

**To:** Toschik, Pamela[pamela\_toschik@fws.gov]  
**Cc:** Wendi Weber[wendi\_weber@fws.gov]; Paul Phifer[paul\_phifer@fws.gov]; Deborah Rocque[deborah\_rocque@fws.gov]; Kyla Hastie[Kyla\_Hastie@fws.gov]; Andrew Tittler[andrew.tittler@sol.doi.gov]; Peg Romanik[peg.romanik@sol.doi.gov]; Jesup, Benjamin[BENJAMIN.JESUP@sol.doi.gov]; Racey, Meagan[meagan\_racey@fws.gov]  
**From:** Rothstein, Dave  
**Sent:** 2017-03-10T14:40:10-05:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: U.S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Friday, March 10, 2017 A/C Privilege; Litigation Sensitive DO NOT RELEASE  
**Received:** 2017-03-10T14:40:25-05:00

A/C Privilege; Litigation Sensitive DO NOT RELEASE

Hi Wendi. Let me try to distill this somewhat complicated and recent development.

#### THE SHORT ANSWER

- (b)(5) DPP, ACP [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]  
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(b)(5) DPP, (b)(5) ACP

On Fri, Mar 10, 2017 at 12:52 PM, Toschik, Pamela <[pamela\\_toschik@fws.gov](mailto:pamela_toschik@fws.gov)> wrote:

Hi Wendi,  
There's litigation around this, I am looping Dave in to respond.  
Best wishes,  
Pam

On Fri, Mar 10, 2017 at 10:24 AM, Wendi Weber <[wendi\\_weber@fws.gov](mailto:wendi_weber@fws.gov)> wrote:

Hi are we involved in mbta permit as article claims on purple line? Thanks  
Wendi Weber

Regional Director, Northeast Region  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Hadley, MA 01035  
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work (413)253-8300  
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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Bulletin Intelligence <[Interior@bulletinintelligence.com](mailto:Interior@bulletinintelligence.com)>  
**Date:** March 10, 2017 at 4:01:35 AM PST  
**To:** <[Interior@BulletinIntelligence.com](mailto:Interior@BulletinIntelligence.com)>  
**Subject:** U.S. Department of the Interior News Briefing for Friday, March 10, 2017

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**DATE: FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2017 7:00 AM EST**

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### **DOI In The News**

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#### **Secretary Zinke To Visit Montana.**

The [AP](#) (3/9) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke on Friday will visit Glacier National Park “to talk about the park system’s multi-billion-dollar maintenance backlog.” During his visit to Glacier, Zinke “also will receive a traditional tribal blessing by members of the Blackfeet Nation.” On Monday, he will “address a joint session of the Montana Legislature.” Then, on Tuesday, Zinke will “visit Bureau of Land Management field offices in Lewistown and Billings for closed meetings with agency personnel.”

Coverage by the AP was also picked up by [U.S. News & World Report](#) (3/9), the [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (3/9), the [Flathead \(MT\) Beacon](#) (3/9), the [Kansas City \(MO\) Star](#) (3/9), and the [Roanoke \(VA\) Times](#) (3/9).

Additional coverage was provided by the [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (3/9), [KBZK-TV Butte \(MT\) Butte](#), MT (3/9), [KTVQ-TV Billings \(MT\) Billings](#), MT (3/9), and [KPAX-TV Missoula \(MT\) Missoula](#), MT (3/9).

#### **Secretary Zinke Pledges Support For Tribal Energy, Infrastructure Development, Quiet On Climate Change.**

[E&E Daily](#) (3/9) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke pledged to support tribal energy development, telling the Senate Indian Affairs Committee that the Interior Department “has not always stood shoulder to shoulder with many of the tribal communities for which it is tasked to fight.” Zinke sees an opportunity to foster economic productivity through “improved infrastructure and expanded access to an all-of-the-above

energy development approach.” Zinke pledged to support Sen. Al Franken’s efforts to find money for the tribal energy loan guarantee program and improve consultation with tribes around energy development. Zinke promised Sen. Steve Daines that he would urge the Army Corps of Engineers to quickly permit coal export terminals supported by some tribes, but E&E reports that Zinke’s commitment “glossed divisions among tribes over coal export terminals.”

[ClimateWire](#) (3/9) reports that Zinke did not remark on climate change during the hearing. Julie Maldonado, director of research for the Livelihoods and Knowledge Exchange Network and a lead author of the 2014 National Climate Assessment chapter on indigenous peoples, said, “Zinke brought up the need to pay specific attention to sovereignty and self-determination,” adding that tribes are “on the front lines of climate change and experience unique climate-related challenges.” In one example, tribes, confined to reservation land, cannot follow elk if climate change shifts migration patterns.

Additional coverage of Zinke’s appearance at the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs’ “Identifying Indian Affairs priorities for the Trump Administration” oversight hearing was provided by [UPI](#) (3/9, Pestano), [Montana Public Radio](#) (3/9, O'Brien), and the [Nation Sun News](#) (3/9).

### **Republican Senators Concerned About Slow Pace Of Nominations For Lower-Level Agency Posts.**

The “Morning Energy” blog of [Politico](#) (3/9) reported senior Republican senators on Wednesday told the ME blog “they were troubled by White House slowness in nominating officials to fill lower-level agency positions.” Sen. John Thune “called the process ‘frustratingly slow,’ pointing in part to the voluminous amount of paperwork nominees must complete, while Jim Inhofe called the number of vacancies in agencies ‘a concern’ and said ‘it’s driving me crazy.’”

### **Republicans Seek Overhaul In Public Land Management.**

[USA Today](#) (3/9, Sullivan) reports that recent proposals targeting public lands “illustrate the radical shift in public land policy that has been a goal of Republicans for several years.” According to the article, “with one-party government in Washington, Republicans think the time is right to make significant changes.” However, “for millions of Americans and for groups like the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society and Missoula, Mont.-based Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, the aggressive campaign to divest what they consider to be the national heritage for possible commercial development won’t happen without a fight.” The article says that “they may have an ally in the new Interior Department Secretary Ryan Zinke, the former Montana congressman who stepped down as a delegate to the GOP’s national convention in July after the platform language cited earlier was adopted.”

*Op-Ed: Republicans Failing In Management Of Public Lands.* In an op-

ed for the Los Angeles Times (3/9, Chouinard), Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia, argues that if public lands were run like “a business” as Republicans have insisted, “shareholders would be shocked by the gross negligence of some of their top executives.” Chouinard points to Republicans who, rather than harnessing “the power of public lands for maximum benefit,” are “trying to repeal laws that safeguard ecologically vulnerable landscapes.” Chouinard urges the public to “start acting like owners and demand that our elected representatives start delivering the value we deserve.”

#### **Bill Would Lift Wilderness Mountain Bike Ban.**

USA Today (3/9, Spillman) reports that a bill by Rep. Tom McClintock would “lift a decades-old national ban on biking in federally designated wilderness areas.” Supporters say “it’s an attempt to give people a chance to pedal through serene locales that currently allow hiking, backpacking and horseback riding but not mountain biking.” However, “opponents say it is a step down a slippery slope that could erode protections the Wilderness Act of 1964 established for some of the most scenic and sensitive places in America.”

#### **Grijalva Presses Secretary Zinke On Antiquities Act.**

The Sierra (CA) Sun Times (3/9) reports that Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva sent a letter to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “pressing him to explain his stance on whether presidents can use the Antiquities Act to revoke national monument status at existing monument sites.” Grijalva wrote, “Now that you have been sworn in as Secretary, your role in counseling President Trump regarding the future of the special places under the jurisdiction of your Department is no longer theoretical; advising the President on the future of Bears Ears and other National Monuments is now your solemn responsibility.”

#### **Senators Introduce Bipartisan Bill To Fully Fund LWCF.**

My Central Oregon (3/9) reports that Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, “as well as 20 other senators introduced bipartisan legislation to permanently authorize and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund.” Wyden said, “Fully funding this program will allow communities across the country to continue protecting our nation’s public lands and providing access for the outdoor activities Americans enjoy.” Merkley said. “The projects made possible by the Land and Water Conservation Fund have impacted countless lives, and we owe it to future generations to pay it forward by fully funding and making permanent this essential program. Public lands that are open and accessible to all are a key part of our recreation economy, and even more importantly, of who we are as Americans.”

#### **Utah Offers Outdoor Show \$1M To Stay.**

The [AP](#) (3/9) reports that the Utah Legislature is "restoring \$1 million in the state budget that helps out the Outdoor Retailer show, with the hope it will persuade show organizers keep it in Salt Lake City." Gov. Gary Herbert said Thursday "his office requested the money be put back to help pay for large pavilion tents that provide space for the massive expo." Outdoor Retailer spokeswoman Kate Lowery "said in a statement they appreciate the sentiment but only a position change on public lands by state leaders would spur them to reconsider."

Meanwhile, the [AP](#) (3/9, Calvin) reports that "Montana officials said they are continuing to explore a bid" for the show, "even as they acknowledged Thursday that they may not have adequate facilities to host the massive event." Gov. Steve Bullock has "directed his economic development team to ready a bid if the state is invited to do so for the Outdoor Retailer show, which could be held in Salt Lake City this summer for the last time."

### **Additional Coverage: Trump Meets With Secretary Zinke, Alaska Senators.**

Additional coverage of President Trump's meeting with Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Alaska's senators was provided by the [Washington \(DC\) Times](#) (3/9, Joling), the [Fort Worth \(TX\) Star-Telegram](#) (3/9, Joling), the [Kenai \(AK\) Peninsula Clarion](#) (3/9, Joling), and [Politico Morning Energy](#) (3/9).

### **America's Great Outdoors**

#### ***National Park Service***

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### **Statue Of Liberty To Undergo \$4.5M Renovation.**

[Fox News](#) (3/9, Fears) reports that the area surrounding the Statue of Liberty will undergo "a \$4.58 million revitalization project that was approved by the National Park Service earlier this week, it was revealed Wednesday." According to the article, "the renovations include installing a stainless steel fence around the perimeter of Lady Liberty's base and replacing broken granite pavers that surround the statue." National Park Service public affairs officer Jerry Willis said, "This is hopefully our last Hurricane Sandy recovery project."

### **This Weekend's Cold Snap Could Severely Damage D.C. Cherry Blossoms.**

The [Washington Post](#) (3/9, Samenow) reports that "a punishing, long-duration cold snap arriving this weekend" in Washington "could cause irreparable damage" for the cherry blossoms at the Tidal Basin, "which have advanced to a vulnerable stage." On Wednesday, the National Park Service announced "that the blossom buds had reached the peduncle elongation stage." However, on Friday, "an Arctic cold front will plunge into the metro region," and the Park Service's Michael Stachowicz "said



that once the temperature drops below 27 or 28 degrees for a half-hour, damage to about 10 percent of the blossoms can occur."

Additional coverage was provided by Fox News (3/9), and WRC-TV Washington (DC) Washington (3/9, Aderoju).

### **NPS Monitoring Water Issues.**

The Rome (GA) News-Tribune (3/9, Walker) reports that the National Park Service is "taking a hard look at water resources in and around parks." Ed Harvey, "a supervisory hydrologist and chief of the NPS Water Resources Division in Fort Collins, Colorado, spoke to Berry College students Wednesday night and said issues from climate change to drought and flood problems are key concerns today." He said the park service "does have some issues similar to the Georgia-Alabama-Florida water wars, where they have to deal with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and other partners to get a feel for the water demand in parks and surrounding areas."

### **Crews Clearing Blue Ridge Parkway After Rockslide.**

The AP (3/9) reports that "crews in North Carolina are working to clear a rockslide along the Blue Ridge Parkway northeast of Asheville." According to the article, "a rockslide Saturday brought down more than 100 tons of rocks on the parkway just south of the Craggy Gardens Visitors Center."

### **Tour Guide Cited For Trying To Sneak Group To Halemaumau Crater.**

The AP (3/9) reports that "a French tour guide is facing up to six months in jail for allegedly trying to take a tour group into the closed area of the erupting Kilauea volcano's Halemaumau Crater." The National Park Service on Wednesday "spotted the group of 14 people trying to visit Halemaumau Crater." According to the article, "members of the tour group were cited for violation of closure, which carries a \$100 penalty." Chief Ranger John Broward said, "This is a serious violation. Areas surrounding Halemaumau Crater are closed because of extremely hazardous volcanic conditions that include high concentrations of toxic gases and particulates, ongoing volcanic explosions and frequent collapses of the crater walls."

### **Woman Accused Of Running Over Smokies Park Ranger Arrested.**

The AP (3/9) reports that "Tennessee investigators have arrested a woman who they say ran over a Great Smoky Mountains National Park ranger's foot and struck a deputy with her car before being shot last month." Chelsey Dunbar, 28, was "arrested Wednesday on multiple charges, including aggravated assault."

### **Additional Coverage: Harriet Tubman Visitor Center Opens This Weekend.**

Additional coverage that the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center opens this weekend was provided by the [Washington Post](#) (3/9, Page-Kirby).

### ***Fish and Wildlife Service***

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#### **Texas Land Commissioner Wants Protections For Endangered Warbler Removed.**

The [Austin \(TX\) American Statesman](#) (3/9, Price) reports that Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush, "determined to remove special habitat protections for" the golden-cheeked warbler, "said Thursday that he is preparing to sue the federal government on the matter." However, "birders and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service disagree with Bush's premise that the warbler has fully recovered from the circumstances that landed the bird on the endangered species in the first place." The dispute "promises to be a test case for the Trump administration's approach to endangered species protections."

Additional coverage was provided by the [San Antonio Express-News](#) (3/9, Gibbons).

#### **Advocates Worry Rebounding Gray Wolf Numbers Could Backfire.**

[Cronkite News](#) (3/9, Guzman) reports that "populations of endangered Mexican gray wolves have reached their highest numbers since reintroduction efforts began nearly 20 years ago, but rather than cheer the success, environmentalists are worried it could backfire on the struggling animals." According to the article, "with wolf numbers and wolf predation on the rise, state, local and cattle industry officials have renewed their push to have a greater say in controlling its population." Sen. Jeff Flake "reintroduced a bill last month to require that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service work with states, counties, and local stakeholders to sustain wolf populations without adversely impacting livestock, wild game or recreation."

#### **FWS Expected To Downlist Manatees' Status.**

[WKMG-TV](#) Orlando, FL (3/9) reports that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is "expected to 'downlist' the West Indian manatee's status from 'endangered' to 'threatened' meaning the species is on the road to recovery." In 2016, the FWS "sought public comment on a petition to reclassify the West Indian manatee because 'they no longer meet the definition of endangered,' the petition said." The article notes that "the number of manatees has steadily increased over the past three years with 6,620 as the highest number to date this year since the survey was first conducted in 1991."

#### **Rhino At French Zoo Killed For Horn.**

The [Washington Post](#) (3/9, Brulliard) reports that "the slaughter of a

white rhinoceros at a zoo near Paris this week was a brazen escalation for a global wildlife trafficking industry behind a poaching crisis in Africa.” According to the article, “the incident made clear that possession of a rhino horn which is desired in parts of Asia as an investment or as medicine, despite no scientific evidence of its medicinal efficacy can be so lucrative that poachers were willing to break through a gate and two locked doors, as security cameras rolled, to shoot a caged rhino and saw off its horn.” Dan Ashe, president and chief executive of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, “said such a crime ‘was not something that we were anticipating. ‘Surprise’ is a good word.’” The incident raised worries that it could have happened here since “zoos aren’t impenetrable, and rhino-horn trafficking networks exist here, too.”

### **Purple Line Faces Delays Ahead Of Tree Clearing Deadline.**

The [Washington Post](#) (3/9, Shaver) reports that the Maryland Transit Administration is expected to miss a March 31 deadline for clearing 43 acres of trees for the light-rail Purple Line. The delay is due to a pending lawsuit. The article mentions that starting from April 1, “a federal law that protects the nests of migratory birds will prohibit the MTA from cutting into ‘forested’ areas until September almost a year after the line’s construction was initially scheduled to begin.” The article notes that on Wednesday, officials from the transit system seemed to be unaware of the restriction.

### ***Bureau of Land Management***

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### **Black Rock Desert Due For Environmental Assessment.**

The [Reno \(NV\) Gazette-Journal](#) (3/9, Kane) reports that “the Black Rock Desert is due for an environmental checkup one that specifically determines whether Burning Man is having an impact on the land though it may be a while before the desert gets a diagnosis.” The most recent environmental assessment, conducted in 2011, expired last year. However, “it could be another two or more years before Burning Man and the Bureau of Land Management are able to complete another assessment.” Mark Hall, acting Black Rock Field Office Manager for the Bureau of Land Management, said, “I wish we were farther along, but, given the other projects we have, it’s taken a bit longer.”

### **BLM’s Dillon Field Office Seeks Input On Placer Mining Plan Near Twin Bridges.**

The [Montana Standard](#) (3/9) reports that the Bureau of Land Management’s Dillon Field Office seeks “feedback on a Plan of Operations for placer mining along Rochester Creek in Madison County, west of Twin Bridges.” The operator is proposing to mine “approximately 2,500 feet of Rochester Creek, processing about 40,000 cubic yards of gravel to recover gold from patented and unpatented mining claims.”

## **Securing America's Energy Future**

### ***Onshore Energy Development***

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#### **BLM To Auction Off Elko Acres In Oil, Gas Lease Sale.**

The Elko (NV) Daily Free Press (3/9) reports that the Bureau of Land Management "generated \$63,181.50 from its last sale of oil and gas leases in the Elko District, and is preparing to auction five times as many acres this month." The auction is scheduled for March 14 and "includes 67 parcels totaling nearly 116,000 acres in the Elko District."

#### **Sgamma Cautions Against "Misinformation" On The BLM Venting Rule.**

Western Energy Alliance president Kathleen Sgamma writes for The Hill (3/9) in its "Congress Blog" the oil and gas industry "long ago adopted an ethic of environmental stewardship" and has "met every legitimate environmental challenge through technological innovation and responsible regulation." Sgamma argues that operational circumstances sometimes necessitate venting and flaring and "several studies show that leaks from natural gas wells are just over one percent." Sgamma cautions against "misinformation" from the environmental lobby ahead of the a Senate vote to overturn the Bureau of Land Management's waste prevention rule.

### ***Renewable Energy***

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#### **FWS Issuing 30-year Take Permits For Eagles.**

The Boulder (CO) Weekly (3/9, Turner) reports that "after years of requests from the wind energy industry, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will now be able to issue wind energy companies 30-year 'incidental take permits' for eagles." The FWS national raptor coordinator, Brian Millsap, "played a key role in finalizing the new permit." He said, "We're not causing these projects to be built. Our job is to understand the impact of wind development on eagles and on other species, and our job is to minimize that as much as we can."

#### **Deepwater Officials Hold Hearing On Planned Wind Farm Off Rhode Island.**

Newsday (NY) (3/9, Harrington) reports developers of the large "offshore wind farm" off the coast of Rhode Island "gave the first glimpse" yesterday "of the project's proposed undersea cable route and connecting point in the Hamptons, drawing concern from fishermen who fear loss of fishing grounds." Officials with Deepwater Wind "said a 50-mile cable from the turbine array off Rhode Island will make land at one of two proposed sites on town or state parkland on Napeague Bay." Deepwater CEO Jeff Grybowski "said the power cable will travel seven miles underground to a LIPA substation on Buell Lane in East Hampton village."

### **Judge Declines To Hear Lawsuit Against Tule Wind Project Expansion.**

The [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) (3/8, Nikolewski) reports a U.S. District Court judge in San Diego on Monday turned down a lawsuit filed by the Protect Our Communities Foundation in an effort to halt an expansion to the Tule Wind Project. The group argues that the turbines pose a danger to birds, including golden eagles. However, Avangrid Renewables "has long insisted the wind farm is safe." The article mentions that Southern California Edison has signed a 15-year power purchase agreement for the first half of the project, known as Tule I, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Tule II will not be built "until Tule I is finished and has been permitted for as many as 24 turbines with a capacity of 69 megawatts."

### **Empowering Native American Communities**

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### **Connecticut Suit Could Have Far-reaching Impact On Tribal Compacts.**

The [Albuquerque \(NM\) Journal](#) (3/9, Shepard) reports that a case before the U.S. Supreme Court could have implications on "just how far Native American tribes' immunity from lawsuits should extend." The case arose when a couple was "injured after being rear-ended by a tribal casino limo driver 70 miles from the Mohegan Sun casino in Connecticut and off the reservation." The Mohegans argue "the case is a simple money grab and worry it could open a floodgate of lawsuits and diminish tribal power." The couple's attorney, Eric Miller, "sums up the case differently in written arguments: 'A tribal employee transporting gamblers to and from a casino should not be treated as somehow akin to a foreign ambassador.'"

### **Tackling America's Water Challenges**

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### **Heavy Snowfall Portends Flooding In Major Wyoming River Basins.**

The [AP](#) (3/9, Moen) reports that "the heavy snowfall so far this winter in parts of central and western Wyoming has forecasters expecting potential spring and early summer flooding in some major river basins that hasn't been seen in decades." National Weather Service hydrologist Jim Fahey "said Thursday that parts of the Upper Green, Sweetwater and Snake river basins are seeing unusually high snowpacks and potentially high runoffs as the snow begins to melt." According to the article, "in anticipation of a high spring runoff, the Bureau of Reclamation has started releasing more water from the Jackson Lake Dam in Grand Teton National Park north of Jackson."

### **Federal Highway Administration Data Deems Parker Dam Bridge "Functionally Obsolete."**

The [Parker \(AZ\) Pioneer](#) (3/9, Curtis) reports Federal Highway

Administration data found on the National Bridge Inventory Database website shows the Parker Dam bridge is "functionally obsolete," although the article notes the data has not been "officially confirmed." According to the article, "five separate data entries recorded on the website indicates that a bridge on Parker Dam Road intersecting the Colorado River and maintained by the Bureau of Reclamation as 'functionally obsolete.'"

## **Top National News**

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### **Trump And Ryan Push GOP Healthcare Law Against Conservative Resistance.**

Coverage of House Republicans' American Health Care Act focuses on both the White House and Capitol Hill. Several reports and analyses say that President Trump has gone into action in support of the measure, putting his famed dealmaking abilities to the test. While Trump has been reaching out to conservatives, some analyses say this could endanger the long-term prospects of the legislation by making it unpalatable in the Senate. Meanwhile, House Speaker Ryan and other members of the GOP leadership are going to bat for the measure, saying it is the best plan that can be passed into law. Coverage is all but silent about Democratic opposition, focusing almost entirely on the divisions within the GOP.

ABC World News Tonight (3/9, story 6, 3:05, Muir) reported, "President Trump and his book, 'The Art of the Deal' tonight, putting that art form to the test, giving the hard sell behind the scenes to the Republican plan to replace Obamacare. ... But he faces a divided Republican party on this." ABC's Jonathan Karl: "President Trump declared today he is well on his way to keeping a top campaign promise, repealing and replacing Obamacare. ... But the plan is facing mounting opposition. The American Medical Association and the American Hospital Association have both come out against it. One analysis projects up to 10 million fewer Americans would have health insurance. And some prominent conservatives are lining up against it too." The CBS Evening News (3/9, story 5, 2:30, Pelley) reported, "Today, President Trump said [via Twitter], 'Despite what you hear in the press, healthcare is coming along great.' Well, what you've heard in the press is that AARP and the American Medical Association are against the Republican replacement for Obamacare, and so are conservative Republicans who say the House bill should be scrapped."

The New York Times (3/9, A1, Haberman, Pear) reports that Trump, "after a halting start, is now marshaling the full power of his office to win over holdout conservatives and waffling senators to support" the bill. The President "is deploying the salesman tactics he sharpened over several decades in New York real estate," and "is plunging personally into his first major legislative fight, getting behind a bill that has been denounced by many health care providers and scorned by his base on the right."

The Los Angeles Times (3/9, Bierman, Mascaro) says Trump is "in 'sell mode,' as his staff calls it," though "some still doubt his commitment

to the latest congressional plan to alter President Obama's signature healthcare law." USA Today (3/9, Collins) says that if Trump "can get his party united" behind the bill, "it might just be his best deal yet. The former businessman and his administration have kicked off 'a full-court press' to get skeptical conservative lawmakers and advocacy groups to a yes.'" In a story that was the lead on the Drudge Report on Thursday evening, the Daily Mail (3/9, Martosko) reports that Trump "is asking congressional conservatives to go bowling," inviting House Freedom Caucus members to the White House bowling alley for pizza and a discussion of the bill. Reuters (3/9, Cornwell, Abutaleb) calls the bill "Trump's first legislative test." Politico (3/9, Nelson) says "Trump and other White House officials have been bullish about the legislation's prospects," but it "faces stiff opposition" in both houses and from both parties.

CNN (3/9, Diamond) reports on its website that in order to win over conservatives, the White House "is privately lining up behind conservative calls to roll back Obamacare's Medicaid expansion sooner than the health care reform bill currently calls for." But that "could blow up the already fragile efforts to repeal" the ACA. Still, The Hill (3/9, Sullivan) reports that Republican Study Committee Chairman Rep. Mark Walker said such a change would make it more likely that his group would support the bill. Politico (3/9, Bade, Everett) says Trump's "early efforts to court conservatives" are "backfiring in Congress" emboldening the far-right to demand changes that could repel centrists critical to its passage. While the president has given a full-throated endorsement of the bill, he's also suggested he's open to "negotiations."

The New York Times (3/9, Peters) says that groups backed by the Koch brothers "and other powerful players on the right, such as Club for Growth and Heritage Action for America, have come out quickly and strongly against the bill," and "activists are already swarming Capitol Hill and demanding that Congress take a harder line and pass a repeal measure that would leave no trace of the Affordable Care Act." The infighting "has many conservatives asking why now that they control both houses of Congress and the White House and have remained largely united so far they are picking a fight with each other."

Avik Roy of the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity, a former policy adviser to Republican presidential candidates Mitt Romney, Marco Rubio, and Rick Perry, writes in the Washington Post (3/9), that the bill "is nothing close to Obamacare Lite." It would repeal the ACA Medicaid expansion "and entirely defund its health insurance exchanges. The bill would transform Medicaid into a modernized, dynamic insurance program: a policy achievement that would be akin to the 1996 welfare reform bill times 10." And while some conservatives have criticized its tax credit component, that idea "has been around since long before Obamacare was even a word."

***House GOP Leaders Defend Legislation.*** NBC Nightly News (3/9,

story 2, 2:05, Pelley) reported, "Millions of Americans wonder what will happen to their insurance. House Speaker Paul Ryan rolled up his sleeves trying to beat back a revolt from within his own party." Ryan: "This is the once in a lifetime opportunity. This is the closest we will ever get to repealing and replacing Obamacare." The Washington Times (3/9, Dinan) reports that Ryan "put reporters through a seminar Thursday, hoping to earn better coverage of the GOP's efforts to repeal and replace Obamacare by explaining the problems with the existing law and describing how Congress is trying to wipe it clean." USA Today (3/9, Kelly) reports that Ryan warned against making significant changes to the bill, saying that could kill its chances in the Senate.

House Majority Leader McCarthy said on Fox News' Hannity (3/9), "If you listen to the Freedom Caucus at the very beginning of January, they asked us to make sure that we would not repeal without the placing of the time. If you look at the conservative bill that we have before you, much of that element was Tom Price's bill when it was inside the House and you had numbers of Freedom Caucus cosponsor that." McCarthy added, "If we repealed everything, we would still need 60 votes to pass something new. Then you're going to have to negotiate with all those Democrats."

House Majority Whip Scalise said on CNN's The Lead (3/9) that "a lot of those people that were supportive of Obamacare...are not surprisingly against us dismantling Obamacare because they like the government being in charge of those kind of decisions that really should be made by families and doctors. So that's really at the heart of this."

**Pence: GOP "Beginning From A Position Of Consensus."** Vice President Pence said in an interview with Fox News Special Report (3/9) that there is "very broad consensus among Republicans in the House and Senate and the American people that Obamacare is failed. ... We are really beginning from a position of consensus on what we need to accomplish but in an open legislative process, we are working through how to get there. ... What the American people are seeing is really what they expect Congress to do and that's to propose and consider amendments to see if there's ways to improve legislation."

**Measure Passes Two House Committees Along Party Lines.** The AP (3/9) reports that the House Energy and Commerce Committee "cleared the GOP bill on a party-line vote of 31-23 Thursday after more than 27 hours of debate." The Ways and Means Committee approved the legislation on a party-line vote just after 4:00 a.m. Thursday. The Wall Street Journal (3/9, A1, Armour, Hackman, Rubin) says the measure now goes to the House Budget Committee. The Washington Post (3/9, A1, Eilperin, Debonis, Viebeck) also reports on the votes.

The Washington Post (3/8, Tumulty, Ehrenfreund) writes that the committees advanced the "sweeping health legislation without the benefit of an objective estimate of its impact" from the Congressional Budget Office "the legislative equivalent of flying into a storm without



instruments." Gloria Borger said on [CNN's Situation Room](#) (3/9), "I think part of the reason for the rush...is that they want to get this done before a big recess so members of Congress don't have to go home and get hit over the head by their constituents about the problems they have with this legislation. So, I think they're pushing it because they know that the longer it sits out there...the more it really is in jeopardy."

Sen. Tom Cotton said on [CNN's The Lead](#) (3/9), "There's no urgency here. There is no deadline. We need to get healthcare reform right. We don't have to get it fast." Rep. Charlie Dent similarly said on [MSNBC's Morning Joe](#) (3/9), "I think there has been too much of a focus here on arbitrary time lines and deadlines and base lines. This issue to me is about the people who are going to be impacted by the decisions we make."

***Some Conservatives Call On Senate To Use Reconciliation To Pass Bill.***

Even if the bill makes it through the House, it faces longer odds in the Senate, so some conservatives are calling for a significant rules change. [Politico](#) (3/9, Schor, Haberkorn) reports that "a growing number of conservative lawmakers" want the Senate to advance the bill through "budget reconciliation" and to overrule the Senate parliamentarian if she doesn't decide in their favor." But that "would require the unlikely buy-in" of Senate Majority Leader McConnell, "a noted institutionalist." [The Hill](#) (3/9, Bolton) reports that Sen. Ted Cruz also says that Pence, as Senate president, "should be prepared to overrule the Senate parliamentarian to bulk up the controversial health measure."

[USA Today](#) (3/9, Collins) reports that Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Chairman Lamar Alexander called the bill "a good start," but said he is "not yet ready to commit to voting for the package." Alexander said, "Let's wait to see what comes out of the House."

***GOP Says Bill Would Drop Widely Used Mental Health Mandate.*** The [Washington Post](#) (3/9, Ingraham) reports that House Republicans have confirmed that the bill "would remove a requirement to offer substance abuse and mental-health coverage that's now used by at least 1.3 million Americans."

**Spicer: "We're Not Aware" If Trump Is Under Investigation Over Russia Ties.**

The [CBS Evening News](#) (3/9, story 3, 2:05, Pelley) reported that "the FBI has been investigating communications between [Trump] campaign officials and Russian operatives. No one has been charged with a crime." CBS' Margaret Brennan: "Press Secretary Sean Spicer said that the White House is still not sure whether or not the President is under investigation." Spicer: "I'm not aware of it. But that's not point that we're not aware of anything." Brennan: "So you've never been told by the Justice Department that there is no investigation?" Spicer: "No." Brennan: "So there might be one. You just don't know." Spicer: "Right, I said we're not aware and I'm not aware." Brennan: "The Justice

Department said they never gave you the assurances that you gave us." Spicer: "No, the assurance I gave you, Margaret, was that I'm not aware. if somebody asks me if I'm aware of something and I say no, the answer is no." The New York Times (3/9, Lichtblau) reports that the Justice Department "declined to confirm statements" from the White House on Wednesday that the President "was not the target of a counterintelligence investigation."

Appearing on Fox News' Special Report (3/9), Vice President Pence was asked if he is concerned about reports of connections between Trump campaign officials and Russia. Pence began by voicing confidence in "the bipartisan congressional committees that are examining information," before adding, "When [former DNI Clapper] said just a week ago that in the report he prepared by the end of the year, there was no evidence of collusion between Russian officials and our campaign, I think that speaks with great authority."

Sen. Chris Coons said on MSNBC's MTP Daily (3/9), "I think this is a critical investigation for the defense of our democracy. ... There are a lot of concerning allegations of or evidence of some ties between the Trump campaign team and Russia, but there is no hard evidence or proof yet. That doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. And in order for us to get to the bottom of this, in order for us to resolve this cloud that's hanging over the Trump Administration, I think it is important that it be fully, fairly and promptly investigated."

Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-CA) said on CNN's The Lead (3/9), "Certainly, right now this investigation has put a lot of dots up that continue to get connected." He said the public is asking "what were the personal, financial, and campaign ties that the President and his team had with Russia and we wanted to piece those together in an unclassified way so the public could follow along and also see the influence that has taken place."

***FBI Investigating Russian Bank's Ties To Trump Organization.*** Pamela Brown reported on CNN's Situation Room (3/9) that the "FBI's counterintelligence team the same one looking into Russia's suspected interference in the 2016 election is still examining" a "computer connection between the Trump organization and a Russian bank called Alpha Bank," according to "several sources familiar with the probe." Brown says the server is the same one mentioned in a Breitbart article "that a White House official said sparked Trump's series of tweets last Saturday accusing investigators of tapping his phone." However, Brown said there is no FISA warrant on that server.

***Smoking Gun: Stone Was In Contact With Guccifer 2.0.*** The Smoking Gun (3/6, Bastone) reported earlier this week that Roger Stone, "a longtime confidante and political consultant for Donald Trump," was in contact with Guccifer 2.0, a "Russian hacking group that US intelligence officials have accused of illegally breaching the Democratic National Committee's computer system and the e-mail accounts of Hillary Clinton

campaign officials in a bid to aid Trump." The contact came via private direct messages on Twitter, according to a source. The 6,100-word piece details the contact as well as Stone's long and controversial career as a GOP operative.

***Schiff Wants Dossier Author To Appear Before House Intelligence Committee.*** The Washington Times (3/9, Blake) reports that House Intelligence Committee ranking Democrat Rep. Adam Schiff said the panel will seek testimony from Christopher Steele, the "former British intelligence official attributed with assembling the scandalous dossier devoted to" President Trump that was published online in January. Schiff told MSNBC, "I'll certainly be requesting his testimony. And if there's an issue about whether he is willing to come before the committee, I can say I am more than willing to go to him, and I know there are other members of the committee that would join me in that."

The Washington Post (3/9, Phillips) reports that Rep. Maxine Waters told MSNBC on Thursday that she "is sure that some of the more salacious allegations" in the dossier are true. She said, "We already know that the part about the coverage that they have on him with sex actions is supposed to be true. They have said that that's absolutely true." The Post writes, "It's not clear who 'they' or 'them' are."

***ACLU Files Ethics Complaint Against Sessions Over "False Statements."*** BuzzFeed (3/9, Geidner) reports that the ACLU has filed an ethics complaint against Attorney General Sessions, "asking the Alabama Bar to 'determine whether he violated the Alabama Rules of Professional Conduct' in his sworn testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding his contact with Russian officials." The complaint alleges, "Mr. Sessions made false statements during sworn testimony on January 10, 2017, and in a subsequent written response to questions on January 17, 2017."

***Page Profiled.*** The AP (3/9, Pace) has a feature on Carter Page, the "little-known former investment banker and foreign policy adviser" to Trump whose contact with Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyac and travel to Russia is now playing a key role in the Russia probe.

### **Comey Discusses Trump's Wiretapping Claims With Congressional Leaders.**

ABC World News Tonight (3/9, story 2, 3:10, Muir) reported on the "late-day visit to Capitol Hill" by FBI Director Comey, "who is under mounting pressure from key lawmakers who want to know, is there any evidence at all that President Obama wiretapped Trump Tower before the election, as President Trump has claimed?" Sen. John McCain: "I think the President of the United States stated categorically that Trump Tower was wiretapped. He should come forward with the information that led him to that conclusion." ABC's Mary Bruce: "Less than 24 hours ago, two senators sent a letter to the Justice Department demanding the FBI produce any evidence that might exist. ... Privately, the FBI Director has

unsuccessfully implored the Justice Department to refute the President's claims."

NBC Nightly News (3/9, story 3, 0:30, Holt) said in a brief item that "a congressional source says the Director was there to provide an update on the subject of Trump Tower. It comes after President Trump accused former President Obama of having Trump Tower wiretapped. Neither President Trump or his White House team have provided any evidence." The CBS Evening News (3/9, story 2, 0:30, Pelley) said in a brief report that the President "has been holed up in the White House all week, not taking one question there reporters since he accused President Obama of wiretapping his phones." Politico (3/9, Wright) reports that Comey met with "the so-called 'Gang of Eight,' the top Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate, plus the chairmen and ranking Democrats on both chambers' intelligence committees."

Politico (3/9, Dawsey, Wright) writes that "calling for investigations has become a preferred tactic of the Trump administration as it seeks to change the subject, deflect the president's unproven claims, or muddy the waters when facing criticism. But even some Republican allies are questioning the wisdom of the kneejerk reaction," saying that such probes "could backfire by exposing all sorts of other untoward allegations and by giving Democrats a tool with which to bludgeon the White House."

***Pence: Administration Wants To Be Respectful Of Congressional Committees.*** Appearing on Fox News Special Report (3/9), Vice President Pence said, "I think we will let the congressional committees review it. Those are knowable answers and the bipartisan congressional committees can review the facts. ... [The Administration wants] to be very respectful of the process and ensuring that our congressional committees have the latitude get the information they need to get to the bottom of those allegations and other allegations that have been raised."

Jake Tapper said on CNN's The Lead (3/9), "Every credible person with access to intelligence says this did not happen, or they have seen no evidence that it happened. And not even the Vice President will say that he believes it happened. No one from the President's team says the charge is true. No one says, 'I believe the President.' And these are people who are paid to believe the President."

***Democrats Criticize Trump's Claim.*** Sen. Bernie Sanders said on CNN's Situation Room (3/9), "Every other day, President Trump says something which is totally preposterous. ... I think this just adds to a lot of the delusional statements that we hear from President Trump."

House Intelligence Committee ranking member Rep. Adam Schiff said on CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 (3/9), "I can only say I have really no idea what caused President Trump to assert that his predecessor was engaged in that type of criminality. It seems completely divorced from reality."

Rep. Elijah Cummings said on MSNBC's Morning Joe (3/9), "I think that was an inappropriate comment. I don't believe it and I think he

should retract it but it's a little late for that."

## **Editorial Wrap-Up**

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### **New York Times.**

**"*Stand Your Ground' Could Get Worse.*"** In an editorial, the New York Times (3/9) writes that Florida House Republicans' bill to give "accused killers even greater leeway" with the self-defense claim is "dangerous" because "prosecutors would essentially have to try a case twice." The Times says the bill moving through the Legislature builds on the 2005 Stand Your Ground law, which has created "the Wild West mayhem" already reigning in Florida courts. American Bar Association research has found an increase in homicides, reduced victims' rights, and increased racial injustice following the Stand Your Ground law.

**"*Afghanistan Is Now Trump's War.*"** In an editorial, the New York Times (3/10) writes that, as American commanders in Afghanistan call for more troops, the Administration should consider "the long history of deluded thinking about what could be accomplished if the United States committed more troops to the effort." American generals in Afghanistan have been "stymied" for years by issues including insurgent havens in Pakistan, Afghan corruption, and poor Afghan military leadership, and without "a strategy that is significantly different from previous ones," additional troops would "only temporarily" prop up the Afghan government.

### **Washington Post.**

**"*The Most Powerful Check On President Trump.*"** The Washington Post (3/9) editorializes that because President Trump's campaign promise to Americans that "they could have it all" was "probably the most effective and phoniest" of his "false promises," when he has a reality check, he will realize the need to "set priorities and make choices." The Post presents the contradictions of tax cuts, untouched entitlement programs, and federal debt reduction; the deconstruction of the "administrative state" and increased ICE deportation operations; and protecting gun ownership rights and stemming violence in Chicago. The failure of previous presidents to accomplish such lofty goals should not be blamed on "the perfidy of Washington's elite," but rather on reality.

**"*Online Dissidents Expose The Russian Prime Minister's Material Empire.*"** A Washington Post (3/9) editorial says documents released online by the Anti-Corruption Foundation, which is headed by Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny, show that Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev "has accumulated more than \$1 billion worth of property, including vast estates in Russia and Tuscany and two yachts." The Post editorializes this is "a testimony not only to the staggering corruption of the regime of Vladimir Putin, but also to the power of the Internet and social media to expose it and inform Russians about it." The Post argues that while the Trump Administration, "which has been backed

up by Russian propaganda outlets in denouncing reports on its own activities as 'fake news,' can hardly be expected to assist courageous dissidents such as Mr. Navalny in exposing truths about the Kremlin," other Western governments and nongovernmental organizations should endeavor to help because distributing evidence of Putin's corruption "would be an appropriate response to Russia's disinformation campaigns in the West."

***"Scott Pruitt Demonstrates What Climate Denial Sounds Like."*** A Washington Post (3/9) editorial says EPA Administrator Pruitt's statement in a CNBC interview that carbon dioxide is not the "primary contributor" to global warming does not represent "'skepticism,' a term that implies reasonable doubt in the face of inadequate information." Rather, it is "denial of a scientific consensus built on ample evidence that gets stronger every year, and it is denial of Mr. Pruitt's essential responsibilities as the nation's chief environmental watchdog."

#### **Wall Street Journal.**

***"How To Think About The Trade Deficit."*** In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal (3/9) sets out to provide a tutorial on trade and the wealth of nations to counter the recent op-ed by National Trade Council Director Peter Navarro that emphasized the economically harmful effects of trade deficits. The Journal writes that a trade deficit is often a sign of economic prosperity because it means the US has a capital surplus: Americans buy more foreign goods and services, and foreigners invest in American real estate, stocks, debt, and dollar bank accounts. Getting rid of a trade deficit is difficult because it is often the side effect of a healthy economy. Citing the input of prominent economists from 1978, the Journal suggests that interpreting a trade deficit or surplus as bad or good, respectively, is often incorrect and not useful.

***"6-1/2 More Years Of Comey?"*** In an editorial, the Wall Street Journal (3/9) asserts that FBI Director James Comey should step down immediately to allow the FBI to rehabilitate its credibility from the perspective of the American public. The Journal argues that Comey's decisions caused the multiple controversies plaguing his tenure that have damaged the bureau's integrity.

***"Politically Correct Juries."*** The Wall Street Journal (3/9) editorializes that the decision penned by Justice Anthony Kennedy in the 5-3 decision last week has no constitutional basis and threatens to corrupt juries with political standards based on the liberal focus on race, gender, and class. Kennedy's majority opinion leaves open the definition of unacceptable racial prejudice with only an ambiguous caveat to guide judges on when to overturn jury verdicts. The decision also fails to protect from religious prejudice and sexism, which are also constitutionally protected.

#### **Big Picture**

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#### **Headlines From Today's Front Pages.**

***Wall Street Journal:***

[GOP Health Plan Advances After Clearing Two Panels](#)  
[Oil Glut Worries Resurface, Triggering Market Tumble](#)  
[Micromanager-In-Chief Modi Upends How India Is Run](#)  
[AIG CEO Peter Hancock To Resign After Turnaround Plan Falters](#)

***New York Times:***

[After Halting Start, Trump Plunges Into Effort To Repeal Health Law](#)  
[EPA Chief Doubts Consensus View Of Climate Change](#)  
[South Korea Removes President Park Geun-Hye](#)  
[As Rebels Move Out Of Colombia Drug Trade, Corporations Look To Move In](#)  
[WikiLeaks Will Help Tech Companies Fix Security Flaws, Assange Says](#)  
[Cuomo's \\$1.4 Billion Plan Targets Brooklyn In Fight Against Poor Health And Poverty](#)  
[The Rise, Then Shame, Of Baylor Nation](#)

***Washington Post:***

[Behind The Political Lexicon Of The Trump White House](#)  
[South Korean President Unanimously Impeached](#)  
[Court Filings Describe NFL Misuse Of Painkillers](#)  
[Amid Objections, GOP Health Bill Is Pushed Forward](#)  
[House GOP Quietly Advances Revisions To Tort Law](#)

***Financial Times:***

[AIG Chief To Quit As Recovery Plan Flounders](#)  
[Euro Jumps As ECB Declares Victory Against Deflation](#)  
[Montenegro Coup Suspects Push For Poll To Foil NATO Bid](#)  
[New York And London Battle For Saudi Aramco IPO](#)

***Washington Times:***

[A Scholar And An Accused Killer: A Tale Of Two Dreamers](#)  
[Trump's Coattails: Special Elections To Reflect Affirmation Or Backlash](#)  
[Republicans Make Progress On Obamacare Replacement](#)  
[Trump Pushes Back Against Reports Of Chaotic White House](#)  
[Border Wall Helps Secure Turkish City Protecting Syrian Refugees](#)  
[Billionaire George Soros Fuels Democrats' Push To Lower Voting Age To 17](#)

***Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:***

**ABC:** Germany Train Station Attack; Obama Wiretap Investigation; CIA Leak Investigation; Severe Weather; Weather Forecast; Healthcare Reform Plan; EPA Admin-Climate Change Comment; Florida Bank Robbery; Gymnastics Team Sex Abuse Trial; Teenage Hikers Murder Investigation; Southern California Wildflowers; Child Saves Mother.  
**CBS:** Female Military Member Photos Investigation; Trump-Obama Wiretap Claim; Trump-Russia Connection Investigation; CIA Leak

Investigation; Trump Supporters-Healthcare Reform; EPA Admin-Climate Change Comment; Iraq-Mosul Assault; IRA Scams; Wall Street News; Beverage Consumption; Skydiving Dogs.

**NBC:** CIA Leak Investigation; Healthcare Reform Plan; Obama Wiretap Investigation; Trump-Conflict Of Interest; AT&T 911 Outage; Germany Train Station Attack; Opioid-Oxycontin Lawsuit; Food Delivery Robot; Severe Weather; Beverage Consumption; E-Cigarette Fire; Girl Scout Cookies.

***Network TV At A Glance:***

CIA Leak Investigation 7 minutes, 25 seconds

Healthcare Reform Plan 5 minutes, 10 seconds

Trump-Obama Wiretap Claim 4 minutes, 10 seconds

Germany Train Station Attack 3 minutes, 10 seconds

Weather 3 minutes

EPA Admin-Climate Change Comment 2 minutes, 30 seconds

Beverage Consumption 40 seconds

***Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:***

**ABC:** South Korea-President Impeached; Mississippi Rail Crossing Accident; Healthcare Reform Plan; Wall Street News.

**CBS:** Healthcare Reform Plan; Low Grade Infrastructure; Female Military Member Photos Investigation; South Korea-President Impeached; Severe Weather; Wall Street News.

**FOX:** Healthcare Reform Plan; Revised Immigration Order-Legal Challenge; Germany Train Station Attack.

**NPR:** Revised Immigration Order-Legal Challenge; Low Grade Infrastructure; Afghanistan-US General Wants Reinforcement; Wall Street News; South Korea-President Impeached; Germany Train Station Attack; Boston-St. Patrick's Day Parade.

**Washington Schedule**

**Today's Events In Washington.**

**White House:**

PRESIDENT TRUMP Leads a healthcare discussion with key House Committee Chairmen; speaks with President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority by telephone; has lunch with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; meets with Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Ben Carson.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE Joins the President for a healthcare discussion with key House Committee Chairmen; hosts a healthcare listening session with conservative leaders; hosts a reception for the Indiana National Guard

**US Senate:** No publicly announced event.

**US House:** 9:00 AM House Armed Services subcommittee hearing on effects of the sequester and CRs Tactical Air and Land Forces



Subcommittee hearing on 'The Effect of Sequestration and Continuing Resolutions on Marine Corps Modernization and Readiness', with testimony from U.S. Marine Corps Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources Lt. Gen. Gary Thomas Location: Rm 2118, Rayburn House Office Bldg, Washington, DC [www.armedservices.house.gov](http://www.armedservices.house.gov)  
<https://twitter.com/HASCRpublicans>

9:00 AM House debates Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act House of Representatives meets for legislative business, with agenda including 'H.R. 720 Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act of 2017' Location: Washington, DC <http://www.house.gov/>

**Other:** 3:30 PM CAIR, SAALT, Civil Rights Partners, Members of Congress to Hold Vigil in Honor of Victims of Hate Violence The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) will join South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) and a number of other civil rights organizations\* will hold a vigil with members of Congress on the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., to honor and bring national attention to the victims of hate violence in South Asian, Sikh, Muslim, Arab-American communities across the country. Contact: CAIR Government Affairs Director Robert McCaw, 202-742-6448, [rmccaw@cair.com](mailto:rmccaw@cair.com) Location: Capitol Steps on House of Representatives Side (enter is at the intersection of I <http://www.cair.com> <https://twitter.com/cairnational>

## **Last Laughs**

### **Late Night Political Humor.**

**Jimmy Kimmel:** "Trump has made it known that he doesn't want the new healthcare bill to be called Trumpcare for a very good reason. The President is a humble man; he doesn't like to put his name on things."

**Jimmy Kimmel:** "You know how the government could make some money? Put it on pay-per-view. I would gladly pay a hundred dollars to watch Donald Trump and Ted Cruz eat dinner together. It would be the best episode of 'Celebrity Wife Swap' ever."

**Stephen Colbert:** "Well, the GOP's new healthcare bill cleared its first hurdle early this morning, when it was passed by the House Ways and Means Committee, after roughly 18 hours of debate. And anyone who's spent 18 hours trying to pass something knows what you get at the end."

**Stephen Colbert:** "According to one GOP operative, 'Pretty much anything with the pejorative suffix on it, 'care,' is going to be viewed unfavorably by conservatives.' Yes, conservatives don't want to be associating with caring. That's why the official mascot of Obamacare repeal is 'Suck-it, the don't-care bear.'"

**Stephen Colbert:** "Of course, one thing Trump is willing to put his name on is accusations that President Obama illegally tapped his phones. Trump demanded that Congress investigate his charges, which they're going to get to right after they find those three million illegal voters, and what really happened to Arnold Schwarzenegger's ratings."

**Stephen Colbert:** "So, on March 20, Congress will hold a Russia hearing. A fitting name because, as we know, Russia is listening."

**James Corden:** "Now we're going to get right into the Trump Administration news. Just brightens every day, doesn't it?"

**James Corden:** "Today Scott Pruitt, the new head of the Environmental Protection Agency, went against the entire scientific community by saying that carbon dioxide is not a primary contributor to global warming. I will go out on a limb here and say that this guy may not be the best choice to head up the EPA. Yes, because not only does Pruitt not see the forest through the trees, he wants to cut down all the trees and build a Cinnabon."

**James Corden:** "Donald Trump selected his ambassador to Russia, and it's former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman. ... This is great news for Trump. He finally has someone in his Administration who is actually supposed to meet with the Russians. Jon Huntsman's first job as ambassador will be to exchange gifts with his Russian counterpart, and that's tough. Because what do you give somebody who already gave you the White House?"

**Trevor Noah:** "Why are Republicans in such a rush to repeal Obamacare? 4:30 a.m.? No one's ever made a good decision at 4:30 a.m."

**Trevor Noah:** "That's right. Trump and his people will not forget you unless you are a Russian ambassador. That never happened."

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