

## News Roundup

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This week federal prosecutors [announced](#) that they have charged 60 people, including 31 doctors, pharmacists, and medical professionals, with various offenses arising from an investigation into illegal opioid distribution and health care fraud. Last year the Justice Department formed the Appalachian Regional Prescription Opioid Strike Force and dispatched experienced health care fraud attorneys to several federal districts across the country to build cases against “medical professionals [who] behave like drug dealers.” The charges were brought in Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and West Virginia. Additional arrests are expected to arise from the investigation.

The News Roundup comes a day early this week as the School is closed tomorrow for a holiday, we'll be back to blogging on Monday. Keep reading for more news.

**Pretrial Risk Assessment Webinar.** On May 24 the School of Government is hosting a [free webinar](#) discussing pretrial risk assessment tools and bail reform. Jessica Smith is moderating the event and it is open to all judicial system stakeholders. Register [here](#) and take a look at the official description right here:

In North Carolina and around the nation, criminal justice stakeholders are debating what role, if any, pretrial risk assessment tools can or should play in bail reform efforts. In this free Webinar, guest presenter Dr. Sarah L. Desmarais will explain what pretrial risk assessment tools are and the research on their effectiveness. She also will discuss common objections to their use, including concerns about racial bias, and common implementation problems. With Jessica Smith as moderator, Sarah will take questions during the Webinar from participants.

**New COA Judges.** The News & Observer [reports](#) that Governor Roy Cooper announced this week that he is appointing Chris Brook and Reuben Young to fill two seats on the North Carolina Court of Appeals. Brook is the legal director for the North Carolina ACLU and Young is the chief deputy secretary for the Department of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice. The vacancies were the result of Mark Davis being [elevated](#) to the North Carolina Supreme Court and Judge Robert Hunter reaching [mandated retirement](#) age.

**Church Arson.** As Louisiana newspaper The Advocate [reports](#), a 21-year-old man recently was charged with state hate crimes and several other offenses for allegedly setting fire to three historically African-American churches in St. Landy Parish. At a bail hearing, the state fire marshal testified that digital evidence collected from Holden Matthews' cellphone connected him to each of the three fires, which occurred over a ten-day span in late March and early April. The Advocate report says that one issue explored at the bail hearing was Matthews' alleged interest in church fires set in Norway in the 1990's that are associated with the Scandinavian “black metal” music subgenre.

**Columbine.** As the Denver Post [reports](#), an eighteen-year-old Florida woman who the FBI described as “infatuated with Columbine” caused alarm in Colorado this week when she traveled there and bought a shotgun after making threats against schools in the area surrounding Columbine High School. Schools were locked down as authorities searched for Sol Pais, a Miami resident whose threats came four days prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Columbine school shooting. Pais was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot on Wednesday.

**Barry.** The New York Times [reports](#) that Third Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Maryanne Trump Barry, the sister of President Donald Trump, has retired from the bench amid an ethics investigation into her co-ownership with her siblings of a building supply company that the Times accused of engaging in “dubious tax schemes” in an

investigative [report](#) last year. Following her brother's election, Barry voluntarily had stopped hearing cases and was in inactive status. The ethics complaint was filed by Scott Shuchart, a lawyer who resigned from DHS because of the family separation border policy and who now works for what the Times calls "a left-leaning public policy and advocacy group." Barry's retirement ends the ethics investigation.