

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Monday, November 18, 2019

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 2pm: President Trump receives intelligence briefing
- 4:15pm: Trump meets with Sec. of State Michael Pompeo in Oval Office
- 4pm: White House adviser Ivanka Trump makes an announcement on the Women's Global Development and Prosperity Initiative; Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert St. NW

CONGRESS

- Senate meets at 3pm; considers nomination of Robert Luck to be a U.S. Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit
 - The chamber is preparing for quick passage of a bill to show support for pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong by placing the city's special trading status with the U.S. under annual review
- House meets at noon; first votes at 6:30pm
 - Considers six bills under suspension of the rules, including a measure to reauthorize the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act, and legislation that would require publicly traded companies to disclose the race, ethnicity and gender of board members and executives

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **FDA Pick to Face Questions on 'Frankenfish,' Stem Cells, Vaping:** Trump's selection to be the next head of the FDA will face a barrage of questions this week about his views on vaping, oversight of stem-cell therapies and even "Frankenfish." Stephen Hahn, chief medical executive of the prestigious MD Anderson Cancer Center at the University of Texas in Houston, will go before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Wednesday for his first public hearing since being nominated to become commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration.
- **Former Adviser Says Aid Was Tied to Probe:** A former top White House adviser told House impeachment investigators Ukrainians were advised Sept. 1 that U.S. military aid was being withheld until their president announced an investigation of a company that had hired Biden's son, Hunter. Tim Morrison, a former senior director of European and Russian affairs at the National Security Council, said Sondland told him how he had informed a high-ranking Ukrainian official that release of \$400 million in aid was being linked to the investigations, according to a transcript of his closed-door testimony released Saturday.

- The House committee also released testimony from Jennifer Williams, an aide to Vice President Mike Pence, who said she found some of the discussion on the July 25 call between the two leaders to be “unusual and inappropriate.”
- **Funding Deadline:** Lawmakers are facing a deadline of Thursday to pass legislation to continue funding the government, before they depart for a recess through the week of Thanksgiving. House and Senate leadership have expressed optimism that both chambers will pass a measure ahead of the deadline, though no continuing resolution has been introduced as of this morning and the House schedule offered few details of the timing of a vote.
 - “I hope we pass the CR,” House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) said on the floor Friday. “I hope it’s as clean as it can be.” The measure will contain some usual anomalies, noncontroversial changes in funding levels or legislative language, Hoyer said.
- **Risch Warns Erdogan of Sanctions:** Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Jim Risch (R-Idaho) warned that if Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan persists in the deployment of a Russian air defense system, he will move ahead with a sanctions bill. “It is his choice, and he knows the consequences,” Risch said in a statement on Friday evening. Just a day earlier, Risch had said that the Senate should hold off on sanctions over Turkey’s invasion of Syria if Erdogan agreed to give up the S-400 anti-aircraft missile system.
- **Anti-Robocall Agreement Reached:** House and Senate negotiators on Friday reached an agreement on bipartisan legislation to combat illegal robocalls, and anticipate a vote on the measure this year. The House and Senate passed separate legislation earlier this year with broad bipartisan support, and staff has been working since August to reach an agreement on provisions from the two anti-robocall bills.
- **Democrats Subpoena EPA Over Formaldehyde Analysis:** Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas), chairwoman of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, sent two subpoenas to the EPA Friday over the agency’s alleged refusal to provide answers about removing formaldehyde from its review program outlook. Johnson said in an accompanying letter to EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler that the committee had suffered through “eight months of delayed and insufficient responses.” The subpoenas were sent to Wheeler and David Dunlap, deputy assistant administrator for the agency’s Office of Research and Development.
- **Democrats Use Super-PACs to Combat Trump:** Wealthy Democratic donors are pouring money into outside groups as part of their effort to defeat Trump in 2020, avoiding contributions to a party apparatus that lost in 2016 and to leading candidates who don’t want their help. Outside groups aligned with Democrats have pledged to spend more than \$300 million attacking Trump, far more than the \$67 million raised by the Democratic National Committee. With little primary opposition, Trump and the

Republican Party are already in general election mode, free to spend millions in states he'll need to win a second term. The Democratic groups are being fueled by seven-figure checks necessary to advertise in battleground states, blunting Trump's big campaign cash advantage.

- **Buttigieg Wants Public College Free for Some:** Pete Buttigieg called for spending \$120 billion on the Pell Grant program and making public colleges tuition-free for students eligible for those federal grants as part of his proposal released Monday to improve college affordability. Unlike some of his primary opponents, Buttigieg isn't calling for public colleges to be tuition-free for all students, or for total student-debt cancellation. He's said families that make over a certain income threshold should pay at least some of the cost of their kids' higher education. The plan released Monday focuses on helping lower- and middle-income families.
- **Louisiana Governor's Re-election May Offer Lessons for 2020:** John Bel Edwards proved it's possible to buck Trump's popularity, winning a second term to remain the only Democratic governor in the Deep South. His victory will give political strategists important insights on what it takes to motivate turnout going into 2020, said University of Pennsylvania political science professor Daniel J. Hopkins. "Voters may feel more empowered to back a moderate Democrat," said Hopkins, who explores the nationalization of state politics in his book, "The Increasingly United States."
 - In Louisiana, Trump headlined three rallies to try to drive turnout for Republican Eddie Rispone. Edwards, meanwhile, ran on a record of demonstrated independence from his national party.
- **North Carolina Lawmakers Back New Congressional Map:** North Carolina lawmakers have approved new congressional boundaries to be used in the 2020 elections. The 13 current U.S. House district lines were redrawn after a state court decided Oct. 28 that the map in place since 2016 couldn't be used, pending further review. The North Carolina Superior Court for Wake County had found that plaintiffs were likely to prevail in a lawsuit claiming the boundaries were illegally drawn to maximize Republican advantage.
- **Barr Blasts Democrats:** Attorney General William Barr fired a broadside against critics of Trump -- and congressional Democrats in particular -- while defending the president's actions. In a fiery speech before the conservative Federalist Society on Friday, Barr said Trump's opponents are using every tool they can to intentionally sabotage his administration. "Immediately after President Trump won election, opponents inaugurated what they called the Resistance," Barr said. "They essentially see themselves as engaged in a war, to cripple by any means necessary, a duly elected government."
- **Trump, Kim at Odds Ahead of Deadline:** The bonhomie between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is nearing a key deadline showing new signs of strain.

Trump urged Kim over the weekend to “act quickly” to get a nuclear deal done, suggesting the two leaders could meet again “soon.” His comments came hours after North Korea ruled out nuclear talks without a policy change by the U.S. and reported on a military drill observed by Kim himself.

- Veteran North Korea nuclear adviser Kim Kye Gwan told Trump that Pyongyang will no longer give him “things to boast about,” the state’s official KCNA news agency today quoted him as saying. He added North Korea is no longer interested in talks that the U.S. “uses to buy time.”

- **Lawmaker Speaks Out Against U.S. Defense-Cost Hike:** Rep. Grace Meng (D-N.Y.) said Trump is destabilizing the U.S.’s relationship with South Korea by demanding the Asian nation pay about \$5 billion, or five times the amount of its current one-year deal, to host U.S. troops. Meng tweeted a letter Friday asking Defense Secretary Mark Esper and Secretary of State Michael Pompeo to “devise a better strategy that values the alliance,” adding that such a hike would be “extorting” South Korea. Meng said such a request also “puts U.S. national security and economic interests in jeopardy.” She asked the U.S. officials to “reconsider and engage in good faith negotiations.”
- **Esper Has ‘Great Faith’ in U.S. Military Justice System:** Secretary Esper expressed his faith in the country’s military justice system, after Trump last week pardoned two soldiers convicted in Afghanistan killings. “I’d say first of all that we have a very effective military justice system,” Esper said during a press conference at the Asean Defense Minister’s Meeting-Plus in the Thai capital of Bangkok yesterday. U.S. military personnel “are trained from day one about the laws of armed conflict and how to conduct themselves during wartime,” he said.
- **China, U.S. Trade Talks Continue:** Top negotiators from China and the U.S. talked again this weekend, after signs of concessions from both sides on some of the outstanding issues. China’s Vice Premier Liu He, the country’s key negotiator in the trade talks with the U.S., spoke with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer by phone on Saturday morning Beijing time, according to the Chinese Commerce Ministry. They had “constructive” discussions about each side’s core concerns in the phase-one deal, and agreed to stay in close communication, the statement said. The USTR confirmed the call took place.
- **Trump to Tour Apple’s Austin Plant:** President Donald Trump is scheduled to tour an Apple manufacturing plant in Austin, Texas, on Wednesday, the White House said yesterday. The president plans to visit the plant along with Apple CEO Tim Cook, according to a tweet by spokesman Judd Deere. The Austin American-Statesman newspaper reported that Trump will travel with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and other administration officials.
 - The company announced in September that its new Mac Pro computer will be assembled in Texas after it received exclusions from the Trump administration from tariffs on certain parts imported from China. The visit also comes at a time

the U.S. and China are close to finalizing the first phase of a highly-anticipated trade deal.

- **Facebook, Google Donate Heavily to Privacy Advocacy Groups:** Few companies have more riding on proposed privacy legislation than Google and Facebook. To try to steer the bill their way, the giant advertising technology companies spend millions of dollars to lobby each year, a fact confirmed by government filings. Not so well-documented is spending to support highly influential think tanks and public interest groups that are helping shape the privacy debate, ostensibly as independent observers.
 - Seven prominent nonprofit think tanks that work on privacy issues received a total of \$1.5 million over an 18-month period ending Dec. 31, 2018. The groups included such organizations as the Center for Democracy and Technology, the Future of Privacy Forum and the Brookings Institution. The actual total is undoubtedly much higher – exact totals for contributions were difficult to pin down.
- **Scalia Says Big Law is Unwilling to Defend Conservative Views:** Major law firms are shying away from defending conservative viewpoints in court, a trend that “should trouble the legal profession,” Labor Secretary Eugene Scalia told a group of right-leaning lawyers at a Federalist Society event on Friday. “It is appropriate, admirable, and necessary for lawyers to take on clients and advance positions that may offend some observers,” Scalia said. But some of the country’s biggest law firms appear to be disinclined to protect free speech and “free trade in ideas,” he argued, calling that evidence of a “broad trend” of conservative political views being under attack.