

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Wednesday, January 29, 2020

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 11am: President Trump holds signing ceremony for USMCA trade deal

CONGRESS

- Senate impeachment trial continues with 16 hours of written questions from senators over Wednesday, Thursday
 - U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts, the trial's presiding officer, will read the written queries out loud for lawyers of each side to respond on the Senate floor
- 10am: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, top House Democrats hold press conference to unveil infrastructure investment framework
 - Proposal will take the form of a topline document that ties together priorities from three House panels – the Transportation and Infrastructure, Ways and Means, and Energy and Commerce committees – according to an outline of the transportation panel's plans.
- House meets at 10am; first votes expected from 4pm
 - House set to consider S. 3201, which would extend classification of fentanyl-related substances would as Schedule I, the most strictly controlled drug category, until May 6, 2021
 - House to also consider H.R. 3621, which would require credit reporting companies to provide consumers with more information on their credit record and scores

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Poll Backs Witnesses:** Three-quarters of U.S. voters say senators should hear from witnesses in the impeachment trial, according to a Quinnipiac University poll. Much of the Jan. 22-27 poll was taken before Sunday's report on Bolton's book. "There may be heated debate among lawmakers about whether witnesses should testify at the impeachment trial of President Trump, but it's a different story outside the Beltway," according to Quinnipiac analyst Mary Snow, who said even 49% of Republicans want to hear testimony.
- **Parnas Wants to Attend Impeachment Trial:** Lev Parnas, the former Trump supporter who is now seeking to help Democrats' efforts to remove the president, wants to witness the impeachment proceedings in person. The Ukrainian-American businessman asked a judge yesterday for permission to travel to Washington today to attend the president's trial.

Parnas is out on bail facing charges of laundering foreign funds for U.S. political campaigns and masking the source of political contributions.

- In order to attend the proceedings, Parnas would have to travel from Florida to New York to have his GPS monitoring device removed, so he could enter the Senate gallery, his lawyer wrote the judge. The office of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) provided tickets for Parnas and his lawyer to attend the session, according to the letter.
- **Push for Bipartisan Paid Leave Bill:** Congress may use the Democratic-backed FAMILY Act as a starting point for future bipartisan paid leave legislation, House Ways and Means Chairman Richard Neal (D-Mass.) said yesterday. During a committee hearing on the topic yesterday, lawmakers from both sides of the aisle appeared to be open to offering suggestions and improvements on the bill, he said. The measure can be the “cornerstone of what we would build on,” he said.
 - The FAMILY Act, which would establish a federal paid family and medical leave social insurance program funded through a payroll tax, is a tough pill to swallow for many House Republicans who’ve expressed concern about the added cost to businesses and the bill’s “one-size fits all” approach. Neal said he’s still optimistic a paid leave bill could work its way through the committee and get to a floor vote by the end of the year. A payroll tax to support the legislation will likely need to be higher than originally expected, according to a letter yesterday from the Social Security Administration’s Office of the Actuary.
- **Republicans Dismiss Democrats’ Climate Bill:** Democrats have little hope of moving a draft climate change package unveiled yesterday, key House Republicans said, dubbing the call for 100% clean energy by 2050 more campaign slogan than serious proposal. “There’s a lot of show going on now,” Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.), the top Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said in an interview. “That’s what happens in a presidential cycle.” The draft text released by House Democrats is meant to spur feedback from environmental and industry groups, individual companies, and even other House Democrats before the bill’s official introduction.
- **House Democrats Release \$4.67 Billion Disaster Aid Bill:** House Appropriations Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) introduced a \$4.67 billion disaster aid measure for Puerto Rico following earthquakes in the U.S. territory. The measure would provide \$3.26 billion for Community Development Block Grant funds under the Department of Housing and Urban Development, \$1.25 billion for repairs to roads and \$100 million in education funds, among other provisions. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) has said chamber could vote on the measure next week.
- **Changes to Tech Liability Shield:** Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) has asked her staff to examine changes to a liability shield that protects tech platforms such as Facebook from lawsuits because of her concerns about how fake information could be used in the 2020 presidential election. Schakowsky, who leads a House subcommittee on consumer

protection and the chamber's efforts to write privacy legislation, said yesterday her staff is studying possible changes to Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, a law that protects big technology platforms from responsibility for user-generated content.

- **Scott Blasts Firm's Lobbying for Maduro Ally:** Lobbying by Foley & Lardner on behalf of "the top lawyer for Nicolas Maduro's brutal regime in Venezuela" is "shocking," Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.) wrote in a letter to the law firm. "No business in the United States should have any contact with Maduro's government, let alone willingly take money to lobby on its behalf," he wrote. "As long as you represent a dangerous dictator who is against everything this country was built on, I refuse to meet with anyone in your firm, or anyone that contracts on this matter with your firm, regardless of the many clients you represent."
- **Biden's Resilience to Be Tested If Son Testifies:** Joe Biden has so far survived attacks over his son's work for a Ukrainian company that were designed to weaken his presidential prospects, but that resilience could soon face its toughest test. Republicans are threatening to subpoena Biden's 49-year-old son Hunter as a witness in the impeachment trial if Democrats succeed in getting testimony from Bolton. That would force a spotlight on to an issue that the Biden campaign has worked furiously to knock down -- just days before the first contest to choose a nominee, the Feb. 3 Iowa caucuses.
- **Biden, Sanders Top Latest National Poll:** Biden is holding his lead in national polling just days ahead of the Iowa caucuses, but Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) is keeping the gap narrow. Biden took the top spot in the latest Quinnipiac University national survey, with 26% support among Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters, up slightly from 25% in a Jan. 13 survey. Sanders rose to 21% in the latest tally, up from 19% two weeks ago and his highest tally so far in the poll. The new survey was taken between Jan. 22 to Jan. 27.
- **Restaurant Workers Union Backs Warren, Sanders:** When a California union local was fighting over a contract at Loyola Marymount University, Sens. Sanders and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) threatened to skip on the Democratic debate there. Now, the Unite Here Local 11 has returned the favor, with a joint endorsement of the two presidential hopefuls. Negotiations between the union and the food services company Sodexo had stalled at the time of the debate. Warren was the first 2020 candidate to promise not to cross a picket line for the debate in mid-December. Sanders followed a half hour later.
- **Biden Seeks Social Media Defense:** Biden's campaign is urging its active social-media supporters to get online and defend the Democratic presidential candidate against what it sees as increasingly aggressive attacks from the surging Sanders camp. With less than a week before the Iowa caucuses, the Biden campaign expressed concern on a call to its supporters that Sanders people were "getting ugly" and it had to "step up its game" defending the vice president. The message was confirmed by campaign national press secretary TJ Ducklo.

- **DNC Asked to Let Bloomberg Debate:** Democrats concerned that former New York Mayor and presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg is avoiding scrutiny by not participating in televised debates with other candidates are pushing the party to allow the billionaire on stage. Bloomberg hasn't been eligible to debate since joining the race Nov. 24 because he's self-funding his campaign. The DNC requires a certain level of donations from individuals to qualify for the debates. Bloomberg has spent \$278 million of his own money so far in ads, an effort that has earned him fourth place in recent national surveys.
- **Trump Neutralizes Key Democratic Attack With Bipartisan USMCA:** Trump will sign into law a trade pact with Canada and Mexico today, sealing a political victory that will help neutralize Democratic attacks on his economic record. The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA, delivers on one of Trump's core campaign promises: to replace the Clinton-era North American Free Trade agreement that the president has called a "catastrophe" that drained the U.S. of jobs. Democrats have taken aim at Trump's economic policies -- including tax cuts that benefited corporations and the wealthy -- but attacking his approach to trade has proved more complicated as they compete for votes in swing states that have seen manufacturing jobs disappear.
 - After the signing, Trump is scheduled to travel tomorrow to Michigan and Iowa -- where he's expected to tout the agreement just as Democrats try to win over voters in next week's Iowa caucuses.
- **Pompeo Heads to Ukraine Amid Impeachment Trial:** Secretary of State Michael Pompeo travels to Ukraine this week to persuade the country that U.S. support remains undiminished in the wake of the impeachment saga. Trump's continued hostility toward Kyiv -- and Pompeo's own recent comments -- make that a harder sell. Pompeo will meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other senior officials during a one-day stop tomorrow "to highlight U.S. support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity," the State Department said. He'll also go to the U.K. -- where a key decision on using Chinese 5G technology upset the U.S. this week -- as well as Belarus, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.
 - The trip begins in London today, where Pompeo will hear directly about Prime Minister Boris Johnson's decision on technology built by Huawei. Pompeo and other American officials say the company's equipment can be used for espionage -- a charge it denies. The U.K. announced Tuesday it believes it could work with Huawei on some technology while keeping it out of the most sensitive parts of its 5G mobile networks.
- **Kushner Says Saudis Will Like Peace Plan:** Saudi Arabia shares common goals with Israel and its leadership will approve of much of Trump's Middle East peace plan unveiled yesterday, Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner said in an interview. Like Israel, the Saudis view Iran and Islamic militant groups as their primary threat, and it's in their interest to solve the regional conflict with Israel, Kushner, who is close to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, said.
 - "The Saudis don't have any issues with the Israelis," Kushner, a chief architect of the peace proposal, said. "Israel is hated by Iran. Saudis are hated by Iran. They have a common enemy and we have been able to hopefully bring the countries close

together on that.” Kushner appeared to overstate the ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Saudi kingdom has no diplomatic relations with Israel and bans flights between the nations. Saudi royals are mindful that the public is still pro-Palestinian and that normalizing ties with Israel risks causing a backlash in the kingdom despite sharing Iran as a common enemy.

- **Airlines Cancel More Mainland China Flights:** Airlines across the globe suspended more flights to China, as governments clamped down on travel to help stop the spread of the deadly Wuhan virus. British Airways halted daily routes to Beijing and Shanghai from London’s Heathrow airport, after U.K. officials advised against non-essential travel. The U.K. flag carrier said it would reassess over the next few days. Hong Kong’s Cathay Pacific Airways said separately it would cut capacity to China by 50% or more starting Thursday, while United Airlines in the U.S. said it would reduce flights to Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong.
 - The coronavirus spread further, with the number of confirmed cases in China soaring to overtake the official number of infections in the country during the SARS epidemic. Governments tightened international travel and border crossings with China as they ramped up efforts to stop the spread of the disease. Germany said yesterday it identified a cluster of local patients infected by a woman from Shanghai who had been visiting Europe. That’s a worrying sign for health authorities who have taken aggressive steps to stop what for now has been mostly a Chinese outbreak from becoming an international one.
- **Lighthizer to Talk Trade Deal With India:** U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer will be in India in the second week of February to finalize a trade deal ahead of Trump’s expected visit, according to people with knowledge of the matter. India is keen to sign an agreement during Trump’s visit and trade minister Piyush Goyal has invited Lighthizer to discuss the details of a possible pact that has been stalled since before Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s U.S. visit in September. India expects to sign deals to raise its defense and energy purchases from the U.S. during the president’s visit, said the people asking not to be identified citing rules.
- **U.S. Sends Furlough Warnings to Korean Staff:** The U.S. military has begun issuing furlough warnings to civilian employees in South Korea, as Washington and Seoul remain at loggerheads over troop costs. The notices inform workers that they potentially face administrative furloughs as of April 1, according to a statement issued today by U.S. Forces Korea. South Korea has balked at Trump administration demands for a dramatic increase this year in the amount of money the country pays for American security support.
- **Harvard Arrest Ups the U.S. Ante on China as Security Threat:** A Harvard University chemist, an ex-Coca-Cola scientist and a University of Kansas researcher. All three have been swept up in a U.S. crackdown on intellectual property theft sponsored by China and linked to the Thousand Talents Plan, a Chinese government program to recruit overseas researchers. The charges

unveiled yesterday against Harvard's Charles Lieber -- that he lied to U.S. investigators about his role in recruiting people to pass along scientific research to the Chinese government -- mark a high-profile escalation of the Trump administration's effort to root out economic espionage in academic institutions.