

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Thursday, January 16, 2020

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 11:45am: President Trump receives intelligence briefing
- 2pm: Trump participates in announcement of guidance on constitutional prayer in public schools

CONGRESS

- House meets at 9am; set to consider H.J.Res 76, which would overturn the Education Department's 2019 student loan forgiveness rule
- Senate meets at 9:45am; resumes consideration of H.R. 5430, the USMCA Act. Chamber to hold 2 votes at 11am, a motion to waive the budget act, then passage of bill
- Noon: Senate to receive House impeachment managers
- 2pm: Chief Justice John Roberts presides over consideration of articles of impeachment

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Medicare and Medicaid's Top Doctor Set to Leave Agency:** Kate Goodrich, director of the Center for Clinical Standards and Quality and the chief medical officer at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, will be leaving the agency next month, the agency confirmed yesterday. Since August 2012, Goodrich has headed the Quality Measurement and Value-Based Incentives Group. She was responsible for the quality measurement and public reporting work, as well as the marketplace quality work portfolio, value-based incentives programs, and implementation of the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015.
- **Judges Question FTC's Clawback Authority:** Third Circuit judges questioned the Federal Trade Commission's authority to recoup profits from companies engaged in anticompetitive behavior in a legal battle over AbbVie's control of a testosterone gel patent. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit heard arguments yesterday in a case brought by the FTC against the drugmaker for allegedly filing sham patent lawsuits to stifle competition. AbbVie and Besins Healthcare Inc. want the court to reverse multimillion-dollar judgments against them and to take away the FTC's broad authority to claw back ill-gotten gains.
- **Parnas Says Trump Lied:** Lev Parnas, an indicted associate of Rudy Giuliani, accused Trump of lying for saying he didn't know what Parnas and Giuliani were doing in

Ukraine. In an interview with MSNBC's Rachel Maddow yesterday, Parnas said, "I wouldn't do anything without the consent of Rudy Giuliani or the president," Parnas said. "President Trump knew exactly what was going on," he added in the interview.

- **Republicans Plot Climate Strategy:** House Republican lawmakers will huddle over their approach to climate change during a closed-door strategy summit today, as they face intensifying pressure from younger voters to address the environmental threat. The strategy session is spurred by a growing recognition among some Republican congressional leaders that the party has for too long ceded the debate over climate change to Democrats, according to three House Republican aides who asked not to be named discussing private deliberations.
 - "There's been a lot of credibility given to some really crazy and dangerous and irresponsible ideas, and we've got to make sure that we are working to inform and educate the public about the dangers of some of these policies," Rep. Garret Graves (R-La.), ranking member on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, said in an interview.
- **Age Bias Bill Passed:** Workers would have an easier time proving age, disability, and similar discrimination claims in court under a bill passed by the House. The Protecting Older Workers Against Discrimination Act would lower a bar currently requiring workers to show that discrimination or retaliation was the sole reason behind an employer's decision to fire, demote, or take other adverse action. The measure would allow workers suing for discrimination, such as age or disability bias, to pursue "mixed-motive" claims.
 - "I don't know what the Senate is going to do. They haven't done much," Education and Labor Committee Chairman Bobby Scott (D-Va.), the lead sponsor, said shortly after the House vote. "The record will show that Democrats in the House supported senior citizens' right to get a job free from discrimination and Republicans in the Senate did whatever they're gonna do. So we'll see."
- **U.S. Effort in Afghanistan Worse Than 'D-':** U.S. efforts to rebuild Afghanistan after almost two decades of fighting have been plagued by insecurity, personnel issues and politically-driven timelines, according to the Pentagon's watchdog for Afghanistan reconstruction. "The constant turnover of U.S. personnel, or what we have euphemistically called the annual lobotomy, negatively impacted all of our reconstruction efforts," Special Inspector General John Sopko told the House Foreign Affairs Committee yesterday. The U.S. effort was further undermined by a lack of understanding of the "historical, social, legal and political traditions" of the country, he said.
 - Sopko delivered a blistering critique of American efforts to rebuild Afghanistan. At one point in the hearing, Sopko said if the U.S. had done more than just "showed up for class" or achieved a "D-minus," the reconstruction efforts would have worked a lot better. The U.S. has spent nearly \$900 billion on the Afghan conflict, the longest in American history. Yet the Taliban are at their strongest since being overthrown in 2001, civilian casualties remain near a record high and

attacks by insurgents make it impossible for Afghan forces to secure much of the country.

- **Iran Threat Stirs Cyber Defense Call:** Potential cyberattacks in retaliation for the U.S. airstrike this month on Iran's senior military leader Qassem Soleimani are spurring U.S. lawmakers to urge for more funding for the Department of Homeland Security. "You have gotten the committee in a good position to make some strong arguments from a budgetary standpoint that would help shore up some known vulnerabilities," House Homeland Security Chairman Bennie Thompson (D-Miss.) said after a hearing yesterday on threats to the homeland following Soleimani's death.
- **Trump Tries to Elbow Democrats Out of Iowa:** Trump is trying to elbow Democratic presidential candidates out of the spotlight before the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses. The president held his own televised rally in neighboring Wisconsin on Tuesday to compete with the Democrats' seventh debate in Des Moines. His campaign also bought a full-page ad in the city's newspaper and flew a banner through the sky saying "TRUMP FIGHTS FOR IOWA FARMERS!" before candidates sparred on stage. He'll hold a rally in Des Moines on Jan. 30, just four days before the caucuses. He's also sending his sons to Iowa and the campaign has scheduled a host of other events.
- **Steyer Lifts Ceiling on Spending:** Billionaire Tom Steyer has blown past the \$100 million he committed to his Democratic presidential campaign by more than 25% and now says there is no ceiling on what he will spend if it keeps paying off. It remains to be seen whether that tactic will work. Steyer received 1% support in a Quinnipiac national poll of registered voters taken last week. But he's scored a second-place showing in a recent poll in South Carolina, which holds its primary at the end of February.
- **Bloomberg Seeks to Mobilize Women:** Michael Bloomberg sought to mobilize female voters behind his Democratic presidential campaign yesterday with an organizing event in New York, saying women will be the difference in ousting Trump from office. "When we defeat President Trump in November, I know it will be because women rose up to say, 'Enough,'" Bloomberg said at a rally in a New York hotel ballroom to launch a "Women for Mike" effort.
 - The push comes as Bloomberg is facing questions about lawsuits that accuse him of making crude remarks at work in the 1990s and fostering an uncomfortable work environment for women, as well as whether he should release women from non-disclosure agreements. Bloomberg has denied the allegations.
- **Buttigieg Backed by N.H. Lawmaker:** Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg netted the first endorsement from the New Hampshire congressional delegation on Friday, winning the support of Rep. Ann Kuster (D-N.H.). Kuster, who represents the 2nd Congressional District, will campaign with Buttigieg in Concord on Friday. "Pete Buttigieg is the leader who can finally turn the page on the Trump presidency and bring

our nation together to usher in a new era where we finally solve our most urgent problems,” Kuster said.

- **U.S.-China Trade Deal Reality Check:** The deal signed between the U.S. and China brings a pause in the trade war between the world’s two largest economies. However, it promises some actions China has already taken and skepticism remains as to whether the nation can buy an additional \$200 billion in goods and services, including \$95 billion in commodities. To achieve the promised increase in purchases, U.S. exports of goods and services have to jump almost 56% this year from 2019 to reach the total laid out in the deal signed by Trump and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He.
- **South Korea Should Consult U.S. on North Korea Tours, Envoy Says:** South Korea’s push to allow for private tourism to North Korea should be discussed with the U.S., said Ambassador Harry Harris, who added the visits are technically possible. “Tourism is allowed under sanctions, but what you take with you when you tour, some of those things might not be allowed under those sanctions,” the U.S. envoy to South Korea told reporters today after President Moon Jae-in raised the proposal earlier this week. Harris said consultations with a designated U.S. government body should take place to “avoid misunderstandings.”
- **After F-16s From U.S., Taiwan Looks Inward:** In her first term, President Tsai Ing-Wen secured more than \$10 billion in high-profile U.S. weapons to defend Taiwan against China. Over the next four years, it might be more important to acquire less glamorous, but nimbler weapons to prevent China from weighing an invasion. Tsai, whose Democratic Progressive Party considers Taiwan as an independent country, spent her first four years in office successfully securing high-tech arms commitments from Trump, including more advanced F-16s and battle tanks. Now she’ll need to show whether she can use that base to build a more credible deterrent against any attack by an increasingly powerful China.
- **Trump Pushes Mexico to Step Up Cartels Efforts:** Trump is pushing Mexico to do more to confront drug cartels over concerns about narcotics and violence coming from the U.S. southern border -- topics that will lead the agenda when his top law enforcement official visits today. Mexican officials will host Attorney General William Barr in Mexico City for the second time in as many months, the latest instance of an ongoing conversation between the two countries. A Department of Justice official said the purpose of Barr’s trip is to have high-level meetings on joint counter-narcotics efforts.
- **Trafficking Fight in Line for Funding:** More money to fight human trafficking and first-of-its-kind prosecutions against companies and corporate officials importing goods produced with forced labor will be coming from the Homeland Security Department, its new chief said yesterday. The issues are now a priority and should “rise to the top” of future budget requests across agencies, acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf told a gathering at the Heritage Foundation, unveiling the agency’s first strategy to fight

human trafficking, child sexual exploitation, and the importing of goods using forced labor.

- **Trump Targets Prayer in School:** Trump will announce new guidance on prayer in public schools today, targeting an area in which he's allowed scant constitutional latitude in another appeal to evangelical Christian voters. Trump telegraphed the action during a Jan. 3 event at a Miami-area megachurch to launch an "Evangelicals for Trump" coalition, telling the audience it would be "big." But prayer in schools is already legal, with restrictions set out in a series of court actions the president can't unilaterally countermand.
 - Trump and his campaign have shown some concern about evangelical support for his re-election following a Dec. 19 editorial published by Christianity Today, founded by the evangelist Billy Graham, that called the president "immoral" and said he should be removed from office. In 2016, 81% of white evangelical Christians voted for Trump. They mostly live in reliably Republican states in the South, but their votes will be crucial to Trump in swing states including Florida and the Rust Belt.
- **SEC'S Jackson Leaving Next Month for NYU:** Robert Jackson Jr. said he will step down from the Securities and Exchange Commission next month to return to teaching, leaving Wall Street's main regulator with an open Democratic seat as Republicans push to dial back rules before November's elections. Since joining the SEC in January 2018, Jackson has often led opposition to policies pushed by Chairman Jay Clayton, including last year's landmark move to overhaul conduct standards for brokers and investment advisers. At the same time, he and Clayton -- both political independents -- worked together to approve enforcement actions in the face of objections from the commission's two Republicans.
- **BakerHostetler Lawyer Gets Trump Nod:** A BakerHostetler employment and labor lawyer is Trump's expected pick to fill a seat on the U.S District Court for the Southern District of Texas, adding to Trump's appointments already in the state. Drew Tipton, who's been with the firm since 1999, specializes in complex labor and employment and trade secret litigation. Tipton also clerked for Judge John D. Rainey, a judge on the Texas court to which he's going to be nominated. If confirmed, Tipton would fill the last remaining district court vacancy in Texas.
- **Virginia Declares Emergency Ahead of Militia Protests:** Virginia's Gov. Ralph Northam (D) declared a temporary state of emergency ahead of expected demonstrations in Richmond on Monday and prohibited all weapons from the state's capitol grounds until Jan. 21. Citing intelligence analysts, the governor's office said in a statement yesterday that out-of-state militia groups were planning to attend the event that has been surrounded by credible threats of violence and white nationalist rhetoric.