

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Monday, January 27, 2020

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 11am: Trump participates in arrival of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu
- 11:10am: Trump meets with Netanyahu
- 12:30pm: Trump meets with former Israeli military chief Benny Gantz
- 1:15pm: Trump, Vice President Mike Pence have lunch
- 3:30pm: Trump takes part in a ceremonial swearing-in of the administrator of the Small Business Administration

CONGRESS

- Senate meets at 1pm to resume impeachment trial
 - Republicans are under pressure to call impeachment trial witnesses after a report that Trump told his national security adviser in August he wanted to keep freezing aid to Ukraine until the government there investigated a political rival
- House meets at 2pm, with votes postponed until 6:30pm
 - 5pm: House Rules Committee meets to consider a measure that would repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 and mandate
 - Will also consider an expanded version a credit reporting bill

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Taming State Medicaid Finance Schemes:** Hospitals, nursing homes, and physicians are lining up against a White House plan to curb questionable state Medicaid financing arrangements, saying that the changes could slash annual funding by up to \$49 billion, hurt beneficiary access to care, and limit states' ability to fund their cash-strapped programs. Like other sweeping health-care directives from the Trump administration, the Medicaid Fiscal Accountability Regulation proposal will likely face a legal challenge from provider groups and states that could have to pay a larger share of program costs, said Cindy Mann, a partner at Manatt Health in Washington.
- **Bolton Bombshell Aids Witness Push:** An explosive leak from former National Security Adviser John Bolton's unpublished book saying President Donald Trump wanted to freeze aid to Ukraine until its government investigated his political rival threatens to upend the politics of the impeachment trial and bring new pressure on Republicans to call witnesses.

- Bolton’s account in the draft of his book, as described by the New York Times, fortifies the two central arguments made by Democrats in the trial: that Trump used the power of his office for political gain and that the senators urgently need to hear from witnesses the president blocked from testifying during the House inquiry.
- **Trump Lawyers Begin Defense:** Earlier, Trump’s lawyers this weekend said House Democrats failed to prove their case for impeaching the president and now are asking the Senate to take the unprecedented step of removing him from office without evidence to justify such a consequential act. “They are asking you not only to overturn the results of the last election, but, as I said before, they are asking you to remove President Trump from the ballot in an election that is occurring in approximately nine months,” Cipollone said as he opened the president’s defense on Saturday. “They’re asking you to do something that no Senate has ever done and they’re asking you to do it with no evidence.”
 - Trump’s lawyers spoke for about two hours Saturday in what they called a preview of their broader defense. Cipollone and the other members of Trump’s team said they will provide a point-by-point rebuttal of the impeachment case presented by Democrats over the three previous days.
- **House Agenda:** The House returns to work today after a week-long recess, with plans to vote on legislation to limit Trump’s ability to conduct military action in the Middle East without congressional approval and give consumers more information about their credit.
 - Next week, the House is likely to vote on a sweeping labor bill to amend federal workplace laws to bolster a wide range of legal protections on the job, along with a supplemental appropriations bill to address recent earthquakes in Puerto Rico, according to a letter House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) sent to his colleagues on Friday. On tap for later in the month, according to Hoyer, are plans to consider a package of wilderness and public lands bills and legislation to remove the deadline for ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment.
- **Puerto Rico Fiscal Plan:** Democrats including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and presidential candidates Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) on Friday asked Puerto Rico’s Fiscal Oversight and Management Board to change the fiscal plan of the island’s power agency due to the disruption from the recent earthquakes. The island-wide blackout caused by the earthquakes shows that Puerto Rico is still in a “vulnerable and unstable position,” the lawmakers said in a letter. “FOMB and the government of Puerto Rico have before them a unique opportunity” to avoid risks to the system, reduce the debt load of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority and opt for a fiscal plan that “prioritizes renewable generation.”
- **Tax Writers to Wrestle With Highway Bill Funding:** The House Ways and Means Committee this week is set to revisit the toughest part of crafting a major infrastructure package: figuring out how to pay for it. Wednesday’s hearing coincides with the expected introduction of a draft infrastructure package by House Democratic lawmakers. The proposal will tie together priorities from the Transportation and Infrastructure, Ways and

Means, and Energy and Commerce committees, according to an outline of the transportation portion.

- The draft will include details about the surface transportation reauthorization bill, known as the “highway bill,” a policy package for government programs covering highways, bridges, and railroads that Congress enacts about every five years. The package, which Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has said will be introduced this week, will need new funding sources unless all sides agree to increase already record levels of government debt to finance it.
- **Sanders Leads in N.H., Iowa While Biden Still Ahead Nationally:** New polls showed the unsettled state of the Democratic primary days before the first voters weigh in at the Iowa caucuses, with front-runner status still unclear. Vice President Joe Biden holds a sizable lead nationally, but many polls show Democrats in the early-voting states favor Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), which could spark his campaign for the contests ahead.
 - Winning in the early states is critical to generate momentum to continue on through Super Tuesday on March 3, when populous states including California and Texas hold their primaries. Biden, in particular, has run on the notion of electability -- losing early on could dampen that argument. National polls aren’t particularly predictive of the eventual nominee at this point.
 - A poll by Emerson University of the first caucus state found Sanders leading with 30%, followed by Biden at 21% and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) at 13%. The poll marks the first time this cycle Klobuchar placed in the top three. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) was at 11% and Pete Buttigieg 10%. That poll has a margin of error of 4.6 percentage points.
 - But Suffolk University and USA Today’s poll of Iowa painted a different picture. Biden led with 25%, followed by Sanders with 19%, Buttigieg with 18%, Warren 13% and Klobuchar 6%. That poll had a margin of error of 4.4 percentage points.
- **Warren Gets Des Moines Nod:** The Des Moines Register endorsed Warren this weekend, saying she would “push an unequal America in the right direction.” The influential newspaper in Iowa’s largest city revealed its pick for the first-in-the-nation nominating contest on its website Saturday evening. “At this moment, when the very fabric of American life is at stake, Elizabeth Warren is the president this nation needs,” the Register’s editorial board said. The Register said that many of Warren’s ideas “are not radical. They are right. They would improve life in America, and they are generally shared by the other Democratic candidates, who bring their own strengths to this race.” The candidate is “tough and compassionate,” the newspaper said.
- **Buttigieg Bets on Friends-and-Family Tactic in Iowa:** In a historically large field of candidates and a saturated organizing environment, the Buttigieg campaign is betting that tapping into its supporters’ personal networks will be more successful in locking in support from reliable Democratic voters and will help them better reach independents and disaffected Republicans. “The potential for someone to come into a campaign office and upload their contacts and even bring 20 new people into the mix could really be the ball game,” said Brad Anderson, Barack Obama’s Iowa state director in 2012 who is unaffiliated

this cycle. "If you have a giant number of volunteers across the state and they all add 20 people into the fold and in a caucus where 250,000 people turn out, you're talking about a percentage that could be impacted by the model."

- **Yang Will be on Democratic Debate Stage in February:** Businessman and outsider Democratic candidate for president, Andrew Yang, has earned a spot in the upcoming eighth democratic debate in New Hampshire. In order to make the stage for the debate on Feb. 7, candidates have to receive at least 5% in four Democratic National Committee-approved polls or 7% in two early-state polls. Candidates also have to receive at least 225,000 individual contributions. Yang had already met the donor threshold. He earned 7% in a national poll from a Washington Post and ABC News poll and 5% in a Fox News poll, both released yesterday. He had received 5% in a December NPR/PBS/Marist national poll and 5% in an early January Quinnipiac University national poll.
- **Netanyahu Says He Will 'Make History' With Trump in U.S. Visit:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he will "make history" with Trump in a visit to Washington this week, when the U.S. leader is slated to present his long-awaited peace plan. "I am going to meet with President Trump tomorrow," Netanyahu said at the airport, before taking off to Washington. "On Tuesday, together with him, we will make history."
 - Netanyahu and his main election challenger, former Israeli military chief Benny Gantz, accepted invitations to the White House ahead of Trump's planned release of his long-awaited Middle East peace plan. Israel is scheduled to hold a third election in less than a year on March 2, after two previous attempts resulted in no leader able to assemble a governing coalition. While Netanyahu didn't reveal any details from the plan, he said that the proposal would advance Israel's "vital interests."
- **U.S. Embassy in Baghdad Hit:** Five Katyusha rockets were fired at the fortified Green Zone in Baghdad last night, one directly hitting the U.S. Embassy building, Iraq's security forces reported. U.S. helicopters were seen evacuating injured people, al-Sumaria News reported, citing an anonymous security official. The State Department released a statement that did not comment on any injuries or deaths. But it noted there have been 14 attacks on U.S. personnel in Iraq since September. It also called on Iraq to "fulfill its obligations to protect our diplomatic facilities."
 - "The security situation remains tense and Iranian-backed armed groups remain a threat," the statement reads. "So we remain vigilant."
- **EU Searches for Trump Trade Deal:** Faced with a U.S. refusal to cut industrial tariffs unless the EU opens its agricultural market more, the European Commission might be prepared to scale back technical barriers to imports of American foods including shellfish, according to officials. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because the plan is still under discussion. The idea is that the bloc would recognize U.S. safety standards for mollusks as equivalent to Europe's rules, opening the door to American shipments of edibles such as oysters to the European market.

- **Johnson Set to Test Bond With Trump Over Huawei:** U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson will put his friendship with Trump to the test this week as he is poised to allow Huawei a role in the country's fifth-generation wireless broadband networks. In the week that the U.K. ends its 45-year relationship with the European Union, Johnson is expected to make a series of critical infrastructure decisions that could shape his premiership -- and the country -- for years to come. He's preparing to give Huawei a role in developing 5G, despite calls from Trump to ban the Chinese firm over concerns that it could make the network vulnerable to spying in the future. Huawei has always denied posing a security risk. An announcement could come as early as tomorrow.
- **China Deaths Jump as Measures Fail to Slow Virus:** China's death toll from the coronavirus climbed to at least 80 as the country extended the Lunar New Year holiday in an effort to contain an infection whose spread accelerated around the globe. Premier Li Keqiang visited Wuhan, the city at the epicenter of the disease, today as the government faces pressure to combat the epidemic. World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he's heading to Beijing to meet with the government and assess the response. Chinese authorities said the virus isn't yet under control despite aggressive steps to limit movement for millions of people who live in cities near the center of the outbreak.
- **Pompeo Keeps NPR Reporter Feud Going:** Secretary of State Michael Pompeo kept a feud with an NPR reporter alive yesterday, taking to his personal Twitter account to post a Bible quote about lying and slander. The post came a day after Pompeo's unusual, official statement attacking NPR's Mary Louise Kelly and the media in general after a contentious interview with questions about Ukraine that she said ended with him unleashing an expletive-laced tirade.
 - Pompeo accused Kelly of lying to him twice, including while setting the interview up in December and by disclosing his alleged outburst following that conversation, which he said was "off the record." He cited no evidence. "This is another example of how unhinged the media has become in its quest to hurt President Trump and this administration," Pompeo said in his statement.
- **Asylum Cooperation Agreement Sought:** Asylum seekers at the U.S. border could be sent to Honduras to seek protections there under a cooperation agreement that could be finalized as early as this week, Department of Homeland Security interim Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli told reporters on a press call Friday. The DHS has sent approximately 100 asylum seekers to Guatemala under a similar agreement with that country since November in its efforts to curb migration to the U.S. Both countries have been instrumental in helping control the caravan of approximately 4,000 migrants from Honduras that began to move toward the U.S. earlier this month, he said. Pilot programs that speed up the deportation of asylum seekers to their home countries in Mexico or Central America may also expand to include all southwest border land entry points as early as two weeks from now, he said.

- **State AGs, DOJ Lawyers to Discuss Google Probe:** Attorneys general will meet with Justice Department lawyers this week to discuss separate investigations of Google, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing people familiar with the matter. The meeting could lead to the groups joining forces, the newspaper said in a story posted to its website yesterday. A coalition of 48 states opened an antitrust investigation that will dig into Google's operations in search and mobile software, going beyond an initial focus on the company's advertising business.
- **Koch Network Tells Companies to Protect Data:** The Koch political network is advising tech companies that have come under fire in Washington that they should act as good stewards of data but resist pressure to police political ads or give the government access to encrypted devices. After the group spent years defending business and telling the government to stand back, it released principles today that press companies to change their behavior. They call on firms to be "responsible stewards of the data they collect, use, store, and share," post clear data-use policies, and be transparent about problems.
- **Congressman With Passion for Health Care Dies:** Former California Rep. Fortney "Pete" Stark Jr., a Democrat who had a special focus on health care during his 40 years in Congress, has died at age 88. No cause of death was given. Stark is on a short list of House members who served four decades or more. He represented a district in the San Francisco Bay area, including the cities of Alameda, Hayward, San Leandro and parts of Oakland. He helped craft Obamacare, President Barack Obama's signature policy achievement.