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Subject: Afternoon Clips – Tuesday, June 28, 2016

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Benghazi News:

Associated Press: Benghazi report faults security; no new Clinton allegations

<http://bigstory.ap.org/34c68bb91bbb41fdb2f8efa210c1d2b5>

Matthew Daly

Republicans on the House Benghazi Committee harshly faulted the Obama administration Tuesday for lax security and a slow response to the deadly 2012 attacks at the U.S. diplomatic outpost in Libya. But they produced no new allegations about then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The attacks, which killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens, have been repeatedly cited by Republicans as a serious failure by the administration and by Clinton, the presumptive Democratic nominee for president. But the committee's 800-page report, released by Republican members, offered no "smoking gun" about Clinton's role. Rep. Trey Gowdy, the panel's chairman, has repeatedly said the report was not aimed at her, though Democrats have accused the committee's Republican majority of targeting her throughout. Campaigning in Denver, Clinton said that it was "time to move on" and that the report had "found nothing, nothing to contradict the conclusions of the independent accountability board or the conclusions of the prior multiple earlier investigations."

Associated Press: Clinton on Benghazi report: Time to 'move on'

<http://bigstory.ap.org/ec3b7c3006d44846abc12308833b8a91>

Nicholas Riccardi

Hillary Clinton said Tuesday the nation should move on after Republicans on the House Benghazi Committee released a report critical of the slow response to the deadly 2012 attacks at the U.S. diplomatic outpost in Libya. The former secretary of state said at a campaign event in Denver that the report involved more than two years and \$7 million but "found nothing, nothing to contradict" the findings of earlier investigations. "I'll leave it to others to characterize this report but I think it's pretty clear it's time to move on," Clinton told reporters. The committee's 800-page report, released by Republican members, offered no "smoking gun" about Clinton's role as secretary of state. The Sept. 11, 2012, attacks, which killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens, have been pointed to by Republicans as a major failure by the Obama administration and by Clinton during her tenure leading the State Department.

Post and Courier: At the conclusion of Benghazi committee investigation, Trey Gowdy has one request: 'Read the report'

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160628/160629449/at-the-conclusion-of-benghazi-committee-investigation-trey-gowdy-has-one-request-read-the-report>

Emma Dumain

U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy came before the microphones and flashing camera bulbs on Tuesday morning with only one request: Read his report. That's a tall order from the South Carolina Republican and chairman of the committee tasked with investigating the Sept. 2012 attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya. The report, the culmination of more than two years of work amidst public scrutiny and political criticism, is more than 800 pages long. "Read this report," Gowdy implored reporters all the same during a 56-minute press conference on Capitol Hill. "You can read this report from pillar to post in less time than our fellow Americans were under attack in Benghazi."

Dylann Roof Case:

Associated Press: Prosecutors ask for mitigating factors in church shooting

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=5h7pWsdF

Bruce Smith

Federal prosecutors in South Carolina want to know what mitigating factors the defense plans to present during the sentencing phase of the death penalty trial of accused Charleston church shooter Dylann Roof. Prosecutors note in court documents filed Monday such disclosure before the trial was ordered in the Boston Marathon bombing case. The documents said that providing the information beforehand will allow the government to investigate defense claims and also help seat an impartial jury. Mitigating circumstances such as drug abuse or mental illness that the defense will rely on in sentencing are generally not required to be revealed until after a defendant is found guilty. If the defendant is found guilty, there is a second part of the trial to determine the sentence.

Post and Courier: Seeking earlier state date, solicitor says Dylann Roof federal trial lacks 'relevance'

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160628/160629432/seeking-earlier-state-date-solicitor-says-dylann-roof-federal-trial-lacks-relevance>

Andrew Knapp

In formally asking for a chance to try Dylann Roof first, Charleston's top state prosecutor argued Tuesday that the outcome of a federal trial would have little consequence on the defendant's fate because of that government's "apparent unwillingness" to execute people. Ninth Circuit Solicitor Scarlett Wilson suggested to a judge during a hearing last week that the state's trial should be rescheduled before the federal proceeding in order for any sentence to matter. She cited South Carolina's "primary jurisdiction" of Roof, the accused killer of nine worshippers at Emanuel AME Church, because local officers were the first to charge him. In a written motion Tuesday, Wilson reasserted her position and cited past rulings stating that federal courts should cede the way to state authorities who start litigation. She said in the document that the federal government moved to try Roof first despite these "rules" set by the courts and "ingrained aspects of our national DNA."

SC Political News:

The State: Ethics panel asked to dismiss complaint against SC treasurer

<http://www.thestate.com/news/politics-government/politics-columns-blogs/the-buzz/article86397717.html>

Jamie Self

State ethics watchdogs will decide within 30 days whether to dismiss or pursue charges that S.C. Treasurer Curtis Loftis violated ethics laws by using his office to help a long-time friend and business associate get a job representing the state in a lawsuit. Attorney Gregory Harris asked the S.C. State Ethics Commission on Tuesday to dismiss the case against Loftis, saying the Republican had not violated the law when he asked S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson to approve the hiring of Michael Montgomery, Loftis' long-time friend, fraternity brother, personal attorney and business associate. Loftis did not disclose to Wilson his ties with Montgomery, who was hired to represent the treasurer's office in a lawsuit and was paid \$2 million when the lawsuit was settled. But attorney Christian Stegmaier, hired by the Ethics Commission to prosecute the case, said the case should go on because Loftis should have disclosed his relationship with Montgomery.

Post and Courier: S.C. Ethics Commission has 30 days to consider dismissing complaint against Treasurer Curtis Loftis

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160628/160629431/sc-ethics-commission-has-30-days-to-consider-dismissing-complaint-against-treasurer-curtis-loftis->

Maya T. Prabhu

It will be another 30 days before the public learns if the S.C. Ethics Commission will dismiss a claim

that state Treasurer Curtis Loftis used his position to help a friend land a job representing his office in a lawsuit. Loftis is accused of asking S.C. Attorney General Alan Wilson to hire Michael Montgomery, a long-time friend who served as Loftis' personal attorney, to represent the treasurer's office in a lawsuit. Montgomery was paid \$2 million when the case was settled. The lawsuit was filed by the state treasurer's office against the Bank of New York Mellon. BNYM was suspected of violating a securities lending agreement with the treasurer.

Morning News: Terry Alexander on the DNC Platform Committee

http://www.scnw.com/news/article_31a2094c-3ce4-11e6-847b-ebba03799d23.html

Joshua Lloyd

All signs are pointing to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton becoming the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, but Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders still has a voice in the party. S.C. Rep. Terry Alexander of Florence is a part of the DNC's Platform Committee to try and help push some of the ideas Sanders advocates and make sure the Democratic Party includes the voice of the millions of people who voted for Sanders. "It's about posturing and making sure some of his platform points are discussed in depth," Alexander said. "'I'll be right there to help reshape and revise the Democratic Party as much as I can, and I'm hoping that as we go along, more people will start to realize that's not a bad thing.'" Some of the issues Alexander hopes become a part of the DNC platform include raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, providing universal health care and reforming a justice system that is tilted against African-Americans and Hispanics.

SC Elections:

Associated Press: The Latest: Handful of legislative nominees to be picked

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=Vy1Gxfgv

SC State Wire

Voting is going smoothly as a handful of nominees for seats in the state General Assembly are being selected in South Carolina. State Election Commission spokesman Chris Whitmire says turnout is light and no problems had been reported at precincts across the state Tuesday. About 14 percent of the state's 3 million registered voters cast ballots two weeks ago and runoffs generally see fewer voters at the polls. There are no statewide races to be decided, and there are runoffs in only six state Senate and seven state House primaries. Whitmire says 14 counties have no runoff voting at all, and only three counties - Greenville, Georgetown and McCormick - have both Democratic and Republican runoff elections.

Associated Press: No Vote: Horry law enforcement merger won't be on ballot

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=UICdG9n

SC State Wire

There will be no merger of law enforcement agencies in Horry County at least for now. Horry County Council had been considering merging the police and sheriff's departments in the only county in South Carolina that has two countywide law enforcement agencies. But local media outlets report the issue won't go before voters this fall because there is not enough time for council to approve the referendum and get it on the ballot. Two regular council meetings next month and in August won't be held because council members are attending state and national conferences. The county police department was created more than 50 years ago because of a dispute between county officials. County voters went to the polls in 1998 but voted down a merger at that time.

The State: Turnout so far light in Lexington County runoff elections

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article86425952.html>

Tim Flach

Voting was light across Lexington County by midday Tuesday in six runoff elections, officials said. County election director Dean Crepes described turnout as "very slow but steady." About 1,500 absentee ballots were cast before polls opened at 7 a.m., he said. The runoffs are for solicitor, an S.

C. House seat in the Cayce-West Columbia area, two County Council posts, clerk of court and register of deeds. All are among Republicans.

Independent Mail: It's 'my privilege,' to vote in today's runoff, Belton voter says

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#label/Clips/155984dedc474ab8>

Mike Ellis

Joyce and Ed Ellison voted in a runoff election this morning at their precinct at First Baptist Church of Belton. Joyce said they haven't missed an election in at least four decades. "It's so very important because we want to know who is going to represent the people," Joyce Ellison said. "And stop this crime and drug dealing." Belton voter Maxine LeCroy said voting was "my privilege." She said people who don't vote haven't earned the right to complain about the results. LeCroy and Ellison declined to say who they favored in the three runoff elections on the Belton ballot. There are elections in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens counties in Republican runoffs, including the top prosecutor for a circuit with Anderson and Oconee counties, two seats in the South Carolina General Assembly, an Anderson County Council seat and three County Council seats in Pickens County.

SC Agency News:

The State: Accusations fly in DOR-Richland penny sales tax court battle

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article86426117.html>

Sarah Ellis and John Monk

The S.C. Department of Revenue is attempting an unprecedented and illegal power grab in trying to control how Richland County is spending the millions raised by the county's penny sales tax, a lawyer for the county argued Tuesday before a state judge. "If DOR has the power it claims it has, it would become the single-most powerful agency" in state government, charged Benjamin "Ned" Nicholson, the private attorney who argued the county's case to state Judge Thomas G. Cooper of Camden. "DOR has the authority to collect taxes – not to say how they are spent," Nicholson argued, telling the judge that the tax agency has a mechanical function – to collect the millions from Richland's penny sales and then automatically turn the money over to the county. But DOR attorney Rep. James Smith, D-Richland, fired back, telling the judge that just because the law says that DOR must turn penny tax proceeds, "that does not mean we blindly pass money to the county."

The Herald: DSS investigating Rock Hill day care where two children walked into street

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/article86254567.html>

South Carolina investigators are conducting a probe into how two children at a Rock Hill day care ended up in the middle of a street before being found by police. Day cares in South Carolina are licensed and regulated by the S.C. Department of Social Services. The agency was notified by Rock Hill police Monday about the incident and its early childhood and education investigation staff is looking into the incident, said Marilyn Matheus, spokesperson for the agency. In the Monday incident, patrol officers found the children after being alerted by a witness who saw them in the street on Ebinport Road. Officers confirmed the children came from Adventures Plus Child Care, 1570 Ebinport Road. Both children were found safe and taken back to the day care, said Mark Bollinger, spokesman for the department.

The State: Lee Correctional dorm remains on lockdown as officials investigate inmate killing

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/crime/article86443297.html>

Cynthia Roldan

A dorm at Lee Correctional Institution is still on lockdown Tuesday as officials continue to investigate an incident in which an inmate was injured and a second was killed. Ae Kingratsaiphon, 35, of Aiken County, was killed Thursday, said Stephanie Givens, spokeswoman for the Department of Corrections. Kingratsaiphon was convicted of murder and had been serving his life sentence since 1999. The second inmate who was injured has not been identified, and the extent of his injuries are unknown. He was taken to an outside hospital for treatment. Up to 150 inmates could be housed in

the dorm in which the killing took place. Lee Correctional Institution, a maximum security facility in Bishopville, is one of the state's largest prisons. It is currently housing 1,375 inmates.

Associated Press: Authorities investigate inmate's death at S. Carolina prison

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=fVzLRk0f

SC State Wire

Authorities are investigating violence at a maximum-security South Carolina prison that left one inmate dead and another hospitalized. Local media outlets report Tuesday that the South Carolina Department of Corrections is investigating the death of 35-year-old Ae Kingratsaiphon. Agency spokeswoman Stephanie Givens says Kingratsaiphon was killed Thursday at Lee Correctional Institution in Bishopville. He had been serving a life sentence on murder charges since 1999. Authorities have not given specifics about the incident or the extent of the second inmate's injuries. Lee currently houses nearly 1,400 inmates. In recent years, it has experienced riots and other inmate violence.

Associated Press: New SC health department site gives public restaurant info

http://m.apnews.com/ap/db_268748/contentdetail.htm?contentguid=kE2BKF27

SC State Wire

Headed out to eat in South Carolina? A new website from the state health department may help you decide where to dine. The Department of Health and Environmental Control on Tuesday announced the launch of a new website called SC Food Grades . The agency says users can find and click on restaurants to view their most recent inspection scores and read the reports. People can also search using a variety of criteria, like a certain type of restaurant or a specific date range. Users can also see reports and grades for grocery stores, food trucks, convenience stores and schools. DHEC conducts risk-based inspections on each of the more than 18,000 establishments in the state annually or quarterly, based on an establishment's food processes and their compliance history.

South Carolina News:

Post and Courier: Legacy of 'transformational' Pat Summitt continues in women's program at USC

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160628/160629447/legacy-of-transformational-pat-summitt-continues-in-womens-program-at-usc>

David Caraviello

A giant, a legend, and a transformational leader. That's how Pat Summitt is being remembered at South Carolina, which is carrying on the women's basketball legacy she created at Tennessee. The eight-time national championship coach died Tuesday after a five-year battle with Alzheimer's type dementia, according to her family. Over a career that spanned 38 seasons, she won 1,098 games, more than any other college basketball coach — men's or women's — and in the process played a major role in elevating the women's game from obscurity. "I'm deeply saddened by what has happened to Pat Summitt. I've been a fan of hers and the way she so passionately and profoundly led our game," Gamecocks head coach Dawn Staley said Tuesday in a statement. "I can't think of anyone whose footsteps I would want to follow other than hers. She has passed the torch to all who coach; it's now our turn to make her proud." Summitt's work remains evident at USC, which has led the nation in average attendance the past two seasons, and won three straight championships in an SEC once owned by Tennessee. A landmark victory for the Gamecocks came in 2012, Summitt's final season, when USC scored its first win ever in Knoxville.

Greenville News: Upstate coaches, former players reflect on Summitt's passing

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/sports/college/clemson/2016/06/28/upstate-coaches-former-players-reflect-summitts-passing/86473542/>

Scott Keeper

In 1981, Barbara Kennedy-Dixon was a member of the only Clemson women's basketball team to defeat Tennessee and legendary coach Pat Summitt. But Kennedy-Dixon says she best remembers

the Tigers' 31-point defeat against the Volunteers the following year. "I remember playing up there and how coach Summitt shared great words of encouragement with me," Kennedy-Dixon said. "I will carry those memories for the rest of my life." Those memories were rekindled Tuesday morning when Kennedy-Dixon heard of the passing of Summitt, who died at the age of 64, five years after she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. "It just breaks my heart," Kennedy-Dixon said. "I woke up this morning and saw it on the news and I just had tears falling from my eyes. She will certainly be missed."

Local News:

The Herald: Feds indict 3 Rock Hill store owners in \$5 million food stamp fraud

<http://www.heraldonline.com/news/local/crime/article86381432.html>

Andrew Dys

Three Rock Hill store owners have been indicted by federal prosecutors in connection with an alleged \$5 million conspiracy to accept food stamps for the purchases of cigarettes, beer and gasoline. In the June 21 federal grand jury indictments, court documents show, prosecutors allege that Li Fang Phu, Hoang Long Huu Nguyen, and Dianne Margaret Phu conspired in a scheme at the former Gas on the Spot store on South Cherry Road, and at the Daily Express Mart on Wilson Street just two blocks from the Rock Hill Police Department, to defraud the federal government of \$5,850,733. Food stamps, technically called the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, are a federal program that gives assistance to the poor for food purchases only. Food stamps by law are not allowed to be used for non-food items. Food stamps were converted from paper to EBT cards in 2002.

The State: West Columbia OKs meal tax, water and sewer rate increase

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/article86417892.html>

Tim Flach

Turning on the faucet and going to a restaurant will cost more soon in West Columbia and nearby areas City Council gave final approval Tuesday to higher water and sewer bills as well as a new tax on dining out, take-out meals, some snacks and bar tabs. The utility rate increase adds up to \$4.50 a month to the typical residential bill for residents of the Lexington County community and about double that for those in nearby neighborhoods. It takes effect Friday. West Columbia provides water and sewer to about a fifth of the county's 280,000 residents, city officials estimate.

Sun News: Why CCU is voting on tuition hike - again

<http://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/local/education/article86386942.html>

Christian Bolschult

On Thursday, the CCU board of trustees will vote for a tuition hike for the second time within eight days. Last Thursday, the board took almost a half-hour before getting enough board members to call into the meeting to reach a quorum, which is 50 percent of the board plus one additional member. The board then voted on a 3.29 percent increase to student tuition, resulting in 1.7 percent total increase in student costs. But on Friday, the school announced that it would have to hold another vote on next year's tuition and boarding rates because the board's bylaws require a notice to be sent to all board members at least five days before any vote on tuition or room and board. CCU legal counsel Timothy Meacham said he received a call from trustee and Myrtle Beach attorney Natasha Hanna, who didn't attend last week's meeting, after she saw the vote and called Meacham asking about whether or not the board had received sufficient notice before voting on tuition.

Post and Courier: \$1B Lorelei project in Charleston 18 months from breaking ground; developers begin seeking input for ideas

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160628/160629442/1b-lorelei-project-in-charleston-18-months-from-breaking-ground-developers-begin-seeking-input-for-ideas>

Warren L. Wise

The first sprouts of development on the proposed \$1 billion Lorelei project off Charleston's upper

peninsula are at least 18 months away, but those involved in the massive undertaking are seeking input from the community well ahead of any shovels digging into the 160-acre undeveloped island. On Monday, Lorelei team members fielded questions about the mixed-use project on Laurel Island and talked about urbanism and walkable communities for what developers call “a relief valve” for congestion in the booming downtown area. Plans for the industrial-zoned island at the end of Romney Street call for retail, restaurants with waterfront patios, a locally curated food hall, hotel, meeting space, offices, upscale apartments, homes, an entertainment venue on the water, community gathering spaces, hiking and biking trails, boat access and parking.

Post and Courier: SCE&G files for new rate increase to fund nuclear plant construction

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160628/160629448/sceg-files-for-new-rate-increase-to-fund-nuclear-plant-construction>

David Wren

South Carolina Electric & Gas is asking state regulators to approve a rate increase under a state law that lets the utility charge customers in advance for the financing costs of two new reactors at the V. C. Summer nuclear plant in Jenkinsville. The proposed increase, which needs approval from the state’s Public Service Commission, would boost residential customers’ rates by 3.1 percent, or an average of \$4.44 per bill for those using 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per month. Commercial customers would see their rates increase by between 3 percent and 3.3 percent, depending on the size of the business. SCE&G said in a news release that the rate increase would be offset by lower fuel costs that were passed along to consumers earlier this year.

Greenville News: Concentrix adding 300 call center jobs

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/money/business/2016/06/28/concentrix-adding-300-call-center-jobs/86434046/>

Rudolph Bell

Concentrix Corp. is expanding its Greenville call center operations, planning 1,500 employees in nearly 250,000 square feet of office space by the end of the year. The company said Tuesday it would add 300 more workers at its existing operations at the Wade Hampton Office Park, for a total of 1,500. The company, based in Fremont, California, provides a wide range of support services, such as technical support, for more than 400 clients. It’s a subsidiary of Synnex Corp., which is also based in Fremont and whose U.S. distribution headquarters is located in Greenville. Concentrix President Chris Caldwell and other senior managers were on hand for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Wade Hampton complex Tuesday.

Post and Courier: Erosion control sea walls spur complaints from sea turtle nesting monitors

<http://www.postandcourier.com/20160627/160629477/erosion-control-sea-walls-spur-complaints-from-sea-turtle-nesting-monitors>

Bo Petersen

Threatened sea turtles have run into the wall, scrambled to find their way around it or turned and gone back to sea. That’s the nub of a complaint to the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control by two environmental groups concerning experimental “wave dissipation devices” installed in front of Wild Dunes properties to stave off severe erosion that is threatening condos and houses. The device consists of vertically set pipes and connecting strip panels that leave openings. The idea is to break up the storm waves that cause the worst beach erosion but allow water and fine sand to pass back and forth between the pipes, simulating the flow on an unobstructed beach. It does not prevent erosion, but keeps it in check.

National News:

Associated Press: Buddy Ryan, NFL coach and defensive mastermind, dies at 82

<http://bigstory.ap.org/9eca88520c784eaba6650e33233d6015>

Barry Wilner

Buddy Ryan took a back seat to no one. Neither did his fierce defenses that won two Super Bowls. The pugnacious coach and defensive mastermind whose twin sons have been successful NFL coaches, died Tuesday. He was 82. His death was confirmed by the Buffalo Bills, where Rex Ryan is the head coach and Rob Ryan an assistant. James Solano, Buddy Ryan's agent, said he died in Kentucky but did not give a cause. Ryan lived on a ranch in Shelbyville. "His knowledge, passion for football and the love he had for his players and coaches are traits that have shaped and influenced so many careers, including my own," said Rams coach Jeff Fisher, who played for and got his coaching start under Ryan.

Associated Press: Pat Summitt, winningest coach in D1 history, has died at 64

<http://bigstory.ap.org/9b64a2d2cb0a4306a1c6b15c1e8ed41c>

Steve Megargee

Pat Summitt, the winningest coach in Division I college basketball history who lifted the women's game to national prominence during her 38-year career at Tennessee, died Tuesday. She was 64. With an icy glare on the sidelines, Summitt led the Lady Vols to eight national championships and prominence on a campus steeped in the traditions of the football-rich south until she retired in 2012. Her son, Tyler Summitt, issued a statement Tuesday morning saying his mother died peacefully at Sherrill Hill Senior Living in Knoxville surrounded by those who loved her most. "Since 2011, my mother has battled her toughest opponent, early onset dementia, 'Alzheimer's Type,' and she did so with bravely fierce determination just as she did with every opponent she ever faced," Tyler Summitt said. "Even though it's incredibly difficult to come to terms that she is no longer with us, we can all find peace in knowing she no longer carries the heavy burden of this disease."

Associated Press: Trump takes on trade deals in Pennsylvania speech

<http://bigstory.ap.org/73feecb532c0410cbfd77e3910d40054>

Jill Colvin

Republican Donald Trump took aim at U.S. free trade deals in a speech delivered in Western Pennsylvania Tuesday that painted his likely Democratic rival Hillary Clinton as a champion of the kind of globalization that has pushed manufacturing jobs overseas. "This wave of globalization has wiped out totally, totally our middle class," said Trump, standing in front of stacks of compressed metal on the floor of Alumisource, a plant that provides aluminum scrap and other raw materials to the aluminum and steel industries. "It doesn't have to be this way. We can turn it around and we can turn it around fast." The speech, delivered in the heart of America's struggling rust belt, stressed a central premise of his campaign: that global free trade — a Republican Party staple for decades — has hurt American workers because deals have been negotiated poorly. Trump has vowed to bring back manufacturing jobs, in part, by slapping tariffs on goods produced by companies that move manufacturing jobs offshore.

Associated Press: Supreme Court leans left in term unsettled by Scalia's death

<http://bigstory.ap.org/e6e3e434ccf14efd8e8ee681e5baa4c9>

Mark Sherman

Justice Antonin Scalia's sudden death transformed the Supreme Court's term, shifted power to its liberal wing and started a transition that will be greatly affected by who wins the presidency. It was a term unusual in other ways, too. Justice Clarence Thomas broke a 10-year silence following his good friend's death to ask questions during an oral argument. Senate Republicans shunned any action on President Barack Obama's nominee to restore the court to its full nine-member strength. And four cases ended in 4-4 ties. Major decisions underscoring abortion rights and constraining corruption prosecutions of public officials would have come out the same way had Scalia remained on the court. But his death led directly to an unexpected majority to uphold race-conscious college admissions policies. Another major goal of conservatives, to rein in the power of labor unions, was unattainable at the court without Scalia.

Associated Press: US official says anti-Islamic State forces gaining momentum

<http://bigstory.ap.org/6e5e9abd968e4a0da74a73994541c0f7>

Richard Lardner

The U.S. representative to the anti-Islamic State coalition told Congress on Tuesday that morale inside the extremist group is plummeting, as the forces arrayed against it are gaining momentum. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Special Presidential Envoy Brett McGurk said the Islamic State's days in Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, are "numbered" as lawmakers called for the Obama administration to move faster to defeat the extremists. The Islamic State remains firmly in control of Mosul, which was once home to a million people. Iraqi leaders have pledged to liberate Mosul this year. But McGurk said the U.S. won't put a timeline on the Mosul operation.

World News:

Associated Press: EU leaders plot a future without Britain, demand answers

<http://bigstory.ap.org/f5fab9b3829e452989a81955faa5a1b1>

Raf Casert and Lorne Cook

British Prime Minister David Cameron fended off anger from other European Union leaders at an unprecedented summit charged with uncertainty about the union's future without Britain. Leader after leader rejected Cameron's pleas for favorable conditions for Britain once it leaves, while he frustrated them by refusing to initiate the divorce proceedings just yet. At what may be his last EU gathering, Cameron sat at one end of the oval summit table in blue shirt sleeves, arguing for the best possible exit conditions for his island nation. Around the table, other EU leaders refused to negotiate, seemingly eager to kick Britain out as soon as possible to avoid further political and economic turmoil after the shock and emotion of the British vote to leave last week. "Europe is ready to start the divorce process, even today, without any enthusiasm, as you can imagine," said summit host, EU President Donald Tusk.

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