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



DATE: MONDAY, JULY 3, 2017 7:00 AM EDT

Holiday Message

In observance of the U.S. federal Independence Day holiday, we will not publish on Tuesday, July 4, 2017. Service will resume on Wednesday, July 5, 2017. We wish our readers a safe and happy holiday.

Today's Table Of Contents

DOI In The News

- Washington Post: Cabinet Secretaries' Tough Task: Lack Of Funding, Support For Agency Missions.
- U.S. News & World Report: Commissioners Show Support For National Monument Protection.
- KHON-TV Honolulu: Hero To Receive Medal Of Valor For Aid In Helicopter Crash At Pearl Harbor.
- KBFX-TV Bakersfield (CA): Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District Gets Federal Drought-prep Money.
- The Hill: Companies Push Trump To Outsource Work In National Parks.
- Houston Chronicle: As Trump Moves To Grow Oil And Gas, House Could Curb Environmental Suits.
- The Atlantic: Democrats Allege The U.S. Doesn't Track Anti-Federal Threats.
- Casper (WY) Star-Tribune: Despite Recent Legislation, Conservation Crosses Party Lines, According To New Poll.
- Southwest Colorado Journal: Outdoor Recreation Industry Generates Billions For Colorado.
- Bozeman (MT) Daily Chronicle: Sec. Zinke Should Fight For An Appropriate Budget.
- Forbes: The Best Deal Going: Privatize US Public Lands.
- Huffington Post: This Land Is Our Land.
- Fairbanks (AK) News-Miner: Progress On King Cove Road: Interior Department Allows Survey Work For Remote Airport Link.
- Grand Junction (CO) Daily Sentinel: Shutting Down RACs Makes No Sense.
- Havasu (AZ) News-Herald: Our View: Continued Federal Funding Necessary For Rural Western Counties.
- Washington Times: Energy Independence In America Can Be Achieved.

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

- Cayugas Awarded Proceeds In Suit.
- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe's Casino Hopes Rekindled.
- Tribe Fights Feds' Bid To Toss Oklahoma Fracking Suit.

Bureau Of Land Management

- NBC: NBC Analysis: Exploding Population, Dwindling Budget Hindering Wild Horse Management.
- U.S. News & World Report: Diving From The Sky, Firefighters Parachute To US Wildfires.
- The Guardian (UK): The New West: Why Republicans Blocked Public Land Management.
- Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette: GUEST COLUMN: Methane Rule Hurts Colorado Residents.

Bureau Of Ocean Energy Management

- DOI Opening Public Comment Period For More Offshore Oil/Gas Leasing.
- Seismic Airgun Testing A Bad Deal For Florida.

Bureau Of Reclamation

- River Restoration Work Partially Funded Through Federal Program.

Bureau Of Safety And Environmental Enforcement

- Federal Offshore Well Permits Support Safe Energy And Economic Development, BSEE Says.

Fish And Wildlife Service

- The Hill: Greens Threaten To Sue Trump Over Grizzly Bear Protections.
- Minneapolis Star Tribune: Rare Butterfly Thrives On, And Because Of, US Military Bases.
- Miami Herald: Feds Ask For Public Comment On Florida Panther Endangered Status.
- U.S. News & World Report: Can California Fish Catch Break With Giant Tunnels?
- Courthouse News: Political Deals Rip Throat Out Of Wolf Recovery Plan, Enviros Say.
- Washington Times: Alabama Bat Blitz Aims To Gauge Area Bat Population.
- Albuquerque (NM) Journal: Endangered Species Act Is Under Assault.

National Park Service

- U.S. News & World Report: Charges Dropped Against 2 Youths In Tennessee Wildfires.
- Spokane (WA) Spokesman-Review: Out & About: Blanket Phone Coverage Proposed For Parks.
- New York Times: Green Thumbs Hope To Lead The Trumps Down The Garden Path.
- WTOP-FM Washington: Law Enforcement Prepares For July 4 Events On National Mall.
- Washington Post: Federal City Council To Negotiate Lease For Federally Owned Golf Courses In D.C.
- Philly (PA): The Economic Juggernaut That Is Independence National Historical Park.

- Fox News: Gettysburg Anniversary Seeing Few Flare-ups, Despite Rumors Of Violence.
- U.S. News & World Report: Rappahannock Tribe Renews Ties With Ceremony.
- Missoulain (MT): Getting The Help It Needs: Groups Work To Help Glacier Park Meet Growing Demands.
- U.S. News & World Report: Fees May Increase At Devils Tower National Monument.
- Redding (CA) Record-Searchlight: Fee Increase Proposed At Lassen Park.
- Loveland (CO) Reporter-Herald: Rocky Mountain National Park's Fall River Entrance Up For Historic Status, Possible Changes.
- Las Vegas Review-Journal: UNLV Researcher Works To Eradicate Invasive Plant.
- U.S. News & World Report: Home Of Slain Activist Named As A Historic Place.
- Washington Times: Maine City Plans \$900,000 River-Walk Project For Riverfront.

Top National News

- The Hill: Critics Say Trump's Latest Tweet Promotes Violence Against The Media.
- NBC: Trump Criticizes States Over Reluctance To Share Voter Data, Intensifies Feud With Media.
- Washington Post: Conway Defends Trump As His Feud With "Morning Joe" Hosts Escalates.
- NBC: Trump Hosts South Korean President, Urges Asian Allies To Coordinate On North Korea Efforts.
- ABC: Trump Suggests Lawmakers Should Just Repeal ACA, Replace Later.
- Reuters: Moderate Republican Lawmakers Warn Tax Reform Initiative In Jeopardy.
- Axios: Bannon Pushing Tax Hike For Wealthy To Pay For Middle, Working Class Tax Cuts.
- Forbes: White House Projected To Save \$22 Million.
- Washington Post: Source: Trump Administration Considering Effort To Examine Climate Science.
- The Hill: White House Office Of Science And Technology Policy Unstaffed.

Editorial Wrap-Up

- New York Times.
 - "Bank Health, Imperiled."
 - "Europe's Deadly Paralysis On Migration."
- Washington Post.
 - "What Trump Should Say When He Meets Putin For The First Time."

- "Trump Launches His Opening Voter Suppression Salvo."
- "Pope Francis' Toleration Of Sexually Abusive Clergy Leaves A Stain."
- Wall Street Journal.
 - "The Senate's Tax Panic."
 - "Trump's Signals To China."
 - "Pruitt's Clean Water Break."

Big Picture

- Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Washington Schedule

- Today's Events In Washington.

Last Laughs

- Late Night Political Humor.

DOI In The News

Cabinet Secretaries' Tough Task: Lack Of Funding, Support For Agency Missions.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/2, Eilperin, Brown) reports that "a small group of Cabinet secretaries," including Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, "are running departments with missions they have repeatedly disparaged, with employees who are secretly – and on occasion publicly – hostile." While the Secretaries "have made very public efforts to court their staff," they "frequently are crafting key initiatives in private" as the Trump Administration "sets out to overhaul the federal government." The Post says "they have erected small, secluded citadels within each department, where they can advance policies that reflect the priorities of the president."

Commissioners Show Support For National Monument Protection.

The [AP](#) (7/2) reports that "Wyoming county commissioners have signed a letter asking the U.S. Department of Interior to continue protecting national monuments." Teton County commissioners "voted Thursday to join the Mountain Pact nonprofit in their letter to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke regarding President Donald Trump's executive order on national monuments. Trump has asked Zinke to place national monuments designated after 1996 under review." The letter "stresses the importance of public lands to rural communities and tells Zinke to keep that in mind when the department reviews national monument designations."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Jackson Hole \(WY\) News & Guide](#) (6/30, Gross).

Mesquite Council Supports Zinke's Gold Butte Review. The [St. George \(UT\) Spectrum](#) (7/1, Thomas) reports that "when Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke visits Southern Nevada next month to review

Gold Butte National Monument, he will be doing so with the formal support of the city of Mesquite.” The Mesquite City Council, “in a 4-1 vote last week, passed Resolution No. 927 expressing its support for Zinke’s review of the recently-designated national monument.” The resolution “also expressed support for the Nevada Land Sovereignty Act — a bill introduced by Sen. Dean Heller and Rep. Mark Amodei that calls for congressional action in lieu of the Antiquities Act when designating large swaths of land as a national monument.”

Why The Fishing Industry Wants More Say On

Papahānaumokuākea. The [Honolulu Civil Beat \(HI\)](#) (6/30, Eagle) reports that comments received on the Interior Department’s review of national monuments “overwhelmingly support leaving the monuments alone.” However, “not everyone feels each voice should carry the same weight — especially those supportive of Hawaii’s commercial fishing industry.” NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office administrator, said, “We will treat all commenters fairly.”

Additional coverage was provided by the [Kaua’i \(HI\) Garden Island News](#) (7/2, Else).

Additional Coverage. Additional coverage of the national monuments review was provided by the [Winter Haven \(FL\) News Chief](#) (6/30, Frommer), the [Petaluma \(CA\) Argus Courier](#) (6/30, Kovner), the [Charleston \(SC\) Post and Courier](#) (7/1, Dumain), the [San Luis Obispo \(CA\) Tribune](#) (7/1, Sheeler), and [KCBX-FM San Luis Obispo \(CA\)](#) San Luis Obispo, CA (6/30, Mart).

Additional Commentary. Additional commentary appears in the [Flathead \(MT\) Beacon](#) (7/1, Busse), the [Montana Standard](#) (7/2, Busse), the [Billings \(MT\) Gazette](#) (6/30), the [Billings \(MT\) Gazette](#) (6/30, Datko, Epstein, Fugere), the [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (6/30), the [Baltimore \(MD\) Sun](#) (6/29, Carmichael), the [Tri-City Herald \(WA\)](#) (7/1), the [Salt Lake \(UT\) Tribune](#) (7/1, Minehart), the [Pagosa \(CO\) Daily Post](#) (6/30, Leentjes), the [Boston \(MA\) Globe](#) (7/1), the [Ellsworth \(ME\) American](#) (6/30, Liebow), and the [Riverside \(CA\) Press Enterprise](#) (7/1).

Hero To Receive Medal Of Valor For Aid In Helicopter Crash At Pearl Harbor.

[KHON-TV](#) Honolulu (7/2, Mattison) reports that “a hero will be honored this Independence Day for his bravery after he helped a family involved in a helicopter crash at Pearl Harbor last year.” Bryan Eisenberg was “working as a federal police officer for the National Park Service at the time of the crash.” On July 4 in Washington, D.C., Eisenberg will receive the Medal of Valor from Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

Additional coverage was provided by [WROC-TV](#) Rochester, NY (7/2, Chodak).

Shafter-Wasco Irrigation District Gets Federal Drought-prep Money.

[KBFX-TV](#) Bakersfield, CA (6/30) reports that the Interior Department is “awarding \$6.9 million to 17 drought-preparation projects in five states, including California.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said in a news release, “Drought continues to have serious adverse impacts throughout the West. Reclamation and its partners have been leaders in combating this drought for a hundred years. The newest infusion of Reclamation funds announced today will help communities in five states prepare for and respond to drought.”

Companies Push Trump To Outsource Work In National Parks.

[The Hill](#) (6/30, Cama) reports that “companies that operate visitor services in national parks are pushing the Trump administration to outsource more work to the private sector.” According to the article, “the hospitality industry is betting that President Trump’s desire to cut the National Park Service’s (NPS) budget, combined with the GOP’s long-standing goal of moving federal functions to the private sector, presents an opportunity to make inroads in campgrounds, fee collection and other services at parks.” However, “conservationists fear that increasing the role of concessioners is a slippery slope toward privatizing national parks.”

The [Joplin \(MO\) Globe](#) (7/2, Murakami) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has proposed “outsourcing the management of the campgrounds to private companies, reducing labor and maintenance costs in the process.” Zinke told a meeting of the RV Industry Association in early June, “As the secretary, I don’t want to be in the business of running campgrounds.”

As Trump Moves To Grow Oil And Gas, House Could Curb Environmental Suits.

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (6/30, Osborne) reported that Republicans in Congress are investigating ways to reduce the delays to drilling and mining project on federal land because of litigation from environmental groups. Rep. Mike Johnson said, “Our legal system is an important avenue for citizens seeking redress of wrongs perpetuated by the federal government...however special interests repeatedly exploit our legal system to further their own agendas.” However, Rebecca Riley, a senior attorney with the NRDC, said, “The oil and gas industry routinely files lawsuits under environmental statutes. ... I don’t think [Congress] would be looking at cutting the avenue off. It’s such an important means to keeping government accountable.”

Democrats Allege The U.S. Doesn’t Track Anti-Federal Threats.

[The Atlantic](#) (7/2, Meyer) reports that “some supporters of public lands and former federal officials argue” that recent “high-profile occupations are only the tip of a more serious crisis: a simmering and abusive siege on federal employees who work for the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and other agencies that manage public lands.” They also

claim “that the federal government does not keep track of these types of extremist threats to federal employees.” On Friday, Democratic leadership on the House Natural Resources Committee will “ask the Government Accountability Office to investigate whether any of the agencies that oversee public land systematically follow anti-federal threats against public employees. The”

Despite Recent Legislation, Conservation Crosses Party Lines, According To New Poll.

The [Casper \(WY\) Star-Tribune](#) (7/1, Peterson) reports that “clean air and water, access to public lands and protecting wildlife aren’t exclusively red or blue issues, according to a survey released recently by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.” According to the article, “of those contacted, 81 percent said they considered themselves conservationists.” Segmented into parties, “83 percent of Republicans, 81 percent of Democrats and 80 percent of Independents described themselves that way.”

Outdoor Recreation Industry Generates Billions For Colorado.

The [Southwest Colorado Journal](#) (6/30, Perkins) reports that “Colorado consumers spend \$28 billion annually on outdoor recreation, according to a sneak peek released Tuesday of an economic impact report by the Outdoor Industry Association.” The article notes that “in return, the outdoor recreation industry contributes \$2 billion in tax revenue, \$9.7 billion in wages and creates an estimated 229,000 jobs in Colorado.” According to the article, “individual reports for all 50 states will be released next month, but Tuesday’s sneak peek included annual numbers on the national impact of outdoor recreation: \$887 billion in consumer spending, 7.6 million jobs and a combined \$124.5 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue.”

Sec. Zinke Should Fight For An Appropriate Budget.

In an op-ed for the [Bozeman \(MT\) Daily Chronicle](#) (7/1, Edwards), Becky Edwards, director of the Montana Mountain Mamas, calls on Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to defend the Interior Department from budget cuts. Edwards warns that “if our campgrounds are overrun with litter and we slash the very programs that keep our fishing access sites and our public lands trails open, we will lose jobs and visitation through our recreation economy, but also some of the beauty of our great state.” Edwards writes: “Parents across Montana are urging Sec. Zinke to remember that simple fact: You work for us. We are putting our children’s memories in your hands. Stand up and fight for an appropriate budget to manage our public lands, national parks, and recreation programs. Follow through on your promise to protect the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Remember your roots under the big sky.”

The Best Deal Going: Privatize US Public Lands.

In a piece for [Forbes](#) (6/30, Hanke), Steve Hanke calls Interior

Secretary Ryan Zinke's stance against the privatization of public lands disappointing. According to Hanke, "Zinke's misguided views bring back an echo from the past: President Reagan's Secretary of the Interior and Sagebrush Rebel James Watt." Hanke writes that "fortunately, Reagan the intellectual slapped Watt down and fully embraced the idea of privatizing public lands," but whether President Trump will "take Zinke to the woodshed remains to be seen."

This Land Is Our Land.

In a piece for the [Huffington Post](#) (6/30, Rogers, Contributor), Will Rogers, President of The Trust for Public Land, writes that "the recognition that our public lands are a work in progress, a shared responsibility that we must expand, protect and maintain, is embodied in a more than 50-year old federal program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)." However, "despite its low-profile and high-impact, the Trump Administration's budget has targeted this wildly successful program for elimination." Rogers warns that "killing off LWCF, or starving it of funding, would put our national parks, forests and wildlife refuges in jeopardy of commercial development and exploitation."

Progress On King Cove Road: Interior Department Allows Survey Work For Remote Airport Link.

The [Fairbanks \(AK\) News-Miner](#) (7/1) is pleased "to see some movement on the long-overdue King Cove Road project, especially since the movement is in the proper direction in favor of getting this road on the Alaska Peninsula built." According to the paper, "the lives of King Cove residents are at risk without the road." It argues that "the solution – one that would allow for timely medical flights and eliminate the risk to Coast Guard personnel – is a road to the all-weather, all-season airport at Cold Bay."

Shutting Down RACs Makes No Sense.

In an op-ed for the [Grand Junction \(CO\) Daily Sentinel](#) (7/2, Vasquez), Barbara Vasquez questions the cancellation of Resource Advisory Council meetings. Vasquez stresses "the importance of regularly meeting face to face with people you often don't agree with." According to Vasquez, "with the current administration asking for public comment on public land management decisions, the RACs need to keep providing a significant conduit for local involvement and discussion throughout this important process."

Additional commentary appears in the [Mount Desert \(ME\) Islander](#) (6/30).

Our View: Continued Federal Funding Necessary For Rural Western Counties.

The [Havasupai \(AZ\) News-Herald](#) (7/3) editorializes that President Trump's proposed 2018 budget would "restrict PILT funding to the most recent 10-year average of payments (\$397 million)." The

paper notes that “there are more than 1,900 local governments across the US that have come to rely on PILT funding.” One possible solution that the paper supports is Rep. Paul Gosar proposal “for the sale or transfer of some public lands to state control.”

Energy Independence In America Can Be Achieved.

Senior Heritage Foundation fellow Stephen Moore writes in the [Washington Times](#) (7/2, Moore) that “we are entering an age of American energy renaissance that will last not just years but many decades.” Moore credits President Trump’s “robust and realistic strategy” for making significant progress on making the US the 21st century Saudi Arabia. Moore says that since 2007, the US has increased its oil and gas output by 75 percent, while exporting more than 150 million barrels of crude since 2015. Moore argues that “natural gas is the disruptive energy source that is blowing away the competition,” which is “good news for America because we have far more natural gas than anyone.”

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

Cayugas Awarded Proceeds In Suit.

The [Finger Lakes \(NY\) Times](#) (6/30, SHAW) reports that “the leadership dispute within the Cayuga Indian Nation has spilled over into federal litigation out of New Mexico.” The Cayugas are “one of nearly 700 Indian tribes and organizations across the country that have been awarded more than \$862.2 million by a federal district court in New Mexico.” The sum “represents money the federal government would have allocated to the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the Department of Interior to provide a host of programs and services to Indian tribes.” However, “before a tribe can be given its allocation, the federal government needs to know which leadership officials represent the tribe in claiming its share of class action proceeds.” The article says that “distribution of the money to hundreds of other tribes is being held up until the Cayuga Nation and other tribal leadership disputes have been settled.”

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe’s Casino Hopes Rekindled.

The [New Bedford \(MA\) Standard-Times](#) (7/2) reports that the Interior Department on Friday declined a request by the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe “to suspend a review of whether it qualifies for land into trust under an alternative category to the one a federal judge rejected last year.” However, “the move could be good news for the tribe’s hopes to build a casino in Taunton, seemingly dealt a setback earlier in the week when it asked Interior officials to hit the pause button on the review that had, until the latest development, been destined to end badly for the tribe.” According to the article, “instead of suspending its review or moving forward with a decision on the issue prepared on June 19, the agency instead plans to

further analyze an aspect of the case that had not been previously explored: whether the state's authority over the tribe could be considered in place of the federal government's authority in determining whether it met one of the alternative definitions of Indian required for land to be taken into trust on its behalf."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Taunton \(MA\) Daily Gazette](#) (7/2, Winokoor).

Tribe Fights Feds' Bid To Toss Oklahoma Fracking Suit.

[Law360](#) (6/30, Powell) reports that the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma on Thursday "defended against the dismissal of its lawsuit accusing the federal government of approving oil and gas leases and fracking permits on the tribe's land without properly considering the environmental impacts, which links that alleged failure to a recent record-breaking earthquake in the state." The tribe "responded to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Land Management's motion to dismiss its suit contending that the agencies' approvals of the leases and permits violated the National Environmental Policy Act."

Bureau Of Land Management

NBC Analysis: Exploding Population, Dwindling Budget Hindering Wild Horse Management.

[NBC Nightly News](#) (7/2, story 9, 2:25, Snow) reported that as costs of managing wild horse populations "have skyrocketed" and President Trump's budget proposal calls for significant federal funding cuts, "there's growing concern about the future of these horses." Bureau of Land Management Acting Deputy Director John Ruhs explained that the remaining funding will be targeted at the 46,000 wild horses kept in pastures and facilities, as there are insufficient funds for administering birth control to the 73,000 in the wild. NBC's Gadi Schwartz said that the exploding population encroaches on grazing lands for ranchers' cows.

Diving From The Sky, Firefighters Parachute To US Wildfires.

The [AP](#) (6/30, Bryan) reports on the training that smokejumpers receive. The article notes that "nearly 30 wildfires are currently burning — including an Arizona blaze that forced the evacuation of thousands of people plus others in California, New Mexico and Utah." Federal officials recently "raised the preparedness level for U.S. firefighting forces because of the heightened fire activity."

The New West: Why Republicans Blocked Public Land Management.

In a piece for [The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (7/2, Tracey, Sizek), Caroline Tracey, a PhD candidate in Geography at the University of California, Berkeley, writes that on March 27, President Trump "signed a joint resolution to eliminate planning 2.0." The article

says that “at first, going after planning 2.0 appears to be just one of the new administration’s many rollbacks of federal regulations and defunding of agencies.” However, “what is strange about this cut is that in certain important ways, BLM 2.0 was exactly the kind of federal land management that earlier generations of western Republicans longed for.”,

GUEST COLUMN: Methane Rule Hurts Colorado Residents.

In an op-ed for the [Colorado Springs \(CO\) Gazette](#) (6/30, Chavez-Rey), Hugo Chavez-Rey, the chairman of the Colorado Hispanic Republicans, decries the failure by the Senate “to scrap an Obama-era rule that limits methane emissions from gas and oil production on federal lands.” He argues that “the rule would kill thousands of jobs and cost millions of dollars, while having virtually no impact on emissions.” Chavez-Rey urges that Interior Department “succeeds” in killing or modifying the rule.

Bureau Of Ocean Energy Management

DOI Opening Public Comment Period For More Offshore Oil/Gas Leasing.

[Natural Gas Intelligence](#) (6/30, Cocklin) reports that “following a series of initiatives outlined on Thursday by President Trump, the Department of the Interior (DOI) readied a public comment period for a new five year offshore leasing program that would open more of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) to oil and gas drilling.” Acting DOI Assistant Secretary Kate MacGregor said, “The Trump administration is dedicated to energy dominance, growing the economy and giving the public a say in how our natural resources are used, and that’s exactly what we are doing by opening up the request for information and a new five-year plan.” According to the article, “the 45-day public comment period would kick off an extensive period of analysis that typically takes two or three years to prepare a new five year program.”

Additional coverage was provided by [UPI](#) (6/30, Graeber), the [Richmond \(VA\) Times-Dispatch](#) (7/2, Zullo), the [Newport News \(VA\) Daily Press](#) (6/30), the [Delmarva \(MD\) Daily Times](#) (6/30), [The Guardian \(UK\)](#) (6/30, Milman), the [High Country \(CO\) News](#) (6/30, Wiles), [Forbes](#) (6/30, Bradley), the [Coastal Review](#) (6/30), and [World Oil](#) (6/30).

Seismic Airgun Testing A Bad Deal For Florida.

In an op-ed for [Florida Today](#) (7/2, Jackalone), Frank Jackalone, the Florida Chapter director of the Sierra Club, opposes allowing “the use of seismic airgun blasting to map the ocean floor from Florida to Delaware in the search for oil and gas.” Jackalone notes that the Interior Department’s “very own studies estimate airgun blasting will cause 13.5 million instances of harm to Atlantic marine mammals, including the right whale, which makes its breeding

ground off the coast of Florida.” Moreover, Jackalone argues “that there is no need for airgun blasting or off-shore oil drilling,” since “the fastest growing form of energy is not oil or gas, but renewables like solar and wind.”

Bureau Of Reclamation

River Restoration Work Partially Funded Through Federal Program.

The [Farmington \(NM\) Daily Times](#) (7/3, Grover) reports that “the Animas Watershed Partnership was one of seven organizations to receive funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for WaterSMART Watershed Management Projects.” Bureau of Reclamation Acting Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen said in a press release, “Cooperative watershed groups bring together diverse partners to address water management needs in their local communities.”

Bureau Of Safety And Environmental Enforcement

Federal Offshore Well Permits Support Safe Energy And Economic Development, BSEE Says.

The [World Oil](#) (6/30) reports that “the operation of drilling an offshore oil and gas well provides for economic development and supports as many as 450 new jobs.” According to the article, “as Energy Week concludes, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement’s well permit approvals in 2017 total 69.” BSEE Director Scott Angelle said, “I believe BSEE holds the potential to move the U.S. offshore energy program forward in both energy production and economic development, and done in a safe and environmentally-responsible manner. Overall, operators in the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf are producing more oil and gas than ever before and it all begins with drilling the well.”

Fish And Wildlife Service

Greens Threaten To Sue Trump Over Grizzly Bear Protections.

[The Hill](#) (6/30, Cama) reports that “a coalition of environmental groups is threatening to sue the Trump administration over its decision to remove protections for the Yellowstone grizzly bear.” The organizations, “led by Earthjustice, said Friday that ending the threatened listing under the Endangered Species Act was premature and that the Yellowstone grizzly hasn’t shown sufficient signs of recovery.” Earthjustice attorney Timothy Preso said in a statement, “With grizzly deaths spiking, now is not the time to declare the great bear recovered and federal protections unnecessary.” He said, “The grizzly is a major part of what makes

the region in and around Yellowstone National Park so special and unique. We should not be taking a gamble with the grizzly's future."

[Reuters](#) (6/30, Zuckerman) notes that "the delisting plan, scheduled to go into effect at the end of July, was initially proposed during Democratic President Barack Obama's administration."

Additional coverage was provided by the [AP](#) (6/30, Ridler), [NPR](#) (6/30, Neuman), the [Huffington Post](#) (6/30, D'angelo), the [Columbus \(OH\) Dispatch](#) (7/2, Golowenski) the [Yellowstone Insider](#) (6/30, Reichard), and the [Madison \(WI\) Capital Times](#) (7/2, Randolph).

Coverage by the AP was also picked up by the [Daily Mail](#) (6/30, Zuckerman), [ABC News](#) (6/30, Ridler), the [Minneapolis \(MN\) Star Tribune](#) (7/1, Ridler), [Philly \(PA\)](#) (6/30, Ridler), the [Washington \(DC\) Post](#) (6/30, Keith Ridler |, Ap), the [Washington \(DC\) Times](#) (6/30, Ridler), [CNBC](#) (6/30), and the [San Francisco \(CA\) Chronicle](#) (6/30, Ridler).

Rare Butterfly Thrives On, And Because Of, US Military Bases.

The [AP](#) (7/1, Pratt) reports that "a tiny rare butterfly is flourishing" and the credit goes to the U.S. military, according to experts. The frosted elfin has "found a home at several defense installations because of the way the military manages open spaces, said Robyn Niver, an endangered species biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." The "common thread" among military bases where the butterfly has been confirmed is "the way they manage vegetation through controlled burns, which create the perfect conditions for wild blue lupine and indigo to grow, the frosted elfin caterpillar's two host plants."

Coverage by the AP was also picked up by the [Boston \(MA\) Herald](#) (7/2), the [Daily Mail](#) (7/2), the [San Francisco \(CA\) Chronicle](#) (7/2, Pratt), the [Washington \(DC\) Post](#) (7/2, Mark Pratt |, Ap), the [Washington \(DC\) Times](#) (7/2, Pratt), and [WTOP-FM Washington \(DC\)](#) Washington (7/2).

Feds Ask For Public Comment On Florida Panther Endangered Status.

The [Miami Herald](#) (6/30, Staletovich) reports that "federal wildlife officials are asking for public comment on a review to determine whether rules protecting endangered Florida panthers need to be changed." The review is "part of a regular check-up and was not prompted by any recent actions, including a push by state wildlife officials, hunters and ranchers in 2015 to reconsider the number of panthers needed for a successful recovery, said U.S. Fish and Wildlife spokesman Ken Warren." The article says that "the assessment will likely include the recent discovery of female panthers north of the Caloosahatchee River."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Naples \(FL\) Daily News](#) (6/30, Staats).

Can California Fish Catch Break With Giant Tunnels?

Depends. The [AP](#) (7/1, Knickmeyer) reports that “Gov. Jerry Brown’s plan to route much of California’s mightiest river into two massive tunnels poses new perils for salmon and other struggling native species, but could give them a couple of breaks as well, experts and project supporters and opponents say in the wake of two newly issued wildlife rulings on the \$16 billion project.” Ultimately, water experts say, whether the Delta tunnels “hurt salmon, whales and other imperiled species depends, as always, on the intent and smarts of the officials who manage the Sacramento River’s delta with the San Joaquin River, that fought-over, over-tapped spigot for the U.S. state with the most people, most crops and the biggest estuary on the West Coast.”

Political Deals Rip Throat Out Of Wolf Recovery Plan, Enviro Say.

[Courthouse News](#) (6/30, YOUNG-GRINDLE) reports that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has “announced its draft recovery plan for the Mexican wolf, but environmentalists say it is more about politics than saving the wolves.” Bryan Bird, Southwest program director for Defenders of Wildlife said, “Politics trumps science in this draft Mexican gray wolf recovery plan. It’s a backroom deal with the states that resist wolf recovery and fail to understand the transformational benefits to the entire landscape when Mexican gray wolves thrive. Contrary to recommendations from leading wolf biologists, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s draft plan restricts the Mexican gray wolves from moving into millions of acres of suitable habitat in northern Arizona, New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. President Trump’s plans to build an impenetrable border wall with Mexico will only worsen chances for the wolves’ recovery. The lobos would be boxed in, incapable of beating the clock on extinction.”

Alabama Bat Blitz Aims To Gauge Area Bat Population.

The [AP](#) (6/30, Pillion) reports that “dozens of bat researchers, enthusiasts and wildlife officials from around the Southeast flocked to Birmingham this week for the Alabama Bat Working Group’s annual Bat Blitz event.” The Working Group “consists of bat biologists and enthusiasts working for state and federal wildlife agencies, universities, and non-profit groups, plus a few volunteers who helped conduct bat surveys at Ruffner Mountain, Turkey Creek and Oak Mountain.” Shannon Holbrook, “a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Daphne office, said the survey would help them know if there were federally endangered or threatened species living in the area.”

Endangered Species Act Is Under Assault.

In a piece for the [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (7/2, Small), Sue Small criticizes “legislative attacks” on the Endangered Species Act. According to Small, “the ESA is so well-crafted that it has effectively protected 99 percent of those species listed at risk of

extinction." She also argues that "it offers flexibility for private landowners, states and tribes; and it provides avenues for the public to actively protect species." Small vows to "fight for the Endangered Species Act and its safeguards."

National Park Service

Charges Dropped Against 2 Youths In Tennessee Wildfires.

The [AP](#) (6/30, Mattise) reports that "prosecutors have dropped arson charges against two juveniles in connection with the Tennessee wildfires that killed 14 people and tore through thousands of homes and businesses in November, a law enforcement official said Friday." District Attorney General Jimmy Dunn said in a statement that "after months of investigating, prosecutors can't prove the youth were responsible because there were other factors contributing to the seriousness of the fires, such as 80-mph (130-kph) winds and downed power lines that ignited flames."

Additional coverage was provided by [USA Today](#) (6/30, Satterfield) and [CNN](#) (6/30, Levenson, Burnside).

Out & About: Blanket Phone Coverage Proposed For Parks.

The [Spokane \(WA\) Spokesman-Review](#) (7/2) reports that "proposals for increased cell phone coverage in Mount Rainier, Yellowstone and several other national parks have opened for another round of public comment, with constituents divided on the issue in a previous comment period last year." According to the article, "backcountry purists argue against increased coverage in wilderness areas of the parks while some people point out the potential safety advantages." Jeff Ruch, PEER executive director, said, "There is little evidence that increased cell coverage increases safety but there is ample evidence that drivers on poorly lit, winding park roads distracted by their devices are a hazard. By acceding to industry pressure for more coverage, park superintendents are wiring their wild lands with little thought toward preserving the values that make these cathedrals of nature so special."

Green Thumbs Hope To Lead The Trumps Down The Garden Path.

The [New York Times](#) (7/2, Baumgaertner) reports on the future of the White House Kitchen Garden, started by former First Lady Michelle Obama as part of her Let's Move! campaign to combat childhood obesity. According to the Times, "those outside the White House who support the garden are seeking creative efforts to keep it an East Wing priority." While First Lady Melania Trump's communications director, Stephanie Grisham, said that "the White House kitchen will cook with the homegrown vegetables and will donate the remaining harvest to charity," and that "the Trump

family planned to continue the educational nature of the garden," the June harvest "was carried out solely by the National Park Service," and administrators from local schools whose students have worked in the garden "said they had not been invited back since the transition."

Law Enforcement Prepares For July 4 Events On National Mall.

[WTOP-FM](#) Washington (6/30, Murillo) reports that "thousands of people from around D.C., the U.S. and the world will celebrate" Independence Day in the nation's capital. Mike Litterst, with the National Park Service, "said that means a lot of planning goes into keeping things safe." Litterst said, "Security for any event on the National Mall, especially for the Fourth of July, is of tantamount — not only interest, but importance — to the National Park Service and the U.S. Park Police."

Federal City Council To Negotiate Lease For Federally Owned Golf Courses In D.C.

The [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Portnoy) reports that the National Park Service and Federal City Council "this week agreed to begin negotiating a deal that, if successful, could result in a multimillion dollar renovation of three dilapidated golf courses and a tennis center in the District." The Federal City Council, "a private nonprofit business group, has nine months to convince the federal agency it can overhaul Park Service-owned facilities: Langston and Rock Creek Park golf courses as well as the golf course and tennis courts at East Potomac Park, known as Hains Point." The article says that "the signing of the 'letter of intent' on Wednesday is the first step in what both sides expect will be a long and complicated process."

The Economic Juggernaut That Is Independence National Historical Park.

[Philly \(PA\)](#) (6/30, Loyd) reports that Independence National Historical Park is "gearing up for more visitors, who descended on the park's more than 20 houses and buildings in record numbers last year, the most since the Constitution's 200th anniversary in 1987." Independence National Park "had 5.1 million visitors, a healthy 17 percent jump over 2015, with the biggest crowds at the Liberty Bell Center, Independence Hall, Congress Hall, Old City Hall, and the Visitor Center at Sixth and Market." The article notes that "those crowds, which tend to be highest over the summer, show that the park had a ripple effect in turning the surrounding area into something of an economic powerhouse."

Gettysburg Anniversary Seeing Few Flare-ups, Despite Rumors Of Violence.

[Fox News](#) (7/1, Chakraborty) reports that "despite rampant rumors of violence, protests and counter-protests planned this weekend at Gettysburg that prompted heightened security, there were few flare-ups by midday Saturday." The article says that "reports of

possible disruptions and even violence have the National Park Service acting with an 'abundance of caution.'"

Additional coverage was provided by [Fox News](#) (6/30, Wallace), the [Huffington Post](#) (7/2, Mathias), [Philly \(PA\)](#) (6/30, Schaefer), and [WPMT-TV Harrisburg \(PA\)](#) Harrisburg, PA (6/30, Lima).

Rappahannock Tribe Renews Ties With Ceremony.

The [AP](#) (7/2, Hedelt) reports that "with tribal drumbeats and singing in the air, the Rappahannock Tribe joyfully took possession of an acre of ancestral land that leaders hope will reconnect young people with the traditions of their ancestors." Chuck Hunt, the National Park Service's Chesapeake Bay Office superintendent, was among those who spoke at Saturday's ceremony, "noting that the donation of land coincided with a recently released report defining the Rappahannock Tribe's 'Indigenous Cultural Landscape.'" Following the ceremony, Hunt "said the expectation was that the study of the Rappahannock Tribe's history in the region would continue."

Getting The Help It Needs: Groups Work To Help Glacier Park Meet Growing Demands.

The [Missoulian \(MT\)](#) (7/2, Backus) reports that Glacier Park Superintendent "enjoys partnerships with three key organizations that raise important funding, provide a core of willing volunteers and offer educational programs that create new constituencies." Glacier Park Superintendent Jeff Mow "said those partnerships have never been more vital." Mow said, "Our staffing is actually five employees less than what we had in 2002. You can imagine the sort of responsibilities they have with our number of visitors. We couldn't be doing what we're doing without having partners to help us."

Fees May Increase At Devils Tower National Monument.

The [AP](#) (7/2) reports that the National Park Service is "seeking public input before it decides whether to raise fees" at Devils Tower National Monument "for a second time this year." Prices at the monument were "raised to \$30 for an annual pass, \$15 for a vehicle, \$7 per person and \$10 for a motorcycle in January." The NPS is "proposing raising the fees to \$40, \$20, \$10 and \$15 respectively to match the prices at other national monuments."

Fee Increase Proposed At Lassen Park.

The [Redding \(CA\) Record-Searchlight](#) (7/2, Arthur) reports that "National Park Service officials want to hear from the public about a proposal to raise the entrance fees at Lassen National Park." The article notes that "the proposed \$5 increase per vehicle marks the second entry fee hike since 2015." According to Lassen park Superintendent Jim Richardson, "money from the fee increase would be used to maintain and improve facilities at the park."

Rocky Mountain National Park's Fall River Entrance Up For Historic Status, Possible Changes.

The [Loveland \(CO\) Reporter-Herald](#) (6/30, Johnson) reports that Rocky Mountain National Park is "looking to add the 1960s-era Fall River entrance to the National Register of Historic Places at the same time officials are looking at a redesign of that same area." Kyle Patterson, spokeswoman for the national park, said, "That area has morphed in our past, and now we're looking to see how we continue to manage that entrance with our record visitation and continuing to honor our history."

UNLV Researcher Works To Eradicate Invasive Plant.

The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (7/1, Bruzda) reports that a UNLV student is working on a "project to research the best way to eradicate invasive plants and bring new, but familiar life to her ancestral land in the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area." Ka-Voka Jackson, "a Hualapai Indian who grew up on a Peach Springs, Arizona, reservation," is "collaborating with the National Park Service to determine how to best remove and eliminate nonnative ravenna grass weeds from five canyons along the Colorado River." According to the article, "while she envisions a broader goal, her project's contract with the National Park Service, designed for Glen Canyon, ends in May 2019."

Home Of Slain Activist Named As A Historic Place.

The [AP](#) (7/1, Watkins) reports that the home of Wharlest and Exerlena Jackson has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Wharlest Jackson Sr., "a husband and father of five who worked three jobs so his wife, Exerlena, could stay home with the children, was killed in February 1967 by a bomb planted beneath his 1958 Chevrolet pickup and aligned with the driver's seat." The article says that "he was treasurer of the NAACP, and his involvement with voter registration, among other things, had angered local white supremacists."

Maine City Plans \$900,000 River-Walk Project For Riverfront.

The [AP](#) (6/30) reports that "Waterville is planning to install a \$900,000 river-walk project and will start accepting bids in August from interested contractors." According to the article, "the city applied for a \$300,000 grant" from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and was "notified it was one of three municipalities in Maine to be approved for grant money."

Top National News

Critics Say Trump's Latest Tweet Promotes Violence Against The Media.

President Trump continued his Twitter attacks on the mainstream

media over the weekend, garnering a great deal of media attention for a Sunday morning tweet featuring a video clip of him at a WWE wrestling match with the CNN logo superimposed over the face of an opponent. While several reports highlight comments from Administration officials and backers supporting the President, the coverage is largely negative, describing Trump's tweet as promoting violence against the media.

Trump wrote in a [tweet](#) Sunday, "The dishonest media will NEVER keep us from accomplishing our objectives on behalf of our GREAT AMERICAN PEOPLE! #AmericaFirst." [The Hill](#) (7/2, Shelbourne) says the tweet "included a video of Trump speaking Saturday night at Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center, where he also mocked the media." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/2, Radnofsky) reports that in his remarks at the "Celebrate Freedom" concert, Trump said, "The fake media tried to stop us from going to the White House, but I'm president and they're not. ... The fact is the press destroyed themselves because they went too far. Instead of being subtle and smart, they used the hatchet and the people saw it right from the beginning."

However, a [tweet](#) from the President hours earlier receives far more media attention. The [Washington Post](#) (7/2, Nakamura) says the earlier tweet, which "appeared to promote violence against CNN," featured "an old video clip of him performing in a WWE professional wrestling match, but with a CNN logo superimposed on the head of his opponent." In it, Trump is seen "slamming the CNN avatar to the ground and pounding him with simulated punches and elbows to the head. Trump added the hashtags #FraudNewsCNN and #FNN, for 'fraud news network.'"

[Bloomberg News](#) (7/2, Krasny) says Trump "ratcheted up his feud with the media" with the tweet, while [USA Today](#) (7/2, Singer) says Trump was "continuing his jihad against the news media," and [Reuters](#) (7/2, Mason) says he "stepped up his feud with the media." Reuters adds that the video "takes his criticism to a new level and drew criticism from CNN," which said in statement, "It is a sad day when the President of the United States encourages violence against reporters. ... Instead of preparing for his overseas trip, his first meeting with Vladimir Putin, dealing with North Korea and working on his health care bill, he is instead involved in juvenile behavior far below the dignity of his office."

To the [New York Times](#) (7/2, Grynbaum), "the video is an unorthodox way for a sitting president to express himself." The Times adds that it "stirred criticism, disbelief and dumbfoundedness." The Times adds that some journalists described the video's "portrayal of violence as dangerous...could incite attacks or threats against news media employees." Tom Llamas said in the lead story for [ABC World News Tonight](#) (7/2, lead story, 3:10) that the "bizarre video" raises the question of whether Trump's "social media habit [is] hijacking his agenda." Llamas also questioned whether the "shocking image of the President physically attacking someone [is] just comedy, or could it incite violence

against the media?"

Elaine Quijano said on the lead story for the [CBS Weekend News](#) (7/2, lead story, 2:35) that "reporters' rights groups are outraged," while the [AP](#) (7/2, Lucey) quotes Bruce Brown, the executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, as "condemn[ing] the video as a 'threat of physical violence against journalists,'" and saying that "Trump's tweet was 'beneath the office of the presidency.'" An [AFP](#) (7/2, Knowlton) report on the video was the lead story on the Drudge Report Sunday under the headline, "Now He Body Slams CNN!" AFP called the video "bizarre even by [Trump's] standards," and says it was "immediately condemned by journalists, who said Trump seemed to be promoting physical violence against the media."

Jim Rutenberg writes in an analysis for the [New York Times](#) (7/2) that the First Amendment "is under near-daily assault from the highest levels of the government." Rutenberg argues that "all of the attacks against something so central to [America's] identity must have [the country] in quite the birthday funk."

In the lead story for [NBC Nightly News](#) (7/2, lead story, 3:15, Snow), Kelly O'Donnell called the tweet "the art of distraction," adding that "the media feud squeezes out other issues." Julie Pace of the Associated Press said on [CNN Inside Politics](#) (7/2), "This is Trump's agenda. Going after the media, trying to tear us down is as much a part of the agenda as passing a healthcare bill, trying to get a tax overhaul. He sees this as actually part of that effort. If he can undermine the reporting about him, if he can undermine the credibility of the press, he thinks he has a clear lane for doing some of the things he wants to do."

On [MSNBC AM Joy](#) (7/2), Brian Karem of the Sentinel Newspapers said of his exchange with White House deputy press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders that Sanders "went out of her way to bash us. I had had enough. Look, he started out telling me I am the enemy of the people. I'm not the enemy of the people. We are the people. He's the enemy of the people because he continually tries to cleave us from the rest of us. That's not right, that's not what America is about."

[Politico](#) (7/2, Morin, McCaskill) says the "incendiary post," which portrays Trump "physically attacking" the news network, "threatens to take his fraught relationship with the media to a new, dangerous low." Politico adds that while GOP lawmakers "have called for civility in the wake of a shooting last month at a congressional baseball practice that left House Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) critically injured and others wounded," the White House "has declined to follow their lead."

The [Washington Times](#) (7/2, Wolfgang) reports that Sen. Ben Sasse told [CNN's State Of The Union](#) (7/2, Tapper) that Trump "wants to 'weaponize distrust' in the press and warned that America is headed down a dangerous path if citizens listen only to media outlets and political leaders that reinforce their own personal views." Sasse said, "There's an important distinction to draw

between bad stories or crappy coverage, and the right citizens have to argue about that and complain about that, and trying to weaponize distrust. The First Amendment is the beating heart of the American experiment and you don't get to separate the freedoms that are in there." Sasse "went on to suggest that many Americans, including Mr. Trump, are perpetuating a society in which citizens listen only to those who agree with their own political views."

The [Washington Times](#) (7/2, Wolfgang) reports that "influential Republicans" are "urging Mr. Trump to stay off of social media." Ohio Gov. John Kasich told [ABC's This Week](#), "You know it's unfortunate, and people are now begging the president not to do this and, you know, he ought to stop doing it and we'll have to see what happens. It's one of the few things that I think brought Republicans and Democrats together."

The [New York Post](#) (7/2, Moore) reports on building "bipartisan condemnation" of the video, while the [Washington Examiner](#) (7/2, Mayfield) says Democrats "took to Twitter to once again condemn President Trump's tweeting habits." Rep. Ted Lieu [tweeted](#) that "the president is encouraging violence and the tweet was 'beyond unacceptable,'" while Rep. Eric Swalwell [called](#) on all House GOP members to condemn his behavior, saying they were put in place to do just that and if they don't, they are condoning it." Meanwhile, a [tweet](#) from House Minority Leader Pelosi "praised journalists as 'guardians to our democracy' and called for a rejection to violence against them," and Rep. Adam Schiff "joined his colleagues," [tweeting](#) that "the president's behavior [is] 'beneath the dignity of the office.'"

CNN White House correspondent Sara Murray said on [CNN Inside Politics](#) (7/2), "I don't know why Washington think this 70-year-old man is going to change. He's not going to change. Before we go out handing awards for bravery and courage for senators standing in front of a camera and talking about how ashamed they are of Trump's behavior, let's remember that many of these members of Congress watched Trump say things that were equally disturbing, equally sexist, equally horrifying in 2016, and then not only voted for him, they showed up and they told their voters to vote for him too. You got what you paid for. This is not a new person that you elected. ... So it's a little bit of a sham to say that we should be surprised he's behaving like this. He's a 70-year-old man. This was what he was like during the campaign. This is what he is going to be like as President."

A [USA Today](#) (7/2, Singer) analysis of Trump's Twitter feed found that since his election, Trump "has published more than 60 tweets disparaging 'fake news'" but "fewer than a dozen tweets about the border wall that was the hallmark of his presidential campaign." Moreover, Trump "has posted only 11 tweets with the word 'trade' and three more about NAFTA." USA Today adds that Trump "has posted about 80 tweets referring to 'health care' or 'Obamacare,'" but has "mentioned vets or veterans in only a dozen

tweets, about half as many times as he has mentioned NBC.”

Administration officials and Trump supporters were firmly on Trump’s side, however. The [Washington Times](#) (7/2, Wolfgang) reports that White House national security and counterterrorism adviser Thomas Bossert “praised President Trump’s use of Twitter,” arguing on [ABC’s This Week](#) ☐ that “the social media account has helped make the commander in chief the ‘most genuine president’ in U.S. history.” Bossert argued, “There’s a lot of cable news shows that reach directly into hundreds of thousands of viewers, and they’re really not always very fair to the president. So I’m proud of the president for developing a Twitter and a social media platform where he can talk directly to the American people. ... In fact, he’s the most genuine president and the most non-politician president that we’ve seen in my lifetime. And he’s demonstrated – whatever the content of that particular tweet is or any tweet – he’s demonstrated a genuine ability to communicate to the people.” Gloria Riviera said in the lead story for [ABC World News Tonight](#) ☐ (7/2, lead story, 3:10) that Bossert “defend[ed] the President.” Bossert: “I think that no one would perceive that as a threat. I hope they don’t.”

Asked on [NBC’s Meet the Press](#) ☐ (7/2, Todd) to address President Trump’s tweets, HHS Secretary Price said, “What I’m concentrated on is the job he’s given me, and that is to make sure we fulfill the mission of the Department of Health and Human Services and that is the health of the American people.” Secretary Price and host Chuck Todd engaged in a pointed exchange on the subject, with Todd saying, “Mr. Secretary, with all due respect, you’re blaming me for what the President of the United States has spent his entire week focused on?” Price ultimately responded, “The fact of the matter is that he can do more than one thing at a time.”

[The Hill](#) (7/2, Manchester) reports that in an interview with radio host John Catsimatidis on AM 970 in New York that aired Sunday, deputy assistant to the President Sebastian Gorka “claimed...that mainstream news media are losing influence.” Gorka said, “To those supporters of the Trump administration who are worried by all the fake news reporting of the last 23 weeks, I can assure you, just ignore it. ... The fake news complex is collapsing in on itself. We see that with the massive scandal at CNN, having to fire people who were generating totally false stories about the administration. We see that with the severe personnel cuts at The New York Times.”

The [New York Post](#) (7/2, Moore) says Trump’s sons also took to Twitter “to blast the cable news network for being part of the ‘fake news’ media.” On Sunday, Eric Trump [tweeted](#), “I love how CNN looks to #1A [First Amendment] as a justification to not uphold basic journalistic integrity or an ethical standard #FakeNews.” The tweet was in response to a post from CNN reporter Jim Acosta, who [tweeted](#), “Hope you are enjoying #4thofjulyweekend and celebrating our cherished #1A freedoms enshrined in our Constitution which cannot be taken away.” Then,

in response to another Acosta [tweet](#) in which the reporter wrote, "Isn't pro wrestling fake?" Donald Trump Jr. [tweeted](#), "Yes, just like your coverage."

The [Los Angeles Times](#) (7/2, King) reports that the tweet "prompted renewed expressions of support from backers." [Townhall](#) (7/2, Van Laar) similarly says that Trump's supporters "are chuckling at the video." CBS' "Face the Nation" moderator John Dickerson said on the [CBS Weekend News](#) (7/2, story 2, 2:35, Quijano) that the "political consequence is that it rallies his supporters and that he is basically from the inauguration, onward, been quite consistent with his campaign message, which is that basically, he is going to run the presidency in a different way than we've seen from other presidents, which is basically to stick with the affections of those who supported him, keep those affections tight and roiled up, and there's no better way to do that than in the competition with the media because a lot of his supporters see the competition not based on what the merits of the moment might be, but a fight between somebody who is their champion, fighting for the things that they want, and press corps trying to get on his way."

Sharyl Attkisson said on [Fox News MediaBuzz](#) (7/2), "The President knows by now the kind of response his tweets get and has obviously decided it works in his favor. Whether it does or not, that is clearly what he thinks." Mollie Hemingway of The Federalist said on [Fox News MediaBuzz](#) (7/2), "He's the President and should be held to a different standard than the media. But I don't see any reason that we shouldn't acknowledge the media has been so hostile and so personal in their attacks."

[McClatchy](#) (7/2, Hadley) reports that "a Reddit page dedicated to Trump has claimed credit for inspiring the tweet." The "r/The_Donald" forum "has generated plenty of controversy in the past for its anti-immigration, anti-Semitic and white supremacist posts, according to The Verge." A version of the video was posted by a user on the forum Wednesday, and as of Sunday "it has received nearly 9,000 'up votes.'" McClatchy adds that after the President's tweet, "the forum began to explode with posts claiming credit for inspiring the post and video."

WPost Analysis Compares Trump's Social Media Posts With Other World Leaders' In an analysis, the [Washington Post](#) (7/2, Wootson) examines Trump's defense of his social media activity as "modern day presidential," by comparing his tweets to "what the other leaders of the free world were tweeting out while Trump was disparaging 'Crazy Mika' and 'Psycho Joe' of 'Morning Joe' fame before the start of Thursday's workday and then defending his tweets around dinnertime on Saturday." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau tweeted, "Last week was the lead-up to Canadian Independence Day, and there's nothing more prime minister-y than donning the Canadian colors and waxing philosophically — and bilingually — about how great America's neighbor to the north is." On the day Trump posted about the "Morning Joe" hosts, Australian

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull “was talking about small business and technology on a live Facebook chat.” Other world leaders highlighted by the Post include Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, and British Prime Minister Theresa May.

WPost Analysis: CNN’s Firing Of Journalists Over Retracted Story Did Not Pacify Trump. The [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Sullivan) reports that CNN’s decision to fire three journalists “after reporting, editing and publishing a story — based on a single anonymous source — that the network says didn’t go through the proper review channels,” was praised by some “as welcome accountability, if a draconian form of it.” However, if the move “was intended to mollify CNN’s chief critic — President Trump — it certainly backfired,” as Trump “and his surrogates took the opportunity to bash the network and the rest of the mainstream media more vociferously than ever.”

Asked on [Fox News MediaBuzz](#) (7/2) about the story about him which was retracted by CNN, Anthony Scaramucci said, “It didn’t seem like they did their homework. ... But when I started to make some calls to the senior leadership to CNN and explain my position, I thought that they moved pretty quickly. I was pretty satisfied that probably 12 to 15 hours I had spoken to them they realized they made a mistake and they took the thing down.” Asked about a report that he threatened to sue CNN, Scaramucci said, “It wasn’t until it became clear to me that there was still some uncertainty inside their organization about what the facts were that I had to make another phone call, and I said, ‘I am not under investigation, I have done nothing wrong. I sort of feel like you guys have to clear this up. If you don’t clear it up then of course I have to take action to protect myself and my reputation.’”

Coppins: “Alternative Left Media Infrastructure” Has Arisen In Trump Era. McKay Coppins writes in a piece for [The Atlantic](#) (7/2, Coppins) that “a vast alternative left-wing media infrastructure that operates largely out of the view of casual news consumers” has arisen during the Trump era and it forms “a media universe where partisan hysteria is too easily stoked, and fake news can travel at the speed of light.” While “these personalities and publications do not yet wield the same influence in the Democratic Party that their counterparts do in the GOP,” Coppins argues that “ignoring them would be a mistake.” Coppins goes on to “attempt to map the topography of the left’s modern alternative media landscape” which includes “Twitter conspiracists,” “Hyperpartisan Facebook pages,” “Blogs and message boards,” “Podcasts,” and “VIP Validators.”

Trump Criticizes States Over Reluctance To Share Voter Data, Intensifies Feud With Media.

President Trump posted nearly a dozen tweets on Friday, which included posts criticizing states for refusing to comply with his Presidential Advisory Commission on Voter Integrity’s request for information, denouncing MSNBC’s “Morning Joe” hosts Mika

Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough, and attacking the “Fake News” media as exemplified by CNN and NBC. Coverage, which included more than five minutes combined on the network newscasts, was also extensive in print and online. The mostly negative reporting characterized Trump as upset and lashing out against his critics, though some analyses suggested his tweets could help galvanize the President’s core supporters.

[NBC Nightly News](#) (7/1, story 3, 1:10, Snow) Kelly O’Donnell reported that while Trump traveled to New Jersey for the day with his family, he is “taking no holiday from Twitter.” O’Donnell said Trump moved from “a friendly shoutout” to “more fireworks in his running media feud, deriding the cable news hosts at Morning Joe as ‘crazy’ and ‘dumb,’ then firing a rocket at more than two dozen states.”

The [Washington Post](#) (7/1, Erickson) reports the President began the day with a “shout-out” for America’s northern neighbor, [tweeting](#), “Happy Canada Day to all of the great people of Canada and to your Prime Minister and my new found friend @JustinTrudeau. #Canada150.” Although the relationship between Trump and Trudeau has “gone south” in recent months, the Post says the President’s tweet “perhaps reflects Trudeau’s wide-ranging efforts to win Trump over, even as he opposes many of the president’s policies.” In a more than 2,300-word analysis, [Politico Magazine](#) (7/1, Lindzon) reports Trudeau was initially criticized when he first took office, but now “it’s no exaggeration to say that Donald Trump is saving Justin Trudeau’s Canadian bacon.” Politico adds that “in Trump, Trudeau has the most unnatural of confederates: a man whose policies he must oppose and whose professional partnership he requires.”

[The Hill](#) (7/1, Greenwood) reports the President then “accused MSNBC’s parent company on Saturday of firing anchor Greta Van Susteren for refusing to go along with the network’s negative coverage of him and his administration.” He [tweeted](#), “Word is that @Greta Van Susteren was let go by her out of control bosses at @NBC & @Comcast because she refused to go along w/ ‘Trump hate!’”

[Bloomberg News](#) (7/1, Riley, Sullivan) reports Trump next “fired off a tweet Saturday aimed at the growing number of secretaries of state resisting a broad request for data by his voter-fraud commission, including officials from deep red states whose support the controversy-laden White House can ill afford to lose.” Trump [said](#), “Numerous states are refusing to give information to the very distinguished VOTER FRAUD PANEL. What are they trying to hide?”

The [Washington Post](#) (7/1, Nakamura, Berman) reports Trump “lashed out” at the states in a tweet that “highlighted the political stakes over his effort to validate his widespread claims of rampant illegal voting through the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity, which is being led by Vice President Pence and Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach (R).”

[Reuters](#) (7/1, Schectman, Kenning) similarly says he “lashed out” at the states that have refused to comply and the [Washington Times](#) (7/1, Boyer) reports he “slammed states that have refused to turn over voter registration data.”

The [AP](#) (7/1, Causey, Ramer) says the President “is upset that all states aren’t fully cooperating with his voting commission’s request,” while [Politico](#) (7/1, Morin) states that “Trump has in the past blamed, without evidence, an abundance of illegal voting for costing him the popular vote in last year’s general election.”

According to [The Hill](#) (7/1, Cohn), Trump’s tweet “echoed” Kobach, who said in an interview with [NPR](#)’s “All Things Considered” on Friday, “Frankly, if a state like Kentucky or California won’t provide available information, one has to ask the question, ‘Why not?’ I mean, what are they trying to hide if they don’t want a presidential advisory commission to study their state voter rolls?” However, in an interview with the [Kansas City \(MO\) Star](#) (6/30, Lowry), Kobach acknowledged the challenges in getting states on board and said his state “would not be sharing the Social Security information at this time” because that “is not publicly available.” He asserted, “If the commission decides that they would like to receive Social Security numbers to a secure site in order to remove false positives, then we would have to double check and make sure Kansas law permits.” Kobach added, “I know for a fact that this information would be secured and maintained confidentially.”

In the lead [CBS Weekend News](#)  (7/1, lead story, 2:10, Ninan) segment, Reena Ninan reported the President’s “effort to expose alleged voting fraud in last year’s election is running into a brick wall,” which Paula Reid said was due to the commission’s request last week for “voter roll data including addresses, dates of birth, political party, and even voter history dating back to 2006.” Reid adds the “backlash” has been “swift,” as more than 20 states are refusing to comply, according to Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, who said the Administration’s demand “is an outrageous violation of citizens’ privacy rights.” [ABC World News Tonight](#) ’s (7/1, story 4, 0:45, Llamas) Gloria Riviera said “at least 13 states have flat-out refused and over two dozens others are balking at the Administration’s request to turn over voter information.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/1, Radnofsky) reports Mississippi Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann (R) said Friday in a statement that if he receives the expansive request, the Commission “can go jump in the Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi is a great state to launch from. Mississippi residents should celebrate Independence Day and our State’s right to protect the privacy of our citizens by conducting our own electoral processes.” In addition, [USA Today](#) (7/1, Berry, Groppe) reports Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson, a member of the commission who represents Pence’s home state, “said Friday state law prevents her from turning over all of the requested information.” Similarly, Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted (R) “said Friday that his state will not provide the commission with the last four digits of Ohioans’ Social Security

numbers or their state driver's license IDs." Meanwhile, Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate (R) "said the state would require the commission to file a formal request and will not release personal information about voters" and a spokeswoman for Louisiana Secretary of State Tom Schedler (R) "said lawyers are reviewing the letter to determine how the state will respond."

The [Arizona Republic](#) (7/1, Pitzl) reports Arizona Secretary of State Michele Reagan "will provide information that is available to anyone in the general public, as the law and a recent settlement in a registration-database lawsuit permit." However, the Republic says "she will not release certain data Kobach is requesting because state law forbids it. That includes the last four digits of a voter's Social Security number, his or her date of birth (only the year is permitted) and other identifying information such as the maiden name of the voter's mother."

In an analysis, the [Washington Post](#) (7/1, Bump, Ingraham) reports "overall, the states that have said they will not be complying at all with the Kobach commission's request represent over 30 percent of the nation's population." The Post adds that their refusal to cooperate "could complicate any efforts to build a truly national voter file, although it remains unclear what the commission's ultimate goal is in collecting the data." The [Huffington Post](#) (7/1, Levine) contends the President's tweets "cast doubt about the neutrality of a commission he created to investigate 'election integrity'" because he asserted "it was a probe focused on voter fraud." The HuffPost says Kristen Clarke, the president of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, "immediately seized on Trump's tweet to urge states not to comply with the commission's work, which she called a 'sham.'"

Meanwhile, the [Washington Post](#) (7/1, Nakamura) reports "the Tweeter in Chief" was also "busy...launching familiar attacks against the two networks over their coverage of him." [The Hill](#) (7/1, Byrnes) states Trump "laid into CNN," [tweeting](#), "I am extremely pleased to see that @CNN has finally been exposed as #FakeNews and garbage journalism. It's about time!." In a separate article, [The Hill](#) (7/1, Carter) reports that in his [fourth tweet](#) of the day, the President "returned to attacking the hosts of MSNBC's 'Morning Joe' in a tweet on Saturday, calling them 'crazy' and 'dumb as a rock.'" Trump said, "Crazy Joe Scarborough and dumb as a rock Mika are not bad people, but their low rated show is dominated by their NBC bosses. Too bad!"

The [Huffington Post](#) (7/1, Levine) condemns the new tweet as the latest in Trump's "long history of sexist comments" while [The Hill](#) (7/1, Carter) says the President's "tweet harkened to attacks previously launched on the political morning show hosts before his crude tweets this week that were panned by members of both parties." In a piece that provides some background on the feud, [USA Today](#) (7/1, Groppe) states that "Trump's comments came the day after Scarborough and Brzezinski questioned Trump's mental and emotional fitness after he [attacked them](#) on Twitter Thursday."

[Politico](#) (7/1, Morin) similarly reports "Trump and Scarborough publicly sparred this past week after the president lashed out at the MSNBC co-hosts by tweeting Thursday that Brzezinski had a 'low I.Q.' and had been 'bleeding badly from a face-lift' during a past visit to his Mar-a-Lago estate. The comments were widely criticized by lawmakers across aisle."

The [Washington Times](#) (7/1, Harper) says Trump's "trio of tweets directed at major broadcasters" on Saturday proved "very popular with the president's fans, who...retweeted these messages up to 20,000 times, and liked them with the familiar Twitter heart symbol up to 33,000 times."

Trump also [posted](#) his [weekly address](#) promoting Kate's Law and the No Sanctuary for Criminals Act as well as an [announcement](#) that he was "Getting rdy to leave for tonight's Celebrate Freedom Concert honoring our GREAT VETERANS w/ so many of my evangelical friends. See you soon!"

[The Hill](#) (7/1, Manchester) reports the President later returned "to rip the news media" that afternoon, "saying the 'fake and fraudulent news media' is trying to convince Republicans that he should not use social media." In his [eighth tweet of the day](#), Trump asserted, "The FAKE & FRAUDULENT NEWS MEDIA is working hard to convince Republicans and others I should not use social media – but remember, I won..." He [continued](#), "...the 2016 election with interviews, speeches and social media. I had to beat #FakeNews, and did. We will continue to WIN!" Trump then [added](#), "My use of social media is not Presidential – it's MODERN DAY PRESIDENTIAL. Make America Great Again!" [CNN](#) (7/1, Leblanc) reports the President [concluded](#), "I am thinking about changing the name #FakeNews CNN to #FraudNewsCNN!"

In an article titled "Trump Doesn't Seem To Be Heeding Calls To Tone Down Tweets," the [AP](#) (7/1, Lucey) says Trump's "stream of insults has pained politicians from both parties who have appealed to him, without apparent success, to stop the 140-character bursts of character attacks and focus on running the country," but he instead "escalated an intensely personal feud with two high-profile talk show hosts Saturday, suggesting without evidence that their network is biased against him."

Trump Energizes Crowd At Kennedy Center Event With Media Attacks. The [New York Times](#) (7/1, Shear) reports the President on Saturday addressed "raucous supporters at a faith rally at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington [and] brought the crowd to its feet by condemning news organizations." Trump said, "The fake media is trying to silence us. But we will not let them. Because the people know the truth. The fake media tried to stop us from going to the White House. But I'm president and they're not."

The [AP](#) (7/1, Lucey) reports Trump also "vowed to support and defend religious liberty, telling a gathering of evangelical Christians that the threat of terrorism is 'one of the most grave and dire threats to religious freedom in the world today.'" Trump

asserted, "We cannot allow this terrorism and extremism to spread in our country, or to find sanctuary on our shores or in our cities. We want to make sure that anyone who seeks to join our country shares our values and has the capacity to love our people."

Trump Asked White House Staffers For Input On "Morning Joe"

Tweets, Source Says. "A source close to the White House" told the [New York Post](#) (6/30, Morrongiello, Fredericks) that the President had been "asking staffers for feedback on his controversial 'Morning Joe' tweets Thursday." The source claimed Trump "said to everyone, 'I know it wasn't presidential, but what did you think?' ... He wanted to get people's reactions and sense what the fallout might be." The source added, "There's definitely a feeling that they're under siege, but this was also a week when they had the CNN vindication. ... So I think the White House has been in an aggressive mood as a result of that."

Melania Trump Responds To Brzezinski, Ivanka Stays Silent On

Tweets. [The Hill](#) (7/1, Bowden) reports First Lady Melania Trump on Friday "blasted" Brzezinski after she told [InStyle](#) (6/30, Cristobal) on Friday, "Melania's got the worst job in the country and I don't think she wants to do it a lot longer. I think she will do it for as long as she has to for her son, and that's it." In response, [ABC World News Tonight](#) (7/1, story 2, 1:05, Llamas) reported the First Lady in a statement said, "It is sad when people try to further their own agenda by commenting on me and my family, especially when they don't know me."

However, the [AP](#) (7/1, Lucey) reports that while "Ivanka Trump has been vocal in using her White House role to advocate for women," when her father "lobbed a demeaning attack on a female TV host on Twitter this week, his daughter and senior adviser kept quiet." According to the AP, her "moment of silence...spoke to the challenges and calculations Ivanka Trump faces as she tries to promote family-friendly policies in an administration led by a man whose comments about women have made women cringe and drawn bipartisan rebuke." The AP adds Ivanka so far has not "respond[ed] to questions about the president's tweet or how it affects her policy efforts."

Brzezinski Takes Credit For Introducing Powell To Trumps.

In his [New York Times](#) (6/30, Rutenberg) "Mediator" column, Jim Rutenberg calls Trump's feud with the "Morning Joe" co-hosts "a striking example of how a presidency born of television lives there still, no matter what else might be going on In Real Life (IRL, as the internet calls it)." In an interview, Scarborough and Brzezinski discussed their past relationship with the Trumps and Brzezinski "said she helped Mr. Trump find a key staff member, his foreign policy adviser, Dina Powell. Ms. Powell, a former Bush administration official, has emerged as a power inside the administration, reassuring worried outsiders." According to Brzezinski, "Dina Powell was in there because I brought her to Trump Tower and introduced her to Ivanka and Donald. I will just say that, on camera and off, we hoped for the best."

Lewandowski: Trump is the “Hemingway of Twitter” [The Hill](#) (7/1, Manchester) “Briefing Room” blog reports Corey Lewandowski, President Trump’s former campaign manager, in a Fox News appearance lauded Trump as “the Ernest Hemingway of Twitter.” He added, “He’s taken down his opponents on Twitter many times. You can ask ‘Little Marco’ or ‘Lyn’ Ted’ or ‘Crooked Hillary.’ We all know the names or ‘Low Energy Jeb.’ When you oppose Donald Trump, beware of his hundred million social media followers.”

Experts Warn Commission’s Request For Data “A Gold Mine For Hackers.” [Politico](#) (7/1, Geller, Bennett) reports “cybersecurity specialists” warn the Presidential Advisory Commission on Voter Integrity’s request for data “would centralize and lay bare a valuable cache of information that cyber criminals could use for identity theft scams – or that foreign spies could leverage for disinformation schemes.” They caution a comprehensive file on American voters would be “a gold mine for hackers” and comes as “the Trump administration is already under fire from Democrats who say it is doing little to protect the electoral process from hackers.” The security specialists “were especially perturbed about Kobach’s claim that the commission would publish all the voter data it receives.” However, Marc Lotter, a spokesman for Vice President Pence, said, “Information being requested is already publicly available according to state law from which it would be released. ... The federal government takes cybersecurity very seriously. No publicly identifiable information will be released to the public and the information will be managed consistent with federal security guidelines.”

CLC Sues Alabama For Insufficient Effort To Notify Convicted Felons Of Restored Voting Rights. The [Huffington Post](#) (7/1, Levine) reports the Campaign Legal Center (CLC) has filed a lawsuit against Alabama to require the state “to educate eligible voters about a pivotal change to a state law that could potentially restore the voting rights of thousands of convicted felons.” The article says “Alabama earned praise when it passed a law in May clarifying which felonies constituted ‘moral turpitude’ and would therefore block people from voting, but Secretary of State John Merrill (R) told HuffPost in June that his office wouldn’t take any action to make sure the thousands of people affected by the law actually know about it.” In a statement, a CLC lawyer said, “The state is responsible for correcting the confusion that has wrongly disenfranchised voters for decades. In order for HB 282 to have any meaningful effect, Alabama must notify voters about their right and ensure they are able to successfully cast a ballot going forward.”

Huckabee, Kasich, Dowd, Tapper Criticize Trump For “Morning Joe” Tweets. [The Hill](#) (7/1, Bowden) reports former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee said Saturday on “Fox & Friends Weekend” that Trump “should have resisted the urge to comment on Morning Joe’s attacks, saying they weren’t worth the trouble.” Huckabee described the comments as “a mosquito bite. Swat it, leave it, go

away." He added, "If I was advising Trump" he would say, "Don't let these guys even rise to the level of your attention, because they're not worth it." The Hill states that "Huckabee also said that Trump's tweets are 'distracting' from his agenda."

[The Hill](#) (7/1, Manchester) "Briefing Room" blog reports Ohio Gov. John Kasich, speaking with ABC's Martha Raddatz, "criticized President Trump's use of Twitter on Saturday, saying his tweets are 'unacceptable.'" Kasich said, "We've seen this for quite a while. You know, it's unfortunate and people are now begging the president not to do this, and you know you got to stop doing it."

[The Hill](#) (7/1, Greenwood) reports Jake Tapper, anchor of CNN's "The Lead with Jake Tapper," on Saturday "pushed back" against Trump's tweets, "arguing that the president uses the platform more for maintaining his personal feuds with the media than for advancing his policy goals." Tapper also "argued Saturday that by using Twitter to launch personal attacks, Trump is doing little to help the voters that sent him to the White House."

Meanwhile, in her [New York Times](#) (7/1, Dowd) column, Maureen Dowd says that "with this latest toad jumping from our president's mouth, is Donald Trump acting like a sexist pig or simply a pig? I proffer, a pig." Dowd contends, "I have no doubt that he would attack a man's appearance in the same breathtakingly below-the-belt way if he felt humiliated by that man and had the ammunition." She urges Trump's critics to "not narrow it to sexism" because "it's even more troubling than that. It's cruelty on a Grand Guignol scale, both in Trump's heartless tweets and in his mindless salesmanship of the Republicans' heartless budget." She adds "When Trump called the House health care bill mean, he knows whereof he speaks. He's the King of Mean. Pathetically, Trump mistakes cruelty for strength." She concludes "you can never be sure of anything that comes out of this White House. Except the cruelty."

Conway Defends Trump As His Feud With "Morning Joe" Hosts Escalates.

White House senior counselor Kellyanne Conway came to President Trump's defense on Friday as his feud with MSNBC's "Morning Joe" hosts Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough escalated following their allegations that his son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner and other aides had threatened to blackmail them with the publication of a negative National Enquirer article. The almost uniformly negative reporting, which was extensive in print and online and also generated seven and a half minutes combined on the network newscasts, was focused on Brzezinski's and Scarborough's criticism of the President's [tweet](#), though most pieces highlighted that the President and the White House denied attempting to blackmail the cable TV hosts.

The [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Blake) says that during an appearance on ABC's "Good Morning America," Conway "offered the White House's most controversial and dangerous statement of the

week” when she “went so far as to question the news media’s patriotism” over their coverage of the President. The Post reports that in a reference to Brzezinski, Conway asserted, “If you go back and you look at what is said about this president, a lack of policy coverage, there are personal attacks about his physicalities, about his fitness for office, he’s called a goon, a thug, mentally ill, talking about dementia, armchair psychologists all over television every single day.”

[Politico](#) (6/30, Nelson) reports Conway said, “It doesn’t help the American people to have a president covered in this light. I’m sorry, it’s neither productive nor patriotic. The toxicity is over the top.” According to Politico, while she “stopped short of saying she approved of the specific attacks” on Brzezinski, [The Hill](#) (6/30, Manchester) reports Conway “endorse[d] his ability to fight back when he’s attacked.” She added, “No good comes out of people attacking the president’s physical and mental states on national television everyday, to the exclusion of connecting Americans with information they need.”

In a separate article, [The Hill](#) (6/30, Manchester) reports Conway also told “Fox and Friends” that “as a woman who knows him and works for him, I’m very pleased at how he treats women in this workplace, the White House.” The [Washington Times](#) (6/30, Persons) similarly reports Conway said “that women care more about policy than Mr. Trump’s tweets.” Conway argued, “Roughly about 120 of the 160 tweets detail with policy, bilateral meetings, what president of the United States is doing right here at that White House, what the Cabinet is doing, news that he sees that he wants to convey to other people, foreign policy, ISIS – you name it – terrorist attacks. That gets very little coverage.” In contrast, Conway said, “The conversation we’re having right now is a one-way conversation of toxicity. A lot of these people on TV do not criticize him on his policies, they do not criticize his actions and his beliefs, they criticize him. The office of the president and it’s current occupant.”

Meanwhile, the [Washington Post](#) (6/30, A1, Rucker, Parker) says on its front page that “to many inside the White House, as well as outside allies, what looked like a public relations debacle [has] amounted to an abundance of ‘winning’ – a Trumpian catchphrase playfully repeated Friday by some West Wing officials, even as they were discomfited by the Brzezinski broadside.” Jason Miller, a former Trump campaign adviser, said the President’s tweets “energize the base” while Roger Stone, a former Trump adviser, “likened Trump’s attacks on the media to the strategy employed by former president Richard M. Nixon to discredit organizations such as The Post that were breaking stories on the Watergate investigation.”

However, the [New York Times](#) (6/30, A1, Mele) reports in a front-page article that Brzezinski and Scarborough “defended themselves on Friday against President Trump’s Twitter attack the day before, with Ms. Brzezinski saying that...Trump’s tweets

targeting her betrayed 'a fragile, childlike ego' that was a profound concern." While they were scheduled to go on vacation Friday, [Politico](#) (6/30, Nelson, Tamborrino) reports Brzezinski and Scarborough, her fiancé, "joined their morning show in its 7 a.m. hour to address the president's attack on-air. Both insisted that they had not been rattled by Trump's tweets and both said they had received a flood of calls and texts from concerned friends."

[ABC World News Tonight](#) (6/30, story 3, 2:30, Llamas) reported Trump's tweets generated "explosive fallout," as the "Morning Joe" co-hosts argued his remarks "reveal a continued mistreatment of women." [Reuters](#) (6/30, Chiacu) reports Brzezinski asserted the President "appears to have a fragile, impetuous, child-like ego that we've seen over and over again, especially with women," while Scarborough added, "He attacks women because he fears women." He additionally "said Trump packed 'five or six lies into two tweets,' including mischaracterizing their meetings at Mar-a-Lago. Brzezinski said she has never had a face-lift."

The [New York Post](#) (6/30, Fredericks) reports Brzezinski said Friday that she had told Trump about having some cosmetic surgery done on her neck, "prompting him to gush about how 'incredible' she looked." Scarborough told [Vanity Fair](#) (6/29, Fox), "The irony of it all is that Donald kept saying, 'That's incredible. You can't even tell. Who did it? Who did it?' He kept asking for the name of the doctor. He literally asked 10 times. 'Is he down here? Who is he?'"

The [AP](#) (6/30, Bauder) reports the "Morning Joe" hosts also "said Friday that President Donald Trump lied about their December encounter in a tweet and that his 'unhealthy obsession' with their program doesn't serve his mental health or the country well." Brzezinski asserted, "It's been fascinating and frightening and really sad for our country." The [New York Post](#) (6/30, Steinbuch) reports Brzezinski responded to "Trump's deeply personal attack on Twitter by assailing his 'fragile' and 'easily played ego' – saying she was worried for the United States." The [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Lac, Johnson) reports Brzezinski said Trump's tweets did not upset her, but they do "worry me about the country."

In a [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Brzezinski) op-ed, Brzezinski, Scarborough contended that despite the "personal attacks," their "concerns about his unmoored behavior go far beyond the personal." They asserted "America's leaders and allies are asking themselves yet again whether this man is fit to be president. We have our doubts, but we are both certain that the man is not mentally equipped to continue watching our show, 'Morning Joe.'" They repeatedly highlighted Trump's "unhealthy obsession with our show" and revealed "this year, top White House staff members warned that the National Enquirer was planning to publish a negative article about us unless we begged the president to have the story spiked. We ignored their desperate pleas."

The [Daily Intelligencer \(NY\)](#) (6/30, Sherman) reports that "according to three sources familiar with the private conversations,

what happened was this: After the inauguration, Morning Joe's coverage of Trump turned sharply negative." The piece states that in March, "Scarborough and Brzezinski found out the Enquirer was preparing a story about their affair" and "in mid-April, Scarborough texted with Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner about the pending Enquirer story." The Daily Intelligencer adds "Kushner told Scarborough that he would need to personally apologize to Trump in exchange for getting Enquirer owner David Pecker to stop the story. (A spokesperson for Kushner declined to comment). Scarborough says he refused, and the Enquirer published the story in print on June 5, headlined 'Morning Joe Sleazy Cheating Scandal!'"

[Politico](#) (6/30, Gold) reports Trump and Scarborough "sparked on Twitter on Friday over [the] National Enquirer article" and the [AP](#) (6/30, Bauder) says that they "traded accusations that the other was lying as the bizarre feud between the leader of the free world and two cable television hosts persisted on Friday."

The [Washington Times](#) (6/30, Persons) reports "Trump was apparently watching the news program because he tweeted later in the morning on their coverage" and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (6/30, Trachtenberg, Rabil) reports the President denied the allegations from the MSNBC hosts. Trump [tweeted](#), "Watched low rated @Morning_Joe for first time in long time. FAKE NEWS. He called me to stop a National Enquirer article. I said no! Bad show." Scarborough subsequently [replied](#), "Yet another lie. I have texts from your top aides and phone records. Also, those records show I haven't spoken with you in many months." Scarborough [added](#), "Why do you keep lying about things that are so easily disproven? What is wrong with you?"

According to the [Huffington Post](#) (6/30, Date), the White House so far "has not directly addressed the claim that Trump's aides threatened Brzezinski and Scarborough," but [McClatchy](#) (6/30, Irby) reports the National Enquirer "put out a statement responding to Scarborough's remarks, saying the story they ran was true and they did not threaten them or their children. Brzezinski accused the Enquirer of calling her children, but not threatening them." [NBC Nightly News](#) (6/30, story 3, 2:35, Holt) White House correspondent Kristen Welker reported the Enquirer said, "At no time did we threaten either Joe or Mika or their children in connection with our reporting on the story. We have no knowledge of any discussions between the White House and Joe and Mika about our story, and absolutely no involvement in those discussions."

On the [CBS Evening News](#) (6/30, story 4, 2:25, Mason), Major Garrett cautioned "there is evidence this Twitter spat has taken a toll...on Capitol Hill, where the President's healthcare agenda is in dangerous limbo and a distracted White House gropes for a new political strategy."

CNN Producer Calls Trump "Crazy," Denigrates "Stupid" Voters.

The [Washington Times](#) (6/30, Richardson) reports Jimmy Carr, a

producer for CNN's "New Day" with Chris Cuomo and Alisyn Camerota, "said that media insiders view President Trump as a 'clown' who's 'f--ing crazy' and voters as 'stupid as sh--' in an undercover video released Friday by Project Veritas." James O'Keefe, the group's president, said, "It now seems pretty clear that CNN's bias and dishonesty is a plague in the once-respected news organization."

[Breitbart](#) (6/30, Spiering) reports Conway additionally challenged CNN "New Day" host Chris Cuomo on Twitter after his producer was caught on camera saying "she looked like her face 'got hit with a shovel.'" Breitbart states that Conway retweeted Donald Trump Jr., who [asked](#): "I wonder what all the people 'outraged' (fauxoutraged) about a tweet feel about how this CNN producer talks about Kellyanne Conway?"

Obama Photographer Trolls Trump Over "Respect For Women."

The [Huffington Post](#) (6/30, Hatch) reports that following "Trump's sexist Twitter meltdown about...Brzezinski," Pete Souza, former President Obama's White House photographer, "took to Instagram to remind us how much Obama valued gender equality in a series of five photos called 'Respect for women.'" The HuffPost says "Souza has made wonderful use of his Instagram account during the Trump Administration, subtly uploading photos from his days with President Barack Obama in response to some of President Trump's most outlandish moments."

WPost Analysis: Despite White House Efforts, Trump Went Off Message This Week. In a brief analysis headlined "The White House Had A Coordinated Message This Month. Trump Didn't," [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Bump) correspondent Philip Bump states that while "his communications team put in so much work to identify themes for each week of the month," an analysis of Trump's tweets this month discovered "fully 12 were actually addressing the subject that the White House was 'focusing on' that week. That's about 7 percent of on-message tweets – including two Twitter ads about infrastructure that ran on his account."

NYPost, NYTimes, Parker Condemn Trump Tweets, Wisconsin Governor Suggests He Should Tweet More. In an editorial on the President's tweets, the [New York Post](#) (6/29) says simply: "Stop. Just stop."

The [New York Times](#) (6/30, Board) editorializes that based on how Trump reacted to Brzezinski "by tweeting a stream of coarse insults," the President demonstrates he "clearly lacks the toughness of George Washington" and "the confidence of Dwight Eisenhower," as well as "the grace Richard Nixon showed, at least in public." According to the Times, "Mr. Trump may be a more tender soul, or less resilient. In any case, he can't seem to take the heat."

In her [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Parker) column, Kathleen Parker speculates whether Trump's attacks on Brzezinski have "finally force[d] Republicans to face the fact, so obvious to so many, that President Trump isn't quite right? Not in the correct sense but in the head sense." She adds "more and more Americans

embrace “This is not normal” as the bumper sticker du jour” and “many are wondering again: Will this be it?” However, Parker warns “don’t count on it. ... Nothing will happen until GOP constituents start shouting and, remember, these are the same people Trump has taught to hate the media.”

However, [The Hill](#) (6/30, Delk) “Briefing Room” blog reports Wisconsin’s Republican Gov. Scott Walker “encouraged President Trump to ‘tweet more’ on Friday, in stark contrast to recent Republican backlash over some of Trump’s more incendiary tweets.” Speaking on Fox News, Walker said, “Unlike others, I’d tell him to tweet more, to be on Facebook more, to get the message out more, but to be focused.” He added, “Tweet more, I’m fine with that, but don’t get off in the weeds on other issues. ... Focus on the things that the people that elected you said you wanted to have done ... and the American people, I think, will come along with him.”

Trump Hosts South Korean President, Urges Asian Allies To Coordinate On North Korea Efforts.

President Trump welcomed South Korean President Moon to the White House on Friday and the two leaders showed unity against North Korean aggression in the region. While media coverage was overshadowed by the President’s Twitter feud with the hosts of MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” reporting was heavy in print and online. Analyses highlighted that despite finding common ground on North Korea, Trump endangered relations with South Korea by criticizing the country on trade even as he strained US-Sino efforts to rein in North Korea on Thursday by sanctioning a Chinese bank and approving an arms sale to Taiwan.

In a segment about Trump’s tweets, [NBC Nightly News](#) (6/30, story 3, 2:35, Holt) reported, “One of the agenda items overshadowed today – the President’s meeting with his South Korean counterpart, coming a day after the White House announced new sanctions aimed at North Korea.” In a similar segment on Trump’s tweets, [ABC World News Tonight](#)’s (6/30, story 3, 2:30, Llamas) senior White House correspondent Cecilia Vega said the White House had “hoped a visit from South Korea’s new leader might shift the focus away from the President’s latest tweet controversy.”

In a segment on Trump’s tweets, [CNN’s Anderson Cooper 360](#) (6/30, Cooper) reported “this was a very important day at the White House when the South Korean President was here, and all of the focus could have been on the global challenges that come out of the Korean Peninsula right now, including North Korea.” [Politico](#) (6/30, Conway) reports the President “told reporters in the Oval Office on Friday that he and Moon ‘accomplished a lot having to do with our thoughts on North Korea and our thoughts on trade’ over a ‘fantastic’ dinner at the White House on Thursday, according to a pool report.”

[Fox News’ Special Report](#) (6/30, Hemmer) broadcast the

President asserting, "The era of strategic patience with the North Korean regime has failed. The United States calls on other regional powers and all responsible nations to join us in implementing sanctions and demanding that the North Korean regime choose a better path and do it quickly." [Reuters](#) (6/30, Ahmann, Chiacu, Lambert) reports Trump also pledged a "determined response" to stop North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missiles program while [CNN's Situation Room](#) (6/30, Blitzer) said that in the joint press conference, Trump added, "We are working closely with South Korea, Japan as well as partners around the world on a range of diplomatic, security, and economic measures to protect our allies and our own citizens from this mess known as North Korea."

The [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Nakamura, Johnson) reports "the show of solidarity between the leaders of two allied nations comes after Moon swept to power in the wake of the resignation of his predecessor, Park Geun-hye, who was undone by a financial scandal." The [Wall Street Journal](#) (6/30, Lee, Mauldin, Stokols) mentions Moon said Trump has accepted an invitation to visit South Korea this year.

However, the [AP](#) (6/30, Pennington) reports that while Trump and Moon "showed joint resolve on North Korea," the President "opened up a new front of discord by demanding a renegotiation of a landmark 2012 trade pact between the two countries." The AP adds that "to rub it in, Trump called on his top economic officials to address their grievances to Moon in front of journalists."

[McClatchy](#) (6/30, Leavenworth, Kumar) says that "the exchange allowed Trump to present himself as again being tough on U.S. allies, particularly on trade deficits." Commerce Secretary Ross said, "there are a lot of non-tariff barriers to U.S. exports" in South Korea as well as the "problem with oil field tubular goods and steel products" caused by South Korean exports of "dumped Chinese steel" into the US. National Economic Council Director Cohn "then talked about China's 'predatory practices' and barriers to U.S. companies that want to export goods to China, or do business there."

The [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Swanson) reports the President "slammed" South Korea "for exporting more to the United States than it imports, restricting sales of U.S. autos, and enabling China in circumventing global trade rules." Trump said, "From when the U.S.-Korea trade deal was signed in 2011 to 2016 – and you know who signed it, you know who wanted it – our trade deficit with South Korea has increased by more than \$11 billion. Not exactly a great deal." [Bloomberg News](#) (6/30, Pettypiece, Sink) reports Trump added, "The U.S. has trade deficits with many many countries, and we cannot allow that to continue. And we'll start with South Korea right now."

In a brief segment, the [CBS Evening News](#) (6/30, story 6, 0:20, Mason) reported Trump "demanded a renegotiation" of the trade deal, which the [Washington Times](#) (6/30, Miller) says that he called "a rough deal for the U.S." The President added that the talks

will “hopefully” result in “an equitable” and “fair deal for both parties.” [Reuters](#) (6/30, Brunnstrom, Lambert) reports Trump vowed his Administration “will do more to remove barriers to reciprocal trade and market access.” He also asserted that he is “encouraged by President Moon’s assurances that he will work to create a level playing field so that American workers and businesses, and especially automakers, can have a fair shake at dealing with South Korea.”

Nonetheless, the [Los Angeles Times](#) (6/30, Bierman) reports “it was unclear from his and administration aides’ remarks how significant a break Trump was making with a free-trade agreement that had broad support when it was approved in Congress.” The Times also cautions that the “announcement could be seen as a provocation of an ally during a delicate time, when the administration is looking to South Korea to help contain North Korea’s nuclear program.”

China Condemns US Sanctions Against Bank, Arms Sale To Taiwan. [CNN’s Situation Room](#) (6/30, Blitzler), reporting on diplomatic efforts on North Korea, said that on Thursday, the Administration “issued new sanctions against a Chinese bank for allegedly helping North Korea: Then hours later announced a massive US arms sale to Taiwan which China views as a renegade province. Beijing is furious.”

The [New York Times](#) (6/30, Myers, Wee) reports Treasury Secretary Mnuchin announced the sanctions against two Chinese businessmen, the Bank of Dandong, and Dalian Global Unity Shipping, hours before Agriculture Secretary Perdue was due to arrive in Beijing with Ambassador Terry Branstad to promote “tasty, wholesome, healthy, safe U.S. beef” at a ceremony meant to “symboliz[e] the promise of a constructive era.” While Perdue asserted, “We think there’s an opportunity for agriculture to lead the way in the future relationship of commerce between our two wonderful countries,” the event was overshadowed by the “furious response” from China.

The [AP](#) (6/30, Klapper, Pace) reports that while Mnuchin insisted “we are in no way targeting China,” the White House appears to be “engaged in a multipronged pressure campaign against Beijing, born of frustration with the limited results of their much-touted cooperation on ending North Korea’s nuclear threat.” The AP acknowledges “the shifts in Trump’s China policy in some way reflect the natural ebbs and flows that are to be expected in great power relations,” but “Trump’s rapid flip-flops on China are a departure from the practice of past U.S. presidents, who found persistent behind-the-scenes pressure and engagement of Beijing more likely than headline-grabbing confrontations to produce deals on everything from carbon emissions to currency exchange rates.”

While the [Los Angeles Times](#) (6/30, Jennings) reports the Chinese government “objected” to arms sale “and demanded that the deal be canceled,” [Reuters](#) (6/30, Blanchard, Shepherd) says Beijing “reacted relatively calmly on Friday after a series of

diplomatic broadsides by the United States, expressing anger over new arms sales by Washington to Taiwan but hoping ties could soon be brought back on track."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (6/30, Page) reports Lu Kang, a spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, called for the Administration to reconsider, and the [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Rauhala) reports he "said Beijing has launched 'solemn representations' with the U.S. side over the arms sale" as well as the sanctions, which he said "go against the consensus achieved at Mar-a-Lago" when Trump met with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

However, [Reuters](#) (6/30, Shepherd, Blanchard) reports the Chinese embassy in Washington in a statement said the Chinese government and people are "outraged" and "urged the United States to revoke immediately its 'wrong decision' to sell Taiwan \$1.42 billion worth of arms, saying it contradicted" the "consensus" reached by Trump and Xi in April. Meanwhile, the Chinese Defense Ministry "said Taiwan was the 'most important, most sensitive core issue in Sino-U.S. ties,' warning the United States to end such sales to avoid further damaging peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait."

On [CNN's Situation Room](#) (6/30, Blitzer) Rep. Gregory Meeks, a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, warned that the arms sale "tips the balance" toward Taiwan. He added, "That is, I think, out of bounds. And then it takes us away from what we want to do because others will also see that that's out of bounds with reference to international law."

Trump Scolds Korean Media For Knocking Over Table In Oval Office. The [New York Post](#) (6/30, Fredericks) reports "Trump doesn't like the Korean media either after they piled into the Oval Office on Friday during his sitdown with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and crashed into a couch, damaged a table and nearly knocked over a lamp." According to the Post, the Secret Service "had to ask the Koreans to stop running as they entered the room" and "there was a lot of jostling as the Korean journalists, unfamiliar with the Oval Office, worked their way around the two chairs where the presidents were seated to find a good spot to set up."

The [Washington Times](#) (6/30, Chasmar) reports the President "scolded" the "aggressive reporters," but a "video posted by C-SPAN showed Mr. Trump's bodyguard Keith Schiller save [the] lamp from being knocked to the ground." The [Washington Examiner](#) (6/30, Pappas) reports Trump said, "Easy fellas. Hey fellas. Fellas, easy. Fellas, easy." He added: "You guys are getting worse." The President continued, "They knocked the table down. It's actually a very friendly press, don't let that get you. Although we just lost the table."

Pence, Moon Lay Wreath At Korean War Memorial. [Reuters](#) (6/30) reports Vice President Pence and South Korean President Moon Jae-in visited the Korean War Memorial on Friday.

Trump Suggests Lawmakers Should Just Repeal ACA, Replace Later.

President Trump tweeted Friday that if the Senate cannot pass the Better Care Reconciliation Act then Republican lawmakers should consider just repealing the Affordable Care Act and passing a replacement at a later date. While ABC World News Tonight was the sole network newscast to provide coverage, the predominantly negative reporting, which was heavy in print and online, focused on the implications of his statement and the White House's insistence that the Administration is still committed to the BCRA.

[ABC World News Tonight](#)'s (6/30, story 4, 1:00, Llamas) Mary Bruce reported "the President did a 180 that could push [Senate Republicans] even further apart," as does the [New York Times](#) (6/30, A1, Kaplan, Pear) in a front-page article, which says that Trump "tossed in a new complication with an old idea, suggesting the Senate could repeal President Barack Obama's signature domestic achievement now, then replace it later." He [tweeted](#), "If Republican Senators are unable to pass what they are working on now, they should immediately REPEAL, and then REPLACE at a later date!"

The [AP](#) (6/30, Werner, Fram) reports Trump "revive[d] an approach that GOP leaders and the president himself considered but dismissed months ago as impractical and politically unwise," but according to [Politico](#) (6/30, Nelson), "Trump's suggestion somewhat mirrors" Sen. Rand Paul, who suggested Thursday that lawmakers should "split the bill into a 'clean repeal' that the entire GOP caucus could support and a second health care spending bill that moderate Republicans could hash out with willing Democrats." [Reuters](#) (6/30, Chiacu) says the President's recommendation was "welcomed" by Sen. Ben Sasse, "a Republican who has often clashed with Trump." Sasse [tweeted](#), "Sounds great, Pres. @realDonaldTrump. We are agreed. We need to break the logjam."

However, [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Blake) senior reporter Aaron Blake in an analysis acknowledges "this approach may be more popular than the one [Republicans are] employing right now," but "the bad news is it's still hugely unpopular and would be a political gamble on a scale we have rarely seen." Blake concludes the "gamble" would be "such a risk, in fact, that I'm doubtful Senate Republicans could even assemble 50 votes to repeal it in the first place – which would render the rest of this pretty moot." [Politico](#) (6/30, Haberkorn) similarly contends Trump's latest proposal is "a non-starter for many congressional Republicans who don't want to scrap a plan that's covering millions of Americans without something to take its place." Politico states that "repealing the health law without a replacement would kick about 18 million Americans off of health coverage in the first year – and reach 26 million a few years later, according to a CBO analysis of a 2015 bill to repeal the health law without a replacement."

Meanwhile, [Reuters](#) (6/30, Rampton) reports White House deputy press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders on Friday insisted the White House remains "fully committed to pushing through with the Senate at this point but we're looking at every possible option

of repealing and replacing Obamacare.” [Bloomberg News](#) (6/30, Titus) reports Huckabee Sanders added, “We are focused on the end product here and that is repealing and replacing Obamacare.”

In addition, the [Washington Times](#) (6/30, Persons) reports Health and Human Services Secretary Price said Friday in a Fox News appearance “he believes a health bill will pass this month because the current system is ‘unacceptable.’” Price added, “The Senate understands that. The president is adamant about making certain that we move forward in a positive way for patients and families and docs and not in Washington, D.C.” According to Price, the Senate is attempting to “make sure we have a health care system that actually responds to patients. The current system doesn’t provide for that, and that’s the challenge that we’ve got to fix, and that’s the challenge that the president has demanded gets done.” Price also said, “There are some concerns about individuals on the Medicaid system and whether, as they transition to something else, there’s something that they can go to, and that’s where the tax credits come into play.”

Conservative Lawmakers Urge McConnell, Ryan To Shorten Recess If Healthcare Bill Not Passed. The [Wall Street Journal](#) (6/30, Radnofsky) reports Sens. Ben Sasse and Rand Paul called on the White House to intervene if Senate Majority Leader McConnell is unable to secure the votes needed to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act by the end of their July 4 recess. The [Washington Post](#) (6/30, A1, Sullivan, Eilperin, Snell) states in a front-page article that their “fresh calls for repeal, which echoed an early-morning tweet from President Trump on Friday, underscored the extent to which Republicans remain divided on health care as they head into the Fourth of July recess.”

In addition, ten senators on Friday sent the Majority Leader a letter “asking for the GOP leader to shorten the August recess – or cancel it altogether – if the party does not make significant headway on its priorities in July, according to a copy obtained by” [Politico](#) (6/30, Everett), which reports that the lawmakers wrote they “respectfully request that [McConnell] consider truncating, if not completely foregoing, the scheduled August state work period, allowing us more time to complete our work.” [The Hill](#) (6/30, Carney) “Floor Action” blog says that the letter, which was “spearheaded by Sen. David Perdue,” came as Rep. Andy Biggs and 11 other members of the House Freedom Caucus sent a letter to House Speaker Ryan “urging him to cancel the August recess” so they can pass the healthcare legislation.

WPost A1: McConnell Attempts To Overcome Reputation As Obstructionist With Healthcare Bill. In a nearly 2,200-word front-page article, the [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Fisher, Sullivan) reports that while Senate Majority Leader McConnell, has been deemed by his opponents as “America’s No. 1 obstructionist, the Darth Vader of Capitol Hill,” whether he can successfully enact “big-ticket” legislation, including the healthcare bill, “will depend on his ability to pivot from blocking to building.” Former House Speaker Newt

Gingrich said McConnell “has a really, really difficult challenge” as the GOP has “a very narrow majority and it’s divided within itself.” Nonetheless, Gingrich praised him as “like a really good engineer, trying to think through every day, ‘How do I get the machine operating?’ ... The tools that make Mitch effective are steely determination, enormous will power and endless patience. He wants to be known as the guy who gets things done.”

NYTimes A1: Trump Supporters Upset With Heller Over Opposition To Healthcare Bill. In a front-page article, the [New York Times](#) (6/30, A1, Martin, Vogel) reports Sen. Dean Heller last week “infuriated the White House and helped unravel his party’s attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act days before a vote was expected in the Senate,” and now he “is facing an intense backlash in Nevada, his home state, where there is talk of a primary race challenge against him next year and a pair of the state’s wealthiest Republican donors are fuming.” The Times states that although America First Policies “suspended its advertising campaign against Mr. Heller after he agreed to attend a West Wing meeting on the health bill and after a group of Republican senators in attendance complained about the commercials,” the lawmaker “has by no means escaped the wrath of Mr. Trump and his vocal supporters, including two billionaire casino magnates, Sheldon G. Adelson and Steve Wynn.”

Polls Show Opposition To GOP Healthcare Bills “Outpace Support.” The [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Guskin) reports a series of new national polls released this week “show opposition” to the Republican healthcare bills “continues to outpace support by a wide margin, with tepid support among Republicans and overwhelming opposition among Democrats.” The Post says the GOP proposal “fares best in a [Fox News](#) poll” of 1,017 “registered voters” (6/25-6/27) that “showed 27 percent of registered voters favored and 54 percent opposed” while a [Suffolk University-USA Today poll](#) of 1,000 “registered voters” (6/24-6/27) “found a nearly 4-to-1 margin of opposition (45 percent opposed while 12 percent supported),” a [Quinnipiac University poll](#) of 1,212 “voters” (6/22-6/27) found 58 percent “who disapproved and 16 percent who approved,” and a [NPR-PBS NewsHour-Marist poll](#) of 1,205 “adults” (6/21-6/25) “found a 3-to-1 margin of opposition, with 55 percent who disapproved and 17 percent who approved.”

FreedomWorks President, Columnists Criticize GOP Healthcare Bill. In a [Washington Post](#) (6/30) op-ed, FreedomWorks President Adam Brandon warns that “the ‘swamp’ is winning” as Republicans “are now breaking frequent promises to repeal Obamacare.” He is critical of the Better Care Reconciliation Act, which “only modifies Obamacare subsidies, bails out insurance companies, likely keeps Medicaid expansion and does nothing to lower premiums.” Brandon asserts “the opposition mounted by Heller and his moderate colleagues is a symptom of Republican hypocrisy that has reared its ugly head.” He concludes by hoping McConnell and other lawmakers “drive this bill in a conservative direction” as grass-roots

activists “want Republicans to defeat the swamp and repeal Obamacare.”

In his [New York Times](#) (6/30, Stephens) column, Bret Stephens asserts that “if Republicans had been more modest and less inept in advancing a realistic health care agenda, they might have spent the past seven years understanding, explaining and changing” the “third-party-payer problem” rather than focusing on “repeal and replace.” He contends “The only genuinely promising reform in the Republican health bills are proposals to nearly double contribution limits for health savings accounts and allow them to be used to pay for premiums.” Stephens concludes, “H.S.A.s can restore sanity to a market in which prices are invisible and costs keep rising, and in which the concept of ‘insurance’ has lost its meaning. Republicans who want to salvage a conservative policy victory from their health care fracas would be wise to leave Obamacare alone, so that its authors can pay the price for its failure, just as the G.O.P. restores price to the rest of the health care system.”

In his [Washington Post](#) (6/30, Davidson) column, Joe Davidson hails Sen. Jon Tester, the ranking member on the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, for highlighting how the GOP’s “heartless” legislation will hurt veterans. Davidson shares Tester’s warnings and contends Chairman Johnny Isakson as well as the Department of Veterans Affairs “had the chance to refute the data presented by the Democrats, but they did not.”

In his [New York Times](#) (6/30, Lieber) column, Ron Lieber asserts that if Americans plan to grow old, they need to pay attention to the Administration’s plans to cut Medicaid funding by “hundreds of billions of dollars...if anything like the health care bills on the table in Washington come to pass.” Lieber concludes that “big Medicaid cuts could lead all of us to miss out on the care that many of us like best – and costs the government the least – because it will be cut first.”

In his [New York Times](#) (6/30, Egan) column, Timothy Egan asserts Senate Republicans’ “toxic” ACA repeal bill “does nothing to fix a struggling system. But it is bold and quite daring: for this is the broadest attack on working Americans by a governing political party in our lifetime.” He says the legislation illustrates “the bargain – your health care for my tax cut.”

Moderate Republican Lawmakers Warn Tax Reform Initiative In Jeopardy.

[Reuters](#) (6/30, Morgan) reports Rep. Charlie Dent and 19 other Republican lawmakers from the Tuesday Group sent a letter on Friday to House Speaker Ryan warning “that efforts to overhaul the federal tax code could be jeopardized by demands for including major spending cuts in a fiscal 2018 budget resolution.” In the letter, they express “fear that if the House persists” in pursuing the “extremely problematic” cuts to mandatory programs in the budget resolution, “it could imperil tax reform.” The [AP](#) (6/30, Taylor)

reports the “20 GOP moderates signaled a revolt” over “an emerging plan to force cuts to government agencies and benefit programs such as food stamps.” The AP says the lawmakers “warned that without an agreement with Democrats on increasing agency spending, moderates will be ‘reticent to support any budget.’”

Bannon Pushing Tax Hike For Wealthy To Pay For Middle, Working Class Tax Cuts.

[Axios](#) (7/2, Swan) reports that President Trump’s chief strategist Steve Bannon is pushing to “rais[e] taxes on the wealthiest Americans to pay for steep middle and working-class tax cuts.” While some officials “think it’s crazy,” Bannon “believes it’s a potent populist idea.”

White House Projected To Save \$22 Million.

[Forbes](#) (7/2, Andrzejewski) reports that the Trump Administration on Friday “released their annual report to Congress on White House Office Personnel,” According to the report, which “includes the name, status, salary and position title of all 377 White House employees,” the “projected four-year savings on the White House payroll could top \$22 million.” Forbes says those savings are due to “Trump’s refusal to take a salary as well as big reductions in other areas including the absence of czars, expensive ‘fellowships,’ and spending on FLOTUS staff.” Forbes goes on to list “key findings” from the report.

Source: Trump Administration Considering Effort To Examine Climate Science.

The [Washington Post](#) (7/1, Dennis, Eilperin) reports the Trump administration is mulling “whether to launch a governmentwide effort to question the science of climate change,” a move opponents “say is an attempt to undermine the long-established consensus human activity is fueling the Earth’s rising temperatures.” The effort, “driven by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt, has sparked a debate among top Trump administration officials over whether to pursue such a strategy.” A top White House official “said that while Pruitt has expressed interest in the idea, ‘there are no formal plans within the administration to do anything about it at this time.’” Energy Secretary Rick Perry “also is involved in the effort, two officials said.” [E&E Publishing](#) (6/30) reports climate scientists are concerned “that the ‘red team, blue team’ concept could politicize scientific research and disproportionately elevate the views of a relatively small number of experts who disagree with mainstream scientists.”

[The Hill](#) (6/30, Cama) reports Pruitt and Perry “have been talking up the ‘red team, blue team’ idea in recent weeks for climate science.” Last month, Pruitt told Breitbart “that the debate would be good.” He stated, “What the American people deserve, I

think, is a true, legitimate, peer-reviewed, objective, transparent discussion about CO2.” The [Washington Examiner](#) (7/2, Shepherd) also provides coverage of this story.

White House Office Of Science And Technology Policy Unstaffed.

[The Hill](#) (7/1, Manchester) reported that “the last three employees of the White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) officially left the department last week, leaving the office completely unstaffed.” The article added that the final three employees “were holdovers from the Obama administration.” The Hill wrote that “the White House’s science division has largely focused in the past on issues such as biotechnology and STEM education,” and pointed out that “there were more than 100 employees in OSTP during the Obama administration.” Speculating on the significance of the moves, the Hill added that “the lack of employees in the science-focused office could reflect how much of a priority science is for the relatively new administration.”

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

“Bank Health, Imperiled.” The [New York Times](#) (7/3, Board) editorializes that even though for the first time since the 2008 financial crisis, the Federal Reserve has determined “that all of the nation’s big banks are healthy,” to the extent that that is true, “credit belongs in large part to banking reforms enacted after the crisis. And it is precisely those reforms that are now in the cross hairs” of the Trump Administration. The Times writes, “Deregulation led to the financial crash in 2008. It’s safe to assume that repeating the mistake will lead to the same result.”

“Europe’s Deadly Paralysis On Migration.” The [New York Times](#) (7/3, Board) editorializes, “With summer’s warmer weather and calmer seas, tens of thousands of desperate migrants are setting out for Europe from Libya, once again overwhelming the capacity of rescue efforts on the Mediterranean and straining the ability of Italy to cope.” Since the start of the year, “some 72,000 migrants arrived in Italy from Libya,” while more than 2,000 died on the way. Italy “has effectively been turned into a holding pen for migrants,” and “people who try to push on from Italy into France face police officers wielding tear gas at the border.” The Times says “Europe has no other option” than to open up.

Washington Post.

“What Trump Should Say When He Meets Putin For The First Time.” The [Washington Post](#) (7/2) argues in an editorial that in his first meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, President Trump “should set aside his stated admiration for Mr. Putin’s strongman tendencies and instead confront the Russian president

with difficult questions.” Trump “cannot fail to admonish Mr. Putin for Russia’s attempts to meddle in the 2016 presidential election” and must “make clear the United States will not tolerate it, period.” The Post says that on this and other issues Trump “must not hesitate to be blunt.”

“Trump Launches His Opening Voter Suppression Salvo.” The [Washington Post](#) (7/2) editorializes that the Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity “is beginning its work under the guidance of its vice chair, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, a Republican notorious for his efforts at vote suppression” who “has written to state election officials requesting that they hand over voter rolls, including not only names, addresses and dates of birth, but also party affiliation, voting history back to 2006 and the last four digits of Social Security numbers – all of which he says will be made public.” According to the Post, “commonplace and often minor inaccuracies on the rolls, along with inconsistencies in data collection and formatting among the states, give rise to the high likelihood of false ‘matches’ from one roll to another, and also that many voters may be purged unfairly, without safeguards or recourse.”

“Pope Francis’ Toleration Of Sexually Abusive Clergy Leaves A Stain.” A [Washington Post](#) (7/2) editorial says Pope Francis’ tolerance of Cardinal George Pell’s alleged incidents of sexual assault is the latest sign that Francis’ “muscular, unequivocal and truly ‘zero tolerance’ stance against pedophile priests and their enablers is not a priority for him.” The Post says through his tolerance, Pope Francis is ensuring “that the disgrace of clergy sex abuse will continue to be a stain on the Catholic Church.”

Wall Street Journal.

“The Senate’s Tax Panic.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/2) says in an editorial that support is growing among Senate Republicans for leaving the ACA’s 3.8 percent surtax on capital gains, dividends, interest, and similar forms of income in place. The Journal says that the GOP vowed to repeal all of the ACA’s tax increases, which it says impact the middle class as well as the rich, and that Republican should not alter that stance.

“Trump’s Signals To China.” In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/2) says new US sanctions on Chinese entities assisting North Korea and the recently-approved \$1.4 billion arms sale to Taiwan evidence the Administration’s growing frustration with Beijing’s unwillingness to pressure Pyongyang over its nuclear program. The Journal expresses support for both measures, and says China’s continued failure to address the growing North Korean threat may be a miscalculation of how far the Administration will go.

“Pruitt’s Clean Water Break.” The [Wall Street Journal](#) (7/2) briefly editorializes that despite President Trump’s difficulty pushing legislation through Congress, he has been successful rolling back former President Obama’s so-called pen-and-phone lawmaking,

most recently in the EPA's rescindment of the Obama-era unilateral rewrite of the Clean Water Act last week. The Journal says the Obama-era EPA's redefinition of the "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act employed a number of arbitrary thresholds – in part empowered by Justice Anthony Kennedy in a 2006 case conceiving the new "significant nexus" standard. EPA Administrator's announcement that the agency will adopt a new rule "in accordance with Supreme Court decisions, agency guidance, and longstanding practice" that would "return power to the states and provide regulatory certainty" is a testament to the limitations of pen-and-phone rule-making, says the Journal.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Dollar Gets Squeezed From All Sides](#)
[With ISIS On The Run, An Unexpected Leader Emerges In Iraq](#)
[Senators Face Pushback From Governors On The Health Bill](#)
[US Navy Patrols Near Disputed Island In South China Sea](#)

New York Times:

[Program To Spur Low-Income Housing Is Keeping Cities Segregated](#)
[With Beaches Empty, Christie Wages One More Fight](#)
[Trump Foot Soldier Sidelined Under Glare Of Russia Inquiry](#)
[An Addict, A Confessed Killer And Now A Debut Author](#)
[Wealthy Qatar Weathers Siege, But Personal And Political Costs Grow](#)

Washington Post:

[‘They Are Not Treated Like Humans’](#)
[Trump Sets Off Furor By Beating Figure Depicting News Media](#)
[Ex-Slave's Progeny Lie In Digital Age's Path](#)
[Good Dog, Good Therapist?](#)
[Trump Quiet On Revamp Of ACA](#)

Financial Times:

[Trump's CNN Smackdown Opens New Front In Media War](#)
[City Team To Press Brussels For Free-Trade Deal](#)
[Iran To Sign \\$4.8bn Gas Deal With Total](#)
[EU Considers Tough New Competition Powers](#)

Washington Times:

[Supreme Court Blockbusters: Gorsuch Addition Will Bring On Bigger Cases](#)
[Republican Rebukes: Trump Using Twitter Dangerously To ‘Weaponize Distrust’ In Media](#)
[Trump's War Of Annihilation Strategy Against Islamic State Frees](#)

[Military To Quickly Seize Territory](#)
[Trump's Sober View Of Iranian Theocracy Lends Energy To](#)
[Dissident Rally In France](#)
[Boy Scout Troop 100 Celebrates Century Of Firefighting, Police](#)
[Duties, Building Character In D.C.](#)
[Voter Integrity Panel's Vice Chairman Questions States' 'Idiotic'](#)
[Withholding Of Information](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Trump-Media Feud; Denver-Plane Engine Fire; Pennsylvania-Home Explosion; Philadelphia-Road Rage Killing Trial; Mosul Assault; Syria-Car Bombs; Bronx-Hospital Shooting; Severe Weather; China-College Girl Kidnapping; Holiday Online Shopping; Washington State-Amtrak Derailing; Chicken Salad Recall; Drugged Racing Dogs; Wave-Wildfires; Police-Boy Help.

CBS: Trump-Media Feud; Trump Media, Healthcare-Expert Opinion; Holiday Travel; State Budgets Impasse; Philadelphia-Road Rage Killing Trial; Denver-Plane Engine Fire; Raqqa Assault; Climate Change-Coral Farming; Needless Flu Vaccine; Grizzly Bear Product Testing.

NBC: Trump-Media Feud; Philadelphia-Road Rage Killing Trial; Washington State-Amtrak Derailing; Denver-Plane Engine Fire; Syrian Refugee Camp Fire; Wimbledon-Security; Minimum Wage Increase; State Budgets Impasse; Cruise Ship Crime; American Wild Horses Protection; Canada-150 Anniversary; Sunscreen; California-Criminal Rehabilitation.

Network TV At A Glance:

Trump-Media Feud – 11 minutes, 35 seconds

Denver-Plane Engine Fire – 1 minute, 40 seconds

Washington State-Amtrak Derailing – 35 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Trump-Media Feud; Denver-Plane Engine Fire; State Budgets Impasse; Illinois-Income Tax Increase.

CBS: Trump-Media Feud; Qatar-Diplomacy Crisis; Trump-China, Japan Phone Calls; Trump-Putin Meeting; Washington State-Amtrak Derailing; Small Airplane Crash; Wall Street News.

FOX: Trump-Media Feud; Healthcare Reform Plan; Wall Street News.

NPR: Trump-Media Feud; Mali-ISIS Abduction Video; Syrian Refugee Camp Fire.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — No scheduled public events announced.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — No scheduled public events announced.

US Senate: 6:00 PM Senate meets in pro forma session Location: TBD <http://www.senate.gov/>

On recess until 10 July.

US House: 11:00 AM House of Representatives meets in pro forma session Location: TBD <http://www.house.gov/>

On recess until 10 July.

Other: New White House chief usher assumes role – New White House Chief Usher Timothy Harleth begins role, moving from a position as Trump International Hotel Washington DC chief of rooms * Chief usher oversees over 90 White House Residence staff Location: TBD <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>
<https://twitter.com/whitehouse>

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

No late-night talk show aired on Sunday night.

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