

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Daily Capitol Hill Update - Wednesday, September 25, 2019

(The following information comes from Bloomberg Government Website)

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- President Trump in New York
 - 10am: Trump participates in multilateral meeting on Venezuela
 - 12:10pm: Trump meets with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as countries are on verge of announcing a trade deal
 - 2:15pm: Trump participates in meeting with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy
 - 3:15pm: Trump meets with El Salvador President Nayib Bukele
 - 4pm: Trump holds press conference
 - 7:40pm: Trump to deliver remarks at fundraising committee dinner at private residence in New York

CONGRESS

- House meets at 10am; set to consider two bills including H.R. 1595, which would allow banks and credit unions to provide financial services to state-authorized cannabis businesses without federal penalties
- House to also consider H. Res. 576, a resolution on the whistle-blower complaint which moved Speaker Nancy Pelosi to launch formal impeachment inquiry of President Trump
- Senate meets at 10am; to consider S.J. Res. 54, relating to Trump's national emergency to secure more funding for the border wall
- 10am: House Judiciary panel holds hearing on assault weapons; 2141 Rayburn

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Out of Pocket Costs:** Rep. Lauren Underwood (D-Ill.) introduced legislation that would eliminate out-of-pocket costs for "common, life-saving" drugs, including insulin, according to a statement from her office. The measure would "require private health insurance plans, including high deductible health plans, to cover certain preventive care and prescription drugs without charging a copayment, coinsurance, or deductible-related fee."
- **Impeachment Fight to Overtake the 2020 Race:** The impeachment fight is set to overtake the 2020 presidential campaign, no matter who becomes the Democratic nominee. If the House inquiry resulted in an impeachment vote, it would re-litigate the first three years of the Trump presidency. Such an action would also threaten to overshadow the campaigns of the Democrats hoping to run on health care, gun control

and immigration. It would put every member of Congress — including freshmen Democrats from swing districts who have been most shy of impeachment — on record on an issue that will only excite partisan passions.

- **Sanders, Warren Compete Over Billionaire's Tax:** Sen. Elizabeth Warren's (D-Mass.) wealth tax proposal is big. Sanders' is about 60% bigger. Sanders' plan for a wealth tax attaches his name to one of the most salient tax ideas in Democratic circles that Warren, one of his main presidential primary opponents, has popularized.
 - Struggling to maintain his top-three position in voter preference polls, Sanders follows Warren in proposing a tax that has become a popular rallying cry of "2 cents" during her campaign speeches. The cries refer to the 2% levy that would kick in on the assets of fortunes worth more than \$50 million. Sanders' tax goes a few steps further -- taxing wealth above \$32 million at 1%, with an increasing rate that tops out at 8% over \$10 billion.
- **Warren Tied With Biden in New National Poll:** Elizabeth Warren is essentially tied with Joe Biden nationwide, continuing a surge in surveys that showed her ahead in Iowa and New Hampshire, according to a Quinnipiac poll released today. The survey will fuel questions about whether the former vice president is losing his perch as the front-runner in the race for the 2020 Democratic nomination. The poll showed Warren with support from 27% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters, compared with 25% for Biden. That's well within the margin of error of the survey of 4.9% but represents the first time a candidate other than Biden has held a numerical lead since Quinnipiac began its survey in March.
- **Pot Banking Bill Offers Hemp Relief:** The booming hemp industry in Kentucky could be the linchpin to getting cannabis banking legislation through the Republican-controlled Senate. Hemp production is taking off in Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's home state and elsewhere, particularly among farmers looking to replace tobacco crops. But that growth is being hampered by hemp's association with cannabis and business loans and payments services have been hard to come by.
 - House lawmakers have added safe harbors for financial services companies doing business with the hemp industry to a bipartisan bill set for a floor vote today. The measure would affirm that banks can lawfully work with the industry and wouldn't be subject to the heightened regulatory scrutiny and compliance necessary to work with the marijuana sector.
- **Panel Talks Funding to Fight Big Tech:** Federal Trade Commission enforcers are likely to face a largely sympathetic audience before House lawmakers aiming to give the agency more money to examine big tech privacy and competition concerns. FTC Chairman Joe Simons and commissioner Rohit Chopra are set to testify today before the House Appropriations Financial Services Subcommittee to request more funds for the agency as it probes competition and privacy issues at Facebook Inc. and Amazon.com Inc.

- The hearing comes as lawmakers in both chambers are debating how much funds to give the FTC as it scrutinizes Big Tech. The agency has reached historic settlements this year with Facebook and Google for privacy violations.
- **Interior Solicitor Pick Gets Confirmation:** Trump's nominee for the Interior Department's top legal job won Senate confirmation yesterday in a close vote mostly along party lines. The Senate voted 51-43 to confirm Daniel Jorjani as Interior solicitor, with Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) in opposition as the lone senator to break party-line ranks. Jorjani was one of two department picks, along with inspector general pick Mark Greenblatt, whose nominations were actually voted on twice this year in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.
- **Puerto Rico Board Urged to Reverse Austerity:** Senate Democrats, including 2020 candidates Warren, Sanders and Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) have sent a letter to the congressionally mandated fiscal oversight board tasked with reorganizing Puerto Rico's debt, urging members to reverse austerity measures imposed on the island. In addition to calling for an end to cuts to social and public spending on the island, lawmakers also asked for a moratorium on debt payments until an independent probe is completed to root out alleged corruption.
- **Trump Uses U.N. Speech to Hit China:** Trump used his speech at the U.N. General Assembly to reiterate complaints about China's trade practices just weeks before negotiators from both sides are due to meet in Washington. After vowing to reach a quick trade deal with the U.K. following its departure from the European Union, Trump said two decades of expectations that freer trade with China would prompt it to be more market-friendly had failed.
 - The speech offered a reminder of the strategic tensions simmering between the world's two largest economies, despite positive signs in trade talks. Chinese companies are preparing to purchase more American pork, people familiar with the matter told Bloomberg News, in the latest demonstration of good will ahead of another round of talks planned for next month.
 - Chinese companies are preparing to purchase the pork as the government battles against domestic shortages. The firms are inquiring about prices from pork exporters including Smithfield Foods, owned by China's WH Group, and Tyson Foods, said the people, asking not to be identified discussing a private matter.
- **Supreme Court Not Politically Split, Roberts Says:** Chief Justice John Roberts rejected suggestions that the U.S. Supreme Court is divided along partisan lines, saying he and his colleagues "don't go about our work in a political manner." Speaking yesterday before some 2,000 people at a New York synagogue, Roberts portrayed the nation's highest court as a collegial institution that isn't swayed by criticism or infected by the partisan rancor that has overwhelmed the other two branches of the U.S. government.

- **Trump Lawyers Head to Court:** Lawyers for Trump are trying to convince a judge that the president can't be investigated for a crime. They're trying to block the Manhattan District Attorney's subpoena for Trump's tax records. But while Trump could succeed in his challenge, legal experts said they don't expect the judge to rule in a way that grants the sweeping degree of immunity from prosecutorial scrutiny that Trump is claiming for himself, his companies and the people around him.
"Trump's lawyers are arguing that because he can't be criminally charged, he can't even be investigated," said Jed Shugerman, a professor at Fordham University School of Law in New York. "The argument, to boil it down, is that a president is above the law."