

AT RISK IN SENATE,  
DEMOCRATS SEEK  
TO RALLY BLACKS

MOVE TO CHANNEL ANGER

Invoking Ferguson and  
Threats to Impeach  
as Motivators

By JONATHAN MARTIN

WASHINGTON — With their Senate majority imperiled, Democrats are trying to mobilize African-Americans outraged by the shooting in Ferguson, Mo., to help them retain control of at least one chamber of Congress for President Obama’s final two years in office.

In black churches and on black talk radio, African-American civic leaders have begun invoking the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, along with conservative calls to impeach Mr. Obama, as they urge black voters to channel their anger by voting Democratic in the midterm elections, in which minority turnout is typically lower.

“Ferguson has made it crystal clear to the African-American community and others that we’ve got to go to the polls,” said Representative John Lewis, Democrat of Georgia and a civil-rights leader. “You participate and vote, and you can have some control over what happens to your child and your country.”

The push is an attempt to counter Republicans’ many advantages in this year’s races, including polls that show Republican voters are much more engaged in the elections at this point — an important predictor of turnout.

Mr. Lewis is headlining efforts to mobilize black voters in several states with competitive Senate races, including Arkansas, Louisiana and North Carolina. The drive is being organized by the Congressional Black Caucus, in coordination with the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. Other steps, such as recruiting N.B.A. players to help register more African-Americans, are also underway.

While Democrats always seek

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A Voter Drive in Ferguson

Organizers hope to get the small city’s black majority to show its political clout. Page 12.



A video game tournament in Seattle in July. Pro gaming, called e-sports, is becoming a lucrative worldwide spectator sport. PHOTOGRAPHS BY STUART ISETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Virtual Games Draw Real Crowds and Big Money

By NICK WINGFIELD

SEATTLE — A bewitching creature — half woman, half deer — battles a shaman and a sentient tree. Lightning bolts strike. Weapons explode. Nasty spells are cast.

The video game Dota 2, like so many across the Internet, transports teams of players from their bedrooms to a verdant virtual world where they smite each other through keyboard and mouse clicks. Except on this sunny day in July, every attack and counterattack by a five-person team set off an eruption of cheers — from the more than 11,000 spectators crammed into this city’s basketball arena.

The contestants were gunning for a big piece of the \$11 million in total prize money, the most ever at a games tournament. And the game’s developer, the Valve Corporation, moved another step closer to securing gaming’s legitimacy as a major-league spectator sport.

Having already upended the entertainment world — global revenue for games is \$20 billion higher than the music industry’s and is chasing that of the movie business — the games industry has turned its ambitions toward the lucrative world of professional video game competition, widely known as e-sports.



POWER UP  
Entering the Big Leagues

The signs of success already mirror the achievements of major sports. Game tournaments sell out giant arenas, and some attract at-home audiences larger than those of top traditional sporting events. Madison Avenue’s highest fliers, like Coca-Cola and American Express, have lined up as sponsors. Prize money has soared to the millions of dollars, and top players earn six- or seven-figure incomes and attract big and passionate followings, luring a generation of younger players to

seek fame and fortune as gamers.

Last year, the State Department began granting visas to professional gamers, under the same program used by traditional athletes. This fall, Robert Morris University in Chicago will dole out over \$500,000 in athletic scholarships to gamers, the first of their kind in the United States, and Ivy League universities have intercollegiate gaming. Last week, the web giant Amazon announced it was buying Twitch, a hugely popular video streaming service used by gamers, for \$970 million in cash.

“This stuff is expanding out of control,” said James Lampkin, a product manager for ESL (for Electronic Sports League), one of the biggest e-sports leagues, which had 73,000 attendees at a four-day tournament in Katowice, Poland, in March. “We have no idea what the limits are.”

Game competitions have been around for decades, but what was happening at that arena in July would have been unthinkable, even laughable, only a few years ago. As broadband Internet access and free-to-play games have spread, gaming competitions have multiplied in size and frequency around the world, going beyond early strongholds like South Korea.

At the Seattle event, cheering fans,

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ISIS DISPLAYING  
A DEFT COMMAND  
OF VARIED MEDIA

DRAWING IN WESTERNERS

Trying to Show Acumen  
in State-Building and  
Bloodshed

By SCOTT SHANE  
and BEN HUBBARD

The extremists who have seized large parts of Syria and Iraq have riveted the world’s attention with their military prowess and unrestrained brutality. But Western intelligence services are also worried about their extraordinary command of seemingly less lethal weapons: state-of-the-art videos, ground images shot from drones and multilingual Twitter messages.

ISIS, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, is using every contemporary mode of messaging to recruit fighters, intimidate enemies and promote its claim to have established a caliphate, a unified Muslim state run according to a strict interpretation of Islamic law. If its bigotry and beheadings seem to come from a distant century, its use of media is up to the moment.

A review of its prodigious output in print and online reveals a number of surprises. ISIS propaganda, for instance, has strikingly few calls for attacks on the West, even though its most notorious video, among Americans, released 12 days ago, showed the beheading of the American journalist James Foley, threatened another American hostage, and said that American attacks on ISIS “would result in the bloodshed” of Americans. This diverged from nearly all of ISIS’s varied output, which promotes its paramount goal: to secure and expand the Islamic state. Experts say that could change overnight, but for now it sharply distinguishes ISIS from Al Qaeda, which has long made attacks on the West its top priority.

And while ISIS may be built on bloodshed, it seems intent on

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U.S. AIRSTRIKES American forces attacked ISIS militants besieging a town in Iraq’s north. PAGE 12

HOSTAGE BEHEADED ISIS took 19 Lebanese soldiers hostage, killing one of them. PAGE 13

Gambling Is the Bait. Savings Are the Jackpot.

By PATRICIA COHEN

While building up savings offers the best route out of poverty, the glamourless grind of socking away a dollar here and there has a tough time competing with the heady fantasy of a Mega Millions jackpot. But instead of attacking lotteries, a growing number of credit unions and nonprofit groups are using them to encourage low-income families to save.

They offer what are known as prize-linked savings accounts, which essentially treat every deposit as a ticket in a prizewinning raffle. The idea is to offer the thrill of gambling without the risk. Even perennial losers keep their savings.

These accounts have won support from a rare combination of liberal poverty advocates and conservatives who like the private market-based approach and emphasis on personal responsibility.

In Congress, bills to modify federal banking laws and permit more financial institutions to offer prize-linked accounts have Republican and Democratic co-sponsors. And several states, including Indiana, Connecticut and New York, have modified their banking laws to allow credit unions to offer such programs.

The accounts make up a small part of the savings universe, but



Some winners in Save to Win, the nation’s largest prize-linked savings program, which they joined through their credit unions. SAVETOWIN.COM

they are slowly gaining traction.

Doorways to Dream, a nonprofit organization based in Massachusetts, helped start Save to Win in Michigan five years ago. It is now the nation’s largest prize-linked savings program, having spread to Nebraska, Washington and North Carolina. The program has created 50,000 accounts that saved a total of \$94 million, all

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Coverage for End-of-Life Talks Gaining Ground

By PAM BELLUCK

DUNDEE, N.Y. — Five years after it exploded into a political conflagration over “death panels,” the issue of paying doctors to talk to patients about end-of-life care is making a comeback, and such sessions may be covered for the 50 million Americans on Medicare as early as next year.

Bypassing the political process, private insurers have begun reimbursing doctors for these “advance care planning” conversations as interest in them rises along with the number of aging Americans. People are living longer with illnesses, and many want more input into how they will spend their final days, including whether they want to die at home or in the hospital, and whether they want full-fledged life-sustaining treatment, just pain relief or something in between.

Some states, including Colorado and Oregon, recently began covering the sessions for Medicaid patients.

But far more significant, Medicare may begin covering end-of-life discussions next year if it approves a recent request from the American Medical Association, the country’s largest association of physicians and medical students. One of the A.M.A.’s roles is to create billing codes for medical services, codes used by doctors, hospitals and insurers. It recently created codes for end-of-life conversations and submitted them to Medicare.

The Centers for Medicare and

Medical Services, which runs Medicare, would not discuss whether it will agree to cover end-of-life discussions; its decision is expected this fall. But the agency often adopts A.M.A. recommendations, which are developed in meetings attended by its representatives. And the political environment is less toxic than it was when the “death panel” label was coined; although there are still opponents, there are more proponents, including Republican politicians.

If Medicare adopts the change, its decision will also set the standard for private insurers, encouraging many more doctors to engage in these conversations.

“We think it’s really important to incentivize this kind of care,” said Dr. Barbara Levy, chairwoman of the A.M.A. committee that submits reimbursement recommendations to Medicare. “The idea is to make sure patients and

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The president of Ukraine said Russia’s campaign of “military aggression and terror” against his country threatened Europe’s stability. PAGE 8

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An experimental drug prolonged the lives of people with heart failure and could replace the treatment that has been the norm for 20 years. PAGE 4

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Michael Sam, who became the first openly gay player drafted in the N.F.L. when he was taken in the seventh round, was one of the team’s final cuts. PAGE 1

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**Maureen Dowd** PAGE 11



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