardian in an on-camera interview she believed the debunked conspiracy theory while continuing to deny she was a follower of QAnon. When asked if she believed the retailer was involved in a global pedophilia conspiracy, she replied: "You know they are. You saw it. You watch the news just like I did." The candidate then ended the interview, being taped as part of the Guardian's Anywhere But Washington series. "I don't know anything about QAnon. You know more than I know," King said as she walked away. Stanton King is one of a number of Republican congressional candidates with ties to the far right, antisemitic conspiracy theory. She has almost no chance of winning her race in Georgia's fifth congressional district, which has been held by Democrats with overwhelming margins for decades. But elsewhere in the state, Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican candidate for the 14th congressional district and an outspoken promoter of QAnon, looks set to win a seat in Congress. Related: Trump ally running for Congress believes in baseless QAnon sex-trafficking conspiracy. 7:37pm BST. Trump gets in a dig against Harris while offering 'best wishes'. Speaking at his campaign rally in North Carolina, Trump sent his "best wishes" to Kamala Harris after one of her top aides and a flight attendant she has traveled with tested positive for coronavirus. "We extend our best wishes," Trump said. "We extend our best wishes, which is more than they did to me, but that's okay." "The glass ceiling broke her, but there will be a woman that breaks the glass ceiling, it just won't be Hillary. And you know who else it won't be? It won't be Kamala...but I'm very concerned about her, because 2 people that travel with her...they have tested positive" -- Trump. pic.twitter.com/v484zRmMvT - Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) October 15, 2020. In reality, both Joe Biden and Harris said they hoped the president and the first lady would make a full recovery after Trump announced they had tested positive for coronavirus. "Doug and I join Joe Biden and Dr. Biden in wishing President Trump and the First Lady a full and speedy recovery," Harris said in an October 2 tweet. "We're keeping them and the entire Trump family in our thoughts. Doug and I join Joe Biden and Dr. Biden in wishing President Trump and the First Lady a full and speedy recovery. We're keeping them and the entire Trump family in our thoughts." - Kamala Harris (@KamalaHarris) October 2, 2020. 7:28pm BST. Amy Coney Barrett nomination hearings conclude. Lindsey Graham, the Republican chairman of the Senate judiciary committee, has officially gavelled out the final day of Amy Coney Barrett's nomination hearings. Senator @LindseyGrahamSC and @SenFeinstein shake hands and hug after the #SCOTUS hearings conclude. Full video here: <https://t.co/lKxfaDOLaZpic.twitter.com/rj1diSUxAQ> - CSPAN (@cspan) October 15, 2020. Graham said earlier today that the committee would hold a vote on Barrett's nomination to the supreme court next Thursday, after which the full Senate will vote on her nomination. Given that Republicans control the Senate, Barrett is expected to be approved by the committee and confirmed by the full chamber. As the final day of Barrett's hearings concluded, Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the committee, applauded Graham's leadership over the past few days. Feinstein and Graham shook hands and hugged as they left the hearing room, which will likely frustrate the public health experts who have urged Americans to minimize such interactions amid the coronavirus pandemic. 7:21pm BST. This is Joan Greve in Washington, taking over for Jessica

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Glenza.Trump is speaking at his campaign rally in North Carolina, and he had a rare humble moment when he acknowledged that Jesus Christ is more famous than him. "Someone said to me the other day, 'you're the most famous person in the world by far.' I said, 'no I'm not'... they said, 'who's more famous?' I said, 'Jesus Christ'" -- Trump pic.twitter.com/KaGTYIHdxO - Aaron Rupar (@atrupar) October 15, 2020"Someone said to me the other day, 'You're the most famous person in the world by far.' I said, 'No, I'm not,'" Trump said. "They said, 'Who's more famous?' I said, 'Jesus Christ.'" He added, "I'm not taking any chances."6.50pm BSTEarly afternoon summaryIt's been a busy morning and there's lots more ahead, so do stay tuned. Joanie Greve will be back in the hot seat at the top of the hour and she and Maanvi Singh will take you through the afternoon and early evening. Then, without a gap, they will close this blog and launch the special live blog at 7pm ET that will cover the lead-up to this evening's main event, the competing town hall sessions where Donald Trump (on NBC) and Joe Biden (on ABC) take voters questions. The simultaneous primetime events are instead of the face-to-face second presidential debate that was due to happen tonight. When it was changed to an online event because the president had contracted coronavirus, Trump pulled out.Here are the main events that have happened so far today:

- Vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris has had to cancel campaign travel through Sunday after her comms chief and a non-staff person, who were both on a flight with her earlier this week, tested positive for coronavirus.
- A communications director for Donald Trump's election campaign reported that Twitter had locked the campaign account over a tweet suggesting that Joe Biden lied about a (our note: highly questionable) New York Post story on his son Hunter. Here's a Guardian take on this from earlier.
- Almost 900K Americans made new jobless claims last week, the 13th week of increases caused by the coronavirus pandemic.
- The results of a new national NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll are out this morning, and they show Joe Biden 11 points ahead of Donald Trump nationally, with less than three weeks until the November 3 election.

6.14pm BSTAfter two people associated with the Biden-Harris campaign tested positive, the campaign contacted reporters who might have been exposed to the virus. The White House decided not to contact-trace people who might have been exposed to Covid-19 after the "super-spreader" event in the Rose Garden. Another contrast: the Biden campaign also contacted reporters who traveled with Biden and Harris last week ahead of this announcement, to let them know of possible exposure. <https://t.co/keF7WvdRtK> - Scott Detrow (@scottdetrow) October 15, 20206.05pm BSTNBC has commented on the "frustration" surrounding the Trump town hall tonight, which will compete directly with a Biden town hall. NBC notes it "had no choice" re: scheduling of Trump town hall, citing its Oct. 5 town hall with Biden at 8 p.m. The statement ignores that the Oct. 5 event with Biden was on a Monday and not conflicting with a competing Trump town hall. <https://t.co/Yz1QAm2rwc> - Sabrina Siddiqui (@SabrinaSiddiqui) October 15, 20205.56pm BSTThe California GOP refused to remove unauthorized ballot boxes, which state election officials say are illegal, with Republican party leaders openly defying a law enforcement order. County election authorities in California are responsible for installing official ballot drop boxes in their regions, but the GOP recently put up their own unofficial boxes in Los Angeles, Fresno and Orange counties, raising concerns about potential fraud and voter confusion. After photos of the Republican boxes spread on social media over the weekend, the state secretary of state, a Democrat, warned that they were unlawful and sent a cease-and-desist order to the party. . @MichelleSteelCA proving, yet again, that she's the most corrupt politician in Orange County. Steel's team is using fake and illegal "official" ballot drop boxes. OC voters - these are FAKE. Please only drop off your ballot in @OCRegistrar drop boxes. pic.twitter.com/kAoP1DwdKI - Harley Rouda (@HarleyRouda) October 11, 2020The GOP has refused to say how many boxes it has installed and how many ballots it has collected, but party leaders are now vowing to keep them up, arguing that they are lawful. The state does allow people to collect ballots from voters and return them to county offices on their behalf, but that process is supposed to involve voters giving their permission. In this case, experts warn, the GOP boxes could appear to be official drop-off sites, and that could be misleading voters. Voters can track their ballots online to ensure they are counted. Related: California investigates unauthorized ballot boxes installed by Republicans5.35pm BSTBreaking: Senate Republicans said the Judiciary Committee will subpoena Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey after the platform blocked a New York Post article about Joe Biden and his son Hunter <https://t.co/5TURZPbndQ> - The Wall Street Journal (@WSJ)

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October 15, 2020 Senate Republicans plan to subpoena Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, after the platform made a controversial decision to block a New York Post article. The article itself is also controversial. Here's a fuller explanation from Guardian technology reporter Kari Paul: Facebook and Twitter took steps on Wednesday to limit the spread of a controversial New York Post article critical of Joe Biden, sparking outrage among conservatives and stoking debate over how social media platforms should tackle misinformation ahead of the US election. In an unprecedented step against a major news publication, Twitter blocked users from posting links to the Post story or photos from the unconfirmed report. Users attempting to share the story were shown a notice saying: "We can't complete this request because this link has been identified by Twitter or our partners as being potentially harmful." Users clicking or retweeting a link already posted to Twitter are shown a warning the "link may be unsafe". Twitter said it was limiting the article's spread due to questions about "the origins of the materials" included in the article, which contained material supposedly pulled from a computer that had been left by Hunter Biden at a Delaware computer repair shop in April 2019. Twitter policies prohibit "directly distribut[ing] content obtained through hacking that contains private information".... The article implicates the former vice-president in connection with his son Hunter's Ukraine business and was headlined: "Smoking-gun email reveals how Hunter Biden introduced Ukrainian businessman to VP dad." The unnamed owner of the computer repair shop told the newspaper he passed a copy of the hard drive on the seemingly abandoned computer to Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer. The story focused on one email from April 2015, in which a Burisma board adviser thanked Hunter for inviting him to a Washington meeting with his father. But there was no indication of when the meeting was scheduled or whether it ever happened.

5.22pm BST A Washington DC Appeals Court will, again, hear arguments on whether the House has the power to enforce a subpoena against the former White House counsel, Don McGahn. McGahn was subpoenaed during Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the election. However, the panel will not hear the case until February, after the presidential inauguration. Here's more from the AP: WASHINGTON (AP) The full federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., on Thursday said it will once again take up the House of Representatives' bid to force former White House counsel Don McGahn to appear before Congress. But arguments won't be held until late February and the issue is whether the House has authority under the Constitution or federal law to ask courts to enforce a subpoena against an executive branch official. A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled 2-1 in August that the House lacks such authority. One of the judges in the August majority, Thomas Griffith, has since retired and was testifying in support of Amy Coney Barrett's Supreme Court nomination shortly after his former court issued its order. Thursday marked the second time that the full appeals court threw out the panel's ruling. The panel initially ruled that judges have no role to play in the subpoena fight between the House and President Donald Trump over the testimony of high-ranking administration officials.

Updated at 1.47am BST 5.07pm BST Here's a little more analysis about the anger directed at NBC for giving Trump a 60-minute town hall, which competes directly with Biden's 90-minute town hall. Again, tonight was supposed to be a debate between two candidates, but that was canceled after Trump refused a virtual-only debate. The virtual debate was offered to protect all involved, after Trump contracted Covid-19. The way I read it, the anger at NBC is about a news network bending over for candidate Trump, and creating for him a head-to-head contest he thinks he can win, after he skipped town on the debate, a head-to-head contest he thought he would lose.

<https://t.co/sjmzt3Md4k> - Jay Rosen (@jayrosen_nyu) October 15, 2020 4.56pm BST Dr Anthony Fauci, America's foremost expert in infectious disease, has warned Americans they, "have to be careful" during the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, just a couple weeks after the upcoming election. If you have vulnerable people, the elderly or people that have underlying conditions, you better consider whether you want to do that now or maybe just forestall it and wait," Fauci said on ABC's Good Morning America. CDC director Dr. Robert Redfield warned US governors that Americans were contracting Covid in small, household gatherings. Today, President Trump holds a rally in Greenville, North Carolina at 1pm ET, with "hundreds" of supporters. The campaign is reportedly checking temperatures at the door and giving supporters masks, though few appear to be wearing them. Greetings from Greenville, NC. I'm back on the trail after 2 weeks of quarantine for potential exposure on AF1 the day of the OH debate. (Tested negative 3 times woo). There are already hundreds of supporters gathered here for a rare midday Trump rally in an amped final stretch. pic.twitter.com/cNw46R930m - Monica Alba (@albamonica) October 15, 2020 4.39pm BST The American Bar Association, which prior to the Trump administration assessed the qualifications of judicial nominees before they were formally nominated, is now testifying in supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett's confirmation hearing. Since the Trump administration, the ABA has been largely sidelined, as the administration has confirmed several judges rated as "unqualified". GOP senators love to rip the American Bar Assn as a bunch of liberals when they give a bad rating to a Trump judicial nominee. But behold! The ABA gave

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Barrett a "very well-qualified" rating and its lead evaluator is one of the GOP's chosen speakers in today's hearing. pic.twitter.com/4CuCFgy5WP - Jennifer Bendery (@jbendery) October 15, 2020 4:25pm BST Nineteen days from the election, Covid-19 is spreading at high levels across the United States, including in sparsely populated states such as Kansas, South Dakota and Wisconsin. But the president is still holding rallies with thousands of people, even as the CDC director warns against small gatherings. Billboard outside Des Moines airport where Trump holds Iowa rally tonight. pic.twitter.com/XHix45wzlw - Jim Acosta (@Acosta) October 14, 2020 Here's an account of his rally Wednesday evening from the Des Moines Register: Several thousand attendees gathered closely together to cheer on the president Wednesday in disregard of state and federal guidance to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Chairs had been set up less than six feet apart, and attendees filled bleachers that had been erected. Not only are these rallies considered a threat to spread of Covid-19, but even small gatherings are now seen as a threat. "What we're seeing as the increasing threat right now is actually acquisition of infection through small household gatherings," said CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield during a call with the nation's governors on Tuesday, according to a report from CNN. 4:16pm BST A group of more than 100 top Hollywood stars and showrunners oppose Trump's separate, NBC town hall tonight, and said so in a letter to NBCUniversal CEO Brian Roberts. Plans for a presidential debate were upended after Trump caught Covid-19, and refused to participate in a virtual debate to protect everyone from spread of the virus. Here's more from the Hollywood Reporter : The petition - sent to Comcast CEO Brian Roberts, NBCUniversal chairman Jeff Shell and NBCUniversal News Group chairman Cesar Conde - told the execs, "you are enabling the president's bad behavior while undercutting the Presidential Debate Commission and doing a disservice to the American public." They continued: "This is not a partisan issue. This is about the political health of our democracy." The group includes such current top NBC talent as Chris Meloni and This Is Us star Sterling K. Brown as well as heavyweights Aaron Sorkin, Greg Berlanti, Ryan Murphy and Seth MacFarlane. US President Donald Trump and Democratic presidential candidate, former Vice President Joe Biden, participate in the presidential debate in Cleveland, Ohio. Photograph: Reuters 4:06pm BST A new poll from a critical state in the election, just 19 days away. Biden leads in Arizona, according to a new Monmouth poll there. He's up 7 points in a 'high turnout' electorate, 51-44, and leads by 2 points in a 'low turnout' election. (fwii I would be interested to know what 'high' and 'low' turnout really mean, @PollsterPatrick) - Nate Cohn (@Nate_Cohn) October 15, 2020 3:53pm BST While we listen to the nomination hearings of supreme court justice Amy Coney Barrett, Trump and Biden are gearing up for dueling town halls tonight. Trump tells a Fox Business anchor Stuart Varney, "I'm sure that will be fair". Trump speaking on Fox Business: "The media in our country are the enemy of the people. Remember that." Anchor Stuart Varney says nothing to push back. - David Nakamura (@DavidNakamura) October 15, 2020 Varney: "You have a town hall tonight on NBC." Trump: "I'm sure that will be fair." (His campaign sought it out to counterprogram Biden's town hall on ABC.) - David Nakamura (@DavidNakamura) October 15, 2020 3:45pm BST Back to the nomination hearing of supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett, Democratic US Senator Cory Booker is now discussing the erosion of democratic norms. "We are eroding our norms to the point we are all bemoaning it," said Booker. "But this isn't happening in a vacuum, it's happening in a time of terrible crisis for our country." Attacks on the post office, the census results, and the president's failure to commit to a peaceful transfer of power, the fear of civil unrest after the election and plots to abduct elected officials in the United States are, he said, "stunning". "While we are doing this we are failing as a body to lead in a time of crisis." United States Senator Cory Booker speaks Wednesday of the confirmation hearing for Judge Amy Coney Barrett, President Donald Trump's Nominee for Supreme Court. Photograph: REX/Shutterstock 3:14pm BST A new survey from the Associated Press shows just how important reacting to Covid-19 will be during this pandemic, as the Biden-Harris campaign cancels upcoming travel "out of an abundance of caution". WASHINGTON (AP) Less than three weeks from Election Day, majorities of Americans are highly critical of President Donald Trump's handling of both the coronavirus pandemic and his own illness, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.... The Rev. Joseph Wiseman, a 49-year-old registered Republican and Biden supporter from Wichita, Kansas, is among them. Wiseman said he was turned off by the president's "cavalier attitude" toward the pandemic and what he saw as Trump's "disregard for the health and well-being" of people around him who were exposed to the virus at White House events, as well as when the president drove in a vehicle with Secret Service agents to greet supporters during his hospital stay. 3:06pm BST Harris wore N95 mask during flight with Covid-19 positive individuals Here's more information on Senator Kamala Harris's contacts who tested positive for Covid-19. Harris was on a flight with both individuals two days before their positive Covid-19 tests. The individuals were Harris's communications director, Liz Allen, and a "non-staff flight crew member". Because Harris and these contacts wore N95 masks during the flight and they were not within six feet of the vice presidential nominee for

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more than 15 minutes, they do not meet the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's definition of "close contact". For that reason, Harris does not meet quarantine criteria, but "out of an abundance of caution" the campaign has canceled her events through Sunday. She will still attend virtual campaign events. The individuals were not in contact with the Democratic president nominee Joe Biden. NEWS: Sen. Harris's campaign communications director and a non staff flight member have tested positive for COVID-19. The Biden campaign is canceling some of Harris's planned travel. pic.twitter.com/TBme8kjFv4 - Daniel Strauss (@DanielStrauss4) October 15, 2020 5:22pm BST Harris cancels travel after Biden campaign members test positive for coronavirus - report Democratic Vice Presidential nominee Kamala Harris has reportedly canceled her travel after two people associated with the Joe Biden's campaign test positive for coronavirus. WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) - Sen. Kamala Harris' travel canceled through Sunday after 2 people associated with campaign contract coronavirus. - Mike Balsamo (@MikeBalsamo1) October 15, 2020 Updated at 3:00pm BST 2:46pm BST Outside of the Coney Barrett hearings, the Daily Beast is reporting conservative media mogul Rupert Murdoch believes Democratic nominee Joe Biden will win the election. ... He is now firmly of the mindset that the next president will be Biden, telling one associate, "after all that has gone on, people are ready for Sleepy Joe." EXCLUSIVE: President Trump's influential supporter, media mogul Rupert Murdoch, is telling close associates he believes Joe Biden will win the election in a landslide <https://t.co/qHF40OUlj6> - The Daily Beast (@thedailybeast) October 15, 2020 2:33pm BST Democratic Senator Dick Durbin said the senate committee learned little from Coney Barrett's testimony: "I'd be afraid to ask her about the presence of gravity on earth... We really don't know what she thinks on many issues," he said. "She hides behind originalism," said Durbin. "... We can't get a direct answer from the nominee. We get direct answers every day from the president." Durbin later said, Trump "picked a nominee he believed would achieve his political goals." "This nomination at this moment in time is no usual, not normal and beneath the dignity of this committee," said Durbin. 2:26pm BST The Senate Judiciary committee is scheduled to vote on Amy Coney Barrett's nomination for supreme court on **22** October. The general election is 3 November. Today's hearing begins with speeches from Republican members. Coney Barrett will not actually be at the hearing today. Instead, we are expecting to hear debate from members of the committee. "After [Brett] Kavanaugh, everything's changed for me," said Lindsey Graham, about the now supreme court justice, whose had a bruising nomination process. Graham infamously opposed former President Obama's nominee Merrick Garland because, he argued, the vacancy happened during an election year. He went on to say Democrats should use his words "against him". Other Republicans were also making the case that this nomination process, just weeks before the general election, is in line with history. The nomination is "consistent with two centuries of precedent and tradition in the Senate," according to Ted Cruz, one of the Senate's most conservative members. Updated at 2:30pm BST 2:01pm BST Trump's comms director claims Twitter has locked campaign's @TeamTrump account Trump's reelection campaign director of comms Tim Murtaugh has posted claiming that Twitter has locked the official @TeamTrump account over a tweet suggesting that Joe Biden is a liar over the New York Post Hunter Biden story. Twitter has locked out @TeamTrump for posting video of clips of Joe Biden lying about never speaking to Hunter about foreign business deals. Includes snips of @nypost exposing the lies. Biden doesn't dispute the authenticity of the docs. STILL protecting Biden from bad story. pic.twitter.com/VGJPYGiwIU - Tim Murtaugh - Download the Trump 2020 app today! (@TimMurtaugh) October 15, 2020 And that's it from me in London today, Jessica Glenza will be along to take you through the Amy Coney Barrett hearing, which is starting imminently... Updated at 2:07pm BST 1:48pm BST Glenn Kessler at the Washington Post has been picking through the bones of the controversial New York Post story about Hunter Biden that has been widely pushed by the Trump campaign - including the president himself - over the last 24 hours. On the key issue of whether the email that suggests Hunter Biden arranged for a top executive at a Ukrainian energy firm to meet with his father Joe, Kessler writes: How do we know the email is authentic? We do not. The New York Post published PDF printouts of several emails allegedly taken from the laptop, but for the "smoking-gun" email, it shows only a photo made the day before the story was posted, according to Thomas Rid, the author of "Active Measures," a book on disinformation. "There is no header information, no metadata." The Washington Post has not been able to independently verify or authenticate these emails, as requests to make the laptop hard drive available for inspection have not been granted. The New York Post said it obtained the material from former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, a personal lawyer to President Trump. There also is no indication that Hunter Biden replied to the email. Read more here: The Washington Post - Hunter Biden's alleged laptop: An explainer 1:39pm BST 898,000 Americans made new claims for jobless benefits last week There were 898,000 new claims filed for jobless benefits in the US last week. It's now the thirtieth week of elevated unemployment claims caused by the pandemic, and it was the highest number recorded since **22** August. In addition, another 373,000 people signed on for the Pandemic

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Unemployment Assistance (PUA) programme because they don't qualify for regular jobless help. In total over 25 million Americans are currently receiving some kind of unemployment aid. OUCH! US initial jobless claims totaled 898K last week, an INCREASE of more than 50K compared to the week before. pic.twitter.com/5Ff3A10gaQ - jeroen blokland (@jsblokland) October 15, 2020 1:34pm BST

A reminder that we've got a live online discussion of the US election coming up on Tuesday 20 October at 2pm ET. If like me you are in the UK, that's 7pm BST. It will feature our senior political reporter Daniel Strauss, political correspondent Lauren Gambino and columnist Richard Wolffe, and will be chaired by our columnist and Politics Weekly Extra podcast presenter Jonathan Freedland. There are more details and the ability to book your tickets here: [Guardian Newsroom: The US presidential election](#)

1:31pm BST According to the Johns Hopkins university coronavirus tracker, yesterday the US recorded 59,494 cases of coronavirus. That is the highest daily total on new cases since 14 August. The country recorded 985 new Covid deaths. Andy Tsubasa Field and John Hanna have been reporting for the Associated Press in Kansas, where rural northwestern communities have endured some of the state's biggest spikes in cases last week. The pandemic arrived late, but it's now stressing Gove County, which has had to send patients to hospitals in other towns. The county's 22-bed medical center only has a handful of beds dedicated to coronavirus patients and not enough staff to monitor the most serious cases around the clock. The local nursing home had most of its 30-plus residents test positive, and six have died since late September. The sheriff, the county's emergency management director, the hospital CEO and more than 50 medical staff have tested positive. Even so, some leaders are reluctant to stir up ill will by talking about how often friends and neighbors wear masks or questioning how officials responded. Local officials quickly abandoned a mask mandate this summer after getting heat from some residents and amid Donald Trump's criticism of such policies. The state health department said coronavirus cases in Gove County doubled during the two weeks ending Wednesday, from 37 to 75, and that spike was proportionally among the largest in Kansas. But locally, officials and doctors say the number is actually far higher at 140. "We have community spread to the point that we have not been able to pin down the root cause of any of our cases for the past month," said Dr. Scott Rempel, the county's health officer. The county commission imposed a mask mandate starting 6 August, when only a handful of cases had been reported, but repealed it 11 days later. Rempel said it was "heartbreaking, from a public health perspective." With officials' response to Covid-19 politicized in an election year, Kansas' Democratic governor and the Republican-controlled Legislature have been at odds for months. More than two-thirds of Gove County's voters are registered Republicans, and Trump carried the county with nearly 85% of the vote in 2016. Quinter resident Judy Wolf, a cook at a senior center, said media outlets reporting on the pandemic need to "quit making a mountain out of a molehill." "Everybody's going to get it and go on with your lives," she said. "The only ones that are dying are the ones with other health issues."

1:22pm BST It's not just Trump vs Biden on the ballot papers in November. States will also be giving residents the opportunity to vote on various local issues - and one that could have wider implications is Proposition 22 in California. Kari Paul in Oakland explains: It's not often that the fate of an industry hangs in the balance during an election, but that is exactly what's happening in California this November. Proposition 22, a proposal on the state ballot, is the result of a years-long battle between gig economy heavyweights like Uber, Lyft and Instacart, and their workers, who are fighting for better benefits and protections. It's also become the most expensive ballot-measure campaign in state history, as the Silicon Valley companies that built their businesses around gig labor seek to avoid having to reclassify their workers as full-time employees. The high-stakes face-off could upend the gig economy as we know it and has been called a "bellwether" for worker rights. But who is behind it, and what would the proposition do? Here's what you need to know. Read more here: [Prop 22 explained: how California voters could upend the gig economy](#)

Related: [Prop 22 explained: how California voters could upend the gig economy](#)

12:55pm BST NBC/WSJ poll: Biden holds 11 point national lead over Trump

The results of a new national NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll are out this morning, and they show Joe Biden 11 points ahead of Donald Trump nationally. Mark Murray reports: Less than three weeks before election day, Joe Biden maintains a double-digit national lead over President Donald Trump, with 6 in 10 voters saying that the country is on the wrong track and that it is worse off than it was four years ago. What's more, a majority of voters say they have major concerns that Trump will divide the country rather than unite it - the largest concern for either presidential candidate. The poll was conducted after the president had been hospitalised with coronavirus, and shows Biden's lead narrowing. The Democratic nominee had a 14-point lead in the same poll conducted immediately after the first presidential debate, although NBC note that today's movement is within the poll's margin of error. There's a warning from 2016 about the numbers and their prospects for being right on the night as well: The October 2016 NBC News/WSJ poll from four years ago - after the release of the damaging "Access Hollywood" video of Trump but before FBI Director James Comey intervened in the race's final days -

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showed Hillary Clinton with an identical 11-point lead over Trump. The final NBC News/WSJ poll of 2016 had Clinton's national lead down to 5 points; she won the popular vote by more than 2 percentage points. What is different this time around? Murray notes "just how stable Biden's national lead has been over the past year, including among key voting subgroups like women, voters of color, seniors and independents." Read more here: NBC News - Biden continues to hold double-digit national lead over Trump in NBC News/WSJ poll 12.48pm BST

The latest episode in our Anywhere But Washington series is out today. Oliver Laughland and Tom Silverstone are in Georgia. Joe Biden won the nomination for president on the shoulders of older Black voters in the US south. But how do younger, progressive people of color feel about his candidacy in the southern state of Georgia, in play for the first time in decades? And will a dangerous campaign of Qanon misinformation have any bearing on the outcome of the election? 12.45pm BST

Steve Cortes, Trump's 2020 campaign senior adviser for strategy has just been on Twitter pointing out what he sees as a weakness in the argument the social media company have used for restricting sharing of the New York Post story yesterday about Hunter and Joe Biden. He suggests that the rules, as they appear, would have prevented the sharing of stories about the Watergate scandal had Twitter been around in the 1970s. By this absurd standard, apparently Twitter would have suppressed WaPo's Watergate bombshells -- and the Pentagon Papers? But...somehow Trump's tax returns were just fine?... <https://t.co/SKl0o2XYIP> - Steve Cortes (@CortesSteve) October 15, 2020

As you can imagine, staff at the New York Post have been less than impressed with the moves by Facebook and Twitter to curtail sharing of the story which they labelled as an exclusive yesterday. Business Insider has a good round-up of that angry reaction here: New York Post employees are attacking Facebook and Twitter for slowing the spread of their Hunter Biden story, calling the companies 'propaganda machines' 12.39pm BST

Speaking of Florida and Texas, their combined 65 electoral college votes are a huge prize on election night, and will go some way to determining who wins on 3 November. If you'd like you build your own fantasy election night, then we have an interactive where you can call all the crucial states for either Trump or Biden, and work out each candidate's possible path to victory. Related: Build your own US election: plot a path to victory for Biden or Trump 12.34pm BST

Healthcare has been a contentious issue in the run-up to the election, especially with Republicans pushing through the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to a supreme court which will shortly be hearing a case trying to strike down parts of the Affordable Care Act. Mark Kreidler reports that Trump's attacks on Obamacare could cost him in Texas and Florida: More than five years since saying "It's gotta go", the president still hasn't articulated a plan for a system to replace Obamacare. But his administration's repeated attacks on Barack Obama's signature presidential achievement, along with other policy decisions, have contributed to a dramatic surge in the number of uninsured Americans - and provoked a movement that might shape the results in two huge battleground states. "There is absolutely no doubt that healthcare is one of the top issues in this election and one of the most important for Latino voters in Florida," said Abel Iraola, a spokesman for the Florida office of NextGen America, which supports progressive candidates by rallying the youth vote. "Latino families in Florida are facing the brunt of this crisis on every level, from healthcare to their pocketbooks." This was true well before the pandemic hit, and not just for Latinos. According to a Capital & Main analysis of data released by the US census bureau last month, the number of uninsured Americans increased by 2.3 million in the first three years of the Trump administration - prior to the onset of Covid-19, which has since prompted mass layoffs and job and benefits losses in the millions. Moreover, from 2016 to 2019, the two states that saw their numbers of uninsured rise most sharply were Florida, with 240,000 newly uninsured, and Texas, which saw its count swell by an astounding 689,000. Read more here: Trump's attacks on Obamacare could cost him in Texas and Florida

Related: Trump's attacks on Obamacare could cost him in Texas and Florida 12.19pm BST

Dan Merica has been in Viroqua, Wisconsin for CNN, reporting on the election battle in one of the tightest of swing states. He reports: In an electorate that agrees on little, there is one thing that nearly every voter here in Southwest Wisconsin feels: Exhaustion. That fatigue with politics, aimed primarily at president Donald Trump but also Democrats in Washington and the overall tone of discourse in America, is coursing through the minds of many voters in one of the most politically volatile parts of this swing state. Looking to seize on this weariness, Wayde Lawlure, the chair of the Vernon County Democratic Party paid to have a large billboard put up between the towns of Viroqua and Westby that simply reads "Had Enough?" in block letters before directing people to "Vote Blue" in November. The sign is aimed at fed-up voters like Sharon Seeley. The 79-year-old resident of nearby Grant County voted for Trump in 2016 but regrets it now, turned off by "his lies." "It just makes you tired. Trump's like a kid in a candy store. If he can't have a piece, he breaks everything in the store." Lawlure said that sense of "exhaustion" is something he hears regularly from "folks that consider themselves pretty middle of the road," especially those who somewhat reluctantly voted for Trump four years ago because they harbored deep-seated animosity for Hillary Clinton. "Most

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people don't want the ugliness of the political world to be front and center in their news every day and in their conversations and in their drive to work," he said. "A lot of people are just fed up with the constant barrage of whatever the scandal of the day is." Read more here: CNN - 'Fatigue is a factor': Political exhaustion weighs on voters in rural Wisconsin 12.13pm BST Maggie Miller reports for the Hill this morning on an IT security study that suggests that half of battleground states are facing cybersecurity challenges ahead of the election. She writes: IT security group SecurityScorecard evaluated and ranked all US states and territories on their overall cybersecurity posture between September and early October, examining state election-related websites, along with network security, information leaks, endpoint security and other cybersecurity issues. The company awarded 75 percent of all states and territories a "C" rating or below, including traditional swing states such as Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire and Ohio. Of these, 35 percent were awarded a "D" or below, with North Dakota, Puerto Rico and American Samoa awarded the lowest scores. Only three states - Kentucky, Kansas and Michigan - were awarded an "A" or above, while Pennsylvania and Wisconsin received "B" scores. The lower the rating, the more susceptible the state was to a major cybersecurity incident. The company also noted that the cybersecurity posture of many states had declined during the Covid-19 pandemic due to more government employees working from home, thereby expanding the attack surface for hackers due to an influx of less secure networks. Read more here: The Hill - Study: Half of battleground states facing cybersecurity challenges ahead of election 12.07pm BST Jason Wilson reports for us on how scores of private actors have aided police in militarizing their operations and expanding their surveillance capacities, in a profit-making industry. Scores of private firms, consultants and non-governmental organizations have provided software, equipment, training and information to law enforcement agencies in a burgeoning profit-making industry, according to documents from the so-called BlueLeaks information dump. The documents show how private actors - from major corporations to small-scale contractors - have aided police in militarizing their operations, expanding their surveillance capacities, and pursuing the so-called "war on drugs". Those firms not directly profiting from their interactions with police can often be seen attempting to influence the agenda of law enforcement, or prioritizing police interests over those of their customers. The documents reveal that police are training in the use of military and surveillance technologies of which there may be little public awareness. Read more here: Private firms provide software and information to police, documents show 11.49am BST The president is up and tweeting, and his first campaign message of the day is about Iowa. Donald Trump is claiming that "Nobody has ever done as much for Iowa as I have done for Iowa". Nobody has ever done as much for Iowa as I have done for Iowa - Not even close!!! <https://t.co/vwXnyYs7N9> - Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) October 15, 2020 One thing that he and the Republican party haven't done for Iowa is make it easier to vote during a pandemic. Yesterday Iowa's highest court upheld a state directive that was used to invalidate tens of thousands of absentee ballot requests mailed to voters pre-filled with their personal information. The Iowa Supreme Court issued its ruling in favor of Trump's campaign and Republican groups and rejected a Democratic challenge that argued the directive issued by Republican secretary of state Paul Pate was unconstitutional. Pate instructed county elections commissioners in July that all absentee ballot request forms they mailed to voters must be blank in order to ensure uniformity statewide. Auditors in three counties defied Pate's guidance and mailed forms to thousands of voters with their names, addresses, dates of birth and voter pin numbers already filled in. Voters just had to review, sign and return the forms, which the three auditors said were intended to make voting by mail as easy as possible during the coronavirus pandemic. The Associated Press report that the Trump campaign and GOP groups filed lawsuits to invalidate those forms, saying auditors overstepped their authority. Two judges in three separate cases agreed, invalidating about 70,000 applications that had been returned by voters and issuing injunctions blocking the counties from processing any others. Affected individuals had to fill out new blank applications to request absentee ballots or vote another way. The court rejected Democrats' claims that Pate's directive undermined the constitutional right to vote, noting that anyone affected can take advantage of Iowa's expansive early voting and Election Day opportunities. "In this proceeding, we are not persuaded that the obligation to provide a few items of personal information on an absentee ballot application is unconstitutional, thereby forcing us to rewrite Iowa's election laws less than a month before the election," the court wrote in an unsigned opinion. Pate praised the ruling, saying the court "reaffirmed a commitment to election integrity." "None of this voter confusion would have happened if not for the irresponsible and unlawful actions of the auditors in Johnson, Linn and Woodbury counties," he said. Separately, the court voted 5-2 to grant a Democratic request to review the constitutionality of a new Republican-backed law that blocks county auditors from using voter registration databases to fill in any missing information on absentee ballot request forms. Unlike prior elections, the law requires auditors to contact those individuals by phone, email and mail to fill in missing information themselves. Democrats and a Latino civil rights organization argue the law

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could leave thousands of requesters who cannot be reached in time without access to absentee ballots. Republicans say the law is a safeguard against fraud. The court ordered the parties to file final briefs by Friday afternoon, signaling a decision could come before the 24 October deadline to request a ballot by mail in Iowa. 11.35am BST Joe Biden's campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon expanded a bit on the details of that record fundraising effort on Twitter last night. She said she wanted to share some things she was 'proud of under the hood'. Our success has been driven by our grassroots supporters. \$203 million came from online donors. We had 1.1 million new donors last month - bringing the total to 5.5 million donors throughout this campaign. Millions of Americans, chose to donate \$5, \$10 to be part of this campaign. She also had a warning against campaign complacency, especially among the extremely online Twitter community, saying "We think this race is far closer than folks on this website think. Like a lot closer." Now: Early voting is already underway in many states. Millions of voters have already cast their ballots. But there is still a long way to go in this campaign, and we think this race is far closer than folks on this website think. Like a lot closer. (4/?)- Jen O'Malley Dillon (@jomalloydillon) October 15, 2020 National polls have been consistently showing a large lead for Joe Biden in recent weeks, however, it is how he fares in the crucial battleground states that will determine who is occupying the White House after inauguration on 20 January. You can keep an eye on how those races are shaping up with our US election polls tracker. Related: US election polls tracker: who is leading in the swing states? 11.27am BST Erum Salam writes a first person piece for us today on how millennials are silenced, mocked and dismissed repeatedly for their political choices, and exhausted by the events that shake this nation: As someone who left Texas to escape the ignorance that surrounded me, it was surprising for me to land in New York and find a different kind of intolerance. I have seen many people talk about how much they want Trump out of office, while simultaneously denouncing young people's "unrealistic" and "idealistic" hopes for this country. As a 25 year old burdened with student loans and part of the first generation to be worse off than our parents, I found it disheartening to see my generations' politics dismissed by people with disproportionately less social and financial burdens than their younger, more diverse counterparts. I fled the rampant racism of the south, only to come face to face with the disconnected elitism on the east coast. Supposed liberals, laughing off ideas that would make the lives of the less wealthy tangibly better: a free healthcare system, a universal basic income, the erasure of student debt. These ideas are only radical if you don't need them. My generation is not lazy, idealistic or apolitical. We are the creatives pioneering on TikTok; the generation who needs two jobs instead of one to get by. We work harder than our older counterparts to make rent and pay off student debt, while being dismissively referred to as "side-hustlers". Yes, we are hustlers. But not by choice. Read more here: Erum Salam - Young Texans like me are not politically apathetic - we're tired 11.16am BST Biden and DNC raise record \$383 million campaign funds in September Joe Biden yesterday announced another record-breaking fundraising tally. His campaign and the Democratic National Committee raised a combined \$383 million in September, beating their previous record month by some \$18m. To every person who chipped in a few dollars last month - thank you. Because of your support, we raised an astounding \$383 million. I'm incredibly humbled. There's still more work to be done, but I wanted to share the good news with Trimicka, one of our grassroots supporters. pic.twitter.com/f9hIPT6PTW - Joe Biden (@JoeBiden) October 15, 2020 Slate report that : Biden campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said the vice president's campaign has a staggering \$432 million on hand to deploy over the last weeks of the election, and potentially beyond depending on when and how the race ultimately resolves itself. The Trump campaign has gotten awfully quiet about its finances since the early days of the campaign when it raced out to a substantial lead. Since then, as the president's poll numbers have sagged so have the campaign donations. In August, for instance, Trump and the Republican National Committee raised \$210 million, trailing the Democratic haul by almost \$150 million. Earlier in the week NPR figures showed that presidential campaign TV ad spending had crossed the \$1 billion mark in key states. Biden and his allies are far outspending Trump and pro-Trump groups in the six key states of Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, North Carolina, Wisconsin and Arizona by \$240 million. The Trump campaign is yet to report its September fund-raising results. 11.03am BST Democratic vice-presidential candidate Kamala Harris continued yesterday to grill supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett on a range of issues, including climate change and racial discrimination in the US. Harris pressed Barrett on whether she believed coronavirus was infectious, smoking caused cancer and climate change was happening. Barrett avoided answering directly to a number of issues during the questioning, including one from Democratic senator Cory Booker on whether it was wrong to separate children from their parents to deter immigrants coming to the US. Here are some of the highlights from yesterday's session: 11.00am BST Good morning, and welcome to the Guardian's live coverage of US politics. Today will be dominated by two - well, three really - set pieces. The confirmation

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hearing for Amy Coney Barrett will conclude, and then at 8pm ET Donald Trump and Joe Biden will both take part in televised town hall debates, separately, on competing networks. Here's a summary of where we are...

- On the third day of Amy Coney Barrett's nomination hearings she dodged questions from Democrats who tried to pin down her views on voting rights and same-sex marriage. Barrett also refused to tell VP nominee Kamala Harris if she thinks climate change is happening.
- Lindsey Graham praised Barrett as "unashamedly pro-life," describing her nomination as historic. "I have never been more proud of a nominee," the Republican committee chairman said.
- Virginia extended its voter registration deadline, after an accidentally cut cable caused the state's online registration system to shut down yesterday.
- A judge ended efforts in North Carolina to help voters more easily fix problems with their ballots.
- 14 million Americans have already voted in the general election.
- Social media platforms moved to limit the spread of a New York Post article about Joe and Hunter Biden amid questions over its veracity, angering conservatives. Twitter reportedly locked the account of White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany for sharing it.
- Donald Trump and Joe Biden will tonight hold dueling town halls to replace canceled debate.
- We'll be hosting our own US election debate on 20 October, featuring our senior political reporter Daniel Strauss, political correspondent Lauren Gambino and columnist Richard Wolffe. It will be chaired by Jonathan Freedland. There are more details and the ability to book your tickets here: Guardian Newsroom: The US presidential election

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16T00:47:06ZfalseUStheguardian.comhttps://gu.com/p/f5yyafalsetruehttps://media.guim.co.uk/a494b17be81715d755d0be38d9345052ccc89706/0_149_4474_2685/500.jpgfalseentrueDonald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden will face voters - but not each other - at dueling town hall-style events on Thursday night, in lieu of a presidential debate. The candidates were originally scheduled to participate in the second of three presidential debates in Miami, until Trump abruptly withdrew from the forum after the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates announced it would be held remotely due to concerns the US president might still be infectious with coronavirus. Follow the events live here. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris both flew on planes this week with people who have tested positive for coronavirus. A senior aide to Harris and a flight attendant on her campaign plane tested positive, as did an aviation administrator who flew with Biden. The campaign said neither Biden nor Harris had recent close contact with any of the three people, but Harris has canceled her in-person campaigning through Sunday out of an abundance of caution. There were 898,000 new claims filed for jobless benefits in the US last week. This marks the thirtieth week of elevated unemployment claims since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, and it was the highest number recorded since late August. Amy Coney Barrett's nomination hearings have concluded. The Senate judiciary committee will hold a vote on her supreme court nomination next Thursday, and the full Senate will then vote on her confirmation. Given that Republicans control the Senate, Barrett is expected to be confirmed. C-SPAN has indefinitely suspended political editor Steve Scully for lying about his Twitter account being hacked. Scully, who was supposed to moderate the second presidential debate before it was canceled, claimed his account had been hacked after he sent a controversial tweet to former Trump adviser Anthony Scaramucci. Trump attacked Dr Anthony Fauci during his campaign rally in North Carolina today, after the infectious disease expert criticized the president's reelection campaign for featuring him in a political ad. "He's a Democrat; everybody knows that," Trump said. In reality, Fauci, who has led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, does not have a party affiliation, according to his voter registration. Tonight, Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden will face voters - but not each other - at dueling town hall-style events on Thursday night, in lieu of a presidential debate. The candidates were originally scheduled to participate in the second of three presidential debates in Miami, until Trump abruptly withdrew from the forum after the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates announced it would be held remotely due to concerns the US president might still be infectious with coronavirus. Shortly after Trump's decision, the Biden campaign proceeded to set up a telecast with ABC News in Philadelphia and the commission formally cancelled the debate. But Trump, slipping

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farther behind in national and battleground state polling, was unwilling to cede the prime-time coverage to his opponent. On Wednesday, NBC news announced that it would hold a town hall with Trump in Miami on Thursday night, at the same time ABC will air its forum with Biden. Speaking on Fox Business ahead of the event Trump bashed NBC News and claimed he was being "set up tonight" in what amounted to "a free hour on television". And he previewed the event during a rally in North Carolina by swiping at moderator Savannah Guthrie and other network anchors. "So you know, I'm being set up tonight, right. I'm doing this town hall with Con-cast," Trump said, mocking the name of NBC's parent company. "So I'm doing it and it's NBC. The worst." The Guardian will be following the events live tonight. Chris Christie, the former New Jersey governor and Trump ally who has been convalescing from Covid-19, said he was "wrong" to not wear a mask while he attended an event at the White House and while spending time with Trump. Christie attended the Rose Garden event honoring supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett that has been linked to several infections in an outbreak at the White House and helped Trump prepare for the first presidential debate. In a statement to the New York Times, he said: I believed when I entered the White House grounds, that I had entered a safe zone, due to the testing that I and many others underwent every day. I was wrong. I was wrong not to wear a mask at the Amy Coney Barrett announcement and I was wrong not to wear a mask at my multiple debate prep sessions with the president and the rest of the team. I hope that my experience shows my fellow citizens that you should follow C.D.C. guidelines in public no matter where you are and wear a mask to protect yourself and others. Christie spent time at an Intensive Care Unit, and was especially vulnerable to complications from the infection due to his asthma. While he has at times been critical of the president, Christie has on the whole been a loyal ally of the president - who has it was "a blessing from God" that he caught the virus and has continued to draw maskless supporters to campaign rallies across the country. In an interview with the New York Times, Christie did not directly blame Trump for his infection. Donald Trump and Lindsey Graham are leading in South Carolina, per a new New York Times/Siena College poll. Graham, whose flip-flopping on whether he - as chair of the Senate judiciary committee - would support the nomination of a Supreme Court justice during an election year, has been fighting the toughest reelection race of his senate career. The poll, which questioned 605 likely voters, shows Trump with an eight-point lead and Graham with a 3-point lead. The margin of error on the poll is 4.5%. No Democratic presidential candidate has won in South Carolina since 1976.. Caroline Rose Giuliani has endorsed Joe Biden for president in an essay for Vanity Fair which details how her politics diverges from her father's. "My father is Rudy Giuliani," the younger Giuliani writes. "We are multiverses apart, politically and otherwise. I've spent a lifetime forging an identity in the arts separate from my last name, so publicly declaring myself as a 'Giuliani' feels counterintuitive, but I've come to realize that none of us can afford to be silent right now." Caroline Rose had endorsed Hillary Clinton in 2016, and writes that since childhood she has engaged in debates with her father about LGBTQ rights, policing and other issues. She writes: "It felt important to speak my mind, and I'm glad we at least managed to communicate at all. But the chasm was painful nonetheless, and has gotten exponentially more so in Trump's era of chest-thumping partisan tribalism. I imagine many Americans can relate to the helpless feeling this confrontation cycle created in me, but we are not helpless. I may not be able to change my father's mind, but together, we can vote this toxic administration out of office." Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, is a personal lawyer to Donald Trump and one of the president's loudest endorsers. He has been in the news lately after he claimed to have found incriminating evidence on a discarded computer of Joe Biden's son Hunter. Twitter has been blocking the dissemination of the New York Post article reporting the unlikely and unsubstantiated claim. "If being the daughter of a polarizing mayor who became the president's personal bulldog has taught me anything, it is that corruption starts with 'yes-men' and women, the cronies who create an echo chamber of lies and subservience to maintain their proximity to power," Caroline Rose writes. Read the piece here. Hi there, it's Maanvi - reporting from the West Coast. Here are the key moments from Amy Coney Barrett's confirmation hearings. That's it from me for now. I'll be back later tonight to blog Trump and Joe Biden's dueling town halls. Here's where the day stands so far: Joe Biden and Kamala Harris both flew on planes this week with people who have tested positive for coronavirus. A senior aide to Harris and a flight attendant on her campaign plane tested positive, as did an aviation administrator who flew with Biden. The campaign said neither Biden nor Harris had recent close contact with any of the three people, but Harris has canceled her in-person campaigning through Sunday out of an abundance of caution. There were 898,000 new claims filed for jobless benefits in the US last week. This marks the thirtieth week of elevated unemployment claims since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, and it was the highest number recorded since late August. Amy Coney Barrett's nomination hearings have concluded. The Senate judiciary committee will hold a vote on her supreme court nomination next Thursday, and the full Senate will then vote on her confirmation. Given that Republicans control the

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Senate, Barrett is expected to be confirmed. C-SPAN has indefinitely suspended political editor Steve Scully for lying about his Twitter account being hacked. Scully, who was supposed to moderate the second presidential debate before it was canceled, claimed his account had been hacked after he sent a controversial tweet to former Trump adviser Anthony Scaramucci. Trump attacked Dr Anthony Fauci during his campaign rally in North Carolina today, after the infectious disease expert criticized the president's reelection campaign for featuring him in a political ad. "He's a Democrat; everybody knows that," Trump said. In reality, Fauci, who has led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, does not have a party affiliation, according to his voter registration. My west coast colleague, Maanvi Singh, will have more coming up, so stay tuned. The president is previewing his NBC News town hall tonight by attacking the network. "I will be doing a major Fake @NBCNews Town Hall Forum, live tonight from Miami, at 8:00 P.M.," Trump said in a new tweet. "They asked me to do it in place of the Rigged Steve Scully (he is now suspended from @cspan for lying) Debate. I wonder if they'll treat me as well as Sleepy Joe? They should!" Joe Biden participated in an NBC News town hall last week, and he is holding another town hall with ABC News tonight, at the same time as Trump's event. The dueling town halls are occurring in place of the second presidential debate, which was canceled after Trump refused to agree to a virtual format to limit the potential spread of coronavirus after he tested positive. According to Joe Biden's campaign, the aviation administrator who has tested positive for coronavirus flew with the nominee on Monday and Tuesday of this week. "This individual traveled on the plane during the vice-president's trip to Ohio on Monday and Florida on Tuesday, and was stationed in the last row of the 737 aircraft - over 50 feet away from the vice-president - throughout all of the flights," campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said in her statement. "This distance is well beyond the standard two rows (in front and behind) of distance the CDC generally uses when conducting contact investigations on aircraft for infectious diseases." Dillon noted that this individual last tested negative on 11 October and sought another test today after developing coronavirus symptoms and being contacted as part of the contact tracing effort from the two other positive test results reported earlier today. Because of the minimal contact between Biden and this individual, the nominee will not be quarantining or changing his travel plans, as Kamala Harris did. "As we announced earlier today, Senator Harris' contact with the crew member on her flight, and her staffer, were so incidental that she is not required to quarantine. Nonetheless, we postponed her travel plans out of an abundance of caution given even this incidental contact," Dillon said. "Given that the vice-president had no physical proximity at all with this administrative crew member, and that his plane is larger than Senator Harris' plane, and the distance from the individual is significant (over 50 feet), there is no reason to even undertake such a caution." An aviation administrator who flew with Joe Biden on his campaign plane has tested positive for coronavirus, the Democrat's campaign manager announced in a statement. "Around noon on Thursday, October 15th, we learned - as part of our contact tracing of the crew member on Senator Harris' plane that tested positive for Covid last night - that an administrative member of the aviation company that charts Vice President Biden's aircraft tested positive for Covid-19," said Jen O'Malley Dillon in a statement. Dillon noted that Biden "was not in close contact" with the person, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "In fact, the vice-president did not even have passing contact: this individual was over 50 feet from VP Biden at all times, entered and exited the aircraft from a rear entrance, and both the individual and the vice-president wore masks for the entire flight," Dillon said. "Given these facts, we have been advised by the vice-president's doctor and the campaign's medical advisors that there is no need for the vice-president to quarantine." The news comes just hours after the campaign announced one of Kamala Harris' senior aides and a flight attendant on her plane tested positive for the virus. We'll let the 17-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg speak for herself on US supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett's climate crisis conversation yesterday with Senator and VP-nominee Kamala Harris. During her nomination hearing yesterday, Barrett refused to say whether she believed climate change was happening and threatening Americans' health. Barrett told Harris, "I will not express a view on a matter of public policy, especially one that is politically controversial." Harris replied, "Thank you, Judge Barrett. You've made your point clear that you believe it's a debatable point." Trump took a victory lap after C-SPAN announced it was indefinitely suspending Steve Scully for lying about his Twitter account being hacked. "I was right again! Steve Scully just admitted he was lying about his Twitter being hacked. The Debate was Rigged! He was suspended from @cspan indefinitely. The Trump Campaign was not treated fairly by the 'Commission'. Did I show good instincts in being the first to know?" Trump said in a tweet. It should be noted that Scully sent the tweet at the center of this controversy after the president attacked him as a "never Trumper" because he interned for Biden's Senate office more than four decades ago. C-SPAN has reportedly suspended political editor Steve Scully, who was supposed to moderate the second presidential debate, for lying about his Twitter account being hacked. The AP reports: A week ago, after Trump had criticized him as a

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'never Trumper,' Scully tweeted "@Scaramucci should I respond to Trump." [Anthony] Scaramucci, a former Trump communications director and now a critic of the president, advised Scully to ignore him. Scully said that when he saw his tweet had created a controversy, 'I falsely claimed that my Twitter account had been hacked.' He had been frustrated by Trump's comments and several weeks of criticism on social media and conservative news outlets about his role as moderator, including attacks directed at his family, he said. 'These were both errors in judgement for which I am totally responsible for,' Scully said. 'I apologize.' Scully was supposed to moderate the second debate tonight, but the Commission on Presidential Debates canceled the debate after Trump refused to agree to a virtual event to prevent him from potentially spreading coronavirus. Trump also attacked Dr Anthony Fauci during his North Carolina campaign rally today, after the infectious disease expert criticized the president's reelection campaign for featuring him in a political ad. The president mocked Fauci for altering his advice to Americans on wearing face masks to limit the spread of coronavirus. "He said do not wear a mask, do not wear a mask under any circumstances" Trump told the crowd. "Then they say, 'Oh, wear a mask'." The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention initially said healthy people without any known exposure to coronavirus did not have to wear masks, but the agency altered that guidance after evidence showed masks could help limit the spread of the virus from people who are asymptomatic or not yet showing symptoms. Trump also said of Fauci: "He's a Democrat; everybody knows that." Fauci, who has led the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984, actually does not have a party affiliation, according to his voter registration. Fauci has also explicitly said he did not want to be featured in Trump's campaign ads because "it's so clear that I'm not a political person". "I have never - either directly or indirectly - endorsed a political candidate," Fauci told CNN on Monday. "And to take a completely out-of-context statement and put it in which is obviously a political campaign ad, I thought was really very disappointing." During his campaign rally in North Carolina, Trump suggested the coronavirus pandemic is going to "peter out," even as cases rise across the country. "It's going to peter out, and it's going to end, but we're going to help the end," Trump said, offering very rosy predictions about the development of a coronavirus vaccine and therapeutics. But the number of new coronavirus cases is actually rising in many states. The seven-day national average of new cases has reached 53,124, up from 38,216 a month ago, according to the New York Times. Many experts have said the rise in the Midwest is particularly worrisome, as Americans in those states huddle inside more frequently due to falling temperatures. The Guardian's Oliver Laughland and Tom Silverstone report from Atlanta, Georgia: A Republican congressional candidate and high-profile ally in Donald Trump's fight to win over Black voters has admitted to believing a baseless QAnon-related conspiracy theory that the online furniture retailer Wayfair is secretly selling trafficked children over the internet as part of a deep-state plot. Angela Stanton King, who is running in Atlanta, Georgia, for the congressional seat once held by the late civil rights icon John Lewis, told the Guardian in an on-camera interview she believed the debunked conspiracy theory while continuing to deny she was a follower of QAnon. When asked if she believed the retailer was involved in a global pedophilia conspiracy, she replied: "You know they are. You saw it. You watch the news just like I did." The candidate then ended the interview, being taped as part of the Guardian's Anywhere But Washington series. "I don't know anything about QAnon. You know more than I know," King said as she walked away. Stanton King is one of a number of Republican congressional candidates with ties to the far right, antisemitic conspiracy theory. She has almost no chance of winning her race in Georgia's fifth congressional district, which has been held by Democrats with overwhelming margins for decades. But elsewhere in the state, Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican candidate for the 14th congressional district and an outspoken promoter of QAnon, looks set to win a seat in Congress. Speaking at his campaign rally in North Carolina, Trump sent his "best wishes" to Kamala Harris after one of her top aides and a flight attendant she has traveled with tested positive for coronavirus. "We extend our best wishes," Trump said. "We extend our best wishes, which is more than they did to me, but that's okay." In reality, both Joe Biden and Harris said they hoped the president and the first lady would make a full recovery after Trump announced they had tested positive for coronavirus. "Doug and I join Joe Biden and Dr. Biden in wishing President Trump and the First Lady a full and speedy recovery," Harris said in an October 2 tweet. "We're keeping them and the entire Trump family in our thoughts. Lindsey Graham, the Republican chairman of the Senate judiciary committee, has officially gavelled out the final day of Amy Coney Barrett's nomination hearings. Graham said earlier today that the committee would hold a vote on Barrett's nomination to the supreme court next Thursday, after which the full Senate will vote on her nomination. Given that Republicans control the Senate, Barrett is expected to be approved by the committee and confirmed by the full chamber. As the final day of Barrett's hearings concluded, Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the committee, applauded Graham's leadership over the past few days. Feinstein and Graham shook hands and hugged as they left the hearing room, which will likely frustrate the public health experts who have urged Americans

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to minimize such interactions amid the coronavirus pandemic. This is Joan Greve in Washington, taking over for Jessica Glenza. Trump is speaking at his campaign rally in North Carolina, and he had a rare humble moment when he acknowledged that Jesus Christ is more famous than him. "Someone said to me the other day, 'You're the most famous person in the world by far.' I said, 'No, I'm not,'" Trump said. "They said, 'Who's more famous?' I said, 'Jesus Christ.'" He added, "I'm not taking any chances." It's been a busy morning and there's lots more ahead, so do stay tuned. Joanie Greve will be back in the hot seat at the top of the hour and she and Maanvi Singh will take you through the afternoon and early evening. Then, without a gap, they will close this blog and launch the special live blog at 7pm ET that will cover the lead-up to this evening's main event, the competing town hall sessions where Donald Trump (on NBC) and Joe Biden (on ABC) take voters questions. The simultaneous primetime events are instead of the face-to-face second presidential debate that was due to happen tonight. When it was changed to an online event because the president had contracted coronavirus, Trump pulled out. Here are the main events that have happened so far today: Vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris has had to cancel campaign travel through Sunday after her comms chief and a non-staff person, who were both on a flight with her earlier this week, tested positive for coronavirus. A communications director for Donald Trump's election campaign reported that Twitter had locked the campaign account over a tweet suggesting that Joe Biden lied about a (our note: highly questionable) New York Post story on his son Hunter. Here's a Guardian take on this from earlier. Almost 900K Americans made new jobless claims last week, the 13th week of increases caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The results of a new national NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll are out this morning, and they show Joe Biden 11 points ahead of Donald Trump nationally, with less than three weeks until the November 3 election. After two people associated with the Biden-Harris campaign tested positive, the campaign contacted reporters who might have been exposed to the virus. The White House decided not to contact-trace people who might have been exposed to Covid-19 after the "super-spreader" event in the Rose Garden. NBC has commented on the "frustration" surrounding the Trump town hall tonight, which will compete directly with a Biden town hall. The California GOP refused to remove unauthorized ballot boxes, which state election officials say are illegal, with Republican party leaders openly defying a law enforcement order. County election authorities in California are responsible for installing official ballot drop boxes in their regions, but the GOP recently put up their own unofficial boxes in Los Angeles, Fresno and Orange counties, raising concerns about potential fraud and voter confusion. After photos of the Republican boxes spread on social media over the weekend, the state secretary of state, a Democrat, warned that they were unlawful and sent a cease-and-desist order to the party. The GOP has refused to say how many boxes it has installed and how many ballots it has collected, but party leaders are now vowing to keep them up, arguing that they are lawful. The state does allow people to collect ballots from voters and return them to county offices on their behalf, but that process is supposed to involve voters giving their permission. In this case, experts warn, the GOP boxes could appear to be official drop-off sites, and that could be misleading voters. Voters can track their ballots online to ensure they are counted. Senate Republicans plan to subpoena Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, after the platform made a controversial decision to block a New York Post article. The article itself is also controversial. Here's a fuller explanation from Guardian technology reporter Kari Paul: Facebook and Twitter took steps on Wednesday to limit the spread of a controversial New York Post article critical of Joe Biden, sparking outrage among conservatives and stoking debate over how social media platforms should tackle misinformation ahead of the US election. In an unprecedented step against a major news publication, Twitter blocked users from posting links to the Post story or photos from the unconfirmed report. Users attempting to share the story were shown a notice saying: "We can't complete this request because this link has been identified by Twitter or our partners as being potentially harmful." Users clicking or retweeting a link already posted to Twitter are shown a warning the "link may be unsafe". Twitter said it was limiting the article's spread due to questions about "the origins of the materials" included in the article, which contained material supposedly pulled from a computer that had been left by Hunter Biden at a Delaware computer repair shop in April 2019. Twitter policies prohibit "directly distribut[ing] content obtained through hacking that contains private information".... The article implicates the former vice-president in connection with his son Hunter's Ukraine business and was headlined: "Smoking-gun email reveals how Hunter Biden introduced Ukrainian businessman to VP dad." The unnamed owner of the computer repair shop told the newspaper he passed a copy of the hard drive on the seemingly abandoned computer to Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer. The story focused on one email from April 2015, in which a Burisma board adviser thanked Hunter for inviting him to a Washington meeting with his father. But there was no indication of when the meeting was scheduled or whether it ever happened. A Washington DC Appeals Court will, again, hear arguments on whether the House has the power to enforce a subpoena against the former White House counsel, Don McGahn. McGahn was subpoenaed during

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Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the election. However, the panel will not hear the case until February, after the presidential inauguration. Here's more from the AP: WASHINGTON (AP) The full federal appeals court in Washington, D.C., on Thursday said it will once again take up the House of Representatives' bid to force former White House counsel Don McGahn to appear before Congress. But arguments won't be held until late February and the issue is whether the House has authority under the Constitution or federal law to ask courts to enforce a subpoena against an executive branch official. A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit ruled 2-1 in August that the House lacks such authority. One of the judges in the August majority, Thomas Griffith, has since retired and was testifying in support of Amy Coney Barrett's Supreme Court nomination shortly after his former court issued its order. Thursday marked the second time that the full appeals court threw out the panel's ruling. The panel initially ruled that judges have no role to play in the subpoena fight between the House and President Donald Trump over the testimony of high-ranking administration officials. Here's a little more analysis about the anger directed at NBC for giving Trump a 60-minute town hall, which competes directly with Biden's 90-minute town hall. Again, tonight was supposed to be a debate between two candidates, but that was canceled after Trump refused a virtual-only debate. The virtual debate was offered to protect all involved, after Trump contracted Covid-19. Dr Anthony Fauci, America's foremost expert in infectious disease, has warned Americans they, "have to be careful" during the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, just a couple weeks after the upcoming election. If you have vulnerable people, the elderly or people that have underlying conditions, you better consider whether you want to do that now or maybe just forestall it and wait," Fauci said on ABC's Good Morning America. CDC director Dr. Robert Redfield warned US governors that Americans were contracting Covid in small, household gatherings. Today, President Trump holds a rally in Greenville, North Carolina at 1pm ET, with "hundreds" of supporters. The campaign is reportedly checking temperatures at the door and giving supporters masks, though few appear to be wearing them. The American Bar Association, which prior to the Trump administration assessed the qualifications of judicial nominees before they were formally nominated, is now testifying in supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett's confirmation hearing. Since the Trump administration, the ABA has been largely sidelined, as the administration has confirmed several judges rated as "unqualified". Nineteen days from the election, Covid-19 is spreading at high levels across the United States, including in sparsely populated states such as Kansas, South Dakota and Wisconsin. But the president is still holding rallies with thousands of people, even as the CDC director warns against small gatherings. Here's an account of his rally Wednesday evening from the Des Moines Register: Several thousand attendees gathered closely together to cheer on the president Wednesday in disregard of state and federal guidance to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Chairs had been set up less than six feet apart, and attendees filled bleachers that had been erected. Not only are these rallies considered a threat to spread of Covid-19, but even small gatherings are now seen as a threat. "What we're seeing as the increasing threat right now is actually acquisition of infection through small household gatherings," said CDC Director Dr. Robert Redfield during a call with the nation's governors on Tuesday, according to a report from CNN. A group of more than 100 top Hollywood stars and showrunners oppose Trump's separate, NBC town hall tonight, and said so in a letter to NBCUniversal CEO Brian Roberts. Plans for a presidential debate were upended after Trump caught Covid-19, and refused to participate in a virtual debate to protect everyone from spread of the virus. Here's more from the Hollywood Reporter: The petition - sent to Comcast CEO Brian Roberts, NBCUniversal chairman Jeff Shell and NBCUniversal News Group chairman Cesar Conde - told the execs, "you are enabling the president's bad behavior while undercutting the Presidential Debate Commission and doing a disservice to the American public." They continued: "This is not a partisan issue. This is about the political health of our democracy." The group includes such current top NBC talent as Chris Meloni and This Is Us star Sterling K. Brown as well as heavyweights Aaron Sorkin, Greg Berlanti, Ryan Murphy and Seth MacFarlane. A new poll from a critical state in the election, just 19 days away. While we listen to the nomination hearings of supreme court justice Amy Coney Barrett, Trump and Biden are gearing up for dueling town halls tonight. Trump tells a Fox Business anchor Stuart Varney, "I'm sure that will be fair". Back to the nomination hearing of supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett, Democratic US Senator Cory Booker is now discussing the erosion of democratic norms. "We are eroding our norms to the point we are all bemoaning it," said Booker. "But this isn't happening in a vacuum, it's happening in a time of terrible crisis for our country." Attacks on the post office, the census results, and the president's failure to commit to a peaceful transfer of power, the fear of civil unrest after the election and plots to abduct elected officials in the United States are, he said, "stunning". "While we are doing this we are failing as a body to lead in a time of crisis." A new survey from the Associated Press shows just how important reacting to Covid-19 will be during this pandemic, as the Biden-Harris campaign cancels upcoming travel "out of an abundance

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of caution". WASHINGTON (AP) Less than three weeks from Election Day, majorities of Americans are highly critical of President Donald Trump's handling of both the coronavirus pandemic and his own illness, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.... The Rev. Joseph Wiseman, a 49-year-old registered Republican and Biden supporter from Wichita, Kansas, is among them. Wiseman said he was turned off by the president's "cavalier attitude" toward the pandemic and what he saw as Trump's "disregard for the health and well-being" of people around him who were exposed to the virus at White House events, as well as when the president drove in a vehicle with Secret Service agents to greet supporters during his hospital stay. Here's more information on Senator Kamala Harris's contacts who tested positive for Covid-19. Harris was on a flight with both individuals two days before their positive Covid-19 tests. The individuals were Harris's communications director, Liz Allen, and a "non-staff flight crew member". Because Harris and these contacts wore N95 masks during the flight and they were not within six feet of the vice presidential nominee for more than 15 minutes, they do not meet the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's definition of "close contact". For that reason, Harris does not meet quarantine criteria, but "out of an abundance of caution" the campaign has canceled her events through Sunday. She will still attend virtual campaign events. The individuals were not in contact with the Democratic president nominee Joe Biden. Democratic Vice Presidential nominee Kamala Harris has reportedly canceled her travel after two people associated with the Joe Biden's campaign test positive for coronavirus. Outside of the Coney Barrett hearings, the Daily Beast is reporting conservative media mogul Rupert Murdoch believes Democratic nominee Joe Biden will win the election.... He is now firmly of the mindset that the next president will be Biden, telling one associate, "after all that has gone on, people are ready for Sleepy Joe." Democratic Senator Dick Durbin said the senate committee learned little from Coney Barrett's testimony: "I'd be afraid to ask her about the presence of gravity on earth... We really don't know what she thinks on many issues," he said. "She hides behind originalism," said Durbin. "... We can't get a direct answer from the nominee. We get direct answers every day from the president." Durbin later said, Trump "picked a nominee he believed would achieve his political goals." "This nomination at this moment in time is no usual, not normal and beneath the dignity of this committee," said Durbin. The Senate Judiciary committee is scheduled to vote on Amy Coney Barrett's nomination for supreme court on 22 October. The general election is 3 November. Today's hearing begins with speeches from Republican members. Coney Barrett will not actually be at the hearing today. Instead, we are expecting to hear debate from members of the committee. "After [Brett] Kavanaugh, everything's changed for me," said Lindsey Graham, about the now supreme court justice, whose had a bruising nomination process. Graham infamously opposed former President Obama's nominee Merrick Garland because, he argued, the vacancy happened during an election year. He went on to say Democrats should use his words "against him". Other Republicans were also making the case that this nomination process, just weeks before the general election, is in line with history. The nomination is "consistent with two centuries of precedent and tradition in the Senate," according to Ted Cruz, one of the Senate's most conservative members. Trump's reelection campaign director of comms Tim Murtaugh has posted claiming that Twitter has locked the official @TeamTrump account over a tweet suggesting that Joe Biden is a liar over the New York Post Hunter Biden story. And that's it from me in London today, Jessica Glenza will be along to take you through the Amy Coney Barrett hearing, which is starting imminently... Glenn Kessler at the Washington Post has been picking through the bones of the controversial New York Post story about Hunter Biden that has been widely pushed by the Trump campaign - including the president himself - over the last 24 hours. On the key issue of whether the email that suggests Hunter Biden arranged for a top executive at a Ukrainian energy firm to meet with his father Joe, Kessler writes: How do we know the email is authentic? We do not. The New York Post published PDF printouts of several emails allegedly taken from the laptop, but for the "smoking-gun" email, it shows only a photo made the day before the story was posted, according to Thomas Rid, the author of "Active Measures," a book on disinformation. "There is no header information, no metadata." The Washington Post has not been able to independently verify or authenticate these emails, as requests to make the laptop hard drive available for inspection have not been granted. The New York Post said it obtained the material from former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, a personal lawyer to President Trump. There also is no indication that Hunter Biden replied to the email. Read more here: The Washington Post - Hunter Biden's alleged laptop: An explainer There were 898,000 new claims filed for jobless benefits in the US last week. It's now the thirtieth week of elevated unemployment claims caused by the pandemic, and it was the highest number recorded since 22 August. In addition, another 373,000 people signed on for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) programme because they don't qualify for regular jobless help. In total over 25 million Americans are currently receiving some kind of unemployment aid. A reminder that we've got a live online discussion of the US election coming up on Tuesday 20 October at 2pm ET. If

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like me you are in the UK, that's 7pm BST. It will feature our senior political reporter Daniel Strauss, political correspondent Lauren Gambino and columnist Richard Wolffe, and will be chaired by our columnist and Politics Weekly Extra podcast presenter Jonathan Freedland. There are more details and the ability to book your tickets here: [Guardian Newsroom: The US presidential election](#) According to the Johns Hopkins university coronavirus tracker, yesterday the US recorded 59,494 cases of coronavirus. That is the highest daily total on new cases since 14 August. The country recorded 985 new Covid deaths. Andy Tsubasa Field and John Hanna have been reporting for the Associated Press in Kansas, where rural northwestern communities have endured some of the state's biggest spikes in cases last week. The pandemic arrived late, but it's now stressing Gove County, which has had to send patients to hospitals in other towns. The county's **22**-bed medical center only has a handful of beds dedicated to coronavirus patients and not enough staff to monitor the most serious cases around the clock. The local nursing home had most of its 30-plus residents test positive, and six have died since late September. The sheriff, the county's emergency management director, the hospital CEO and more than 50 medical staff have tested positive. Even so, some leaders are reluctant to stir up ill will by talking about how often friends and neighbors wear masks or questioning how officials responded. Local officials quickly abandoned a mask mandate this summer after getting heat from some residents and amid Donald Trump's criticism of such policies. The state health department said coronavirus cases in Gove County doubled during the two weeks ending Wednesday, from 37 to 75, and that spike was proportionally among the largest in Kansas. But locally, officials and doctors say the number is actually far higher at 140. "We have community spread to the point that we have not been able to pin down the root cause of any of our cases for the past month," said Dr. Scott Rempel, the county's health officer. The county commission imposed a mask mandate starting 6 August, when only a handful of cases had been reported, but repealed it 11 days later. Rempel said it was "heartbreaking, from a public health perspective." With officials' response to Covid-19 politicized in an election year, Kansas' Democratic governor and the Republican-controlled Legislature have been at odds for months. More than two-thirds of Gove County's voters are registered Republicans, and Trump carried the county with nearly 85% of the vote in 2016. Quinter resident Judy Wolf, a cook at a senior center, said media outlets reporting on the pandemic need to "quit making a mountain out of a molehill." "Everybody's going to get it and go on with your lives," she said. "The only ones that are dying are the ones with other health issues." It's not just Trump vs Biden on the ballot papers in November. States will also be giving residents the opportunity to vote on various local issues - and one that could have wider implications is Proposition **22** in California. Kari Paul in Oakland explains: It's not often that the fate of an industry hangs in the balance during an election, but that is exactly what's happening in California this November. Proposition **22**, a proposal on the state ballot, is the result of a years-long battle between gig economy heavyweights like Uber, Lyft and Instacart, and their workers, who are fighting for better benefits and protections. It's also become the most expensive ballot-measure campaign in state history, as the Silicon Valley companies that built their businesses around gig labor seek to avoid having to reclassify their workers as full-time employees. The high-stakes face-off could upend the gig economy as we know it and has been called a called "a bellwether" for worker rights. But who is behind it, and what would the proposition do? Here's what you need to know. Read more here: [Prop 22 explained: how California voters could upend the gig economy](#) The results of a new national NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll are out this morning, and they show Joe Biden 11 points ahead of Donald Trump nationally. Mark Murray reports: Less than three weeks before election day, Joe Biden maintains a double-digit national lead over President Donald Trump, with 6 in 10 voters saying that the country is on the wrong track and that it is worse off than it was four years ago. What's more, a majority of voters say they have major concerns that Trump will divide the country rather than unite it - the largest concern for either presidential candidate. The poll was conducted after the president had been hospitalised with coronavirus, and shows Biden's lead narrowing. The Democratic nominee had a 14-point lead in the same poll conducted immediately after the first presidential debate, although NBC note that today's movement is within the poll's margin of error. There's a warning from 2016 about the numbers and their prospects for being right on the night as well: The October 2016 NBC News/WSJ poll from four years ago - after the release of the damaging "Access Hollywood" video of Trump but before FBI Director James Comey intervened in the race's final days - showed Hillary Clinton with an identical 11-point lead over Trump. The final NBC News/WSJ poll of 2016 had Clinton's national lead down to 5 points; she won the popular vote by more than 2 percentage points. What is different this time around? Murray notes "just how stable Biden's national lead has been over the past year, including among key voting subgroups like women, voters of color, seniors and independents." Read more here: [NBC News - Biden continues to hold double-digit national lead over Trump in NBC News/WSJ poll](#) The latest episode in our Anywhere But Washington series is out today. Oliver Laughland and Tom Silverstone are in Georgia. Joe Biden won the nomination for president on the

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shoulders of older Black voters in the US south. But how do younger, progressive people of color feel about his candidacy in the southern state of Georgia, in play for the first time in decades? And will a dangerous campaign of Qanon misinformation have any bearing on the outcome of the election? Steve Cortes, Trump's 2020 campaign senior adviser for strategy has just been on Twitter pointing out what he sees as a weakness in the argument the social media company have used for restricting sharing of the New York Post story yesterday about Hunter and Joe Biden. He suggests that the rules, as they appear, would have prevented the sharing of stories about the Watergate scandal had Twitter been around in the 1970s. As you can imagine, staff at the New York Post have been less than impressed with the moves by Facebook and Twitter to curtail sharing of the story which they labelled as an exclusive yesterday. Business Insider has a good round-up of that angry reaction here: New York Post employees are attacking Facebook and Twitter for slowing the spread of their Hunter Biden story, calling the companies 'propaganda machines' Speaking of Florida and Texas, their combined 65 electoral college votes are a huge prize on election night, and will go some way to determining who wins on 3 November. If you'd like you build your own fantasy election night, then we have an interactive where you can call all the crucial states for either Trump or Biden, and work out each candidate's possible path to victory. Healthcare has been a contentious issue in the run-up to the election, especially with Republicans pushing through the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to a supreme court which will shortly be hearing a case trying to strike down parts of the Affordable Care Act. Mark Kreidler reports that Trump's attacks on Obamacare could cost him in Texas and Florida: More than five years since saying "It's gotta go", the president still hasn't articulated a plan for a system to replace Obamacare. But his administration's repeated attacks on Barack Obama's signature presidential achievement, along with other policy decisions, have contributed to a dramatic surge in the number of uninsured Americans - and provoked a movement that might shape the results in two huge battleground states. "There is absolutely no doubt that healthcare is one of the top issues in this election and one of the most important for Latino voters in Florida," said Abel Iraola, a spokesman for the Florida office of NextGen America, which supports progressive candidates by rallying the youth vote. "Latino families in Florida are facing the brunt of this crisis on every level, from healthcare to their pocketbooks." This was true well before the pandemic hit, and not just for Latinos. According to a Capital & Main analysis of data released by the US census bureau last month, the number of uninsured Americans increased by 2.3 million in the first three years of the Trump administration - prior to the onset of Covid-19, which has since prompted mass layoffs and job and benefits losses in the millions. Moreover, from 2016 to 2019, the two states that saw their numbers of uninsured rise most sharply were Florida, with 240,000 newly uninsured, and Texas, which saw its count swell by an astounding 689,000. Read more here: Trump's attacks on Obamacare could cost him in Texas and Florida Dan Merica has been in Viroqua, Wisconsin for CNN, reporting on the election battle in one of the tightest of swing states. He reports: In an electorate that agrees on little, there is one thing that nearly every voter here in Southwest Wisconsin feels: Exhaustion. That fatigue with politics, aimed primarily at president Donald Trump but also Democrats in Washington and the overall tone of discourse in America, is coursing through the minds of many voters in one of the most politically volatile parts of this swing state. Looking to seize on this weariness, Wayne Lawler, the chair of the Vernon County Democratic Party paid to have a large billboard put up between the towns of Viroqua and Westby that simply reads "Had Enough?" in block letters before directing people to "Vote Blue" in November. The sign is aimed at fed-up voters like Sharon Seeley. The 79-year-old resident of nearby Grant County voted for Trump in 2016 but regrets it now, turned off by "his lies." "It just makes you tired. Trump's like a kid in a candy store. If he can't have a piece, he breaks everything in the store." Lawler said that sense of "exhaustion" is something he hears regularly from "folks that consider themselves pretty middle of the road," especially those who somewhat reluctantly voted for Trump four years ago because they harbored deep-seated animosity for Hillary Clinton." "Most people don't want the ugliness of the political world to be front and center in their news every day and in their conversations and in their drive to work," he said. "A lot of people are just fed up with the constant barrage of whatever the scandal of the day is." Read more here: CNN - 'Fatigue is a factor': Political exhaustion weighs on voters in rural Wisconsin Maggie Miller reports for the Hill this morning on an IT security study that suggests that half of battleground states are facing cybersecurity challenges ahead of the election. She writes: IT security group SecurityScorecard evaluated and ranked all US states and territories on their overall cybersecurity posture between September and early October, examining state election-related websites, along with network security, information leaks, endpoint security and other cybersecurity issues. The company awarded 75 percent of all states and territories a "C" rating or below, including traditional swing states such as Florida, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire and Ohio. Of these, 35 percent were awarded a "D" or below, with North Dakota, Puerto Rico and American Samoa awarded the lowest scores. Only three states - Kentucky, Kansas and

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Michigan - were awarded an "A" or above, while Pennsylvania and Wisconsin received "B" scores. The lower the rating, the more susceptible the state was to a major cybersecurity incident. The company also noted that the cybersecurity posture of many states had declined during the Covid-19 pandemic due to more government employees working from home, thereby expanding the attack surface for hackers due to an influx of less secure networks. Read more here: [The Hill - Study: Half of battleground states facing cybersecurity challenges ahead of election](#) Jason Wilson reports for us on how scores of private actors have aided police in militarizing their operations and expanding their surveillance capacities, in a profit-making industry. Scores of private firms, consultants and non-governmental organizations have provided software, equipment, training and information to law enforcement agencies in a burgeoning profit-making industry, according to documents from the so-called Blueleaks information dump. The documents show how private actors - from major corporations to small-scale contractors - have aided police in militarizing their operations, expanding their surveillance capacities, and pursuing the so-called "war on drugs". Those firms not directly profiting from their interactions with police can often be seen attempting to influence the agenda of law enforcement, or prioritizing police interests over those of their customers. The documents reveal that police are training in the use of military and surveillance technologies of which there may be little public awareness. Read more here: [Private firms provide software and information to police, documents show](#) The president is up and tweeting, and his first campaign message of the day is about Iowa. Donald Trump is claiming that "Nobody has ever done as much for Iowa as I have done for Iowa". One thing that he and the Republican party haven't done for Iowa is make it easier to vote during a pandemic. Yesterday Iowa's highest court upheld a state directive that was used to invalidate tens of thousands of absentee ballot requests mailed to voters pre-filled with their personal information. The Iowa Supreme Court issued its ruling in favor of Trump's campaign and Republican groups and rejected a Democratic challenge that argued the directive issued by Republican secretary of state Paul Pate was unconstitutional. Pate instructed county elections commissioners in July that all absentee ballot request forms they mailed to voters must be blank in order to ensure uniformity statewide. Auditors in three counties defied Pate's guidance and mailed forms to thousands of voters with their names, addresses, dates of birth and voter pin numbers already filled in. Voters just had to review, sign and return the forms, which the three auditors said were intended to make voting by mail as easy as possible during the coronavirus pandemic. The Associated Press report that the Trump campaign and GOP groups filed lawsuits to invalidate those forms, saying auditors overstepped their authority. Two judges in three separate cases agreed, invalidating about 70,000 applications that had been returned by voters and issuing injunctions blocking the counties from processing any others. Affected individuals had to fill out new blank applications to request absentee ballots or vote another way. The court rejected Democrats' claims that Pate's directive undermined the constitutional right to vote, noting that anyone affected can take advantage of Iowa's expansive early voting and Election Day opportunities. "In this proceeding, we are not persuaded that the obligation to provide a few items of personal information on an absentee ballot application is unconstitutional, thereby forcing us to rewrite Iowa's election laws less than a month before the election," the court wrote in an unsigned opinion. Pate praised the ruling, saying the court "reaffirmed a commitment to election integrity." "None of this voter confusion would have happened if not for the irresponsible and unlawful actions of the auditors in Johnson, Linn and Woodbury counties," he said. Separately, the court voted 5-2 to grant a Democratic request to review the constitutionality of a new Republican-backed law that blocks county auditors from using voter registration databases to fill in any missing information on absentee ballot request forms. Unlike prior elections, the law requires auditors to contact those individuals by phone, email and mail to fill in missing information themselves. Democrats and a Latino civil rights organization argue the law could leave thousands of requesters who cannot be reached in time without access to absentee ballots. Republicans say the law is a safeguard against fraud. The court ordered the parties to file final briefs by Friday afternoon, signaling a decision could come before the 24 October deadline to request a ballot by mail in Iowa. Joe Biden's campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon expanded a bit on the details of that record fundraising effort on Twitter last night. She said she wanted to share some things she was 'proud of under the hood'. Our success has been driven by our grassroots supporters. \$203 million came from online donors. We had 1.1 million new donors last month - bringing the total to 5.5 million donors throughout this campaign. Millions of Americans, chose to donate \$5, \$10 to be part of this campaign. She also had a warning against campaign complacency, especially among the extremely online Twitter community, saying "We think this race is far closer than folks on this website think. Like a lot closer." National polls have been consistently showing a large lead for Joe Biden in recent weeks, however, it is how he fares in the crucial battleground states that will determine who is occupying the White House after inauguration on 20 January. You can keep an eye on how those races are shaping up with our US

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election polls tracker. Erum Salam writes a first person piece for us today on how millennials are silenced, mocked and dismissed repeatedly for their political choices, and exhausted by the events that shake this nation: As someone who left Texas to escape the ignorance that surrounded me, it was surprising for me to land in New York and find a different kind of intolerance. I have seen many people talk about how much they want Trump out of office, while simultaneously denouncing young people's "unrealistic" and "idealistic" hopes for this country. As a 25 year old burdened with student loans and part of the first generation to be worse off than our parents, I found it disheartening to see my generations' politics dismissed by people with disproportionately less social and financial burdens than their younger, more diverse counterparts. I fled the rampant racism of the south, only to come face to face with the disconnected elitism on the east coast. Supposed liberals, laughing off ideas that would make the lives of the less wealthy tangibly better: a free healthcare system, a universal basic income, the erasure of student debt. These ideas are only radical if you don't need them. My generation is not lazy, idealistic or apolitical. We are the creatives pioneering on TikTok; the generation who needs two jobs instead of one to get by. We work harder than our older counterparts to make rent and pay off student debt, while being dismissively referred to as "side-hustlers". Yes, we are hustlers. But not by choice. Read more here: Erum Salam - Young Texans like me are not politically apathetic - we're tired

Joe Biden yesterday announced another record-breaking fundraising tally. His campaign and the Democratic National Committee raised a combined \$383 million in September, beating their previous record month by some \$18m. Slate report that: Biden campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said the vice president's campaign has a staggering \$432 million on hand to deploy over the last weeks of the election, and potentially beyond depending on when and how the race ultimately resolves itself. The Trump campaign has gotten awfully quiet about its finances since the early days of the campaign when it raced out to a substantial lead. Since then, as the president's poll numbers have sagged so have the campaign donations. In August, for instance, Trump and the Republican National Committee raised \$210 million, trailing the Democratic haul by almost \$150 million. Earlier in the week NPR figures showed that presidential campaign TV ad spending had crossed the \$1 billion mark in key states. Biden and his allies are far outspending Trump and pro-Trump groups in the six key states of Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, North Carolina, Wisconsin and Arizona by \$240 million. The Trump campaign is yet to report its September fund-raising results. Democratic vice-presidential candidate Kamala Harris continued yesterday to grill supreme court nominee Amy Coney Barrett on a range of issues, including climate change and racial discrimination in the US. Harris pressed Barrett on whether she believed coronavirus was infectious, smoking caused cancer and climate change was happening. Barrett avoided answering directly to a number of issues during the questioning, including one from Democratic senator Cory Booker on whether it was wrong to separate children from their parents to deter immigrants coming to the US. Here are some of the highlights from yesterday's session: Good morning, and welcome to the Guardian's live coverage of US politics. Today will be dominated by two - well, three really - set pieces. The confirmation hearing for Amy Coney Barrett will conclude, and then at 8pm ET Donald Trump and Joe Biden will both take part in televised town hall debates, separately, on competing networks. Here's a summary of where we are... On the third day of Amy Coney Barrett's nomination hearings she dodged questions from Democrats who tried to pin down her views on voting rights and same-sex marriage. Barrett also refused to tell VP nominee Kamala Harris if she thinks climate change is happening. Lindsey Graham praised Barrett as "unashamedly pro-life," describing her nomination as historic. "I have never been more proud of a nominee," the Republican committee chairman said. Virginia extended its voter registration deadline, after an accidentally cut cable caused the state's online registration system to shut down yesterday. A judge ended efforts in North Carolina to help voters more easily fix problems with their ballots. 14 million Americans have already voted in the general election. Social media platforms moved to limit the spread of a New York Post article about Joe and Hunter Biden amid questions over its veracity, angering conservatives. Twitter reportedly locked the account of White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany for sharing it. Donald Trump and Joe Biden will tonight hold dueling town halls to replace canceled debate. We'll be hosting our own US election debate on 20 October, featuring our senior political reporter Daniel Strauss, political correspondent Lauren Gambino and columnist Richard Wolffe. It will be chaired by Jonathan Freedland. There are more details and the ability to book your tickets here: Guardian Newsroom: The US presidential election

Maanvi Singh (now), Joan E Greve, Jessica Glenza and Martin Belam (earlier) Kamala Harris on Capitol Hill Tuesday in Washington DC. Giuliani and his daughter and son at his wedding. US President Donald Trump and Democratic presidential candidate, former Vice President Joe Biden, participate in the presidential debate in Cleveland, Ohio. United States Senator Cory Booker speaks Wednesday of the confirmation hearing for Judge Amy Coney Barrett, President Donald Trump's Nominee for Supreme Court. Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., arrives on Capitol Hill for the

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confirmation hearing of Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2020, in Washington. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)" credit="Photograph: Jacquelyn Martin/AP" height="300" media-id="a494b17be81715d755d0be38d9345052ccc89706" image-type="Photograph" photographer="Jacquelyn Martin" source="AP" secure-file="https://media.guim.co.uk/a494b17be81715d755d0be38d9345052ccc89706/0_149_4474_2685/500.jpg" copyright="Copyright 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved." display-credit="true" />

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