

Federal judge strips public lands acting director from role after serving unlawfully



By Al Neal

Flying under the radar last Friday, September 25, was news of a court ruling dealing yet one more blow to Trump's continued drive to take from the people what belongs to them.

A federal judge ruled that Trump's chief steward of public land had been serving unlawfully, and blocked him from continuing in that position, as part of the latest push against the administration's practice of filling key positions without Senate approval.

William Perry Pendley, acting director of the U.S. Interior Bureau of Land Management, served unlawfully for 424 days without being confirmed by the Senate as required under the U.S. Constitution, ruled Judge Brian Morris.

This ruling comes after Montana's Democratic governor sued to remove Pendley back in July, arguing the former oil industry attorney was illegally overseeing an agency tasked with managing almost a quarter-billion acres of land, primarily in the western United States.

As expected, (by this "law and order" president) the ruling will be appealed immediately according to Interior Department spokesperson Conner Swanson. He called it "an outrageous decision that is well outside the bounds of the law," also saying that the Obama administration had similarly filled key posts

at the agency with temporary authorizations.

For now, the agency will accept the judge's orders as the appeal is pending, officials said. This will also force the Interior Department to address questions over the legitimacy of all decisions made by Pendley, including his approval of land use plans in Montana which Morris said the acting director was not authorized to make.

Pendley has been just one of several senior officials in the Trump administration running federal

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agencies and departments despite not going before the Senate.

Trump agencies have defended the skipped deadlines for Senate hearings, saying the senior officials involved were only carrying out the duties of their acting position but were not actually filling

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that position, and thus did not require a hearing and votes before the Senate.

Pendley, like others, had been formally nominated by Trump to the BLM position in July, but the nomination was withdrawn early September after the confirmation process was seen as becoming politically tense, and could potentially disrupt U.S. Senate races in Montana, where Bullock, a Democrat, is fighting to take the Republican seat held by Steve Daines, and in Colorado where Republican Cory Gardner is being challenged by former-Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper. Pendley held onto his position despite the withdrawal, under an arrangement made up by himself on May 22.

In his self-directed order, Pendley made his position as "deputy director," becoming the top post while the director's office remained vacant.

From his newly-minted post, Pendley approved two sweeping land resource management plans what would open 95 percent of Montana federal land

to oil and gas development, said Bullock in court filings.

The bureau's holdings are massive, with nearly 1 out of every 10 acres nationally under its control, mostly across the U.S. West.

Administration officials argued and insisted in public statements and court filings that Pendley was not the acting director, but rather "exercising the authority of the director." In this case, the "director" would be the president.

Trump's continued strategy to avoid the confirmation process has raised worrisome questions about the legitimacy of those administration officials in acting roles, and in the executive branch's authority regarding those temporary appointments. Both issues will ultimately be determined with the outcome of the Nov. 3 elections.

Covid-19 outbreak: Titans have reported 8 positive test results, first for the NFL

By Teresa M. Walker

The Tennessee Titans suspended in-person activities through Friday after the NFL says three Titans players and five other personnel tested positive for the coronavirus.

The NFL issued a statement Tuesday saying both the Titans and Minnesota Vikings suspended in-person activities following the test results. The Titans beat the Vikings 31-30 in Minneapolis on Sunday.

"Both clubs are working closely with the NFL and the NFLPA, including our infectious disease experts, to evaluate close contacts, perform additional testing and monitor developments," the NFL said.

A person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press the eight test results were all confirmed positives, making this the first COVID-19 outbreak of the NFL season in Week 4. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because of health privacy regulations.

The Vikings released a statement saying they had not received any positive results from their testing after Sunday's game against the Titans. They also said they followed NFL protocol by clos-

ing their facility immediately and are working to determine when they can reopen.

The Titans (3-0) are scheduled to host the Pittsburgh Steelers (3-0) on Sunday in a matchup of two of the league's seven remaining undefeated teams. With the Titans not able to practice until Saturday at the earliest, when that game might be played is unknown.

"All decisions will be made with health and safety as our primary consideration," the NFL said. "We will continue to share updates as more information becomes available."

The Titans initially announced Tuesday morning that they would be working remotely "out of an abundance of caution" after several test results came back positive. They beat the Vikings in Minneapolis without outside linebackers coach Shane Bowen, who did not travel with the Titans following a test result Saturday.

Coach Mike Vrabel said Monday that Bowen was not with the team. Rookie offensive lineman Isaiah Wilson, their top draft pick out of Georgia, also has been on the reserve/COVID-19 list for the Titans since Sept. 6.

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Trumka: Workers will not tolerate Trump trashing the Constitution



By John Wojcik

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, the head of the nation's largest labor federation, issued a strong warning to Donald Trump Friday that the nation's workers are ready to stop any attempt by the administration to trash the U.S. constitution.

He was reacting to announcements by Trump that he considers the mail-in voting process unacceptable and that he will not commit to a peaceful transfer of power should he lose the election. Trump has said, essentially, that only an election he wins would be one he would recognize.

"The AFL-CIO categorically rejects all threats to the peaceful transition of power," Trumka declared in his statement Friday afternoon.

Threats to nullify the votes of millions of Americans, he said, including use of the courts to prevent a transfer of power, would circumvent the constitution and be unacceptable to the nation's working people.

"Union members across the political spectrum are united in our fundamental belief that the votes of the American people must always determine the presidency. America's workers will continue to be steadfast in defense of our democracy in the face of President Trump's antics, and we stand ready to do our part to ensure his defeat in this election, followed by his removal from office."

Throughout U.S. history workers have shown that they will go to great lengths to defend democracy, using many different tactics, up to and including general strikes in various regions of the country when democracy was threatened.

Democratic lawmakers have also expressed determination to make sure the president leaves the White House if he loses the election. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said at one point that if such a breach of constitutional order happened all available means would be used to remove Trump including "fumigating him out of the White House."

While Trumka did not say so directly, workers organized into their unions are potentially powerful guarantors of democracy when it is threatened. The profit-making of the sections of the ruling class that support Trump could come to a halt, depending on the nature of the action taken by the nation's workers.

While the media focuses on legal tactics that might be used to stop an out-of-control Trump, the statement by Trumka yesterday reminds us that workers, united in defense of democracy, ultimately have more to do and say in protecting democracy than lawyers and election experts.

In a powerful statement, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka reminds the nation that workers and their unions are critical to preserving democracy in America.

Colombia: Communists denounce Pompeo visit, police violence

By Emile Schepers

The Colombian Communist Party opposes increased repression and efforts by Mike Pompeo to foment a war between Colombia and Venezuela. The communists point out that, under the extreme right-wing government of President Ivan Duque, there is ever-increasing violent repression against people who are working for social justice and opponents of the government's policies. The government has refused to undertake reforms of the National Police with its "military character," which is increasingly being used, with lethal force, to suppress growing social protests.

In the middle of this situation, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Colombia on September 19, announcing his support for President Duque and trying to incite a war between Colombia and neighboring Venezuela, which the Colombian Communists describe as "fratricidal." The communists also demand an end to U.S. bases and the military presence in Colombia.

Presidente de México descarta impunidad en caso Ayotzinapa

Prensa Latina

El presidente de México, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, reiteró hoy que la investigación y castigo a los culpables de la desaparición de los 43 normalistas de Ayotzinapa transcurrirá sin impunidad ni privilegios.

En su conferencia de prensa matutina en el Palacio Nacional, el mandatario respondió a una pregunta que no se protegerá a nadie, en tanto consideró que investigar y enjuiciar a miembros del ejército o de cualquier otra institución no las debilita sino por el contrario las fortalece.

Dijo desconocer la razón que llevó al gobierno de Enrique Peña Nieto a ocultar los hechos, a fabricar la llamada verdad histórica que no fue ni lo uno ni lo otro, a no actuar con transparencia siendo un absurdo querer tapar las cosas.

Aseguró que la justicia tarda pero llega, y en este caso de Ayotzinapa no habrá impunidad para nadie siempre y cuando se demuestre que son responsables de los hechos y no habrá juicio sumario ni linchamiento político hasta tanto se confirme con pruebas la culpabilidad de cualquiera en el caso.

Reiteró que hay voluntad para conocer la verdad y castigar a los culpables, así se lo ofrecimos a los familiares y al pueblo de México y así lo estamos haciendo.

López Obrador destacó la actitud del fiscal general Alejandro Gertz Manero, quien lanzó una acusación muy firme contra el inventor de la verdad histórica, el exsecretario de seguridad Tomás Zenón,

el cual huyó del país a Canadá y luego a Israel, y sobre quien pesa una orden de captura con fines de extradición.

Gertz Manero dijo en el sexto aniversario de la desaparición de los jóvenes que el gobierno federal bajo Peña Nieto es el principal autor de la mentira llamada verdad histórica, basada en torturas e inmoralidades con el objetivo de ocultar la realidad.

El fiscal afirmó que los delitos de esos individuos no se hicieron gratuitamente. Zenón se robó más de mil millones de pesos (cerca de 50 millones de dólares) del presupuesto que sustrajo con varios cómplices, de manera fraudulenta, y el gobierno puso a 50 agentes y todo su aparato administrativo para cuidarlo.

28 sep: El expolicía federal Víctor Manuel Colmenares fue detenido en Texcoco por su vinculación con el caso de los 43 normalistas desaparecidos de Ayotzinapa, informó hoy la Fiscalía General.

Según las pesquisas, el individuo estuvo junto con otros de sus excompañeros, en Iguala, Guerrero, la noche del 26 al 27 de septiembre de 2014, cuando participaron en la persecución de los autobuses donde viajaban los jóvenes, presenciaron el momento en el que fueron detenidos por policías municipales y permitieron que éstos se los llevaran, sin reportar los hechos a sus superiores.