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[US Department of the Interior News Briefing](#)



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DOI In The News

Interior Secretary Zinke Says Nearly One-Third Of Department's Employees Disloyal.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/26, Halper) reports that Monday, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke addressed a group gathered for the National Petroleum Council and said that nearly one-third of the department's employees are disloyal. In its "Blog Briefing Room" blog, [The Hill](#) (9/26, Greenwood) reports Zinke said, "We do have good people. But the direction has to be clear and you've got to hold people accountable."

The [AP](#) (9/26, Daly) reports that House Natural Resources Committee member Rep. Raul Grijalva said Tuesday that Secretary Zinke should "apologize to the public servants he is supposed to be leading." Grijalva added that Secretary Zinke "should be well aware that loyalty is earned. And you don't earn it – or deserve it – with divisive comments like these."

The [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Fears, Eilperin) reports that Energy and Natural Resources Committee ranking member Sen. Maria Cantwell disapproved of Zinke's comments and said, "The public servants at [Interior] deserve respect from the man charged with leading them – not cheap shots in the press." Cantwell added that the comments "betray a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of federal civil service." The Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, Public Lands Foundation, and Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service Employees "also took issue with the remarks" in a joint statement, calling them "deeply insulting."

Also reporting are the [Washington Post](#) (9/26), the [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Grandoni) the [Washington Free Beacon](#) (9/26, Crookston), [Bloomberg News](#) (9/26, Daly), [CNN International](#) (9/26, Green), the [Daily Caller](#) (9/26, Rodgers), [MSNBC](#) (9/26, Benen), [Fox News](#) (9/26), the [New York Daily News](#) (9/26), the [Bristol \(VA\) Herald Courier](#) (9/26, Daly),

Coverage by the AP was also picked up by [U.S. News & World Report](#) (9/26, Daly), the [Bozeman \(MT\) Daily Chronicle](#) (9/26, Daly), the [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (9/26, Daly), the [Daily Mail](#) (9/26, Daly), the [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#) (9/22, Daly), [Philly \(PA\)](#) (9/26, DALY, COLVIN), the [Boston Herald](#) (9/26), the [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Daly), the [Washington Times](#) (9/26, Daly), [ABC News](#) (9/26, Daly), the [Daily Mail](#) (9/25), the [New York Daily News](#) (9/26, Daly), and [MSN](#) (9/26, Daly).

Interior's Astonishing Deep State: 30 Percent 'Not Loyal To The Flag'. In a piece for the [Washington Times](#) (9/26, Chumley), Cheryl K. Chumley urges Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to fire those who are not loyal. Chumley also praises Zinke's plan to reorganize the department to put "decision-making into the hands of state agents." and move "some of Interior's agencies —

like the Bureau of Land Management — to areas in the West.”

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke Catches Flak For Comments. In an editorial, the [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (9/27) defends Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s comments, explaining that “his point was that many bureaucrats under his command are captive to a radical green agenda and are impediments to reform.” But “for the sin of speaking the truth,” the paper says, Zinke became the target of Democrats. The paper poses rhetorically: “Is it really so egregious that agency heads would prefer employees willing to carry out the president’s agenda, in line with existing laws, to those who have other ideas?” The editorial concludes that “far from being controversial, Mr. Zinke’s comments this week are encouraging.”

Perry Wants The Biggest Energy ‘Arsenal’.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/26, Siciliano, Seigel) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, addressing a National Clean Energy Week symposium, “said solar energy development would be better served on rooftops rather than on public lands.” According to Zinke, “putting solar cells on land is not the best use because that land cannot be used for purposes other than energy.”

US Interior Chief Wants Smaller Monuments, But Not At Home.

The [AP](#) (9/25, Brown) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, “a rumored candidate for U.S. Senate in 2018 or governor in 2020, appears to be carving out an exception for Montana from Trump’s agenda to open more public lands to natural resources development.” The article notes that “in Zinke’s home state, the former congressman who has long harbored higher political ambitions is recommending Trump create a new national monument out of the forests bordering Glacier National Park, to the disappointment of a company that wants to drill for natural gas there.” Zinke has also “decided to leave intact a 590-square-mile (1,528-square-kilometer) monument that for 16 years has stirred the kind of impassioned local opposition that Zinke cited in justifying changes to monuments elsewhere.” Also, “he wants to curb mining along Montana’s border with Yellowstone National Park.”

NM Democrats Urge White House To Reject Zinke’s Monument Recommendations.

The [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (9/26, Coleman) reports that Democrats in New Mexico’s congressional delegation wrote to White House Chief-of-Staff John Kelly yesterday “urging him to keep the state’s newest national monuments as they are, and to reject Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s report recommending possible changes, calling it riddled with errors.” New Mexico’s delegation Democrats wrote to Trump, “We were disheartened by the recent news of the Department of the Interior’s recommendations to the President regarding modifications to national monuments, including Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains – Desert Peaks in New Mexico. We were concerned that there are several factual errors included in the report’s summaries of these two monuments which were used to justify recommended changes.”

WV Parks, Pools And Campgrounds Get Federal Funding.

The [Charleston \(WV\) Gazette-Mail](#) (9/26, Steelhammer) reports that “West Virginia’s share of the 2017 Land and Water Conservation Fund includes \$774,984 for state and local outdoor recreation projects.” The money will “help pay for additional power and water hookups at Pipestem Resort State Park’s campground, the restoration of Benwood City Park’s swimming pool in Marshall County, a parking lot at Mill Race Park in Parsons, and two new group picnic shelters at parks in Berkeley County.”

Additional coverage was provided by the [AP](#) (9/27) and [West Virginia Public Broadcasting](#) (9/26, McCormick).

New Mexico Gets \$1.1M For Outdoor Recreation Projects.

The [AP](#) (9/27) reports that “more than \$1.1 million in federal grants will be distributed to New Mexico for outdoor recreation and conservation projects.” The funding, recently announced by the Interior Department, comes from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Members of New Mexico’s congressional delegation “said Tuesday that the grants help fuel jobs in the state and an outdoor recreation industry that contributes billions of dollars nationwide.”

Civil Servants Charge Trump Is Sidelining Workers With Expertise On Climate Change, Environment.

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/26, Halper) reports that the Trump Administration’s actions to reassign personnel have “signaled deep suspicion of many of the civil servants on the government payroll,

particularly when their work has involved confronting climate change or enforcing the environmental protections and other regulations the White House is working to roll back.” At the Interior Department, Secretary Ryan Zinke’s “shuffling of staff and his suggestion before Congress that he would use reassignments to push employees out of government has triggered a probe by the department’s inspector general and given fuel to the whistle-blower complaint” filed by Interior employee Joel Clement .

Federal Judge Dismisses Case Regarding Power Plant, Coal Mine.

The [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (9/26, Smith) reports that “a federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit brought by environmental groups against federal agencies for the extension of operations for the Four Corners Power Plant and Navajo Mine.” Environmental groups argued “federal agencies violated the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Administrative Procedure Act for approving the 25-year extension of operations for the power plant and the expansion of strip mining at the mine.” U.S. District Court Judge Steven P. Logan “ordered the case dismissed without prejudice, meaning it cannot be refiled based on the same grounds, on Sept. 11.”

Congress Questions Cancelled Shared Service Effort.

[Federal Computer Week](#) (9/26, Rockwell) reports, “The agreement between the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of the Interior’s financial management service provider was abandoned earlier this year because of missed deadlines and cost overruns, agency officials told a congressional panel, and could mark a turning point in how shared services are approached.”

Interior Secretary Zinke Invokes Teddy Roosevelt As Model, But His Public Land Policies Don’t.

In a piece for the [Conversation \(UK\)](#) (9/26, Freemuth), John Freemuth, Professor of Public Policy and Executive Director, Andrus Center for Public Policy, Boise State University, writes that “Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s recommendations to shrink four national monuments and allow fossil fuel development activities on others is just the latest sign that this administration sees natural resource use and extraction as the highest priority for public lands.” Freemuth compares Zinke to Cecil Andrus, who led the Interior Department during the Carter Administration. Freemuth writes that Zinke “began his tenure at the Interior Department with pure symbolism: He rode to the agency’s headquarters on horseback and professed to be a conservationist in the mold of Theodore Roosevelt. Then he took a different path.”

Native Tribes Deserve Respect For Work On The Bears Ears Monument.

In an op-ed for [The Hill](#) (9/26, Branch), Ethel Branch, attorney general at the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, credits the Obama Administration for incorporating a “collaborative management model” for the Bears Ears National Monument. However, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, Utah Gov. Gary Herbert and “other Utah officials have made public statements suggesting that the Bears Ears Commission provides an inadequate form of tribal management.” Branch claims that the Bears Ears National Monument, “uniquely enriched by tribal voices and traditional knowledge, can become one of the jewels of our national conservation system.” Branch concludes that “the proclamation and the significant hard-earned role of the five tribes in designing the future of the monument through the Bears Ears Commission should not be changed.”

Commentary: Strong Economies Need Protected Public Lands.

In an op-ed for the [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (9/26, Callaghan), Drew Callaghan, the Outreach Specialist for the American Independent Business Alliance, asserts that “strong public lands protections fuel thriving economies.” Callaghan argues that “while relaxed regulations may benefit specific companies in the short-term, those activities undermine the land’s value in other ways.” Callaghan points to “the greater economic benefits of safeguarding public lands and waters.” He concludes that “robust public lands protections don’t just benefit the environment; they serve people, local businesses, and the economies on which we all depend.”

No, We Can’t — And Shouldn’t — Stop Forest Fires.

In an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Hanson), Chad Hanson, a research ecologist with the John Muir Project, and Mike Garrity, executive director of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, criticizes action proposed to “ostensibly...save our National Forests from fire by allowing

widespread commercial logging on public lands.” The authors claim that “this position is out of step with current science and is based on several myths promoted by commercial interests.” The authors call “this narrative” a “scientifically bankrupt smoke screen for rampant commercial logging on our public lands.”

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

Montana Tribe Relinquishes Jail To Bureau Of Indian Affairs.

The [AP](#) (9/26) reports that “a northern Montana tribe returned control of a jail to the Bureau of Indian Affairs after tribal officials say they couldn’t afford to operate it.” The BIA “took control of the detention facility on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation last week after tribal officials reached out to the bureau for assistance.” According to Fort Belknap Tribal President Mark Azure, “the move wasn’t something either party wanted, but there wasn’t enough funding for the facility.”

Lumbee Recognition Bill Gets Hearing In Washington.

The [Fayetteville \(NC\) Observer](#) (9/26, Woolverton) reports that Lumbee Tribal Chairman Harvey Godwin and Rep. Robert Pittenger “argued to a Congressional subcommittee on Tuesday that Congress should give full federal recognition to Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.” Godwin told the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indian, Insular, and Alaska Native Affairs, “This enduring quasi-legal status for the Lumbee Tribe has resulted in unequal protection for our tribal members.” Pittenger, “who has sponsored a bill to confer full recognition to the tribe,” asserted that it was “an issue of fairness.”

Hoeven Leads Bipartisan Call To Address Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking In Indian Country.

The [Ripon Advance](#) (9/26) reports that “in response to domestic violence and human trafficking in Native American communities,” Sen. John Hoeven “led a congressional call on Friday for federal officials to undergo training to help recognize and respond to those situations.” Hoeven, the chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, “led a bipartisan group of nine senators in calling for enhanced training for federal officials working in Indian country in a letter to Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and National Indian Gaming Commission Chairman Jonodev Chaudhuri.” Hoeven said, “The presence of federal officials across Indian Country could serve as an important resource in our efforts to combat human trafficking. Connecting these federal employees with the training and education they need to recognize and help prevent these crimes against Native Americans is an important step. As chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee, I will continue to advance this and similar efforts to promote greater public safety throughout tribal communities.”

Bureau Of Land Management

Feinstein Contends That Cadiz Project Would Contaminate Water Supply.

The [San Bernardino \(CA\) Sun](#) (9/26, Steinberg) reports that “as the Cadiz project seems increasingly likely to go forward, Sen. Dianne Feinstein issued a statement contending the underground desert water could ultimately contaminate much of Southern California’s water supply.” Feinstein said in the statement, “For close to two decades, Cadiz has been trying to ram through a water extraction project that would harm the Mojave Desert. And now we hear from the Metropolitan Water District that the water Cadiz wants to extract could contain dangerous chemicals that pose a threat to the safety of Southern California’s water supply.” Cadiz officials “dispute Feinstein’s claim, denying that the project’s groundwater would be brought into the Colorado River Aqueduct without treatment to screen out potentially harmful contaminants.”

New Mexico Authorities To Investigate Livestock Killings.

The [AP](#) (9/26) reports that “authorities in southeastern New Mexico are teaming up to investigate a string of livestock killings.” Eddy County Sheriff Mark Cage “says his jurisdiction covers more than 5,000 square miles (12,950 square kilometers) and his deputies can’t be everywhere at once so a task force is being formed to help with the problem.” Cage has “deputized a Bureau of Land Management ranger to help with the case and is working with other local and federal

agencies and organizations.”

BLM Resource Council To Meet.

The [Twin Falls \(ID\) Times-News](#) (9/26) reports that a Bureau of Land Management advisory group will meet on Wednesday at the agency’s Twin Falls office. The group is “slated to discuss the 2017 fire season, potential use of unmanned aircraft to manage resources, travel planning and other issues.” Twin Falls District Manager Mike Courtney said in a statement, “We receive valuable input from our RAC members who represent diverse interests ranging from energy development and livestock grazing to dispersed recreation and historic and archaeological interests. Their feedback helps us to make better informed decisions when it comes to on-the-ground management of public lands.”

Additional coverage was provided by [KLIX-AM](#) Twin Falls, ID (9/26, Weeks).

Ken Medenbach Seeks Judge’s Permission To Attend Bundy Trial In Nevada.

The [Oregonian](#) (9/26, Bernstein) reports that “public lands occupier Ken Medenbach, who called the Bundys his heroes on the witness stand last fall, is urging a judge to allow him to attend their federal criminal trial in Nevada next month.” Medenbach’s probation officer has “already rejected the request.” On Tuesday, Medenbach’s defense attorney “filed a motion asking U.S. District Judge Michael J. McShane to overrule the denial.”

Bureau Of Reclamation

US, Mexico Expand Pact On Managing Overused Colorado River.

The [AP](#) (9/26, Elliott) reports that “the United States and Mexico have agreed to renew and expand a far-reaching conservation agreement that governs how they manage the overused Colorado River, which supplies water to millions of people and to farms in both nations, U.S. water district officials said.” The deal to be signed Wednesday “calls for the U.S. to invest \$31.5 million in conservation improvements in Mexico’s water infrastructure to reduce losses to leaks and other problems, according to officials of U.S. water districts who have seen summaries of the agreement.” The agreement “also calls on Mexico to develop specific plans for reducing consumption if the river runs too low to supply everyone’s needs, said Bill Hasencamp of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.”

Dispute Over Delta Smelt Reignites Despite Wet California Winter.

The [Sacramento \(CA\) Bee](#) (9/26, Sabalow, Kasler) reports that despite the “wettest winter on record for Northern California,” a “dispute continues between farms and cities wanting to receive more water and environmental groups fighting for the Delta’s fragile population of tiny smelt.” Environmentalists are “opposed to a proposal championed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Southern California water interests to ramp up pumping from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta starting next week.” Regulators at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service could “decide as soon as Friday whether to approve the plan.”

Fish And Wildlife Service

Republicans Eye Budget Process For ANWR Opening.

[Politico Morning Energy](#) (9/26, Adragna) reports that Senate Republicans plan “to use their fiscal 2018 budget blueprint to lay the groundwork for new energy production in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by using special rules that would allow them to avoid a Democratic filibuster.” According to the article, “while the budget document couldn’t mandate specific policies, it would enable Senate Energy Chairman Lisa Murkowski to write legislation that would remove restrictions on drilling in ANWR that could be bundled into a massive tax reconciliation package that needs just 50 votes in the Senate.” The article says that “doing so would realize a long-standing goal of Republicans and oil companies, while attracting vehement opposition from environmental groups and virtually all Democrats.”

Utah Residents Ask Supreme Court To Hear Prairie Dog Case.

The [AP](#) (9/26, McCOMBS) reports that “residents in southern Utah asked the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday to hear their case claiming federal safeguards for Utah prairie dogs have prevented

them from doing what they want with their private property.” People for the Ethical Treatment of Property Owners want “the high court to review a March decision by the Denver-based 10th Circuit Court of Appeals that sided with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the issue.” According to the article, “the request likely won’t be considered by the Supreme Court until mid-November at the earliest.”

Additional Coverage: Greens Wage Long Fight Against Copper Mine In Arizona Mountains.

Additional coverage of the lawsuit filed against an Arizona copper mine for its impact on the habitat of jaguars was provided by [Courthouse News](#) (9/26, Poole).

Jenny Loda: Saving Salamanders A Highway At A Time.

In an op-ed for the [Lompoc \(CA\) Record](#) (9/26, Loda), Jenny Loda, reptile and amphibian staff attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity in Oakland, writes that wildlife undercrossings were have been built to help the recovery of tiger salamanders. The project is a collaboration between Caltrans, state Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She says that “that work would never have occurred without Endangered Species Act protections. The success of these and similar recovery projects shows just how much we need this core environmental law. It also highlights the danger posed by legislative attacks from congressional Republicans attempting to weaken or dismantle critical endangered species protections.”

National Park Service

The National Park Service Showed That Its Bottled Water Ban Worked — Then Lifted It.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Fears) reports that National Park Service on Friday, prompted by a FOIA request, released a study finding that its decision in 2011 to eliminate bottled water sales “prevented up to 112,000 pounds of plastic from being sold and discarded each year, along with up to 140 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions.” The Trump Administration’s Department of the Interior rescinded the ban in August.

Also reporting are [USA Today](#) (9/26), [Newsweek](#) (9/25, Valencia), and [Mother Jones](#) (9/26, Nix).

National Parks Offering Free Admission For 3 Days This Fall.

The [Oregonian](#) (9/26, Hale) reports that the National Park Service will waive entrance fees at national parks “on Sept. 30 for National Public Lands Day, and on Nov. 11 and 12 for Veterans Day.”

Historic Trail Receives Major Overhaul After Years Of Neglect.

[KOTA-TV](#) Rapid City, SD (9/26) reports that “the historic Blackberry Trail that connects Mount Rushmore National Memorial to the Centennial Trail is back open to foot traffic and horseback riding.” The National Park Service, the Mount Rushmore Society and “many more partners raised \$200,000 to take on rehabilitation of the trail.” Cheryl Schreier, park superintendent of Mount Rushmore National Memorial, said, “It feels so wonderful and outstanding and part of it is because we had so many partners and donor involved that helped to make this come to fruition. Now we have a safe trail for both hikers and equestrian users; and it is just a wonderful trail to get people out into a different habitat of Mount Rushmore.”

Science Workshops Bring Knox County Teachers To Great Smoky Mountains.

The [Knoxville \(TN\) News Sentinel](#) (9/26, Ahillen) reports that “thirty middle school and high school teachers and two administrators from the Knox County School District” last week participated in a new program called the Smokies Science Immersion Teacher Workshop. According to the article, “the connection between the park and Knox County Schools has been growing for some time, but this was the first of what both sides hope will be many such workshops.” Joy Absher, Great Smoky Mountains National Park education branch chief, said, “We try to work with local counties surrounding the park and find ways that they can bring some of the resources of the park back to the classroom. This is a very important goal for us. Even if students can’t make it to the park, teachers can make them aware of the nature around them.”

Burn Ban Eased In North Cascades And Northwestern Region.

The [AP](#) (9/26) reports that “officials have lifted a ban on campfires in North Cascades National

Park, which officials say compliments the rescinding of campfire restrictions throughout the northwestern part of the state." North Cascades National Park Service Complex spokeswoman Denise Shultz "said Tuesday the ban put into place earlier this month because of extreme fire danger is over, effective immediately."

Open House For Hanford National Park Manager.

The [Tri-City Herald \(WA\)](#) (9/26, Cary) reports that "the first National Park Service manager for the Hanford portion of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park will be welcomed to the Tri-Cities at an open house Wednesday." According to the article, "both Becky Burghart, the park site's new manager, and Sue Masica, the director of the Intermountain Region of the National Park Service, are scheduled to attend."

Park Superintendent Keeps Returning To W.Va.

The [Beckley \(WV\) Register-Herald](#) (9/26, Nelson) reports that Lizzie Watts, superintendent of the New River Gorge National River, Gauley River National Recreation Area and Bluestone National Scenic River, is "finally here to stay." According to the article, "after traveling and working all over the country, Watts applied for a job in West Virginia." Watts said, "This will be my last assignment. I am here for good."

Every Kid In A Park Was Amazing.

In a piece for the [Fairbanks \(AK\) News-Miner](#) (9/26, Cotter), Adia Cotter, Supervisory Park Ranger, Alaska Public Lands Information Center Fairbanks., writes that "this month, the National Park Foundation made it possible for 64 fourth-graders from Joy Elementary to visit Denali National Park." Students "explored the visitor center, attended a ranger program and hiked one of Denali's entrance trails. Before boarding a bus home, students socialized with Denali's newest members of the kennel." Cotter hopes "the amazing experience will stick with them for years to come," and "planted a seed of adventure in their fertile minds."

Office Of Insular Affairs

Trump Defends Federal Response To Hurricane Maria.

Amid criticism of the federal response to Hurricane Maria, President Trump announced Tuesday that he will visit Puerto Rico next week. The story garners heavy media coverage, much of which is negative for the President, casting him as being on the defensive about the federal response and suggesting he was preoccupied by his feud with the NFL and did not fully appreciate the magnitude of the crisis.

Gabe Gutierrez reported on [NBC Nightly News](#) ☐ (9/26, lead story, 3:00, Holt) that Trump "announced he would visit Puerto Rico next week and defended federal response." Trump: "We got 'A+'s on Texas and Florida, and we will also on Puerto Rico. But the difference is this is an island sitting in the middle of the ocean." The [CBS Evening News](#) ☐ (9/26, story 2, 1:45, Mason) showed the President saying, "Everybody has said it's amazing the job that we've done in Puerto Rico. We're very proud of it. I think we're really getting really good marks for the work we're doing. So I think we've done a really good job." While Margaret Brennan added that Trump "said Puerto Rico's governor personally thanked him today for the federal response," Wolf Blitzer said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) ☐ (9/26), "The President's words are at odds with the situation on the ground in Puerto Rico." Ron Brownstein, senior editor of The Atlantic, said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) ☐ (9/26), "I don't think there are many people in Puerto Rico who would describe this as a great job."

[USA Today](#) (9/26, Jackson) reports that the Administration "been accused of giving short shrift to growing humanitarian crisis on Puerto Rico," and the [AP](#) (9/26, Kellman, Superville) says Trump "pushed back aggressively and repeatedly against criticism that he had failed to quickly grasp the magnitude of Maria's destruction or give the US commonwealth the top-priority treatment he had bestowed on Texas, Louisiana and Florida after previous storms."

David Muir said in the lead story for [ABC World News Tonight](#) ☐ (9/26, lead story, 2:35) that Trump is "defending himself." Senior White House correspondent Cecilia Vega added that Trump "brush[ed] off questions about whether he's been preoccupied by his battle with the NFL." Trump: "Was I preoccupied? Not at all. Not at all. I have plenty of time on my hands. All I do is work." However, Jim Acosta said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) ☐ (9/26), "On social media the President has made it clear where his focus lies, on the NFL players protesting during football

games. He has tweeted about the NFL 24 times since Saturday compared to just four times on Puerto Rico." Julie Pace of the AP said on [Fox News Special Report](#) (9/26) that Trump "can say he wasn't distracted but it was his tweeting and messaging on the NFL that pushed to the forefront and overshadowed what FEMA and other agencies actually were doing for Puerto Rico."

[Politico](#) (9/26, Nelson) reports that Trump "has ramped up his tweets about the devastation in the past 24 hours," but he "appeared to place some blame on Puerto Rico for its poor infrastructure and financial crisis, while heaping praise on his administration's response." On Tuesday, Trump "pledged that more help is on the way for the territory, while expressing appreciation for compliments directed his administration's way," [tweeting](#), "Thank you to Carmen Yulin Cruz, the Mayor of San Juan, for your kind words on FEMA etc. We are working hard. Much food and water there/on way." The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/26, Siciliano) reports that Trump "said the federal government will fully pay for recovery assistance to Puerto Rico, which senior utility industry officials praised as a necessary step in helping to restore the island's nearly completely destroyed electric grid."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26, Ballhaus, Hughes) says acting DHS Secretary Duke also defended the federal response and said that as access opens, more resources will arrive. In the lead story for the [CBS Evening News](#) (9/26, lead story, 2:35, Mason), David Begnaud reported that while "FEMA says it has the supplies it needs, with more aid arriving," there are "huge challenges to delivering it." Alex De La Campa, FEMA: "And because we are an island, there's no trucks or roads that we can bring commodities. So everything had to be, we need to bring everything via airplane or via barge."

Puerto Rico Del. Jenniffer Gonzalez Colon said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (9/26) praised Trump's plan to visit the island, saying it will be "more than helpful. It will show that he cares. It will show he is sending the right amount of resources to the island and to the people who are there, waiting to get food, to get water, to get gasoline, to have their power grid." In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/26) says Trump's "silence over the weekend about Puerto Rico while he fomented controversy over football caused worry about whether Puerto Rico would be a priority for the administration." However, Monday's trip to the island by homeland security adviser Bossert and FEMA Director Long, as well as Trump's planned visit "are hopefully signs of the administration taking the crisis seriously."

The [New York Post](#) (9/26, Tacopino) reports that two days after Hillary Clinton "pleaded" with the President to send the Navy hospital ship the USNS Comfort to aid the crisis in Puerto Rico, the Administration sent the ship to the island. FEMA Administrator Long said Tuesday "that a flotilla of ships were on their way to the island – including the USNS Comfort." Long said, "We're dramatically increasing the federal footprint that's there." The [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Lamothe) says Clinton's "call to action took off, with a petition on the website Change.org garnering more than 100,000 signatures in three days and critics expressing frustration with the hashtag #SendtheComfort."

Eva Pilgrim said on [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/26, story 2, 2:10, Muir) that San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz said that "bureaucratic red tape is holding up relief efforts." Cruz: "President Trump, please. Whatever you need to do. Let FEMA do their job." Daniel Kaniewski, deputy director for national preparedness for FEMA, was asked on [CNN's The Lead](#) (9/26) if the federal government is treating Puerto Rico with the same urgency as the crises in Texas and Florida, Kaniewski said, "To us, certainly at FEMA and our federal partners there is no difference between the territories and the US states here on the continental US. However, there is a huge challenge involved, right. The only way we can get the supplies and personnel there is by air or by ship. So it's certainly more challenging, but it is absolutely our responsibility to do this. And I feel...we are doing it well and we are doing it as best as anybody can possibly be expected to do it." However, Dana Milbank writes in the [Washington Post](#) (9/26) that the Administration's "failure to help Americans in Puerto Rico with the same urgency it gave those in Texas and Florida furthers a sad suspicion that the disparate treatment has less to do with logistics than language and skin color."

Lester Holt reported on [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/26, story 2, 1:00) that in "remote parts of Puerto Rico, calls for help are written on rooftops" as "families desperate for aid" and "roads are obliterated with mudslides and flooding." Also on [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/26, story 12, 0:50), Holt praised the efforts of the Air National Guard to "deliver essentials to fellow Americans in need." Said Holt, "We know the people of Puerto Rico are grateful, and we're grateful to the men and women of the Air National Guard."

A front-page story in the [Washington Post](#) (9/26, A1, Schmidt) reports that residents and local officials in the city of Morovis, 37 miles southwest of San Juan, "said they had received no

help from Puerto Rican officials and had no contact with federal agencies," and "Puerto Ricans across the island have echoed those frustrations as advocates off the island have begun to put pressure on the Trump administration." The [New York Times](#) (9/26, Fausset, Blinder) reports on efforts to restore service at the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport.

Lawmakers Warn That Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands Could Become A Katrina-Like Political Disaster. [McClatchy](#) (9/26, Douglas, Daugherty) says "lawmakers from both parties warned Tuesday" that the Administration's response in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands "could become a Hurricane Katrina-like political disaster if he does not respond to the storms' aftermath more decisively." [Politico](#) (9/26, Caputo) quotes Sen. Marco Rubio as saying before a meeting with Vice President Pence, "This has the potential of being a serious humanitarian crisis in a US territory impacting United States citizens. ... There's going to have to be a lot more hands-on federal engagement for us to be able to successfully carry out the mission." Rubio added, "Right now, it's not just a function of Congress passing a bill tomorrow and flooding Puerto Rico with a billion dollars. They have a capacity problem in terms of absorbing it and distributing it to the right people and the right places. ... What I'm more concerned about in the next 48 to 72 hours is ensuring that we don't have a Katrina-style event. I'm not claiming that's where we're heading. I'm saying I want to avoid that from being even a possibility."

Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA) said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (9/26), "I wish the President would spend less time telling us what a wonderful job he's doing and more time focused on what we'll need to do in the immediate aftermath of this territory disaster and over the long term because I think he really risks being perceived the same way that George Bush was, as being indifferent to the plight of people in this case, in Puerto Rico and Virgin Islands."

In an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (9/26), Mari Carmen Aponte, who previously served as acting assistant secretary of state for Western Hemisphere affairs and as the US ambassador to El Salvador, calls on elected officials to "prioritize relief for Puerto Rico before the crisis gets worse." Aponte adds that the military, FEMA, and private organizations must be given "the resources they need to respond quickly," and the Trump Administration "should also immediately waive the Jones Act's restrictions on foreign ships' transporting cargo to Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands." In an op-ed for [USA Today](#) (9/26), Your Say editor Josh Rivera addresses Trump, writing, "It is great that you are coming to Puerto Rico next week, but you need to act now." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26) editorial also calls for the suspension of the Jones Act to provide relief to Puerto Rico.

Rosselló: Without Aid, Millions Of Puerto Ricans Will Flock To US. Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosselló said on [MSNBC's Morning Joe](#) (9/26), "My call to Congress is take action now. This is a major disaster. We need the funding necessary to act appropriately." Rosselló added that "if we don't have that, you'll see thousands if not millions of Puerto Ricans flocking to the United States which will cause a demographic severe problem in Puerto Rico as well as in the United States."

FDA Warns Of Drug Shortages. [USA Today](#) (9/26, Bomey) reports that the Food and Drug Administration is warning that there could be shortages of key drugs "after Hurricane Maria brought Puerto Rico's drug manufacturing industry to a standstill." According to FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, "We may soon face critical shortages if we don't find a path for removal or ways to get production back up and running."

American Medical Students Rescued From Dominica. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/26, story 3, 1:25, Muir) reported that hundreds of American medical students who were stranded on the island of Dominica have been rescued and are "now on their way home and to safety."

Maria To Cause Rough Surf Along East Coast Of US. The [CBS Evening News](#) (9/26, story 3, 0:20, Mason) reported that North Carolina will "get a glancing blow from Maria, now a tropical storm." CBS added that "storm surge and tropical storm watches and warnings extend to the Virginia coast." [ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/26, story 4, 0:20, Muir) reported Maria will cause "rough surf and dangerous rip currents from Florida to Maine over the next few days" before "making a hard right turn" and "going out to sea."

Utilities Brace For Tough Slog In Puerto Rico After Trump Boosts Funding.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/26, Siciliano) reports President Trump yesterday "said the federal government will fully pay for recovery assistance to Puerto Rico." The statement was "praised" by "senior utility industry officials...as a necessary step in helping to restore the island's nearly completely destroyed electric grid." American Public Power Association President Sue Kelly said, "We thank President Trump for authorizing 100-percent cost sharing by the federal government for 180 days of emergency work to help begin the process of repairing damaged energy infrastructure." The APPA "represents a segment of the utility sector that is nonprofit and

government-owned, such as the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority." [The Hill](#) (9/26, Fabian) reports that next Tuesday President Trump is scheduled to travel to Puerto Rico "to survey damage from Hurricane Maria." Trump "told reporters at the White House that damage on the ground prevents any earlier travel to the island, which he said has been 'literally destroyed.'" [Axios](#) (9/26, Vavra) reports President Trump "was updated on the latest recovery and relief efforts in Puerto Rico" in the Situation Room yesterday. Energy Secretary Perry and EPA Administrator Pruitt were among those in attendance.

The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/26, Siegel) reports in a second article that the Department of Defense "said Tuesday that 80 percent of the electricity transmission system in Puerto Rico and all of the island's power distribution network, which brings power to customers, is damaged from Hurricane Maria." In addition "only 11 of 69 hospitals in Puerto Rico have fuel or power."

[Reuters](#) (9/26, Respaut, DiSavino) reports officials are "still taking stock of what is expected to be a months-long effort to rebuild the island's power system, keeping much of its 3.4 million people in darkness for an extended period." A complete "damage assessment has been difficult because of the limited ability to get flights to the island and as federal agencies have been concentrating on life-saving efforts and providing power to crucial infrastructure like hospitals." Reuters adds that "rebuilding will be a challenging task" for PREPA, which is "already regularly criticized by residents for frequent outages and rates higher than every U.S. state other than Hawaii." A separate article by [Reuters](#) (9/26, Reuters) reports "highway signs and traffic poles were scattered across highways around the island on Tuesday, with intersections turned into obstacle courses as cars drove over and around tangled wires and other debris" and "broken transmission towers...were visible."

Perry Pitches Idea Of Sending SMRs To Help Puerto Rico. [Greenwire](#) (9/26) reports Energy Secretary Perry on Tuesday "pitched an unconventional lifeline for the hurricane-battered territory. Little nuclear plants." Perry "said the United States should consider hoisting small modular reactors aboard large military aircraft." At a clean energy conference, Perry said, "Wouldn't it make abundant good sense if we had small modular reactors that literally you could put in the back of a C-17, transport to an area like Puerto Rico, push it out the back end, crank it up and plug it in? ... It could serve hundreds of thousands." He "made the pitch to highlight ongoing work at DOE's national labs and suggested developers of small reactors could be offered incentives in a tax reform package."

National Guard Head: Puerto Rico Clean-up Will 'Challenge The System'. [The Hill](#) (9/25, Mitchell) reports that "the clean-up efforts for U.S. territories following Hurricane Maria are expected to be far more complicated and lengthy than those for Florida and Texas in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, according to the head of the National Guard Bureau." Gen. Joseph Lengyel "said Monday that it will be 'a harder response scenario' to restore power and necessary infrastructure, likely taking months." Lengyel said, "Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are not Texas and Florida. They're out here in the middle of the ocean. It's more complicated to get people here, it's more complicated to fix the power grids, it's more complicated to fix a whole lot of other things."

Trump: US Ready To Use "Devastating" Force On North Korea.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/26, story 9, 0:20, Muir) reported briefly that President Trump warned Tuesday that the US is prepared to use "devastating" military action against North Korea, if necessary, after it threatened to shoot down US war planes. During a joint press conference with Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, [Bloomberg News](#) (9/26, Talev, Jacobs, Mohsin) reports Trump said, "We are totally prepared for the second option – not a preferred option – but if we take that option it will be devastating I can tell you that. For North Korea that is called the military option. If we have to take it we will."

[Politico](#) (9/26, McCaskill) and the [Washington Times](#) (9/26, Boyer) also report Trump's remarks, while the [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Gearan) reports he also "thanked China for helping rein in North Korea and claimed that international pressure" on North Korea "is beginning to work, marking a change in tone amid concerns that tensions with Pyongyang are escalating dangerously." Trump, the Post says, "made a point of praising Chinese President Xi Jinping for his efforts to squeeze" North Korea, while "in other settings – usually Twitter – Trump has complained about lackluster Chinese cooperation and suggested he could punish China economically if it did not do more."

On [NBC Nightly News](#) (9/26, story 4, 2:00, Holt), Andrea Mitchell said that despite Trump's "angry words and new sanctions, the Secretary of State [is] saying the goal is [a] diplomatic solution, and Pentagon seeing no signs of increased military threat." The [Wall Street](#)

[Journal](#) (9/26, Schwartz, Talley, Wong) similarly reports that US officials on Tuesday emphasized the urgency of diplomatic attempts to ease tensions with North Korea amid recent heightened rhetoric. Secretary of State Tillerson will travel to Beijing on Thursday, where spokeswoman Heather Nauert said the Secretary will lay the groundwork for Trump's trip to China this year. "The fact that Secretary Tillerson has been here for nine months now and is now making his second trip to China – that's significant," Nauert said.

[Reuters](#) (9/26, Holland, Ali) reports that while "bellicose statements by Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in recent weeks have created fears that a miscalculation could lead to action with untold ramifications," Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford said Tuesday that the US "has not detected any change in North Korea's military posture reflecting an increased threat." The [AP](#) (9/26, Lardner) reports Dunford said, "We haven't seen military activity that would be reflective of the charged political environment that we're seeing."

[Washington Post](#) (9/26) columnist David Ignatius writes that although US officials "have said repeatedly that America is seeking a diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis with North Korea," Trump's "insulting comments" toward Kim "appear to have made such a negotiated settlement more difficult." According to Ignatius, "experienced Korea watchers believe that Trump's threats have deepened Kim's resistance to concessions and that the North Korean leader is unlikely to back down in the face-off with Washington." Ignatius argues that "the humbling lesson that Trump must learn: He has blustered his way to the edge of a cliff. Now he must stop fulminating and start dealing."

Kathleen Parker writes in her [Washington Post](#) (9/26) column that "how this unfunny comedy resolves itself is anyone's guess, which is the problem, isn't it? Nothing like real diplomacy or containment seems plausible in the current scenario."

US Imposes Additional Sanctions On North Korea. The [New York Times](#) (9/26, Gladstone) reports that the US "added eight North Korean banks and 26 individuals to its sanctions blacklist on Tuesday." The action, announced by the Treasury Department, "affects North Koreans working in China, Russia, Libya and the United Arab Emirates." Treasury Secretary Mnuchin said, "We are targeting North Korean banks and financial facilitators acting as representatives for North Korean banks across the globe." The [Washington Times](#) (9/26, Boyer) reports President Trump said at Tuesday's news conference that the sanctions will further "isolate the North Korean menace." [Politico](#) (9/26, Guida) also reports the move.

North Korea Using GOP Analysts To "Make Sense" Of Trump. According to the [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Fifield), North Korean government officials have been "quietly trying to arrange talks with Republican-linked analysts in Washington, in an apparent attempt to make sense of President Trump and his confusing messages to Kim Jong Un's regime." The outreach began "before the current eruption of threats between the two leaders but will probably become only more urgent as Trump and Kim have descended into name-calling." One source with "direct knowledge of North Korea's approach to Asia experts with Republican connections" said, "Their number one concern is Trump. They can't figure him out."

Despite His Parents' Claim, Warmbier's Autopsy Showed No Signs Of Torture. The [Cincinnati Enquirer](#) (9/26, Saker) reports that the Hamilton County coroner examining Otto Warmbier "found he had a collection of small scars on his body, but none appear serious enough to indicate he was tortured while he was imprisoned in North Korea." The coroner's report, which The Enquirer obtained Tuesday, "only deepened the mystery of what happened to the 22-year-old University of Virginia student" during more than a year in North Korean custody. The Enquirer also notes that Warmbier's parents, Fred and Cindy Warmbier, appeared on national television Tuesday morning for the first time since their son's death. Fred Warmbier accused North Korean officials of "torturing their child to the point," saying that "it looked like someone had taken a pair of pliers and rearranged his bottom teeth." After the Warmbiers' morning appearance on Fox News, President Trump [tweeted](#), "Otto was tortured beyond belief by North Korea." But the coroner's examination of Warmbier "did not indicate the young man's teeth had been disfigured." In fact, it said, "The teeth are natural and in good repair."

[NBC Nightly News](#) ☐ (9/26, story 4, 2:00, Holt) also reported Warmbier's parents are alleging that North Korea "tortured" their son, while [ABC World News Tonight](#) ☐ (9/26, story 10, 0:45, Muir) showed Fred and Cindy Warmbier discussing seeing their son after he was brought back to the US: "We heard this howling, involuntary, inhuman sound. He was staring blankly into space, his face jerking violently. He was blind. He was deaf. As we looked at him and tried to comfort him, it looked like someone had taken a pair of pliers and rearranged his bottom teeth."

[CNN's Situation Room](#) ☐ (9/26) reported that the Warmbiers want to designate North Korea a state sponsor of terrorism. CNN's Brian Todd said a State Department official told CNN "they'll

do that if there's evidence that warrants it." [Fox News Special Report](#) (9/26) showed State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert saying, "This is something we constantly assess. I know [Secretary of State Tillerson] has certainly...looked at it in the past when it came to Otto Warmbier. I don't know if that is something we are looking at today."

Casino Rakes In Over \$1 Billion.

The [Saipan \(MNP\) Tribune](#) (9/26, Encinares) reports that "Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC earned over \$1 billion in gross gaming revenue from January to July 2017, according to documents obtained by Saipan Tribune." The documents, "obtained from the Commonwealth Casino Commission, showed that, factoring in the 5-percent business gross revenue tax, IPI paid the Commonwealth government a total of \$53.4 million for the period from January to July 2017."

Project Manager Of MCC Int'l Gets Prison Term.

The [Saipan \(MNP\) Tribune](#) (9/26, De La Torre) reports that "one of five indicted for allegedly harboring illegal Chinese workers pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge yesterday as part of a plea deal and was slapped with a six-month prison term." MCC International project manager Yuqing Zhao "pleaded guilty in federal court to unlawful employment of aliens—a misdemeanor charge." He was "given credit for 12 days of time served."

St. Croix Gets Standing Curfew, St. Thomas Airport To Reopen.

The [Virgin Islands Daily News](#) (9/26, O'CONNOR) reports that Gov. Kenneth Mapp has "officially installed the curfew on St. Croix between noon and 4 p.m., he told a press conference Monday at Government House." He said, "Twelve noon to 4 p.m. in the afternoon is now the standard window. We're making that going forward, it's now a daily routine. So businesses can plan to open during that hour, expand the services." The St. Thomas-St. John curfew "remains fixed at the moment from 6 p.m. until 9 a.m., meaning residents there have nine hours to conduct business."

Mapp Expects CEKA To Reopen Thursday To Commercial Flights.

The [St. John Source](#) (9/26, Livingston) reports that "Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas will reopen for commercial flights on Thursday and St. Croix's Henry E. Rohlsen Airport may open next week, Gov. Kenneth Mapp said Monday in his daily news conference updating the progress on hurricane recovery." Because of "construction at the airport, Mapp urged passengers to get to the airport four hours ahead of the flight to give airlines enough time to process all passengers."

US Geological Survey

USGS Sees Widespread Beach Erosion From Maria.

The [AP](#) (9/26) reports that "the U.S. Geological Survey says two-thirds of the beaches in North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland have a high chance of eroding as Hurricane Maria swirls offshore." The USGS Coastal Change forecast "shows about 60 percent of North Carolina dunes will be eroded, and 5 percent of that coastline will be under sea water." In Virginia, "it shows two-thirds of the beaches north of the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay are likely to erode, and a third overwashed." In Maryland, "high water could reach and erode sand dunes along two thirds of the coastline, with less than 5 percent of the dunes overwashed."

Additional Reading.

- *Watch Molten Rock Ooze From Cracks In The Earth In Hawaii.* [Washington Post](#) (9/26, Fritz).
- *USGS Reports Second Kansas Earthquake This Week.* [Hays \(KS\) Post](#) (9/26).
- *Looking At The Human Factors In Disasters.* [Wilmington \(OH\) News Journal](#) (9/26, Snarr).
- *Magnitude 4.3 Earthquake Strikes Near Ferndale, California.* [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (9/26).

Top National News

McConnell Says Senate Will Not Vote On Graham-Cassidy, Killing ACA Repeal For Now.

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (9/26, story 7, 2:10, Muir) reported that the "newest effort to kill

Obamacare...is dead on arrival. There will be no vote." ABC's Mary Bruce: "Republicans are conceding defeat." Sen. Bill Cassidy: "We've made the decision. Since we don't have the votes, we will postpone that vote. Am I disappointed? Absolutely." The [CBS Evening News](#) (9/26, story 4, 0:15, Mason) said in a brief report, "The latest attempt by Senate Republicans to repeal Obamacare is dead. The GOP leadership pulled the plug today when it became clear they didn't have the votes to pass the bill."

The [AP](#) (9/26, Werner) reports that Cassidy and Sen. Lindsey Graham "promised to try again at a later date," while President Trump "railed against 'certain so-called Republicans' who opposed the GOP effort. But for now, Trump and fellow Republicans who vowed for seven years to abolish" the Affordable Care Act "will leave it standing and turn their attention to overhauling the nation's tax code instead."

[USA Today](#) (9/26, Page) writes, "Repeal and replace: RIP." Republicans are now "left with hard choices about what to do now. And how to explain it to their voters." The [New York Times](#) (9/26, A1, Kaplan) reports that Senate Majority Leader McConnell "officially pulled the plug" on Tuesday, "telling senators they will not vote on the measure and effectively admitting defeat in the last-gasp drive to fulfill a core promise of President Trump and Republican lawmakers."

[Politico](#) (9/26, Kim, Haberkorn, Everett) reports that McConnell said, "We haven't given up on changing the American healthcare system. ... We're not going to do it this week, but it still lies ahead of us. We haven't given up on that. Where we go from here is tax reform." Vice President Pence "also told Republicans they should keep working on health care and not give up just because a key procedural deadline to pass the bill with a simple majority expires" after this week. But [Roll Call](#) (9/26, Rahman) reports that Pence "opted not to make a last-ditch pitch to Republican senators Tuesday to vote for" Graham-Cassidy.

[Bloomberg News](#) (9/26, Litvan, Dennis), [Reuters](#) (9/25, Cornwell, Cowan), the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26, A1, Peterson, Armour), and the [Washington Times](#) (9/26, Howell) also report on McConnell's announcement, while Paul Kane of the [Washington Post](#) (9/26) writes that Tuesday was an exceptionally bad day for McConnell, with the ACA defeat, ally Sen. Bob Corker's retirement, and the defeat of Sen. Luther Strange in the Alabama GOP runoff.

[USA Today](#) (9/26, Groppe) writes that it is "unclear whether the bipartisan attempts to fix some of Obamacare's problems – which were derailed by the latest repeal bill – can now be successful." The [Washington Post](#) (9/26, A1, Sullivan, Eilperin, Snell) reports that Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch and some other Republicans "argued that the ongoing instability would backfire on Democrats and build momentum for the ACA's eventual repeal." The [Washington Examiner](#) (9/26, King) reports that "some division already exists among lawmakers on the best step for taking up the repeal fight again." Some want to tack ACA repeal on to a budget resolution "that would give them reconciliation authority to pass tax reform with only 51 votes. But others are wary of that approach since it might gum up the effort to overhaul the tax code."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/26, Mascaro, Levey) reports, "Congress faces at least two pressing deadlines: Federal money for the Children's Health Insurance Program...expires on Saturday," and premiums for ACA plans for 2018 "need to be finalized this week, with insurers not knowing whether the federal government will continue payments that help make costs affordable." [The Hill](#) (9/26, Carney) reports that Senate Majority Whip Cornyn "is floating potentially tying a bipartisan deal on stabilizing the health insurance market to structural reforms favored by Republicans."

The [Washington Post](#) (9/26) says in an editorial, "With one more repeal-and-replace effort in flames, Republicans face a choice. They can continue to live in a fantasy world in which it is possible simultaneously to uproot Obamacare, slash federal spending on health care and widen health-care coverage. Or they can finally accept reality and strike a deal with Democrats to improve the Affordable Care Act."

[USA Today](#) (9/26) editorializes, "Even after Tuesday's decision not to bring the latest effort to a vote before the deadline the end of this week for passing a Senate bill by a simple majority, there are Republicans who want to continue this self-flagellation and war on everyday Americans. ... What this spectacle shows is how captive many Republicans are to a narrow band of hard-right voters and an even narrower band of big-money donors who are demanding results from the GOP-controlled Congress."

In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26) faults Sen. Rand Paul for Graham-Cassidy's failure, arguing that his purist stance resulted in the continuation of the ACA, which he strongly opposes.

Trump To Propose Tax Plan In Indianapolis Today.

President Trump will travel to Indianapolis Wednesday to propose what the [New York Times](#)

(9/26, Thrush) describes as “an aggressive and expensive rewrite of the federal tax code,” as the White House “attempt[s] to navigate a narrow political path on an issue that administration officials believe can reboot Mr. Trump’s presidency.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26, Rubin, Bender) says Republicans are anxious for a legislative victory, and the tax plan is their best chance to impact a national issue since taking gaining control of both the legislative and executive branches.

[USA Today](#) (9/26, Przybyla) reports that as Trump pitches the plan, he will apply “a hard lesson from the failing effort to repeal Obamacare: enlist a few Democrats.” Trump will make the announcement alongside Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly, who is planning to travel with him. To [Politico](#) (9/26, Strauss, Nussbaum), Donnelly’s appearance with Trump is “the latest example of an endangered Democratic senator from a red state looking to show some bipartisan credibility.”

[Bloomberg News](#) (9/26, Edgerton, Brody) says Wednesday’s announcement “marks only the start of what could be a brutal fight in Congress among lawmakers who disagree on key elements of the plan,” and [The Hill](#) (9/26, Jagoda) says Trump “has been reaching out to Democrats in an effort to get their support.” The Hill adds that the President said during a White House meeting with a bipartisan group of lawmakers on the House Ways and Means Committee that the Republican tax plan “will include ‘nearly doubling’ the standard deduction and increasing the child tax credit.” Trump told the group, “We will cut taxes tremendously for the middle class. Not just a little bit but tremendously.” [Reuters](#) (9/26, Morgan) reports that Trump told the lawmakers, “I’ve asked lawmakers of both parties to join us to discuss our framework. ... It’s time for both parties to come together.”

[USA Today](#) (9/26, Przybyla) also reports that Trump will “unveil a plan to dramatically slash the corporate tax rate and collapse individual income tax brackets.” At a dinner Monday with grassroots supporters, Trump “said he has asked his staff to confirm that the plan would represent ‘the biggest tax cut in American history’ by comparing the rates to the 1986 tax plan passed under former President Ronald Reagan, according to a dinner attendee.” USA Today adds that Trump’s plan “would lower the corporate rate to 20% and collapse the current individual tax brackets from seven to three: 12%, 25% and 35%, according to lobbyists briefed on the plan.” The [Los Angeles Times](#) (9/26, Puzanghera, Mascaro) says while “businesses would receive huge tax cuts and many middle-class Americans would see relief,” many “specifics, such as whether the individual tax cuts would favor the wealthy, are still to be worked out.” A brief [New York Post](#) (9/26, Tacopino) story also reports on the tax proposal.

Pence To Pitch Tax Reform In Detroit. The [Detroit News](#) (9/26, Gerstein) reports that Vice President Pence will visit Detroit on Wednesday and Thursday “to talk about tax reform and visit a leading auto supplier.”

Von Drehle: Time Is Short To Pass Tax Reform. David Von Drehle writes in the [Washington Post](#) (9/26) that time is running out for Republicans to pass tax reform. Von Drehle adds that at a recent White House meeting, Sen. Roy Blunt told Trump and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin “that tough decisions must be made right away.” Blunt “believes tax reform is a must-do before the December break. Failure to get it done by then would send the GOP into an election year with little to show for the luxury of one-party rule.” Blunt said, “Winning here is pretty important...for the party and for the economy.” Von Drehle asks how “tweeting about football players [will] help achieve that victory.”

MetLife CEO Says Corporate Leaders Must Give Up Loopholes. In an op-ed for the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26), Steven Kandarian, chairman, president and CEO of MetLife Inc., calls on business leaders to put the national interest ahead of the corporate interests and be willing to forego loopholes, credits and deductions.

Trump Included Chad In Travel Ban Over State Department, Pentagon Objections.

The [New York Times](#) (9/26, Cooper, Shear, Searcey) cites “administration officials” who said that President Trump’s inclusion of Chad in his updated travel ban “came over the objections Pentagon and State Department officials, who argued that alienating the nation, one of America’s more reliable counterterrorism allies in Africa, risked harming long-term national security interests.” While Acting DHS Secretary Duke recommended that Chad be included, Pentagon and State Department officials “were opposed to banning travelers from Chad, concerned about American interests, as were diplomats at the American embassy in the capital of N’Djamena, administration officials said.”

[USA Today](#) (9/26) argues in an editorial that even if the latest travel ban is constitutional, “it still appears arbitrary.” The ban, USA Today adds, “holds little promise of making Americans safer.” David Bier, an immigration policy analyst at the Cato Institute, writes in an op-ed for the [Washington Post](#) (9/26) that Trump’s travel ban “is nothing more than a political document, not

one with any legal or national security basis.”

Construction Has Begun On Prototypes For Border Wall.

US Customs and Border Protection said in a short notice Tuesday that construction has begun on “prototypes for President Trump’s border wall,” the [Washington Times](#) (9/26, Dinan) reports. According to the notice, “the building began in San Diego on eight prototypes, which had been awarded over the summer.” The prototypes “are between 18 and 30 feet, and will be evaluated on how well they deter climbers, how well they withstand breach attempts and what sort of awareness they allow agents who patrol the border.” Four of the prototypes are concrete walls and four are non-concrete.

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

“A Corruption Case Worth Repeating.” In an editorial, the [New York Times](#) (9/26, Board) compares a federal appeals court’s decision Tuesday “to overturn the 2015 corruption convictions of the former Albany powerhouse Dean Skelos and his son” to “a July decision in which a different set of appellate judges set aside a jury verdict against Sheldon Silver, the former Assembly speaker” who “had been found guilty of, among other things, steering New York State grants to a cancer doctor who then referred patients to his law firm.” The Times explains in both cases, the appeals courts based their decisions on a 2016 US Supreme Court decision “that narrowed the definition of what kinds of misconduct could support corruption charges.” The Times says the Supreme Court ruling, “and the reversals of the Silver and Skelos verdicts that flowed from it, haunts the efforts to clean up Albany by putting people like Mr. Silver and Mr. Skelos behind bars.”

“How Gun Controls Work Beyond Washington.” A [New York Times](#) (9/27, Board) editorial says while President Trump’s Administration, “beholden” to the National Rifle Association, “quickly overturned a regulation the Obama administration had issued that would have banned lead ammunition and fishing tackle in federal wildlife refuges,” the state of California “passed an enlightened bill” credited with saving the California condor from “the brink of extinction 30 years ago” to a population of about 450. The Times says Republican representatives are now considering a proposal that would “make it more difficult for federal regulators to control armor-piercing bullets.” Unlike California state lawmakers who “stood up to the gun lobby and protected the condor,” says the Times, Congress cannot “muster similar wisdom and courage” to reject legislation that will pose “a particular threat to police officers.”

Washington Post.

“Time For Republicans To Accept Reality.” The [Washington Post](#) (9/26) says in an editorial, “With one more repeal-and-replace effort in flames, Republicans face a choice. They can continue to live in a fantasy world in which it is possible simultaneously to uproot Obamacare, slash federal spending on health care and widen health-care coverage. Or they can finally accept reality and strike a deal with Democrats to improve the Affordable Care Act.”

“Puerto Rico Needs Help. Here’s What We Can Do.” In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/26) says President Trump’s “silence over the weekend about Puerto Rico while he fomented controversy over football caused worry about whether Puerto Rico would be a priority for the administration.” However Monday’s trip to the island by homeland security adviser Bossert and FEMA Director Long, as well as Trump’s planned visit “are hopefully signs of the administration taking the crisis seriously.”

“Tackle Football Is Not For Children.” In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (9/26) writes that it “defies logic” to allow children to play tackle football, given the “dangers that football may present to their developing brains.” The Post cites a Boston University study published last week that found that exposure to repetitive head impacts in children under the age of 12 “may double the chances of developing behavioral problems and triple the risk of experiencing depression.”

Wall Street Journal.

“Trump’s Too-Big-To-Fail Punt.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26) describes financial regulators’ failure to determine whether to remove AIG’s “systemically important financial institutions” label during this past Friday’s Financial Stability Oversight Council meeting as a political punt by the Administration. The Journal argues that Friday’s decision highlights the

need for the Treasury Department to clarify the government's review process for financial institutions and drop its appeal of MetLife's challenge to its too-big-to-fail status.

"The Obamacare Saviors." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26) faults Sen. Rand Paul for Graham-Cassidy's failure, arguing that his purist stance resulted in the continuation of the ACA, which he strongly opposes.

"Second-Class Puerto Rico." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (9/26) editorial calls for the suspension of the Jones Act in order to provide needed relief to Puerto Rico.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Saudi Arabia Lifts Ban On Women Driving](#)

[Senate Scraps Vote On GOP Measure To Repeal Health Law](#)

[Bribery, Kickbacks Alleged At Top NCAA Basketball Programs](#)

[Why Your Orange Juice Might Be From Brazil: Florida's Trees Are Dying](#)

[Equifax CEO Smith To Exit Following Big Data Breach](#)

New York Times:

[Senate Republicans Say They Will Not Vote On Health Bill](#)

['This Is Like In War': A Scramble To Care For Puerto Rico's Sick And Injured](#)

[US Climate Change Policy: Made In California](#)

[Trump To Propose Sweeping Tax Cut For Corporations And Individuals](#)

[Roy Moore Wins Senate GOP Runoff In Alabama](#)

[Saudi Arabia Agrees To Let Women Drive](#)

Washington Post:

[In A Sharp Turn, Saudi Arabia To Let Women Drive](#)

[In Puerto Rico, A Lifeline Cut By Maria](#)

[Lacking Support, GOP Drops Its Healthcare Bill](#)

[GOP To Unveil Tax Plan But Defer Contentious Choices](#)

[College Basketball Coaches Face Corruption Charges](#)

Financial Times:

[Macron Makes Radical Appeal For More Powerful EU](#)

[Yuriko Koike Turns Japan Poll Into Showdown With Shinzo Abe](#)

[Equifax Chief Quits Over Data Breach](#)

Washington Times:

[Trump Cuts Obama's Refugee Target In Half, Takes More Christians Than Muslims](#)

['White Plague': France On Track For Muslim Majority As Native European Populations Dwindle](#)

[Justice Department Fights Restrictions On Freedom Of Thought And Speech At Public Colleges](#)

[Supreme Court To Consider Drawing Line On Partisanship In State Legislative Districting](#)

[Trump Vows To 'Fix The Mess' Of North Korea](#)

[Republicans Try To Sell Trump's Outreach To Hispanics As Democrats Mock Message](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: White House-Hurricane; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Hurricane-Caribbean; Hurricane Tracking; California-Wildfire; White House-NFL Conflict; Congress-Healthcare Reform Plan; Alabama Senator Race; White House-North Korea; Dead North Korean Captive-Parents Interview; NCAA Bribery Scandal; OJ Simpson Parole; Saudi Arabia-Women Driving Ban Lifted; TV Show Ending; Twitter-Character Limit Increased; Wedding Accident.

CBS: Hurricane-Puerto Rico; White House-Hurricane; Hurricane Tracking; Congress-Healthcare Reform Plan; White House-NFL Conflict; Alabama Senator Race; Trump Administration-Costly Flights; Saudi Arabia-Women Driving Ban Lifted; Amazon New HQ Bid; Indonesia-Active Volcano; NCAA-Bribery Scandal; Twitter-Character Limit Increased; Philadelphia-New City Statue.

NBC: White House-Hurricane; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Alabama Senator Race; Dead North Korean Captive-Parents Interview; Equifax-Cyber Security Breach; California-Wildfire; Saudi Arabia-Women Driving Ban Lifted; NCAA-Bribery Scandal; Twitter-Character Limit Increased; Wedding Accident; NFL News; Hurricane-Air National Guard.

Network TV At A Glance:

Hurricane – 9 minutes

White House-Hurricane – 7 minutes, 20 seconds

Alabama Senator Race – 6 minutes, 20 seconds

Saudi Arabia-Women Driving Ban Lifted – 2 minutes, 45 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Alabama Senator Race; Russia Meddling Investigation; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Wall Street News.

CBS: Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Alabama Senator Race; Tax Reform Plan; DEA Director Resigns; Wall Street News.

FOX: Alabama Senator Race; Tax Reform Plan; Congress-Healthcare Reform Plan.

NPR: Alabama Senator Race; Hurricane-Puerto Rico; Equifax-Cyber Security Breach; Wall Street News.

Washington Schedule**Today's Events In Washington.****White House:**

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Meets with the Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; gives remarks on tax reform.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — Participates in a House Republican retreat regarding tax reform; participates in a tax reform meeting with conservative leaders; participates in a Michigan GOP Dinner.

US Senate: 9:30 AM Dem Rep. Ted Deutch's Washington Summit for South Florida business and community leaders continues – Democratic Rep. Ted Deutch hosts Washington Summit for South Florida business and community leaders continues, to cover issues including boating safety regulations, customs and border protection, immigration policy, tax reform, Pell Grants, Port Everglades improvement projects, climate change resiliency plans, and other local and national topics. Speakers today include members of bipartisan, bicameral members Florida's congressional delegation include Sen. Marco Rubio and Reps. Mario Diaz-Balart, Charlie Crist, Matt Gaetz, Alcee Hastings, Cathy Castor, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Lois Frankel and Dennis Ross, and Pennsylvania's Republican Rep. Tim Murphy Location: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, First St NE, Washington, DC teddeutch.house.gov <https://twitter.com/repteddeutch>

10:00 AM VA Secretary Shulkin testifies to Senate committee hearing on suicide prevention – Hearing on '#BeThere: What More Can Be Done to Prevent Veteran Suicide?', with testimony from Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin; Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Inspector General for Healthcare Inspections John Daigh Jr., and Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Executive Director Dr David Carroll; University of Utah National Center for Veterans Studies Executive Director Craig Bryan; and National Alliance on Mental Illness for Montana Executive Director Matthew Kuntz Location: Russell Senate Office Building, Rm 418, Washington, DC <http://veterans.senate.gov/> <https://twitter.com/VACHair>

10:00 AM Senate HELP Committee nominations hearing – Nominations hearing considers Patrick Pizzella to be Deputy Secretary of Labor; Janet Dhillon and Dr Daniel Gade to be Equal Employment Opportunity Commission members (with Dhillon to be chair, upon confirmation); and Carlos Muniz to be Department of Education General Counsel Location: Dirksen Senate Office Building, Rm 430, Washington, DC <http://help.senate.gov/>

10:00 AM Senate Environment Committee hearing on forest management to mitigate wildfires – Hearing on 'Forest Management to Mitigate Wildfires: Legislative Solutions', with testimony from Office of the Wyoming Governor Policy Advisor Jessica Crowder; American Forest Resources Council General Counsel Lawson Fite; and National Wildlife Federation President and CEO Colin O'Mara Location: Dirksen Senate Office Building, Rm 406, Washington, DC <http://epw.senate.gov/public/>

10:30 AM Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee nominations hearing – Nominations hearing considers Ann Marie Buerkle to be Consumer Product Safety Commission Chairman; Rear Adm. (Ret.) Timothy Gallaudet to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere; Howard Elliott to be Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration Administrator; and Dr Walter Copan to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology Location: Russell Senate Office Building, Rm 253, Washington, DC

<http://commerce.senate.gov> <https://twitter.com/SenateCommerce>

10:45 AM Senate Foreign Relations Committee nominations hearing – Nominations hearing considers Kathleen Fitzpatrick to be U.S. Ambassador to Timor-Leste; and Daniel Kritenbrink to be U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Location: Rm 419, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC <http://foreign.senate.gov/>

12:00 PM Senate Broadband Caucus telemedicine expo – Senate Broadband Caucus, in partnership with American Telemedicine Association, hosts telemedicine expo, highlighting ‘the important role broadband plays in advancing telemedicine’ and featuring several demonstrations of ‘technologies and innovations that are changing the way health care is delivered’ Location: Hart Senate Office Building, Rm 216, Washington, DC <http://www.capito.senate.gov/> <https://twitter.com/SenCapito>

12:30 PM Minnesota rural health care providers speak at Congressional briefings on opioid reduction efforts – Representatives of CHI St. Gabriel’s Health – a rural health care provider serving Little Falls, MN – testify to Congressional leaders on its successful opioid reduction initiative, following an invitation from Democrats Sen. Al Franken and Rep. Rick Nolan. House of Representatives staff briefing in Rm 121, Cannon House Office Building (12:30 PM EDT) followed by Senate staff briefing in Rm G11, Dirksen Senate Office Building (2:30 PM EDT) Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC <http://www.mnhospitals.org/> <https://twitter.com/MNHospitals>

2:00 PM Senate Natural Resources subcommittee oversight hearing on encouraging the next generation to visit national parks – National Parks Subcommittee oversight hearing on ‘Encouraging the Next Generation to Visit National Parks’, with testimony from National Park Service Deputy Director for Management and Administration Lena McDowall; Niantic Civil and Social Impact Manager Yennie Fuller; Kupu Hawaii CEO John Leong; NIC Vice President Angela Fultz Nordstrom; AccessParks CEO Tim Rout; and National Park Foundation President and CEO Will Shafroth Location: Rm 366, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC <http://energy.senate.gov/public/>

2:15 PM Senate Foreign Relations Committee nominations hearing – Nominations hearing considers Richard Duke Buchan III to be U.S. Ambassador to Spain; Richard Grenell to be U.S. Ambassador to Germany; and Edward McMullen Jr. to be U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as to be U.S. Ambassador to Liechtenstein Location: Rm 419, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC <http://foreign.senate.gov/>

2:30 PM Senate Indian Affairs Committee oversight hearing on trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Natives – Oversight hearing on ‘The GAO Reports on Human Trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States’ * Rescheduled from 26 Jul Location: Rm 628, Dirksen Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC <http://indian.senate.gov> <https://twitter.com/IndianCommittee>

2:30 PM Closed Briefing: Intelligence Matters Location: Rm 219, Hart Senate Office Bldg, Washington, DC <http://intelligence.senate.gov>

3:00 PM Senate Small Business Committee hearing on SBA’s hurricanes response – Hearing on ‘An Early Review of SBA’s Response to the 2017 Hurricanes’, with testimony from Small Business Administration Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance James Rivera; JAX Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Daniel Davis; and University of Houston Research Professor Dr Steve Lawrence Location: Russell Senate Office Building, Rm 428A, Washington, DC <http://sbc.senate.gov/>

US House: 9:00 AM House GOP hold ‘member retreat on tax reform’ – ‘House Republican member retreat on tax reform’ held at National Defense University at Fort McNair (9:00 AM EDT, no media access), followed by news conference at the U.S. Capitol (around 3:00 PM EDT) * President Donald Trump is today releasing details on a framework for tax cuts and reforms which he and bicameral Congressional Republicans have developed, via remarks in Indianapolis Location: Washington, DC www.speaker.gov <https://twitter.com/SpeakerRyan>

9:30 AM CANCELED: Oversight hearing on ‘Empowering State Based Management Solutions for Greater Sage Grouse Recovery’ Location: Longworth House Office Building, Rm 1334, Washington, DC <http://naturalresources.house.gov> <https://twitter.com/NatResources>

9:30 AM Dem Rep. Ted Deutch’s Washington Summit for South Florida business and community leaders continues – Democratic Rep. Ted Deutch hosts Washington Summit for South Florida business and community leaders continues, to cover issues including boating safety regulations, customs and border protection, immigration policy, tax reform, Pell Grants, Port Everglades improvement projects, climate change resiliency plans, and other local and national topics. Speakers today include members of bipartisan, bicameral members Florida’s congressional delegation include Sen. Marco Rubio and Reps. Mario Diaz-Balart, Charlie Crist, Matt Gaetz, Alcee

Hastings, Cathy Castor, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Lois Frankel and Dennis Ross, and Pennsylvania's Republican Rep. Tim Murphy Location: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, First St NE, Washington, DC teddeutch.house.gov <https://twitter.com/repteddeutch>

10:00 AM POSTPONED: House Infrastructure subcommittee hearing on highways and transit stakeholders' perspectives – POSTPONED: Highways and Transit Subcommittee hearing on 'Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Highways and Transit Stakeholders' Perspectives' Location: Rm 2167, Rayburn House Office Bldg, Washington, DC <http://transportation.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/Transport>

10:00 AM NO LONGER ON CALENDAR: House Foreign Affairs subcommittees joint hearing on budget proposal for AfPak – NO LONGER ON CALENDAR: Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee and Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee joint hearing on 'The President's FY 2018 Budget Request for Afghanistan and Pakistan', with testimony from Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells; and USAID Office of Afghanistan and Pakistan Affairs Administrator's Assistant Gregory Huger Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2172, Washington, DC <http://www.hcfa.house.gov> <https://twitter.com/HouseForeign>

12:30 PM Minnesota rural health care providers speak at Congressional briefings on opioid reduction efforts – Representatives of CHI St. Gabriel's Health – a rural health care provider serving Little Falls, MN – testify to Congressional leaders on its successful opioid reduction initiative, following an invitation from Democrats Sen. Al Franken and Rep. Rick Nolan. House of Representatives staff briefing in Rm 121, Cannon House Office Building (12:30 PM EDT) followed by Senate staff briefing in Rm G11, Dirksen Senate Office Building (2:30 PM EDT) Location: U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC <http://www.mnhospitals.org/> <https://twitter.com/MNHospitals>

2:00 PM Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission hearing on Nigeria – Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission hearing on 'Nigeria: Conflict in the Middle Belt', examining the international community's role in helping the Nigerian Govt address the violent attacks and widespread human rights abuses involved in the ongoing inter-communal conflict between predominately-Muslim cattle-herding nomadic groups and mostly-Christian settled farming populations. Witnesses – International Crisis Group Deputy Program Director for Africa EJ Hogendorn, U.S. Institute of Peace Senior Program Officer for Africa Programs Oge Onubogu, Search for Common Ground Conflict Analyst for Nigeria Olubukola Ademola-Adelehin, and 21st Century Wilberforce Initiative Executive Director Elijah Brown – present testimony on the human rights challenges in the Middle Belt and explore possible solutions Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2255, Washington, DC <http://tlhrc.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/TLHRCcommission>

2:00 PM House Foreign Affairs subcommittee hearing on Rwanda – Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee hearing on 'Rwanda: Democracy Thwarted', with testimony from Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Donald Yamamoto; Democracy in Rwanda Now Coordinator for the U.S. (and former Rwanda Defense Force Major) Robert Higiro, and Coordinator for Canada David Himbara; and Search for Common Ground Africa Programs Manager Mike Jobbins Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2200, Washington, DC <http://www.hcfa.house.gov> <https://twitter.com/HouseForeign>

2:00 PM House Ways and Means Committee Democrats hold forum on tax reform – House Committee on Ways and Means Democratic forum on tax reform, held by Ranking Member Richard Neal and other Democratic members, along with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and other House Democrats. Panelists include author Bruce Bartlett, Washington Center for Equitable Growth Executive Director and Chief Economist Heather Boushey, Center for American Progress Senior Fellow Seth Hanlon, and Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Deputy Director of Federal Tax Policy Chye-Ching Huang * President Donald Trump is today releasing details on a framework for tax cuts and reforms, developed with bicameral Congressional Republicans, via remarks in Indianapolis Location: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, HVC 215, Washington, DC <http://democrats.waysandmeans.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/WaysMeansCmte>

2:00 PM NO LONGER ON CALENDAR: Health Care, Benefits, and Administrative Rules Subcommittee hearing on 'Cybersecurity of the Internet of Things' Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2154, Washington, DC <http://oversight.house.gov/> <https://twitter.com/GOPoversight>

2:30 PM House Armed Services subcommittee hearing on U.S. Army tactical network modernization – Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee hearing on 'The Army's Tactical Network Modernization Strategy', with testimony from U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff (G-6) Lt. Gen. Bruce Crawford; U.S. Army Combined Arms Center Mission Command Center of Excellence Director Maj. Gen. James Mingus; and Department of the Army Program Executive Officer for Command, Control and Communications-Tactical Gary Martin Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2212, Washington, DC www.armedservices.house.gov

<https://twitter.com/HASCREpublicans>

2:30 PM House Foreign Affairs subcommittee hearing on Burma – Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee hearing on ‘Burma’s Brutal Campaign Against the Rohingya’, with testimony from Heritage Foundation Davis Institute for National Security and Foreign Policy Asian Studies Center Director Walter Lohman; Refugees International Senior Advocate for Human Rights Daniel Sullivan; Congressional Research Service Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division Specialist in Asian Affairs Dr Michael Martin; and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide Program Manager Andrea Gittleman Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2172, Washington, DC <http://www.hcfa.house.gov>
<https://twitter.com/HouseForeign>

3:00 PM House Natural Resources subcommittee oversight hearing on reducing catastrophic wildfire risk – Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee oversight hearing on ‘Exploring Solutions to Reduce Risks of Catastrophic Wildfire and Improve Resiliency of National Forests’, with testimony from Ravalli County, MT, Commissioner Greg Chilcott; Geos Institute Chief Scientist Dr Dominick DellaSala; American Forest Resource Council General Counsel Lawson Fite; and Yakama Nation Intertribal Timber Council President Philip Rigdon Location: Longworth House Office Building, Rm 1334, Washington, DC <http://naturalresources.house.gov>
<https://twitter.com/NatResources>

3:00 PM House Veterans’ Affairs subcommittee hearing on GI Bill-approved apprenticeship programs – Economic Opportunity Subcommittee hearing on ‘How to Improve Access to GI Bill Approved Apprenticeship Programs and How these Programs Benefit Veterans’ Location: Cannon House Office Building, Rm 334, Washington, DC <http://veterans.house.gov/>
<https://twitter.com/HouseVetAffairs>

3:00 PM House Financial Services subcommittee hearing on the Family Self-Sufficiency Program – Housing and Insurance Subcommittee hearing on ‘Overview of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program’, with testimony from Preservation of Affordable Housing President and CEO Aaron Gornstein; Abt Associates Director of Housing and Community Initiatives Jeffrey Lubell; Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery County Executive Director Stacy Spann; Housing Partnership Network Senior Vice President for Policy Kristin Siglin; and Compass Working Capital Executive Director Sherry Riva Location: Rayburn House Office Building, Rm 2128, Washington, DC <http://financialservices.house.gov> <https://twitter.com/FinancialCmte>

4:00 PM House meets for legislative business – House of Representatives meets for legislative business, with agenda expected to include the consideration of ‘S. 327 – Fair Access to Investment Research Act of 2017’ and ‘H.R. 3229 – To protect the safety of judges by extending the authority of the Judicial Conference to redact sensitive information contained in their financial disclosure reports, and for other purposes’ under suspension of the rules Location: Washington, DC <http://www.house.gov/>

Other: 9:00 AM Washington Ideas Forum continues – Washington Ideas Forum, hosted by The Atlantic in partnership with the Aspen Institute, continues. ‘Leaders from politics and govt to business and culture’ convene to ‘tackle the issues confronting the country and the world, including politics and policy, economics and trade, race and justice, education, global affairs, technology, and beyond’. Speakers today include Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin, The Boeing Company Chairman of the Board, President and CEO Dennis Muilenberg, Newsmax CEO Christopher Ruddy, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation CEO Richard Besser, Paradigm Founder and CEO Joelle Emerson, The Allstate Corporation Chairman and CEO Tom Wilson, Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture Director Lonnie Bunch, WeWork Co-founder and CEO Adam Neuman, The VR Company Founder and CEO Guy Primus, and The Washington Post Executive Editor Martin Baron Location: Sidney Harman Hall, 610 F St NW, Washington, DC WashingtonIdeas.com
<https://twitter.com/WashingtonIdeas> #WashingtonIdeas

9:15 AM Dem Rep. Richard Neal speaks at FSR discussion on tax reform – Financial Services Roundtable discussion on ‘How tax reform can secure the futures of America’s workers’, with Democratic Rep. Richard Neal, Putnam Investments CEO Robert Reynolds, and a panel discussion on what policymakers can do to better help the nation’s workers, with former Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Retirement and Health Policy J. Mark Iwry, Employee Benefit Research Institute President and CEO Harry Conaway, American Enterprise Institute Senior Economic Fellow James Pethokoukis, and Wholesale Distribution of Transamerica Vice President and Managing Director Chad Brown Location: Financial Services Roundtable, 600 13th St NW, Washington, DC www.fsround.org <https://twitter.com/fsroundtable>

1:00 PM Dem Sen. Michael Bennet speaks on ‘incentives that distort Congress’ – Center for American Progress hosts ‘Distortion and Dysfunction: Incentives Facing the U.S. Congress’

armchair discussion with Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet, who addresses the range of incentives that distort Congress and feed dysfunction, from the effects of money in elections to revolving door politics, growing partisanship, and other factors Location: Center for American Progress, 1333 H St NW, Washington, DC www.americanprogress.org <https://twitter.com/amprog>

1:00 PM VA Secretary Shulkin at briefing on research on suicide prevention – Friends of VA Medical Care and Health Research (FOVA) briefing on ‘The Science of Veteran Suicide: VA Research in Prevention and Intervention’, with presenters Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin, Rocky Mountain VA Medical Center Mental Illness Research Education and Clinical Center Director Dr Lisa Brenner, Canandaigua VA Medical Center Center of Excellence for Suicide Prevention Executive Director Dr Wilfred Pigeon, and Portland VA Medical Center Center to improve Veterans’ Involvement in Care (CIVIC) Director Steven Dobscha Location: U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, SVC 201-200, Washington, DC <http://www.friendsofva.org/>

2:00 PM Dems Sen. Tom Udall and Rep. David Price speak on money in politics at Brookings – ‘Democracy at risk: Solving critical problems threatening U.S. elections’ Brookings Institution discussion on ‘solutions to the systemic problems facing democracy, the barriers that exist to achieving these solutions, and how they can be overcome’. Panelists include Democrats Sen. Tom Udall and Rep. David Price, Democracy 21 President Fred Wertheimer, Common Cause President Karen Hobert Flynn, and former Chief G.W. Bush White House Ethics Lawyer and University of Minnesota Law School Professor Richard Painter Location: The Brookings Institution, 1775 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC <http://www.brookings.edu> [#MoneyinPolitics](https://twitter.com/BrookingsInst)

6:00 PM The Hill hosts celebration of Latino leaders in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month – The Hill hosts ‘The Changing Face of America: Celebrating Latino Leaders’, in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, with Democratic Reps. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Joaquin Castro and Republican Reps. David Valado and Will Hurd discussing how Congress addresses issues important to the Hispanic community Location: WeWork Dupont Circle, 1875 Connecticut Ave NW, Washington, DC thehill.com [#TheHillLatino](https://twitter.com/TheHillEvents)

6:00 PM IAVA Salutes Awards Reception – Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America Salutes Awards Reception honoring ABC News Chief Global Affairs Correspondent Martha Raddatz (IAVA Salutes Award for Leadership in Journalism) and Democratic Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (IAVA Salutes Award for Leadership in Government) Location: Recording Industry Association, 1025 F St NW, Washington, DC iava.org <https://twitter.com/iava>

6:30 PM Partnership for Public Service annual Sammies gala – Partnership for Public Service 2017 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals (Sammies) awards ceremony, paying tribute to seven ‘public servants who have improved the lives of Americans and others around the world’. CBS’ ‘Face the Nation’ chief Washington correspondent and moderator John Dickerson hosts, with presenters and distinguished guests including Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin and Deputy Secretary Thomas Bowman, Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, bipartisan Reps. Debbie Dingell, Blake Farenthold, Eleanor Holmes Norton, David Price, and Keith Rothfus, National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins, General Services Administration Acting Administrator Tim Horne, Office of Personnel Management Acting Director Kathleen McGettigan, author Michael Lewis, Segway inventor Dean Kamen, President’s Assistant and Director of Strategic Initiatives Chris Liddell, and Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategy Dina Powell Location: Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, 1301 Constitution Ave NW, Washington, DC www.ourpublicservice.org [#Sammies2017](https://twitter.com/RPublicService)

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Jimmy Kimmel: “The Graham-Cassidy Healthcare Bill, a bill I’ve been speaking out against all week, did not pass. Senator McConnell decided to pull the vote. They didn’t have the votes. I haven’t been this excited about something being dead since Bin Laden.”

Stephen Colbert: “The GOP plan to repeal Obamacare is officially dead! Got nothing, no pulse. No. They pulled the plug. That is something I’ve said three times now.”

Stephen Colbert: “In addition to the countries named in the first executive order, the revised travel ban was expanded to include people from Chad, North Korea, Venezuela, and the Golden State Warriors.”

James Corden: "The Cowboys knelt before the national anthem as a protest, but then stood while it was being played. Isn't that trying to have it both ways? Like 'I'm on a hunger strike but only between meals.' ... Conservatives immediately blasted the move, saying it disrespected the sacred minutes before the national anthem, which are for peeing and buying nachos."

James Corden: "Yesterday, officials confirmed that at least six of President Trump's closest advisers used private email to discuss official White House business. In a related story, Hillary Clinton was hospitalized today after rolling her eyes so hard she threw her back out."

Trevor Noah: "We shouldn't get too happy because this isn't the first time we have been told it's dead. Like it might be really sick, but it keeps surviving. You know what it's like? It's almost as if the Republican health bill also has Obamacare."

Trevor Noah: "You know, here on the Daily Show, we work really hard to get the facts right. But we're not perfect. So tonight, I'm sorry to say that we have to issue a rare the Daily Show retraction. ... So last night, we reported an official in Trump's White House, Jared Kushner, used a private email account to conduct official White House business, and that statement was wrong. It wasn't an official. It was many officials."

Jimmy Fallon: "When he heard the GOP healthcare bill failed again, Trump said, 'You're not going to believe it, but I think I have to take a knee for this.'"

Seth Meyers: "Senate Republicans announced today they will not hold a vote on the Graham-Cassidy Bill to repeal and replace Obamacare, after they were unable to secure enough support. But Republicans plan to come back with a new plan, where they just slash the tires on all the ambulances."

Seth Meyers: "After President Trump called for pro athletes to be fired if they didn't stand for the national anthem, Nike released a statement yesterday in support of athletes and their right to freedom of expression. Then they introduced a new line of \$400 kneeling shoes."

Conan O'Brien: "An employee for the Buffalo Bills quit after the entire team took a knee during the national anthem on Sunday. Meanwhile, an employee for the Los Angeles Chargers quit after watching them play on Sunday."

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