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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2015

The Seattle Times

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Ruling shocks charter schools

STATE SUPREME COURT SAYS THEY'RE UNCONSTITUTIONAL; WHAT NOW?

By JOHN HIGGINS
Seattle Times education reporter

After nearly a year of deliberation, the state Supreme Court ruled 6-3 late Friday afternoon that charter schools are unconstitutional, creating chaos for hundreds of families whose children have al-

ready started classes.

The ruling — believed to be one of the first of its kind in the country — overturns the law voters narrowly approved in 2012 allowing publicly funded, but privately operated, schools.

Eight new charter schools are

opening in Washington this fall, in addition to one that opened in Seattle last year.

It was not immediately known what would happen with the schools that are already running. The parties have 20 days to ask the court for reconsideration before the

ruling becomes final.

In Seattle, Summit Sierra, a new college-prep high school, opened Aug. 17 in the Chinatown International District with its inaugural freshman class of 130.

"We will absolutely be here ready for kids on Tuesday," said Execu-

tive Director Malia Burns.

School also started Aug. 17 at SOAR Academy and Summit: Olympus in Tacoma. Excel Public Charter School in Kent began Aug. 20, and Destiny Charter Middle School in Tacoma opened Aug. 24. Rainier Prep's first day of class was Tuesday.

PRIDE Prep and Spokane Inter-
See > CHARTERS, A4

While the West dithers, Syrian refugee crisis reaches boiling point



DAN KITWOOD / GETTY IMAGES

Migrant families ride a train from Gevgelija, Macedonia, to the Serbian border Friday. Since the beginning of 2015 the number of migrants using the so-called "Balkans route" to European Union countries has exploded.

'PRICE OF POLITICAL FAILURE' | Half of the country's prewar population has been displaced, with both opponents and supporters of the regime, rich and poor, fleeing.

By ANNE BARNARD
The New York Times

BEIRUT — Arresting images of desperation on the West's doorstep have brought Syria, for the moment, back to worldwide attention: refugees cramming into train stations and climbing border fences; drowned Syrian toddlers washing up on beaches, a girl in polka dots, a boy in tiny shoes.

It was never any secret that a rising tide of Syrian refugees would sooner or later burst the seams of the Middle East and head for Europe. Yet little was done in Western capitals to stop or mitigate the slow-motion disaster that was befalling Syrian civilians and sending them on the run.

"The migrant crisis in Europe is essentially self-inflicted," said Lina Khatib, a research associate at the University of London and until recently the head of the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut. "Had European countries sought serious solutions to political conflicts like the one in Syria, and dedicated enough time and resources to humanitarian assistance abroad, Europe would not be in this position today."

HUNGARY Austria and Germany to take migrants

>A3



BALAZS MOHAI / EUROPEAN PRESSPHOTO AGENCY

Migrants walk on the railway tracks near Bicske, west of Budapest, Hungary, Friday, after some 200 to 300 of them broke out of the Bicske train station.

The causes of the current crisis are plain enough. Neighboring countries such as Lebanon and Jordan became overwhelmed with refugees and closed their borders to many,

while international humanitarian funding fell further and further short of the need.

Then, Syrian government losses and other

See > SYRIANS, A6

Ridgway moved to end long isolation

GREEN RIVER KILLER

Documents show transfer to Colorado a surprise to law enforcement here

By MIKE CARTER
Seattle Times staff reporter

Gary Ridgway, the notorious Green River killer who confessed to murdering 49 women, will have more freedom and social contacts at a federal prison in Colorado where he has been sent by Washington's Department of Corrections officials.

Since his conviction in 2004, Ridgway, now 66, has lived in virtual isolation at the Wash-

ington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, serving life without parole after confessing to a string of sex slayings that spanned nearly 20 years. Dozens of young women, mostly street prostitutes, were murdered and dumped by Ridgway in South King County, many along the banks of the river that lent the killer its name.

After his arrest in 2001 based on DNA evidence, Ridgway agreed to an unprecedented plea bargain with the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, in which he agreed to detail his crimes in exchange for no death penalty.

Prosecutors were eventually able to charge him with 48 murders between 1982 and 1998.

He pleaded guilty in 2011 to a 49th murder. By Ridgway's own count, the number of victims is closer to 70.

The intent of the move to a maximum-security federal penitentiary in Florence, Colo., was to provide Ridgway with an opportunity to live in a prison's general population.

In Washington, Ridgway's notoriety would be a virtual death sentence in general population. Prison documents on his transfer, obtained through a public-records request, indicate he was easily recognizable and a target of other inmates.

In Colorado, where Ridgway is less well known, he was to be

See > RIDGWAY, A12

Low jobless number boosts odds of rate rise, but job-growth slowdown bolsters status quo

By NELSON D. SCHWARTZ AND BINYAMIN APPELBAUM
The New York Times

Despite disappointing job growth last month, the unemployment rate fell to its lowest level since early 2008, sharpening the debate within the Federal Reserve over whether to raise interest rates when policy-

makers meet in two weeks.

Friday's report from the Labor Department — which estimated that employers added a less-than-expected 173,000 jobs in August even as the official jobless rate dipped to 5.1 percent — provided evidence for both camps to make their cases.

The slowdown in job growth and the absence of any significant wage pressure could strengthen the arguments of those who see little risk in keeping monetary policy accommodative and waiting not just for more positive data but also for unruly markets to settle down.

On the other side, there were

enough positive indicators to keep a September tightening in play, even as Wall Street turns more attention to the possibility of a Fed move in October or at the central bank's last meeting of the year, in December.

"I don't think it changes anyone's views," said Michael Gapen, head of U.S. economic research at Barclays. "It's strong enough to keep the September-ists stuck on September and weak enough for everyone else who is looking for a later

takeoff."

The report was hotly anticipated, mainly because it represents the last major piece of data the central

See > JOBS REPORT, A8

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