**NFL: fewer second chances after domestic violence**

USA TODAY Sports analysis finds significant shift in how abuse reports are handled. **In Sports**

**Dwyane Wade hosts new game show: 'The Cube'**

The former NBA champ's gig was "emotional" as he became invested in the players. **In Life**

ILLUSTRATIONS BY VERONICA BRAVO

**LGBTQ flags explained: Beyond the rainbow**

How many of the Pride flags do you know? From the traditional rainbow to relatively new designs representing groups, we break it down. **Page 6D**


# USA TODAY

THE NATION'S NEWS | $2 | **WEEKEND** | JUNE 11-13, 2021


**Tann Parker, left, founder of Ink the Diaspora, with artist Quiara Capellan in their studio in New York, created Ink the Diaspora in 2017 to help connect people with artists of color.** ROBERT DEUTSCH/USA TODAY

# Ending myths of white skin being ideal for ink

## Artists fight pervasive claims rooted in racism

**Christine Fernando** USA TODAY

Sezin Koehler had the perfect tattoo in mind. She imagined blue and purple swirls rising up her arm to match the colorful tattoos adorning her shoulders. After hours of planning and research, she brought her idea to a tattoo artist.

The artist took one look at her and said no.

"Your skin tone is a problem," she remembers the artist telling her.

Koehler, 42, went to multiple artists, who said her skin was too dark to be tattooed in color. They suggested black and gray, even though Koehler already had blue and purple tattoos.

Each time, Koehler left the tattoo shops crying.

"Artists should be able to paint on any canvas," said Koehler, a Sri Lankan and Lithuanian American culture writer from southeast Florida. "And if you can't, there's the internet, books, networks of artists that can teach you.

"If you wanted to learn, you could. So the fact is they're making a choice that they only want cer-

**See TATTOOS, Page 8A**

**Many tattoo artists aren't trained to create on different skin shades.** PROVIDED BY QUIARA CAPELLAN

# Fertility doctors secretly fathering

## Few states have laws for fraud discovered by DNA

**Kevin McCoy** USA TODAY

Bianca Voss reeled in shock when her daughter, Roberta, told her the results of the 23andMe genetic test she took last fall. It indicated that the fertility doctor who had artificially inseminated Voss in 1983, enabling her to give birth to Roberta, had secretly used his own semen.

"I am angry that I was violated in this manner," Voss said during a late May online news conference to announce a federal lawsuit against the doctor, Martin D. Greenberg, who worked in New York City during the 1980s and now lives in Aventura, Florida. "How could I have picked such a criminal and immoral physician who would do such a thing to me?"

**Cecil B. Jacobson was convicted in Virginia of using his own sperm to inseminate patients.** DENNIS COOK/AP

Her daughter was angry, too. Roberta Voss had tried to contact Greenberg through his 23andMe account, but it was deleted after she messaged him. "He knew he was caught, and he was trying to cover it up," she said in an interview with USA TODAY.

Bianca Voss is the latest among dozens of women who have alleged they were duped by fertility doctors they trusted to inseminate them with sperm from anonymous or chosen donors. They discovered the deceptions decades later when their children took popular, at-home DNA tests.

**"I'm in turmoil about who I am, what this means, and what kind of person would do this."**

**Roberta Voss,** who discovered a doctor was her real father

Increasingly, the parents, their children and lawmakers are fighting back. Families have sued former doctors for what they say were fraudulent inseminations decades ago. Six states have enacted laws against so-called fertility fraud, and other states are considering similar statutes.

One of the lawyers representing Bianca Voss says tougher oversight is overdue for what he characterized as the lightly regulated fertility industry.

"In the majority of states, and at the federal level, it's the Wild West," said attorney Adam Wolf, a share-

**See FRAUD, Page 2A**


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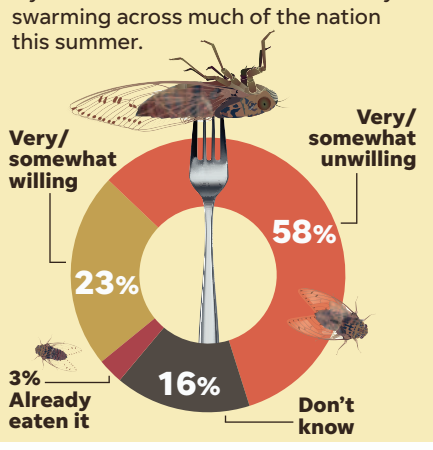
**USA TODAY Snapshots**

## Who would eat cicada cuisine?

A quarter of Americans are willing to try food made with the cicadas loudly swarming across much of the nation this summer.




SOURCE YouGov poll

AMY BARNETTE, BILL CAMPLING/USA TODAY

# Biden, Johnson talk Brexit, reopening

## Overseas travel, climate topics for G-7 summit

**Kim Hjelmgaard and Michael Collins** USA TODAY

FALMOUTH, England – President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson sized each other up in person Thursday for the first time since Biden took office.

Despite Britain's sometimes controversial and unpredictable leader's enthusiastic support of President Donald Trump, Johnson and Biden's first big moment on the global stage got off to a mutually agreeable start – at least in public.

"It's gorgeous. I don't want to go home," Biden said as he and Johnson, joined by their wives, Jill and Carrie, stood on a deck over St. Ives Bay, a majestic stretch of beach that looks out to rugged headlands in this part of southwestern England.

The Group of Seven summit, a meeting of the world's wealthy industrialized nations, takes place here Friday to Sunday. The coronavirus pandemic and climate change are among the topics under discussion.

Beyond the pleasantries, there was substance to their talks.

Biden and Johnson launched a task force that will make policy recommendations about safely reopening international travel between the U.K. and the USA.

Before the coronavirus outbreak, more than 4.5 million Americans visited the U.K. every year, and more than 5 million British nationals traveled to the USA annually.

No specific timing was announced on when the travel task force would begin its work. British scientists said the U.K. may be starting to see a third wave of coronavirus infections as a result of the Delta variant that was first detected in India.

**See G7 SUMMIT, Page 4A**

**British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President Joe Biden have much to discuss before the G-7 summit.** BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

**Our streaming guide hits the 'Heights' this weekend**

Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical is the top of a list that includes sci-fi and Mark Wahlberg. **Page 5B**

## MONEYLINE

SHANNA LOCKWOOD/USA TODAY

### STARBUCKS FACING SHORTAGES OF INGREDIENTS

Snagging your favorite Starbucks treat might be more difficult due to shortages of such ingredients as oat milk. When you open the Starbucks app, you'll see a message warning of the absence of some menu options. "Due to current supply shortages, some of your favorites may be temporarily out of stock," it reads. Starbucks spokesperson Sanja Gould said confirmed shortages will vary by store or market. The oat milk option has been temporarily pulled from some stores.

### JOBLESS CLAIMS FALL FOR SIXTH STRAIGHT WEEK

The number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits fell for the sixth straight week as the U.S. economy reopens rapidly. Jobless claims fell by 9,000 to 376,000 from 385,000 the week before, the Labor Department reported Thursday. The number of people signing up for benefits exceeded 900,000 in early January and has fallen more or less steadily ever since. Still, claims are high by historic standards. Nearly 3.5 million people were receiving state unemployment benefits the week of May 29, down by 258,000 from the week before.

### JBS CONFIRMS IT PAID $11M IN RANSOM TO HACKERS

The world's largest meat processing company says it paid the equivalent of $11 million to hackers who broke into its computer system late last month. JBS SA said on May 31 that it was the victim of a ransomware attack, but Wednesday was the first time the U.S. division confirmed that it had paid the ransom. "We felt this decision had to be made to prevent any potential risk for our customers," said Andre Nogueira, CEO of JBS USA. The FBI has attributed the attack to Russian-speaking gang REvil.

### Dow Jones Industrial Avg.


AP

### THURSDAY MARKETS

| INDEX | CLOSE | | CHG |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dow Jones Industrial Avg. | 34,466.24 | ▲ | 19.10 |
| S&P 500 | 4,239.18 | ▲ | 19.63 |
| Nasdaq composite | 14,020.33 | ▲ | 108.58 |
| T-note, 10-year yield | 1.444 | ▼ | 0.046 |

**SOURCES** USA TODAY RESEARCH, BLOOMBERG

### USA TODAY SNAPSHOTS©

#### Gas Prices

Per gallon of regular unleaded.

| | |
|---|---|
| Yesterday Avg. | $3.073 |
| Wednesday Avg. | $3.067 |
| Week Ago Avg. | $3.042 |
| Month Ago Avg. | $2.967 |
| Year Ago Avg. | $2.071 |

AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

GETTY IMAGES

# PLEASE HOLD

## Airlines overwhelmed with calls as travel rebounds

**Dawn Gilbertson**
USA TODAY

Frequent flyer Jay Groh rarely calls airlines for help.

The Atlanta sales executive books his travel online or on airline mobile apps with little trouble.

Until the coronavirus pandemic. Like travelers around the globe, Groh had to cancel trips planned for 2020 and ended up with travel credits.

When he tried to redeem a Delta Air Lines credit online to book a flight for his wife's 40th birthday trip to California this fall, he kept getting error messages. So he called Delta. Twice.

The first time he called in late May, the wait was more than two hours. He got in the virtual queue for a callback but missed it during a work meeting.

Groh called Delta again a week and a half later – on a Tuesday around lunchtime. The quoted wait time: seven hours and 40 minutes.

He eventually got booking help from a Delta representative on Twitter, but the delays cost him: The ticket price went up $200 from his initial online search.

"If the website had worked, I would have booked on the website and locked in the $500 price for the ticket," he said.

**See AIRLINES, Page 2B**

# Can we still talk politics now that we're back at the office?

**Nathan Bomey**
USA TODAY

Since the last time millions of American workers chatted around water coolers, the nation has gone through a pandemic, protests powering a social justice movement, an election, an insurrection and two presidential impeachments.

And now many people are returning to the office, where these polarizing topics might come up in face-to-face conversations for the first time.

But how will we talk to each other in a productive and respectful way? Will we avoid it altogether? And could our deep divisions undermine the success of the companies we work for?

Americans are increasingly avoiding conversations with people who aren't like them, even in the workplace, where their economic livelihood depends on effective collaboration, research shows.

**Brandon Bentz, of Wichita, Kansas, sells tortillas to retailers. He wants to avoid talking about politics at work. "I was hoping for more unity after things open up."** PROVIDED BY BRANDON BENTZ

And that's how some people want it.

"I was hoping for more unity after things open up," says Brandon Bentz, 38, of Wichita, Kansas. "It's like, let's all try to start fresh."

But after the Donald Trump era and the divisive debate over masks turned Americans against each other, he doesn't want to talk about politics at work.

"My personal philosophy is I just don't think there's a place for it in most workplaces," says Bentz, who sells tortillas to grocery retailers.

He's not alone. And employers are increasingly concerned about the impact of political debates in the workplace.

More than 4 in 10 human resource professionals are discouraging employees from discussing politics at work, according to an October survey by the Society for Human Resource Management.

But some workers are recoiling at those restrictions.

One-third of employees at a software productivity company called Basecamp said they would resign after their CEO, Jason Fried, announced in April that

**See POLITICS, Page 2B**

# Airlines

Continued from Page 1B

Travelers returning to the skies this summer after COVID-19 lockdowns can add long wait times to reach airlines to the lengthy list of frustrations as travel rebounds more quickly than even airline executives poised for the pent-up demand had expected. One traveler said on Twitter that she accidentally fell asleep on hold with an unnamed airline and was still on hold when she woke up.

USA TODAY called the customer service lines of the largest U.S. airlines on Wednesday, June 2, in the afternoon and found waits as long as eight hours and 31 minutes at Delta. The airline was so swamped, it didn't even offer a callback option.

American quoted a wait of two hours and 28 minutes to three hours and 23 minutes but offered the unique option of scheduling a call anytime in the next week.

JetBlue had a wait of 75 minutes.

Calls to Hawaiian Airlines and budget carrier Allegiant resulted in repeated busy signals.

At the other end of the spectrum, the spot check found waits of 20 minutes or less at United and Southwest. I reached someone immediately at budget carrier Frontier, which doesn't have a toll-free line. Spirit Airlines did not quote a time, so I hung up after 20 minutes on hold.

### Airlines warn travelers

Airlines concede heir call centers are overwhelmed, and many posted alerts about the situation on their websites. Some went back to advice from early in the pandemic, when phone lines were flooded with travelers trying to cancel trips: Don't call unless you are traveling soon.

A red banner at the top of Hawaiian Airlines' website says, "Our contact center is experiencing extended wait times. Guests without an immediate need for assistance should contact us later. We appreciate your patience and understanding."

On Allegiant's website, the first item under travel alerts is about high call volume. On JetBlue's website, the second item under travel alerts is about longer-than-usual wait times, under the headline "Skip the (phone) line."

### Why is it taking so long?

Airlines blame the long wait times on a surge in calls and fewer customer service agents to help them. Airlines rushed to match employee levels with sharply lower travel demand last year, offering voluntary leaves and early retirement packages in droves.

At American Airlines, 25% of its reservation center staff accepted such offers, according to Julie Rath, vice president of customer experience and reservations.

Staffing levels weren't an issue until travel started to rebound.

Rath said American started to notice an increase in calls in April as COVID-19 vaccination rates increased and people started thinking about traveling again. A spike began in May as summer travel season loomed. "The volume came back really rapidly," she said.

The calls coming in are more complicated, given a slew of COVID-19 travel restrictions, questions about testing, confusion over travel credits, among other issues coming up as people navigate the return to travel, Rath said. "The calls do take a bit longer," she said.

American and other airlines have detailed information on COVID-19 requirements and travel restrictions on their websites, as well as step-by-step instructions on booking a ticket with travel credits. But many travelers, especially infrequent flyers and those taking international trips for the first time, prefer to talk to a representative, Rath said.

### 'Laser-focused' on fixing this

**Airlines warn travelers about long waits to reach a customer service representative.** GETTY IMAGES

American anticipated an uptick in bookings and in March recalled employees who were on temporary leaves, some as long as a year, Rath said.

It hasn't been enough, especially when bad weather in a major hub prompts a flood of calls to reschedule flights and compounds the wait times.

American reached out to recent retirees, including those who accepted early-out offers, to come back for the summer, and is on an "aggressive" hiring binge for its four U.S. call centers and home-based agents, Rath said.

"We're laser-focused on fixing (the staffing shortage)," Rath said. "We want everyone to get through rapidly and make sure that we're always here for our customers."

Delta is adding temporary summer help at its call centers and hiring 1,300 employees to handle calls, spokesman Morgan Durrant said.

"Wait times are not what we want for our customers when they need to contact us, so we apologize to our customers for the inconvenience," he said.

Budget carrier Allegiant increased staffing at its call centers, spokeswoman Hilarie Grey said.

Alaska Airlines enlisted a senior vice president to apologize to customers.

"We're excited to see our guests planning travel again, but that means more calls and longer-than-normal wait times," Sangita Woerner, senior vice president of marketing and guest experience, says in a recording. "We know your time is valuable, and we sincerely apologize for the wait."

### Tips for travelers

- Get basic information about travel restrictions, requirements and how to redeem those travel credits from the airline's website.
- Before calling, try to book or change your trip online or the airline's mobile app.
- Check for options to chat with the airline online, via text or on the mobile app. Many airlines added these services. JetBlue offers support via live chat or Apple Business Chat.
- When it's offered, join the virtual queue and note the projected time, so you're available to answer. American even allows customers to schedule a callback a week in the future, so it can spread out the volume of calls and staff.
- Call during off-peak hours. American said volume is lowest overnight and early in the morning.
- Reach out to airlines on social media, especially Twitter. They can solve problems via direct message.

Tom Loebig, a freelance media consultant from State College, Pennsylvania, turned to Twitter after multiple waits on hold with United Airlines.

He had booked a last-minute business trip to Houston and forgot he had a credit to use that would cover most of the ticket price.

Loebig wanted to talk to someone at United about canceling that ticket and reissuing it with the credit. He tried online chat but found the replies to be "blank, unemotional kind of responses." He called the airline a few times, each time trying to bypass several steps by saying "agent, agent, agent" and was always put on hold. He asked for a callback but didn't receive one.

He turned to Twitter last week. An agent canceled the first ticket and let him rebook using the credit as a "goodwill gesture."

# Politics

Continued from Page 1B

workers would no longer be allowed to engage in "societal and political discussions" on an internal messaging service.

"It's become too much," he said in a blog post. "It's a major distraction. It saps our energy, and redirects our dialog towards dark places. It's not healthy, it hasn't served us well."

Fried later apologized after employees apparently revolted, saying the developments were "terrible" and although the policy changes, which included other elements, "felt simple, reasonable, and principled," the situation "blew things up internally in ways we never anticipated."

"We have a lot to learn and reflect on, and we will. The new policies stand, but we have some refining and clarifying to do," he wrote.

Fried declined an interview request for this story.

### Tension when we go back to work

The Basecamp episode reflects how much tension awaits employers and employees when they begin seeing each other in person for the first time as remote work arrangements come to an end.

While casual conversations about polarizing issues may not be natural on live-video meetings such as Zoom, they're standard around the office, where the debate over issues such as masks and the election could quickly become heated.

In 2020, 44% of human resource professionals reported intensified political volatility among their workers, up from 26% in 2016, according to a survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, a trade association. They fear that it could begin hurting productivity.

"Toxic polarization stifles creativity and the free exchange of ideas between people with different worldviews, making it harder to collaborate everywhere, including at work," says Andrew Hanauer, CEO of the One America Movement, a nonprofit that fights polarization.

The potential collision of opinions requires employers to thoughtfully train workers on how to have healthy conversations in the workplace, says Steven Dinkin, president of the San Diego-based National Conflict Resolution Center.

"Coming back into the workplace, seeing colleagues and trying to reestablish a team atmosphere is going to be absolutely critical," Dinkin says. "If you don't address some challenging issues, then it's going to be really hard for people to work together."

That's why the National Conflict Resolution Center recently partnered with the University of California, San Diego to establish the Applied Research Center for Civility, which will devise solutions for healthy discourse based on academic research and real-life conflict resolution practices, says co-chair Elizabeth Simmons.

In many cases, healthy discourse starts with listening, she says.

### Start with listening

When you "actually listen to one another and learn from another's point of view, even when you don't agree, it's the opposite of silencing," says Simmons, who also serves as executive vice-chancellor of UC, San Diego. "It enables you to hear many points of view in the same room without exploding into anger."

Learning how to talk to each other is the premise of an event this weekend called America Talks, which is being sponsored by more than 350 organizations through the #ListenFirst Coalition and promoted by Gannett's USA TODAY Network. More than 5,000 Americans have signed up to have conversations about difficult topics with people who aren't like them during America Talks, kicking off the 2021 National Week of Conversation, when more than 100 organizations plan to hold similar events to catalyze discussions on hard issues. (You can sign up for free through Friday night to participate in America Talks at americatalks.us.)

Engaging in healthy discourse comes down to "listening with curiosity, speaking from your own experience and connecting with respect," says Pearce Godwin, CEO of the Listen First Project.

**Mandy Bailey and Theresa Russell talk during a workshop organized by Florida Today's Civility Brevard project through the nonprofit Braver Angels, which is teaching Americans of different backgrounds how to have productive conversations. The event took place at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brevard in West Melbourne, Fla.** CRAIG BAILEY/USA TODAY NETWORK

The opposite is when conversations "occur with vitriol and animosity and judgment and in a way that takes us from the democratic, pluralistic virtue of disagreement into that space of dislike and even dehumanization," Godwin says. "That's what the 'toxic' in 'toxic polarization' means – that I don't just disagree with you, that I dislike, despise, even detest you."

Learning how to have difficult conversations in the workplace is especially crucial because it's virtually impossible for employers to prevent workers from discussing divisive issues, says Dinkin, president of the National Conflict Resolution Center. "People are going to have the conversation even if the manager wants to avoid it," he says.

### George Floyd discussions

For example, after the murder of George Floyd sparked outrage and a social justice movement, the National Conflict Resolution Center brought in experts from the outside to hold a moderated discussion on the topic among its own employees.

"We had an opportunity for everyone to express their feelings about the George Floyd tragedy, and then we broke up into small groups and people continued to have those conversations and then we came back together," Dinkin says. "If outside facilitators are brought in, then it's done in a controlled environment and there are certain ground rules to handle some of those challenging topics."

Employers should take steps to ensure that workers know they value diversity in all respects, including opinions, says Johnny C. Taylor Jr., CEO of the Society for Human Resource Management.

Their philosophy should be that "you will be confronted in work with opinions that you don't agree with. And as a part of our culture, we embrace diversity," said Taylor, who writes an advice column for USA TODAY.

But there are limits, he says. While healthy discussions about polarizing issues are worth pursuing, employers also have a vested interest in keeping workers focused on their jobs, Taylor says.

"That means we will see managers be demoted if they can't manage these situations," he says. "We will see employees be terminated if they cannot operate in this environment."

Taylor acknowledges that some workers demand to be allowed to voice their opinions on contentious topics, while others want the opposite.

While many Basecamp workers quit over the company's new no-politics policy, Taylor speculates that some potential employees might be attracted to work there because of it.

### A no-politics workplace?

Bentz, the Kansas worker, says that's the type of atmosphere he's looking for. In fact, it's exactly what he had for more than a decade when he worked for someone who never said anything political.

"My former boss, a great guy, would give you the shirt off his back," Bentz says. "He could be a hardcore Trump supporter, he could be a hardcore liberal. I have no clue."

Bentz says when you're trying to work, build a team and accomplish goals, talking politics doesn't have a place.

But many advocates for bridge-building between people say it's not possible to remove politics from the workplace.

"Understand that these conversations are going to happen around the literal or proverbial water cooler," says Godwin of the Listen First Project. "it's not productive or even plausible to wish them away."

Rather, bosses should establish a culture of inclusion that includes respect for different perspectives, he said.

"Especially in cases where they may not personally agree or personally hold that perspective," he says. "Create an environment where that kind of posture toward our co-workers is rewarded, is expected, and an environment in which demeaning co-workers because of their alternate perspectives is not tolerated."