

## American Nephrology Nurses Association

### Daily Capitol Hill Update - Friday, October 25, 2019

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

#### Schedules: White House and Congress

##### WHITE HOUSE

- Noon: President Trump departs Washington for Columbia, S.C.
  - 2:15pm: Trump delivers remarks at 2019 Second Step Presidential Justice Forum
  - Trump departs S.C. for Camp David, arriving at 5:45pm
- China fired back at Vice President Mike Pence's criticism on human rights, calling his speech "lies" and chiding him for ignoring U.S. problems like racism and wealth disparity

##### CONGRESS

- Former Presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton among speakers at funeral service for Rep. Elijah Cummings to be held at New Psalmist Baptist Church, Baltimore
- Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard says she won't seek reelection to Congress in 2020
- Three committees investigating Trump aren't hearing from witnesses because the House is adjourned for ceremonies honoring Cummings;
- On Saturday, Philip Reeker, the acting assistant secretary of state of European and Eurasian affairs, is scheduled to appear

#### Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Over-the-Counter Drugs:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee announced yesterday it would hold a committee vote Oct. 31 on an over-the-counter drug bill offered by Sens. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) and Bob Casey (D-Pa.) that would "modernize the way over-the-counter medications are regulated and brought to market. The reforms aim to protect public health and encourage the development of new products to better meet the needs of patients," according to a statement.
- **Teva Gets Tight Deadline in Generics Case:** Some 20 generic drugmakers accused of price-fixing their products must complete discovery and submit all relevant documents to federal court by Dec. 20, according to a pretrial order filed yesterday in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Judge Cynthia M. Rufe's order has significantly moved up the civil case's timeline, ramping up pressure on the defendants, which include Teva Pharmaceuticals, Mylan Pharmaceuticals, and Sandoz, among others.

- **Appropriations:** Senate lawmakers next week are set to continue work on a four-bill package of fiscal 2020 spending measures (H.R. 3055). The measure would cover Agriculture-FDA, Commerce-Justice-Science, Interior-Environment and Transportation-HUD funding.
- **Trump Asks to Reconsider Congress-Subpoena Ruling:** Trump asked a federal appeals court to reconsider its ruling upholding a subpoena ordering his accountants to provide Congress with his financial records. Trump's lawyers filed the request late yesterday, urging the three-judge panel or the full appeals court in Washington to rehear the case. They argue that the court, in its 2-1 ruling, made three significant errors on Oct. 11. Among them: It wrongly concluded that Congress's subpoena had a valid legislative purpose.
- **Impeachment Schedule Update:** The three committees investigating Trump aren't hearing from witnesses today because the House is adjourned for ceremonies honoring the late Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.). Philip Reeker, the acting assistant secretary of state of European and Eurasian affairs, is scheduled to appear tomorrow. Two more witnesses are expected to give depositions to House investigators next week, an official working on the impeachment inquiry said last night.
- **Senate Wants Reports on 'Deep Fakes':** The Senate yesterday approved a bill that would require the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to make annual reports on the growing use of so-called deep fake technologies. The bill, introduced by Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and reported by the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee in July, was passed by unanimous consent.
- **Senate Backs More Ag Inspectors:** The Senate approved a bill to address a shortage of agricultural inspectors at key ports of entry. The bipartisan bill, passed by unanimous consent, authorizes U.S. Customs and Border Protection to hire an additional 240 agricultural specialists annually until the workforce shortage is filled and 200 agricultural technicians annually to carry out administrative and support functions. The bill also authorizes the training and assignment of 20 new canine teams annually.
- **Schumer Floats \$454 Billion Clean Cars Plan:** Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) said if Democrats win control of the chamber next year, he would put an ambitious plan on the floor to remove gas-powered vehicles from American roads by 2040. Schumer's \$454 billion plan echoes "cash-for-clunkers," a short-term vehicle scrappage incentive Congress enacted roughly a decade ago to give a boost to plummeting auto sales during the financial crisis and clean up the U.S. fleet. Consumers would be given a "substantial" cash voucher to trade in older gasoline-powered cars for U.S.-assembled electric, hybrid or hydrogen fuel cell autos, with additional rebates for lower income families.

- **DeFazio Subpoenas GSA for Trump Hotel Lease:** House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) issued a subpoena to the General Services Administration for documents regarding the federal lease with the Trump International Hotel in Washington. DeFazio and Rep. Dina Titus (D-Nev.), chairwoman of the subcommittee on public buildings, cited “potential conflicts of interest and constitutional emoluments violations on the part of the president,” according to a statement.
- **Biden Unveils Labor Plan:** Joe Biden is proposing a wide array of ideas aimed at helping workers unionize and protecting their rights as he seeks to show voters that he will fight for them in ways that he says Trump has not. The candidate today released a series of pledges aimed at countering what his campaign calls “the abuse of corporate power over labor,” while also encouraging workers to organize. Some of the measures build on existing legislation or efforts by the Obama administration.
  - Biden is presenting his labor plan days after he returned to his hometown of Scranton, Pa., for a speech touting his middle-class roots and values, and assailing all the ways he sees Trump failing to deliver for working Americans.
- **Sanders Proposes Expunging Pot Convictions:** Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) broadened his proposal for legalizing marijuana, offering a detailed plan yesterday that includes expunging past criminal convictions for possession, investing in communities hit hardest by the “war on drugs” and barring tobacco companies from participating in the expanding pot industry. Sanders said he’d direct federal and state officials to expunge past marijuana-related convictions and re-sentence those currently incarcerated. He would establish a \$10 billion Agriculture Department grant program to help people who have been arrested for or convicted of marijuana offenses to start urban and rural farms and growing operations.
- **Gabbard Won’t Seek Reelection to Congress:** Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) said she won’t seek reelection to Congress in 2020, asking supporters to back her bid for the Democratic nomination for president. “I’m fully committed to my offer to serve you, the people of Hawaii & America, as your President & Commander-in-Chief. So I will not be seeking reelection to Congress in 2020. I humbly ask for your support for my candidacy for President of the United States,” Gabbard said in a Twitter post.
- **Trump Considers Retreat From Vaping Flavors Ban:** The Trump administration is considering backing away from a pledge to ban popular mint and menthol vaping products -- part of an effort to stem use among kids and curb a growing health crisis -- as e-cigarette advocates press to preserve some flavors for adults. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said last month that the administration would soon ban all flavors of vaping products except tobacco-flavor. But the administration is reconsidering on mint and menthol, two people familiar with discussions said. The unresolved deliberations show the Trump administration is grappling with a complex political

dilemma around a product linked to a growing number of illnesses and deaths, but whose advocates say is less harmful than smoking.

- **China Fires Back at Pence:** China fired back at Vice President Mike Pence's criticism on human rights, calling his speech "lies" and chiding him for ignoring U.S. problems like racism and wealth disparity. Pence yesterday gave a long-anticipated speech in which he criticized China's actions against protesters in Hong Kong while calling for greater engagement between the world's two biggest economies. Hua Chunying, a spokeswoman for China's foreign ministry, blasted Pence's "arrogance" and said no force would stop the country's progress.
- **DeVos Fined for Failure to Forgive Student Debt:** Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos was hit with a \$100,000 fine for violating a judge's order to stop debt collection efforts against former students at bankrupt Corinthian Colleges. Despite the order, the department went as far as seizing the students' tax refunds and wages.
  - U.S. Magistrate Judge Sallie Kim in San Francisco issued the fine yesterday, after finding DeVos in contempt of court. The judge's rebuke came hours after DeVos's point person on overhauling the student loan system abruptly resigned and publicly called for mass debt forgiveness.
- **VA Agency Said Not Protecting Whistleblowers:** An office set up to protect whistleblowers at the Veterans Affairs Department and to hold VA executives responsible for wrongdoing isn't succeeding on either count, the VA's inspector general office said. The Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection isn't holding executives accountable for misconduct and poor performance, and it's also failing to protect whistleblowers from retaliation, according to a scathing report yesterday from the IG.
- **California Faces Biggest, Longest Blackout:** Wildfires are raging across California. Half a million people are recovering from a deliberate blackout designed to keep more from erupting. And the worst is yet to come. Even as utility giant PG&E restores power to customers in Northern California that went dark on Wednesday, it was preparing to cut the lights again across much of its territory this weekend in anticipation of the strongest wind storm in years. It may prove to be the biggest, longest blackout planned yet to keep power lines from sparking fires. Millions are facing as many as two days in the dark.
- **Trump Sex Accuser Says Documents Back Story:** A former reality-TV star who claims Trump sexually assaulted her before he was president said documents that the Trump Organization was forced to hand over corroborate her story. Former "Apprentice" contestant Summer Zervos yesterday asked the New York state court in Manhattan to unseal nine additional pages of documents Trump is trying to keep secret. The Trump Organization is arguing the pages shouldn't be made public because they include Trump's old cell number.

- **Trump Says He'll Attend World Series:** Trump said he plans to attend game five of the World Series on Sunday, if the championship goes that long, but doesn't expect to throw the first pitch. Trump, speaking to reporters in the Oval Office yesterday, said he'll watch the matchup in Washington between the Washington Nationals and Houston Astros. Washington leads the best of seven series, 2-0, with games three and four set for tonight and Saturday, so it's not clear yet if there will be a fifth game.
  - Asked about throwing the first pitch, Trump said: "I don't know. They got to dress me up in a lot of heavy armor. I'll look too heavy. I don't like that."