

American Nephrology Nurses Association

Weekly Capitol Hill Update – Wednesday, August 7, 2019

Schedules: White House and Congress

WHITE HOUSE

- 9am: Trump departs White House for Dayton, Ohio; arrives in Ohio at 10:35am
 - 12:45pm: Trump departs Ohio for El Paso, Texas
 - 3:45pm: Trump arrives in El Paso
 - 6:20pm: Trump departs El Paso en route to Washington D.C.
 - 9:55pm: Trump arrives back in Washington

CONGRESS

- House, Senate out until September

Congressional, Health Policy, and Political News

- **Judicial Emergencies Magnified Under Trump:** Federal Judge Ricardo Martinez has had to get creative in dealing with a serious shortage of judges in his Seattle-based court. He's tapped bankruptcy judges, magistrate judges, and senior judges that have gone into semi-retirement. What he doesn't have are enough active district court judges.
 - While the Republican-led Senate has pushed through Trump's judicial selections at a historic pace, no nominees have been put forward for vacancies in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington. And all three of the active judges Martinez does have – including himself – will be eligible to take senior status in September. The combination of lengthy refill times and soaring caseloads per judge means the vacancies in Martinez's court meet the federal court administration system's criteria for a judicial emergency. His four emergencies are among the 54 nationwide in district courts, up from the 33 that Trump inherited from the Obama administration.
 - District courts notorious for a large volume of litigation, like New Jersey, are also feeling a pinch. Most of the emergencies are in Democratic-leaning states like Washington.

- **Early House Retirements Signal GOP Woes:** An early wave of Republican retirements in the House is bolstering Democrats' chances of holding the majority in 2020 and flipping key seats in GOP strongholds like Texas. A spike in Republican retirements in 2018 gave Democrats the chance to win some House seats that otherwise might have been out of reach. Democrats managed to flip 40 GOP-held districts, mostly in suburban areas where women and college graduates have soured on Trump.

 - While there probably won't be as many Republicans retiring in 2020, there are likely more to come as the GOP faces the prospect of Democrats maintaining or expanding their 235 to 197 advantage in the House as both parties also contest control of the Senate and White House.

- **Tech Tariffs Would Add \$1 Billion to Import Costs:** U.S. technology companies would pay an additional \$1 billion a month or more in tariffs if Trump follows through on his threat to impose duties on additional Chinese imports next month, a trade group said. Trump said last week that he plans to add a 10% tariff on essentially all remaining Chinese imports -- a category of goods valued at \$300 billion that includes a raft of consumer and tech goods. About \$250 billion in imports from China have already been hit with a 25% tariff.

 - The Consumer Technology Association said the industry paid \$1.7 billion in tariffs in June. The additional levies set to take effect on Sept. 1 would impact about \$13 billion in technology imports from China that month, including mobile phones, laptops, televisions and smartwatches, the group said.

- **2020 Democrats May Be Promising More Than They Can Deliver:** Democratic candidates are promising bold executive action on guns if they win the presidency, but they may only manage timid steps. After eight years of half-measures by President Barack Obama -- some of which were undone by a Republican Congress and the Trump administration -- experts say there's not much more executive power the president has left to control the sales and use of guns.

 - No president can ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines and require universal background checks by executive order. Those are the most sought-after changes by gun-control advocates since the shootings in Texas and Ohio. But they would require action by Congress, where gun measures have stalled year after year. That hasn't stopped the 2020 Democratic candidates from promising new gun safety measures -- with or without the help of Congress.

- **Biden Holds Sizable Lead Nationwide:** Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden still maintains a significant lead in the Democratic primary, but support for Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) is growing, a new Quinnipiac Poll released yesterday found. Biden has 32% support, trailed by Warren with 21%, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) with 14% and Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) with 7%. The latest poll shows a sizable jump for Warren and a slump for Harris since the debates last week in Detroit. A survey by Quinnipiac released before the debates in Detroit put Warren at 15% support and Harris at 12% support.

- **Schumer Spoke to Hickenlooper About Senate Run:** Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) spoke with former Colorado Gov. and presidential candidate John Hickenlooper about running for the Senate in Colorado, CNN reports, citing Hickenlooper aide Peter Cunningham. “He is still in the race for president, but he hasn’t closed the door to anything,” Cunningham told CNN. Schumer spoke to Hickenlooper late last week after debates, CNN reports. Hickenlooper is yet to qualify for next round of Democratic presidential debates, and Schumer wants him to challenge incumbent Sen. Cory Gardner (R-Colo.) in 2020, CNN reports.
- **Republicans Need Runoff to Pick Nominee for Mississippi Governor:** Mississippi Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves is looking ahead to the general election contest for governor even though he still faces another intraparty battle. A runoff will be needed to pick the GOP nominee for the first time in almost 30 years. Reeves, who has the backing of outgoing Gov. Phil Bryant (R), won 49% of the Aug. 6 primary vote, according to unofficial returns. That’s just shy of the 50% he needed to avoid the Aug. 27 runoff.

 - He faces former Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller, who garnered about 33% of the primary vote over state Rep. Robert Foster’s 17%. On the Democrats’ side, Attorney General Jim Hood won comfortably, 69% to 11% over his nearest challenger in the eight-candidate field.
- **Google Adds Regulatory Heavyweight:** Google has hired a former top official at the Office of Management and Budget to guide the tech giant as it navigates increased calls for regulation, a company spokesperson said yesterday. Michael Fitzpatrick, head of regulatory advocacy at General Electric Global Law & Policy for the past eight years, is joining Google as director of regulatory affairs within its governmental affairs office. Fitzpatrick served as associate administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, the agency within OMB that reviews all significant federal regulations, during President Obama’s first term.

 - He joins former GE colleague Karan Bhatia hired by Google in June 2018 as head of public policy. Regulatory issues facing big technology companies include data protection, privacy, content, internet of things and artificial intelligence.