

## American Nephrology Nurses Association

### Daily Capitol Hill Update – Tuesday, December 24, 2019

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

#### Schedules: White House and Congress

##### WHITE HOUSE

- 9am: Trump holds videoconference with members of the military

##### CONGRESS

- House, Senate have departed for the year

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

- **U.S. Drugmaking Could Counter China:** The chairwoman of an influential House panel, responding to growing competition from China, is eyeing a plan to expand pharmaceutical manufacturing in the U.S., hoping to lay the groundwork for legislation in 2020. Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Calif.), chairwoman of the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, said addressing the security and safety risks related to foreign dominance of the U.S. drug supply will be a “topline issue” for her panel in the new year. She wants to write sweeping legislation aimed at spurring manufacture of drugs in the U.S. to counter a reliance on China for pharmaceutical ingredients.
- **States Want Nevada Added to ACA Case:** Nevada should have been allowed to join a lawsuit to defend an Obamacare provision that requires employee health plans to pay for birth control because there was no one representing the state’s interests in the suit, 21 states and the District of Columbia told the Fifth Circuit. The states filed a friend of the court brief with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit supporting Nevada’s attempt to overturn a district court ruling denying it the right to intervene in a lawsuit alleging the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive mandate violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.
- **DHS Probed Over Migrant Deaths:** House Oversight and Reform Chairwoman Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) and Civil Rights Subcommittee Chairman Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) are seeking answers from the Department of Homeland Security about incidents involving immigrant deaths. The lawmakers sent letters asking for documents following reports of a pattern of negligence, including one incident of a 16-year-old boy with the flu who was found dead in his cell by border patrol.
  - “The lack of treatment appears to be a flagrant violation of CBP’s own detention standards and raises serious questions about whether DHS is failing to treat children and adults with basic human dignity and compassion,” the lawmakers wrote in letters to DHS, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and the Homeland Security Department’s Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. They gave the department until Jan. 10 to respond.

- **Democrats Say GSA Defying Subpoena:** The head of the General Services Administration should comply with a congressional subpoena for documents related to the lease of the Trump Hotel in Washington or explain her refusal to do so in a public hearing, according to the House Democrat who issued the order. The “agency has engaged in a pattern of obstruction and obstinance that is unacceptable and damaging to GSA’s ability to manage taxpayer funds in a transparent manner,” House Transportation Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) and Rep. Dina Titus (D-Nev.), who leads the subcommittee on public buildings, said in a letter Friday to GSA Administrator Emily Murphy.
- **Democrats Query Private Equity Purchase of .Org Domains:** Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) joined Rep. Eshoo in questioning if private equity firm Ethos Capital can be a “responsible steward” over .org web domains. “The registry that controls .ORG must provide reliable and affordable domain services to nonprofits. It must protect the free-speech rights of all users, even for those with unpopular viewpoints that governments or corporations may not like,” the lawmakers said in a letter to Ethos, which is buying the registry from the nonprofit Internet Society.
- **Democrats Press Bezos on Worker Conditions:** Sens. Warren, Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Rep. Joe Kennedy (D-Mass.) wrote to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos about new data showing a high rate of serious injuries at a facility in their state. The lawmakers said in a letter they are seeking answers “about why so many Massachusetts workers are getting seriously injured at Amazon fulfillment centers, and your plans to prioritize the safety of workers.” The serious injury rate at a Fall River facility is nearly triple the industry average, according to a report from Reveal News and The Center for Investigative Reporting.
- **Trump Promotes Aide Who Defied Impeachment Subpoena:** Trump has promoted a White House aide who was subpoenaed in the House impeachment investigation but declined to testify. The aide, Robert Blair, has been named a special representative for international telecommunications policy, the White House said in a statement. Blair, according to the statement, will “coordinate interagency efforts and serve as a liaison to industry, non-governmental, and international stakeholders to promote the development, deployment, and operation of the next-generation telecommunications infrastructure” and support the administration’s policies regarding 5G technology. He will report to Larry Kudlow, the White House economic adviser.
- **Democrats Hold Up Nominee in Push for Rulemaking Records:** A document supporting the nomination of Paul Ray to head the nation’s top regulatory office sheds light on the standoff that prevented the Senate from confirming him last week as it wrapped up its legislative business for the year. Democrats continue to press the White House Office of Management and Budget for information about recent rulemakings, a

quest that began weeks before Ray's Dec. 4 confirmation hearing before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Ray was nominated Oct. 1 to head the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, a small agency within OMB that reviews significant federal regulations.

- **Trump to Nominate Two Judges to Federal Bench:** Trump plans to nominate two state judges to federal district court seats in Florida and Illinois on the heels of a year-end Senate push to confirm as many selections to the bench as possible. The White House said that Trump intends to nominate John Leonard Badalamenti to the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, which includes Orlando, Jacksonville and Tampa, and Stephen P. McGlynn to the Southern District of Illinois, which includes East St. Louis.
- **Goldman Tech Chief Wiesel Joins Bloomberg Campaign:** One of Wall Street's top tech executives is helping former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's long-shot bid to clinch the Democratic presidential nomination. Elisha Wiesel, Goldman Sachs Group's co-chief information officer, is joining the Bloomberg presidential campaign next month, to bolster its technology push. He previously announced he would depart the Wall Street firm at the end of this year.
- **North Carolina Center-Stage in 2020:** New district lines, a run on retirements, and packed open-seat primaries framed North Carolina's candidate filing deadline ahead of an action-packed election year. The state is set up to be a central character in the 2020 elections. Two of its House seats are expected to flip party control, one of the most vulnerable senators is headed for his first re-election bid, the Democratic governor is back on the ballot, and the Republican National Convention is being held in Charlotte just two months before the state's 15 electoral votes are up for grabs. The playing field crystallized with Friday's filing deadline, though some of the biggest moves came in the prior days and weeks.
- **U.S. to Withdraw Ambassador to Zambia:** The U.S. has decided to withdraw its ambassador to Zambia, after the president of the southern African nation said he didn't want him there for criticizing the jailing of two men for having a consensual relationship, according to two people familiar with the matter. The U.S. has no immediate plans to replace Ambassador Daniel Foote, one person said, asking not to be identified as the information isn't public. The State Department is "dismayed" with Zambia for having effectively declared Foote a persona non grata, it said in an emailed statement. The U.S. government strongly opposes abuses against sexual minorities, it said, without confirming Foote's withdrawal.
- **North Korean Workers Abroad Under Scrutiny:** The U.S. and its allies called on United Nations members to reveal whether they're complying with U.N.-imposed sanctions requiring the repatriation of North Korean workers, part of an effort to squeeze Pyongyang of much-needed foreign currency inflows. As part of a series of resolutions

passed in 2017, U.N. member states were required to send back all North Korean laborers by Sunday, yet some countries have failed to provide an interim report on whether they're meeting those obligations, the U. S. and more than 20 allies including Germany, U.K. and Japan wrote in a letter to the president of the General Assembly. They urged all members to provide final reports by March 22.

- **Diplomats' Union Raises Money to Pay Impeachment Legal Costs:** The union that represents American foreign service officers has raised \$500,000 to cover the costs of the career diplomats who appeared before the congressional impeachment inquiry, an amount it says should be enough to make sure they don't pay out-of-pocket. The money will be pooled with funds provided by the State Department, which agreed to compensate legal fees of up to \$300 per hour for active duty diplomats, according to Eric Rubin, the president of the American Foreign Service Officers Association. Some lawyers offered their services for free.
- **Airlines Duck Fines for Busting Wheelchairs:** Wheelchair users have complained for years about airlines breaking their devices, prompting Congress last year to triple the fine regulators could assess for damaging a mobility aid to about \$100,000. They also forced airlines to publicly report how many devices they mishandled. A year later, the Department of Transportation hasn't issued a single enforcement action using its enhanced powers, even though airlines are, on average, losing or damaging about 1,000 wheelchairs and scooters a month. Several airlines, including Southwest and American, incorrectly reported their statistics for parts of the year, complicating the DOT's task. However, the agency said the bad data didn't impact its oversight of the airlines.
- **Enforcement Changes Coming to CFPB:** Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Kathleen Kraninger is expected to make three enforcement changes in 2020 that will further place her stamp on the bureau in her second year at the helm. Kraninger has talked about bringing clarity to how companies can exit early from CFPB consent orders and defining the term "abusive" act or practices in enforcement actions. The CFPB is also expected to bring in an enforcement director from outside the bureau, a potential major departure at an agency that's promoted from within for the job. Those changes are unlikely to bring much of a shift in priorities for the Trump-era CFPB, but they will make the bureau more of a reflection of her style.
- **Boeing Ousts CEO in Effort Exit From Max Crisis:** Dennis Muilenburg was ousted as chief executive officer of Boeing, a once-unthinkable turning point for a U.S. industrial champion now engulfed in turmoil after two deadly crashes of its top-selling 737 Max jetliner. David Calhoun, a General Electric veteran who had served as chairman since October, will replace Muilenburg as CEO and president Jan. 13, Boeing said in a statement yesterday. The move followed a rare public rebuke earlier this month by the Federal Aviation Administration.
  - At the top of Calhoun's to-do list will be restoring the company's reputation in Washington, where it historically has enjoyed wide latitude with federal

regulators and warm relations with lawmakers that paid off with lucrative government contracts. Boeing has also been a big spender in the capital for decades. Political contributions from Boeing-affiliated PACs and individuals more than doubled over the last decade to \$4.3 million in the 2018 election cycle, according to figures from the Center for Responsive Politics.

- Boeing also disclosed a new batch of internal messages related to the 737 Max program to the FAA. The documents were turned over to the FAA yesterday, the agency said in a statement.
  
- **ByteDance Is Said to Weigh TikTok Stake Sale:** China's ByteDance created one of the country's rare global hits with the addictive video app TikTok. Now the U.S. government is threatening that success as officials in Washington warn the service presents a security threat. The Beijing-based company is weighing a range of options to address those concerns, according to people familiar with the matter. Advisors are pitching everything from an aggressive legal defense and operational separation for TikTok to sale of a majority stake, said the people, asking not to be named because the discussions are private. Selling more than half the business could raise substantially more than \$10 billion, one person said.
  
- **YouTube's Year Under Fire to Continue:** YouTube spent 2019 answering critics with some of the most drastic changes in its 15-year history. With each step, it gave those activists, regulators and lawmakers more reasons to attack its free-wheeling, user-generated business model. Susan Wojcicki, YouTube's chief executive officer, announced her goals in April. "My top priority," she wrote, "is responsibility." Her company spent the year trying to traverse an almost impossible tightrope: nurture a growing community of demanding creators, while pledging to police troubling videos and protect millions of underage users who officially shouldn't even be watching. The efforts pleased almost no one and highlighted an existential quandary. Every time YouTube tries to fix something, the company risks losing the neutrality that it needs to thrive. As 2020 begins, the largest online video service is being dragged deeper into political fights over privacy, copyright and content moderation.
  
- **Cuomo Vetoes U.S. Judges Performing Weddings:** New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D) vetoed a bill that would have allowed federal judges to perform wedding ceremonies because many of them are Trump's appointees. "I cannot in good conscience support legislation that would authorize such actions by federal judges who are appointed by this federal administration," Cuomo said Friday as he vetoed the bill, which was passed overwhelmingly by the Democratic-controlled legislature. "President Trump does not embody who we are as New Yorkers. The cornerstones that built our great state are diversity, tolerance and inclusion."
  
- **Utah Wins Federal OK to Expand Medicaid:** Utah is set to expand Medicaid for all adults who make up to 138% of the federal poverty level Jan. 1 in the wake of the federal government's decision to shoot down its initial attempt to limit that coverage, the state

announced yesterday. Voters opted to expand Medicaid by a ballot initiative in November 2018. However, state lawmakers overrode that decision, seeking to limit coverage to people making up to 100% of the federal poverty level. The lawmakers included a fallback measure that would extend coverage to people making up to 138% of the federal poverty line but also include a work requirement.