Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 10:40am: Biden departs Wilmington, Delaware en route Washington, DC
- 10:50am: Biden receives the President’s Daily Brief
- 11am: Press Briefing by White House COVID-19 Response Team and public health officials
- 11:35am: Biden arrives at the White House
- Noon: Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas
- 4:30pm: Biden meets virtually with Lopez Obrador

CONGRESS

- U.S. House meets at 2pm for legislative business, first votes expected between 6:30pm and 8:30pm
  - 1pm: House Rules Committee holds meeting on H.R. 1—For the People Act of 2021, H.R. 1280—George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021
- U.S. Senate convenes at 3pm
  - Senate to vote on nomination of Miguel Cardona to be Secretary of Education
- Senate Democrats are jettisoning a proposal to use the tax code to penalize corporations that don’t raise the minimum wage for their lowest-paid workers in an effort to keep broader stimulus plan on track for quick passage, according to two people familiar with the matter

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Politico: Biden Urges Senate To Take 'Quick Action' On Coronavirus Relief Package:** President Joe Biden on Saturday called for the Senate to quickly pass his $1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package, which the House approved early Saturday morning. “I hope it will receive quick action,” Biden said. “We have no time to waste. If we act now, decisively, quickly and boldly, we can finally get ahead of this virus, we can finally get our economy moving again and the people of this country have suffered far too much for too long. We need to relieve that suffering.”

- **Bloomberg Government: Earmarks Return as House Democrats Set New Guidelines:** Earmarks are coming back for Congress’s next round of annual funding bills, but for-profit companies will be excluded and the money available will only be a small slice of appropriations. House Appropriations Chair Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) announced on
Friday her panel’s plan to solicit members’ requests for earmarks, the system of designating funds for specific local projects that’s been banned for a decade.

- **Houston Chronicle: Blood Supply Critically Low Following Winter Storm:** The Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center is issuing a desperate plea for blood donations following the devastating effects of winter storm Uri last week as it blanketed the area with snow, ice, and historic low temperatures. “We were greatly impacted by the winter storm,” said Cameron Palmer, community development coordinator for the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center. “We went several days without the ability to collect and now we’re down to less than a one day’s supply of blood,” he said. The drive and walk-in donations were canceled, he said, because the facilities were dependent upon water and electricity. Without those, they couldn’t host the life-saving blood drives.

- **KHN: Becerra Has Long Backed Single-Payer. That Doesn’t Mean It Will Happen If He’s HHS Secretary:** A digital ad running in Georgia and New Hampshire says Xavier Becerra, President Joe Biden’s nominee for Health and Human Services secretary, supports “Medicare for All.” “Becerra supports Bernie’s government takeover of your health care, eliminating your employer-provided coverage,” the narrator says. The ad, funded by the campaign PAC of Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), is part of a blitz from conservative groups against Becerra’s confirmation. It first aired last week and will continue until the Senate’s confirmation vote. The gritty, foreboding ad includes a range of other attacks, including criticisms of California’s covid-19 response and Becerra’s role in legal cases on reproductive rights.

- **AP: Shaheen Introducing Bill To Improve Access To Health Care:** U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire is introducing a bill to improve access to health care by lowering premiums and deductibles for low- and middle-income families. She said in a statement Friday the Improving Health Insurance Affordability Act would expand coverage to more than 4 million people who are currently uninsured and reduce health care costs for millions more who already have coverage.

- **CBS News: Gottlieb Says Americans "Should Be Confident" About Taking Johnson & Johnson Vaccine:** Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the former head of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), said Americans should be "confident" about taking the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Johnson & Johnson, with millions of doses set to join the fight against the coronavirus in the coming days. "There is more and more evidence that these vaccines are preventing transmission of infection, which makes them an even more important public health tool," Gottlieb said in an interview on "Face the Nation." "I think people should be confident about taking it. And it will be in the market this week."

- **The Washington Post: Democrats Abandon $15 Minimum Wage Hike Backup Plan:** Senior Democrats are abandoning a backup plan to increase the minimum wage through a corporate tax penalty, after encountering numerous practical and political challenges in drafting their proposal over the weekend, according to two people familiar with the internal deliberations. On Thursday, the Senate parliamentarian said that the $15-an-hour minimum wage included in President Biden’s $1.9 trillion stimulus plan was inadmissible under the rules Democrats are using to pass the bill through the Senate.
• Roll Call: Medicare Fixes, Amtrak Boost In Draft Senate Aid Package: Senate Democrats were honing a substitute amendment to the House-passed $1.9 trillion coronavirus aid package that chamber plans to take up this week, with one early version circulating that would add money for Amtrak, cybersecurity and Medicare payments for ambulance services and certain hospitals, among other changes.