

## American Nephrology Nurses Association

### Daily Capitol Hill Update - Wednesday, September 11, 2019

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

#### Schedules: White House and Congress

##### WHITE HOUSE

- 8:40am: President Trump and first lady Melania Trump participate in moment of silence commemorating anniversary of Sept. 11 terrorist attacks
- 9:15am: Trump departs White House for Arlington, Va.
- 9:30am: Trump participates in Sept. 11th Pentagon Observance Ceremony
- 1:30pm: Trump receives intelligence briefing
- Vice President Mike Pence makes remarks at the Flight 93 National Memorial Ceremony in Johnstown, Pa.

##### CONGRESS

- House meets at 10am; first vote ~3:30pm, last vote ~4pm
  - House takes up two bills that would block oil and gas drilling on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, H.R. 1941, and the Eastern Gulf of Mexico, H.R. 205
- Senate meets at 9:30am
  - Resumes consideration of nomination of Stephen Akard to be director of the Office of Foreign Missions; at 11am will proceed to vote on confirmation of Akard and confirmation of Dale Cabaniss to be director of the Office of Personnel Management and James Byrne to be deputy secretary of the Veterans Affairs Department

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

- **Senate Labor-HHS Bill Details Emerge:** The Senate Appropriations Labor-HHS-Education Subcommittee will mark up its fiscal 2020 appropriations bill today, and some details of the measure are making their way out.
  - Medical research funding would increase by \$3 billion under the bill, Jeannie Baumann reports. The proposed increase would bring the National Institutes of Health's budget up to \$42.1 billion, marking a 40% increase since Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) took over as subcommittee chairman five years ago.
  - The \$42.1 billion in funding is \$1 billion higher than what the House passed in June as part of a four-bill package (H.R. 2740). Congress has adopted the higher amount proposed by the Senate every year since fiscal year 2016. There is broad support in both parties and both chambers for increasing biomedical research funding, as lawmakers have rejected the Trump administration's proposed cuts every year.

- **Maternal Health:** The House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee holds a hearing on legislation to improve maternal health. Ranking member Greg Walden (R-Ore.) plans to say he's "dismayed" at how Democrats are working to tackle maternal mortality rates in the U.S., according to remarks shared with Bloomberg Government. Walden will open today's hearing pressing Democrats consider legislation (H.R. 4215) that has bipartisan support in the Senate.

  - Walden will plans to note that only one of the bills has a Republican cosponsor and that Democratic leaders didn't give them enough time coming off the six-week break to review witness testimony. "Such a broken process is disrespectful of this important issue," he plans to say.
- **Born-Alive Bill:** House Republicans hold a discussion today on efforts to pressure Democrats to consider Rep. Ann Wagner's (R-Mo.) Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act (H.R. 962). House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) will attend, according to a statement from the Susan B. Anthony List, who's national campaign chairwoman Jill Stanek is also attending.
- **Ways & Means Eyes Green Energy Tax Package:** The House Ways and Means Committee is likely to start negotiations in the coming weeks on a clean energy tax package that would likely focus on extending and expanding breaks like the one for electric vehicles. A centerpiece will likely be Rep. Dan Kildee's (D-Mich.) bill (H.R. 2256) to extend tax benefits aimed at encouraging electric car purchases, and expanding them for car manufacturers like Tesla that have already hit the credit's threshold.
- **Legislation Banning Mandatory Arbitration Advances:** Legislation that would prohibit mandatory arbitration agreements in employment, consumer, and other contracts advanced out of the House Judiciary Committee yesterday. The bill would invalidate a predispute arbitration agreement if it requires arbitration of an employment, consumer, antitrust, or civil rights dispute. Republican members of the panel panned the bill, saying it was too broad and prevented consumers from achieving a "simpler, cheaper, and faster path to justice," according to Rep. Doug Collins (R-Ga.), the committee's ranking member.
- **Thune Names Chief of Staff:** Senate Majority Whip John Thune (R-S.D.) announced that his current whip office deputy chief of staff Nick Rossi will succeed Brendon Plack as chief of staff, according to a statement yesterday. "Having served in a number of roles in my committee and leadership offices, Nick is uniquely prepared to take on these new responsibilities at the helm of my whip operation," Thune said in the statement. Rossi has been a "key member of Thune's staff since January 2013, including serving as majority staff director of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee during Thune's chairmanship," the statement said.
- **Trump-Backed Bishop Wins Tightly Contested Race:** Republican Dan Bishop won a North Carolina special election yesterday for a House seat, dashing Democratic hopes to swipe this partly suburban district from Republican hands ahead of Trump's 2020 re-

election effort. Bishop, a state senator, defeated Democrat Dan McCready, a solar-energy businessman and Marine Corps veteran who also ran in last November's election. The original race was invalidated by the state's elections board because of evidence of absentee-ballot fraud connected to the campaign of Republican Mark Harris.

- Holding on to North Carolina's 9th Congressional District, represented by Republicans for more than half a century, was a relief for Trump, who made a major effort to bolster Bishop's candidacy. Still, the close contest forced the GOP to spend time and money in what has traditionally been friendly territory, a district where Trump won by 12 percentage points in 2016.
  - Bishop is a steadfast ally of Trump who shares the president's policy views on most issues and calls Trump "the greatest fighter ever to occupy the White House." He also echoes the president's divisive attacks on what they characterize as "socialist Democrats" and a "fake news media."
  - Also, Republican state Rep. Greg Murphy won the race for North Carolina's 3rd District seat. Murphy shares Trump's views on curbing illegal immigration, including the president's demand to build more border fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border. In unofficial returns, Murphy had 58% of the vote compared with 42% for Democrat Allen Thomas.
- **Biden, Warren Set for First Showdown:** Joe Biden and Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) are charting vastly different paths to the Democratic nomination that could collide beginning with Thursday's debate. Warren is building a movement for "big, structural change," and Biden is focused on beating Trump in what he often describes as a "battle for the soul of this nation." But they have campaigned on parallel lines, not criticizing each other or proactively making distinctions between their visions. At the third Democratic presidential debate in Houston tomorrow, they will share a stage for the first time, giving voters and pundits their first chance to directly compare the two candidates.
  - **Biden Tops Texas Democratic Poll, Warren Second:** Biden still tops the Democratic primary field in Texas with Elizabeth Warren surging into second place on the eve of the party's third candidate debate in that state, according to a new Quinnipiac University poll. Biden is supported by 28% of Democratic voters and independent voters who lean Democratic, with Warren following with 18% and both Bernie Sanders and former U.S. Representative Beto O'Rourke falling to 12%.
  - **Freedom Caucus Chooses Biggs to Be New Chairman:** The House Freedom Caucus selected Rep. Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.) to replace current Chairman Mark Meadows (R-N.C.), who will end his role Oct. 1 and remain a member of the Freedom Caucus board, according to a statement from group. Biggs is a member of the House Judiciary Committee and the House Science, Space and Technology Committee.
  - **China Starts Tariff Exemptions:** China announced a range of U.S. goods to be exempted from 25% extra tariffs put in place last year, as the government seeks to ease the impact

from the trade war without lifting charges on major agricultural items like soybeans and pork. Pharmaceuticals and lubricant oil are among exclusions to levies on imports announced by the Ministry of Finance on its website today. The exemptions, effective from Sept. 17 to Sept. 16 2020, will cover 16 categories of products worth about \$1.65 billion, according to Bloomberg calculations based on China's 2018 trade data. Other products on the list include alfalfa, fish meal and pesticides.

- **Trump Plans Crackdown on Chinese Fentanyl:** The Trump administration is considering an executive order to crack down on shipments of fentanyl and counterfeit goods, according to people familiar with the matter, a move aimed in part at pressuring China to help the U.S. combat its opioid epidemic. The draft order would target foreign shippers routing deliveries through the U.S. Postal Service—and not the two-largest U.S. couriers, United Parcel Service and FedEx, according to the people.
  - Washington has criticized Beijing for not doing enough to curb the flow of fentanyl, a highly addictive painkiller that's played a role in the opioid epidemic blamed for thousands of deaths in the U.S. Trump has linked the issue to trade talks, citing President Xi Jinping's failure to stop the smuggling of China-made fentanyl as a reason for hiking tariffs earlier this month on Chinese goods.
- **Mexico Says No New Measure Needed on Immigration:** Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said that Mexico doesn't need to take any new measures to reduce the number of undocumented migrants bound for the U.S. because the current strategy is proving successful. Ebrard led a Mexican delegation yesterday for meetings at the White House that included a brief conversation with Trump. Ebrard said that he explained the importance of the steps Mexico has taken since June, including the deployment of the National Guard, and also expressed concern about guns flowing south from the U.S.
- **Trump Faces Season of Scrutiny:** Heading into his re-election campaign, Trump faces months of inquiries by House Democrats beyond a potential impeachment probe. The scrutiny extends from Trump's personal finances to decisions made by the White House on issues such as health care and immigration, his alleged direct involvement in payments to silence two women claiming to have had affairs with him and whether his closest aides improperly used private messaging services to conduct official business.
  - Most probes don't have a direct tie-in to whether the Judiciary Committee opens a formal presidential impeachment inquiry. But many do, and the interconnected investigations will add to the drumbeat of Democratic attacks on Trump leading up to the 2020 election.
- **White House to Meet With Biofuel Producers:** Trump administration officials are set to meet with renewable fuel producers today, as they seek to entice industry endorsements for a plan to bolster corn-based ethanol and soy-based biodiesel. The meeting is slated to include executives from Louis Dreyfus, Renewable Biofuels, and Renewable Energy Group, said people familiar with the matter, who asked not to be named discussing

private negotiations. Ethanol and biodiesel industry trade associations are not expected to be present.

- **Momentum for Digital Watchdog to Regulate Tech Giants:** With Big Tech accused of everything from decimating industries to abusing privacy, calls are growing for the creation of a federal regulator. Presidential candidates, consumer advocates and some antitrust enforcers have focused on breaking up Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google - or at least forcing them to unwind past acquisitions. Yet those moves could take years and face lengthy court challenges.
  - The desire for faster action is fueling demands for a new agency to oversee the industry, an idea that's gaining traction among liberal and free-market economists in the U.S., Europe and Australia. They say there's plenty of precedent: The U.S. and other countries have watchdogs for specific industries, such as aviation, medicine, financial services and the environment, so why not digital markets?
  - Meanwhile, a team of Federal Trade Commission investigators has begun interviewing small businesses that sell products on Amazon to determine whether the e-commerce giant is using its market power to hurt competition. Several attorneys and at least one economist have been conducting interviews that typically last about 90 minutes and cover a range of topics, according to three merchants. All were asked what percentage of revenue their businesses derive from Amazon versus other online marketplaces like Walmart and EBay, suggesting regulators are skeptical about Amazon's claims that shoppers and suppliers have real alternatives to the Seattle-based company.