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Congressional Black Caucus Holds National Speak Out to Address Gun - Violence in America Washington, D.C. - Recently, Congressional Black Caucus Chairman G. K. Butterfield (D-NC), Assistant Democratic Leader James E. Clyburn (D-SC), Representative John Lewis (D-GA), and members of the CBC joined Democrats and supporters from across the country to hold 'Lighting the Way,' a National Speak Out on the path forward on gun violence.

Above Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Rep. G.K. Butterfield.

"Members of the CBC have long advocated for common sense legislation on our nation's gun violence epidemic," said Chairman Butterfield. "The CBC will continue our efforts in support of legislation that will create common sense gun laws, hold police accountable and strengthen community relations with law enforcement.

"America is facing a serious problem with the issue of gun violence and tonight's Speak Out allows us another opportunity to bring attention to the urgent need for Congress to work toward finding a solution to an issue that has affected each of us."

Obama urges Americans to tamp down inflammatory rhetoric

By Kevin Freking

WASHINGTON (AP) - Confronting another killing of police officers, President Barack Obama on July 17 urged Americans to tamp down inflammatory words and actions as a violent summer collides with the nation's heated presidential campaign.

Obama said the motive behind Sunday's killing of three officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was still unknown. It was the latest in a string of deadly incidents involving law enforcement, including the police shooting of a black man in Baton Rouge and the killing of five officers in Dallas.

"We as a nation have to be loud and clear that nothing justifies attacks on law enforcement," Obama said in remarks from the White House briefing room.

The president spoke on the eve of the Republican Party's national convention, where Donald Trump will officially accept the GOP nomination. The businessman has cast the recent incidents as a sign that the country needs new leadership, often using heated rhetoric to make his point.

Obama said that going into the political conventions, elected officials and interest groups should focus their words and actions on uniting the country, rather than dividing it.

political points or to advance an agenda. We need to temper our words and open our hearts ... all of us,"

"We don't need inflammatory rhetoric. We don't need careless accusations thrown around to score

Obama said. The president also seemed intent on demonstrating again his support for law enforcement. Some organizations have cast doubt on that support. The National Association of Police Organizations said after the Dallas shooting that America was in the midst of a war on law enforcement officers. The group said

the administration needed to show political leadership by "supporting them and giving them the resources they need to protect themselves and their communities." "Attacks on police are an attack on all of us and the rule of law that makes society possible," Obama

The president spoke earlier Sunday with Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards and Baton Rouge Mayor

Kip Holden to hear the latest on the investigation into the shootings and pledge federal support.

Obama has spent most of the last week focused on defusing tensions and rebuilding trust between police departments and the communities they serve.

On July 7, an Army veteran opened fire on law enforcement in Dallas, killing five and wounding seven other officers. The shooter, who was black, said he wanted to kill white people, especially white officers. Obama spoke at the memorial service for the officers killed and told Americans not to despair, that the nation is not as divided as it might seem.

In his remarks Sunday, Obama reminded people that he had also said the Dallas shooter would not be the last person to try to make Americans turn on each other.

"Nor will today's killer. It remains up to us to make sure that they fail. That decision is all of ours,"

Following the Dallas memorial, Obama held an extraordinary four-hour meeting at the White House's executive offices with police officers, community activists and elected leaders. He emerged from the session saying "we're not even close" to the point where minority communities could feel confident that police departments were serving them with respect and equality or where police departments could feel adequately supported at all levels. He also said the country would have to "just grind it out" in solving

The shooting of the police officers in Dallas and Baton Rouge were preceded by police shootings of two black men, Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge and Philando Castile in suburban St. Paul, Minnesota, which sparked protests around the country. Dallas police were defending protesters in that city when the gunman opened fire on them.

AP White House Correspondent Julie Pace in Cleveland contributed to this report.



President Barack Obama talks with Mick McHale, President, National Association of Police Organizations, after meeting with activists, civil rights, faith, law enforcement and elected leaders on building community trust, in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building of the White House, July 13, 2016. In the background, Black Lives Matter activist Mica Grimm hugs Col. Michael D. Edmonson, Superintendent of Police, Louisiana State Police. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

Red Cross opens shelter after flash floods in central NC

(AP) - The American Red Cross opened a shelter July 17 for people forced to evacuate their homes after flooding caused by heavy rains that lashed across central North Carolina.

Six people quickly checked into the shelter at Hillside High School in Durham, Red Cross spokeswoman Brittany Jennings said.

Severe storms that rolled through central North Carolina late Saturday, July 16 brought some of their biggest impact to Wake, Durham, Nash and Edgecombe counties. Raleigh officials had to use boats to rescue people from their flooded homes and cars.

Shoppers and employees at Crabtree Valley Mall were stranded Saturday night as water rose in the mall's parking garage rose to the point that some cars were half submerged.

One motorcyclist was killed by lightning Saturday on Blue Ridge Parkway near Mount Mitchell State Park, The Gaston Gazette reported. Scott Pasour of Dallas was stopped at the roadside with two other motorcyclists and pulling on rain gear when the lightning bolt struck him. The other men reported they did not see lightning or hear thunder in the area before Pasour was struck in the helmet by a bolt from the sky. In Johnston County, a motorcycle club was holding a picnic when lightning struck a nearby a tree,

knocking a handful of people off their feet and out of their chairs.

Durham Committee Founder's Day Banquet

Get your tickets today for our 81st Founders' Day Banquet!

The Committee will be honoring Ms. Mayme Webb-Bledsoe, a legend of Durham grassroots community work, and the Honorable Charles Becton, the former Chancellor of North Carolina Central University and former North Carolina Court of Appeals Judge. The affair will be held at the Durham Convention Center and will be hosted by Brian Dawson and Karen Clark of Radio One. The keynote speaker will be **Roland Martin. This evening promises** to be one of honor, inspiration and celebration.

FOR TICKETS: Call 919-451-6332 or 919-423-6179. \$65 includes dinner



LGBT rights trial could take place close to Election Day

By Jonathan Drew and Gary D. Robertson

RALEIGH (AP) - Dueling lawsuits over a North Carolina law limiting protections for LGBT people will likely go to trial around Election Day, putting the divisive issue in the spotlight as voters prepare to cast ballots in the closely watched governor's race.

U.S. District Court Judge Thomas Schroeder issued an order on July 14 saying he expected to try the cases involving a law known as House Bill 2 in late October or early November 2016, which is when lawyers told him they would be ready.

The judge scheduled an Aug. 1 hearing on the American Civil Liberties Union's request for an injunction blocking a key provision of the law that requires transgender people to use restrooms in many public buildings that are consistent with the sex on their birth certificate.

The judge asked lawyers to discuss ways to eliminate certain redundant parts of the cases with an eye toward consolidating them. Two lawsuits challenging the law and two defending it are assigned to Schroeder, who remarked that he wants to avoid "multiple, piecemeal considerations of the overlapping and closely-related issues." A fifth case over the law is pending before a judge in a different court.

Carl Tobias, a University of Richmond law professor, said it appears that Schroeder and the lawyers want a swift resolution, but there could be still be delays.

"It seems like everybody's trying to deal in good faith and get things moving," he said. "But you never know. There can be bumps, and all kinds of things can happen."

The ACLU and Lambda Legal, which challenged the law on behalf of transgender clients, issued a

statement saying they're eager to have their day in court. "Every day that House Bill 2 remains on the books, transgender North Carolinians suffer irreparable harm at work, in school, and in other public places, simply because they want to use public facilities

safely just like everyone," the groups said. The law enacted in March also excludes sexual orientation and gender identity from antidiscrimination protections related to the workplace, hotels and restaurants; and overrules local antidiscrimination

It has drawn high-profile supporters and critics. Nearly two dozen other states are fighting President Barack Obama's administration, which has issued guidelines urging schools to allow transgender students to use bathrooms corresponding to their gender identity. A draft this week of the platform for the Republican National Convention offers a "salute" to the states.

Meanwhile, 68 companies signed an amicus brief recently supporting challenges to the law. The NBA has been deciding whether to remove the 2017 All-Star Game from Charlotte, and league commissioner Adam Silver said this week he's disappointed with a lack of progress on changing the law.

During the legislative session that ended this month, lawmakers restored the ability of workers to use state law to sue over employment discrimination on the basis of race, religion and other factors - but left gender identity and sexual orientation unprotected.

Alfredo Rodriguez, a Republican political consultant in Charlotte, said he doubts GOP candidates will be hurt in November because legislative leaders defending the law "are reflecting the sentiment of voters across the state."

In an interview he gave before Schroeder issued his order, Rodriguez also argued that voters care more about other issues.

"The attention span that the public has on H.B. 2 is diminishing with every passing day," he said. But Chris Cooper, a political scientist at Western Carolina University, said the protracted legal fight

could help mobilize Democrats and unaffiliated voters who lean left. "The average voter is going to think this seems messy," he said. "The more this is in the courts, the more it's a question about what's going to happen going forward, the worse people feel about their state government in general, regardless of party. In an era where people aren't trusting government very much, this debate doesn't help.'

Even before the trials were scheduled so close to the elections, H.B. 2 was expected to influence turnout in the race between Republican Gov. Pat McCrory, who supports the law, and Democratic state Attorney General Roy Cooper, who opposes it.