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Inside Track

County Officials Vote Themselves Bonuses From COVID-19 Relief



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While millions of Americans remain unemployed, commissioners of a Michigan county voted themselves and other county employees thousands of dollars in “hazard pay” out of federal COVID-19 relief funds.

On July 15, Shiawassee County commissioners voted unanimously (except for one absent commissioner) to distribute American Rescue Plan Act money to county officials and employees. That cash was intended to help businesses and local governments weather the storm caused by government overreaction to the virus.

As WILX-TV reported July 21, “The average payment for each employee was \$2,100.” The minimum payment was \$1,000, though commissioners and other officials received many times that, reported the Associated Press July 22. Board of Commissioners Chairman Jeremy Root, County Administrator Brian Boggs, and Sheriff Brian BeGole received \$25,000 each. County Prosecutor Scott Koerner raked in half that. Commissioners John Plowman and Brandon Marks snagged \$10,000 each, while the other commissioners, except Root, got \$5,000 apiece.

“I think that I earned it,” Commissioner Cindy Garber told WILX-TV. “I work really hard at this job. I was here in-person all through this crazy year.” Garber made \$14,000 in her part-time position last year, and received a \$5,000 bonus “that she plans to spend,” the station noted.

Commissioner Marlene Webster, on the other hand, said she was shocked when the extra \$5,000 appeared in her bank account and promptly posted a picture of the payment on Facebook. She told WILX-TV she was “giving the money back.”

Nichole Ruggiero of Owosso sued the board of commissioners not so much for voting themselves money but for allegedly going about it in an underhanded way. She charged that the commissioners violated the state’s Open Meetings Act by discussing the details of the bonus proposal in closed session and then voting on it after returning to open session.



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On July 26, Genesee County Circuit Judge Mark Latchana granted Ruggiero's request for a preliminary injunction rescinding the payments until the commissioners meet again to reconsider them. One presumes they will be more circumspect in their deliberations next time.

by [Michael Tennant](#)

Hurricanes Not Stronger or More Frequent or Due to Climate Change



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A study published July 13 in the scientific journal *Nature Communications*, titled "Changes in Atlantic major hurricane frequency since the late 19th century," concludes that a recent uptick in the number of named hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean is not due to so-called climate change. The study instead concludes that any increase in hurricanes is more likely due to natural variability in weather patterns over time.

Last year, we were inundated with pronouncements that 2020 had been a "record year" for Atlantic hurricanes, and climate alarmists told us that climate change was to blame. A study of satellite images dating all the way back to 1979 told us in breathless tones that the likelihood of Category 3 storms (top winds of 111 mph or higher) was rising by eight percent per decade due to human-caused global warming.

Maybe not, say the new study's authors, who include Gabriel Vecchi of Princeton, Christopher Landsea of NOAA, Wei Zhang of Utah State, Gabriele Villarini of the University of Iowa, and Thomas Knutson of NOAA.

The study suggests that the recent uptick in named storms can be explained by a number of factors, including observation bias. In other words, since the advent of satellites in the late 1960s, we're able to see more storms than we could in the past, thus the storms of the past are likely underrepresented in the data.

The researchers were able to find no evidence of a larger-than-usual number of hurricanes in recent decades when compared to the old-school data. Indeed, they show that the increase in hurricanes in current decades is similar to previous spikes in hurricane activity in the early 1880s and late 1940s.



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They also find no evidence that the storms of today are more intense than historical storms.

The researchers also conclude that the recent increase in storms is not a new record number of hurricanes but, rather, a rebound from a low number of hurricanes in the late 20th century.

by James Murphy

Big Tech Counterterrorism Group Now Targets “Far Right”



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A multi-company Big Tech project created to combat “terrorism” will now shift its focus away from cracking down on Islamic terror networks such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda and instead target “far-right” organizations.

The Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), a collaboration that includes the likes of Facebook, Google, Twitter, and Microsoft, has created a shared database of “extremist” content that is shared by participating companies, allowing them to more easily monitor and suppress such content from platform to platform.

Thus far, the GIFCT database has largely been comprised of content from the Taliban, al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other violent Islamic groups. Now, domestic right-wing organizations will be the priority.

“Over the next few months, the group will add attacker manifestos — often shared by sympathizers after white supremacist violence — and other publications and links flagged by U.N. initiative Tech Against Terrorism,” Reuters reported July 26. “It will use lists from intelligence-sharing group Five Eyes, adding URLs and PDFs from more groups, including the Proud Boys, the Three Percenters and neo-Nazis.”

The 14 companies that can access GIFCT also include Snapchat, Reddit, Verizon, and LinkedIn. The organization was created in 2017 under pressure from the American and European governments following Islamic terror attacks in Paris and Brussels. Recently, the group brought on Airbnb and Mailchimp as members.

The news comes shortly after it was announced that PayPal, one of the world’s biggest online money-transfer platforms, will partner with the leftist Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to tackle “extremist” and



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“hate” movements on its platform.

According to a July 26 article at *The Hill*, the PayPal-ADL partnership will specifically research the financial patterns of such “extremist” groups. Officials from the two organizations say they will share their findings with law enforcement and policymakers.

The news of Big Tech’s crackdown on right-wing “extremism” also comes as voices claiming voter fraud in 2020 and questioning the legitimacy of Joe Biden are branded by the establishment as “far-right,” and even “terrorists” and “insurrectionists.”

by Luis Miguel

Dallas “Justice” Group: Whites Must Stop Sending Kids to Top Colleges



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A recently launched racist outfit in Dallas, Texas, demands that “wealthy white liberals” living in the Highland Park Independent School District not send their children to Ivy League and other top colleges, to make room for blacks and Hispanics.

In an appeal to their “white allies,” Dallas Justice Now says they must sacrifice the future of their children. Those who don’t are “racist hypocrites.”

The imperious demand from the outfit, which features a large photo of racist James Baldwin on its home page, doesn’t mince words or beat around the bush, even if it is addressed “to our white allies.”

“Talk is not enough,” the angry note begins. “Commit yourself towards taking action and making sacrifices to correct centuries of injustice.”

The group’s “white allies” must “open up spaces for Black and LatinX communities by refusing to send your kids to Ivy League and US News & World Report Top 50 schools.”

As well, “white allies” must “encourage friends, neighbors, and family members to do the same. Imagine if those hundreds of thousands of spots at these institutions were occupied only by marginalized communities. Imagine the opportunities. We can achieve true equity within our lifetimes but only if white folks are willing to sacrifice their privileges.”



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White allies must take the “Dallas Justice NOW College Pledge.” “Don’t be a racist hypocrite,” the group says; “Sign the pledge today!”

The suggestion that Ivy League schools have no place for blacks and “Latinx” is false: While whites comprise 60-65 percent of the U.S. population, the incoming class at Ivy League schools ranges from 32-52 percent white.

by R. Cort Kirkwood



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