

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update – Thursday, February 20, 2020

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- President Trump in Nevada and Colorado
 - 2:45pm: Delivers commencement address in Las Vegas for a program that helps ex-prisoners reenter society
 - 4:15pm: Leaves Las Vegas for Colorado
 - 7pm: Holds political rally in Colorado Springs; later returns to Las Vegas for the evening

CONGRESS

- House, Senate return next week

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Senate Health Hearing Scheduled:** The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee announced it will hold a hearing on March 3 on the outbreak of COVID-19, according to a statement. The briefing will present an “opportunity to hear from officials” from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, Food and Drug Administration and HHS about steps that federal, state and local health officials are taking “to respond to this public health threat and prevent the potential spread of disease in the United States.”
 - The panel said the hearing will cover questions on screening and quarantining travelers, testing patients under investigation for the virus, developing vaccines and treatments, and limiting some travel into the U.S.
- **New Coalition Pushes Patent Law Protections:** Industry groups and research advocates have launched a new coalition that looks to educate lawmakers and the public about the benefit of the Bayh-Dole Act, a 40-year-old patent law that allows certain business groups and nonprofits to have ownership of inventions created with federal funding. The coalition, called Bayh-Dole 40, credits the law with helping create more than 200 new therapies, including medicines and vaccines. Among its members is the influential drugmakers’ trade group Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.
 - Joseph Allen, the executive director of Bayh-Dole 40 and former staffer for Sen. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), said the group plans to hold briefings and events defending the statute. “Before Bayh-Dole, the U.S. was not the leader in life sciences and biotechnology it is today,” Allen said. He said he’s opposed to a movement that has gained some support, particularly among Democrats, for the government to use its

authority as a financier of pharmaceutical research projects to lower the price of drugs. "It's a fundamental misunderstanding of how the system works," Allen said.

- **Troops Pushed to Civilian Care:** About 200,000 military medical beneficiaries will be forced to seek outside civilian health care as part of a Pentagon plan to overhaul dozens of facilities nationwide, according to a new report to Congress. A total of 37 of about 348 military domestic treatment facilities will be or have already been converted to active-duty-only facilities. That means families and retirees will be redirected from those facilities to off-base providers as the plans are phased in over 2-5 years. The total savings of the changes is not yet known but the Pentagon is estimating it'll save an initial \$36 million as part of its fiscal 2021 budget request, Assistant Secretary Tom McCaffery said.
- **Warren, Sanders Capitalize on Debate:** Warren raised more than \$1 million during the Democratic presidential debate in Las Vegas, an aide for her campaign said in a tweet.
 - Sanders had 15,218 in donations for a total of \$300,000 during first hour of the presidential debate in Las Vegas, a spokesperson for the Democratic candidate said in e-mailed statement.
- **Democratic Party Fundraising Soared:** The Democratic National Committee's fundraising soared to \$15 million in January, a sharp increase from \$9.5 million in December, but still far less than Trump's re-election effort and the Republican National Committee. The January haul was the first time the DNC had topped \$10 million in a single month since 2018. Part of the money was raised came through a joint fundraising committee that splits donations between the DNC and Democratic state party committees, according to a party official.
 - Trump and the RNC said they've raised a combined \$60 million in January, but didn't say how much each committee raised. The RNC raised \$241 million in 2019, including funds raised through a pair of joint fundraising committees that also benefit Trump's campaign, compared to \$92.3 million on the Democratic side.
- **Union Takes on Opponents of Union Bill:** The Communications Workers of America has urged the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee not to provide any services to seven Democrats who voted against the union-backed Protecting the Right to Organize Act (H.R. 2474). "Those who voted against the PRO Act have betrayed this fundamental principle of the Democratic Party," President Christopher Shelton said in a letter to House Democrats' campaign arm. "It is impossible for the CWA to urge our members to support any of these seven candidates. They must be denied the support of the Democratic Party for refusing to stand with working Americans."
 - Unions warned lawmakers before the Feb. 6 House vote that they should expect to be portrayed as hostile to organized labor if they opposed the bill, which was the most significant labor legislation passed by the House in over a decade. It proposes changes to U.S. labor laws that would allow for a significant expansion of bargaining rights for private-sector workers.
 - The Democrats who voted no are: Henry Cuellar (Texas), Joe Cunningham (S.C.), Kendra Horn (Okla.), Ben McAdams (Utah), Lucy McBath (Ga.), Stephanie Murphy (Fla.), and Kurt Schrader (Ore.).

- The CWA has also held pickets protesting against Murphy, McBath, and Cuellar in the last week, Shane Larson, the union's national director of legislation and politics, told Bloomberg Law's Jaclyn Diaz. The union represents about 700,000 workers in fields including telecommunications, information technology, the airline industry, news media, health care, public service and education, law enforcement, and manufacturing, according to its website.
- **Sabato Downgrades Odds for Gardner, Jones:** Sabato's Crystal Ball, published by the University of Virginia's Center for Politics, updated race rating for two incumbents today. Republican Cory Gardner's race in Colorado went from a Toss-Up to Leans Democratic, while Democrat Doug Jones' bid to keep his Alabama seat looks even tougher, going from Leans Republican to Likely Republican. The analysis also said that "Republicans remain favored to hold the majority."
- **Trump Names Grenell as Acting Director of Intelligence:** Trump said he'll appoint Richard Grenell, the current U.S. ambassador to Germany, to be the next acting director of national intelligence. Grenell is a Trump loyalist who was nominated to be ambassador to Germany in 2017 after having served as spokesman for the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in the early 2000s.
 - Grenell will replace Joseph Maguire, a former Navy SEAL whom Trump appointed as DNI after the resignation of former Indiana Senator Dan Coats last year. Maguire has held the job in an acting capacity and Trump was required by law to either replace him or ask the Senate to confirm him in the position by next month.
 - Appointing Grenell in an acting capacity will avoid the need for a potentially complicated Senate confirmation, but Trump will face the same six-month deadline on his tenure.
- **New Space Force's Purchasing Projected at \$4.7 Billion by 2025:** The Space Force's procurement funding could reach \$4.7 billion in fiscal 2025 as it expands steadily from the \$2.4 billion requested for acquisitions in the coming year, according to projections by the White House budget office. The funding reflects the priority that Trump and Defense Secretary Mark Esper are placing on the new force, starting with a total proposed budget of \$15.4 billion for fiscal 2021. The Air Force previously oversaw offensive and defensive operations in space and was the primary buyer of launch services. The Pentagon request sent to Congress this month includes \$2.4 billion for Space Force procurement of satellites, terminals, ground control stations, launch services and communications security.
- **Power-Sharing Proposal to Oust Maduro:** Trump administration officials are discussing whether to renew their unsuccessful campaign to oust Venezuela's dictator Nicolas Maduro by urging some ruling party members to temporarily share power with opposition leaders, people familiar with the matter said. The U.S. pursued a similar strategy last year – endorsed by opposition leader Juan Guaido, president of the Venezuelan National Assembly – that included a failed uprising on April 30. But some of the officials think they may have a better chance of success now as fresh sanctions kick in, the people said.

- **Wall Street Journal Reporters Expelled from China:** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo criticized China's move to revoke the press credentials of three reporters for The Wall Street Journal over a controversial headline, a decision that comes as Beijing continues to lash out at countries that fault its handling of the deadly coronavirus outbreak. "The United States condemns China's expulsion of three Wall Street Journal foreign correspondents," Pompeo said in a statement late yesterday.
 - "Mature, responsible countries understand that a free press reports facts and expresses opinions," Pompeo said. "The correct response is to present counter arguments, not restrict speech." The rare decision to punish multiple journalists at a single news organization came after China said the Journal had refused to apologize for a "racially discriminatory" op-ed, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said yesterday.
 - Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned travelers to Hong Kong to be prepared for the novel coronavirus after a second person there died from the infection. The agency placed a level 1 travel notice for Hong Kong that advises visitors to avoid contact with sick people and to wash their hands frequently to avoid contracting the virus, which is spreading there from person-to-person. The CDC has a level 4 advisory for Hubei province, the center of the outbreak, which means no one should travel there.
 - This morning, Japan said two people who were on a ship off Yokohama died from the coronavirus, NHK reported. The fatalities were a man and woman, both Japanese nationals in their 80s with existing medical conditions, NHK reported. The cruise ship has the most infections anywhere outside China, with more than 600 confirmed cases. After 14 days of quarantine, Japan yesterday allowed passengers to disembark the Diamond Princess, despite worries it hasn't done enough to prevent the spread of disease from the vessel.
 - South Korea reported the first fatality from the coronavirus outbreak amid a surge of cases tied to a cluster from a religious sect. The global death toll climbed to 2,129, while the number of confirmed cases reached 75,730. Hubei province reported a sharp drop in new cases after another change in the way China diagnoses infections, raising questions over the reliability of the data.
- **White House Admits Trump Trade Stance Depressed Economy:** The White House acknowledged what many economists considered obvious through much of last year: President Donald Trump's trade stance depressed economic growth and business investment.
 - "Uncertainty generated by trade negotiations dampened investment," Trump chief economist Tomas Philipson told reporters in a briefing on the annual Economic Report of the President released today. The admission contrasted with Trump's repeated assertions that his tariff tactics hadn't hurt the economy while swelling the government's tax coffers.
- **Border Patrol Gets Limits From Judge on Detaining Immigrants:** The U.S. can't keep detained immigrants for more than 48 hours in overcrowded and unsanitary holding cells at

Customs and Border Protection stations, a federal judge in Arizona ruled. U.S. District Judge David Bury on Wednesday ordered the Border Patrol in the Tucson sector to turn over processed detainees to other agencies, such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement, within 48 hours after they are booked.

- The judge allowed for a third night of detention only if the conditions meet the detainees' "basic human needs," including a bed with blankets, a shower, and food that meets acceptable dietary standards. The judge spelled out the definition of a shower, noting it doesn't mean a "paper-shower" or a "shower-wipe." The injunction issued by the judge applies only in the Tucson sector, but the reasoning behind it applies equally to all short-term immigration detention facilities, Colette Mayer, a lawyer for the detainees, said in a statement.

- **Trump Backs Larry Ellison in Court Fight:** The Trump administration urged the Supreme Court to reject an appeal by Google, boosting Oracle's efforts to collect more than \$8 billion in royalties for Google's use of copyrighted programming code in the Android operating system. The Trump administration weighed in on the high-stakes case on the same day that the president attended a re-election campaign fundraiser in California hosted by Oracle's co-founder, billionaire Larry Ellison. Ellison hosted a golf outing and photos with Trump.
- **Equal Employment Office, Labor Board Picks:** Trump in the coming weeks will announce that he plans to nominate Gibson Dunn attorney Andrea Lucas for a seat on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, as part of a package of picks to fill openings at the EEOC and National Labor Relations Board. The White House plans to nominate Lucas and Labor Department official Keith Sonderling for EEOC Republican seats, as well as civil rights attorney Jocelyn Samuels for a Democratic seat, four sources familiar with the plans said. Trump also will tap former NLRB member Lauren McFerran (D) and current member Marvin Kaplan (R) for new five-year terms.
- **USDA Unveils Program to Reduce Environmental Impact of Farming:** Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue, whose department has been criticized for suppressing research on climate change, will announce an initiative Thursday to reduce the environmental impact of American farming. Perdue will emphasize voluntary conservation incentives and efficiency improvements rather than regulation as he joins major farm groups in seeking to shape the public debate on agriculture and climate change. Twenty-one farm groups including the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Pork Producers Council announced a coalition Wednesday on environmental sustainability.
- **Supreme Court Braces for Contentious Second Half:** The second half of the Supreme Court's current term will be chock-full of high-profile arguments and blockbuster opinions, and court watchers say it's going to be explosive. In the coming months, the justices will consider whether President Donald Trump can avoid congressional inquiries into his financial history. They'll also get their first chance to chip away at abortion rights since Trump's conservative nominees took the bench. The court has already heard divisive cases

involving gun rights and the administration's plans to nix deferred deportation for "Dreamers," but has yet to issue its final opinions.