



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell warned that another health care fight would be politically costly and doomed to fail.

# Obamacare repeal off table for GOP until after 2020

By LISA MASCARO and CATHERINE LUCEY  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Amid blowback from Capitol Hill, President Donald Trump switched gears again today, suggesting he never wanted Congress to vote to replace the Affordable Care Act until after the 2020 election.

Trump's new tweets shifted his rationale for the "Obamacare" fight. First he said it was his choice to push off the health care votes. Then he said he never expected there to be any votes at all until after 2020.

Trump claimed he had never intended to reopen old wounds. But in keeping the issue at the forefront, the president put fresh attention on the GOP's long-running and thus far unsuccessful effort to end ACA.

"I was never planning a vote prior to the 2020 Election on the wonderful Health-Care package that some very talented people are now developing for me & the Republican Party," Trump tweeted, adding, "I never asked Mitch McConnell for a vote before the Election."

That's not how congressional Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader McConnell, understood Trump's sudden shift to the issue last week.

The GOP's bitter internal fight over health care in 2017 remains a sore subject for the president. He often retells the story of the late

Arizona Sen. John McCain's "no" vote that killed the repeal-and-replace effort. Republicans, hit hard on health care issues during the 2018 midterm election, had no plans to take up the issue again before the next one.

Trump's fight was on display when he told Republican senators last week that his White House was developing a plan to replace the Obama health law. The sudden move stunned GOP leaders on Capitol Hill. While Trump wanted them to become "the party of health care," they feared it could be for all the wrong reasons if they were forced into a do-over of the tough votes.

McConnell on Tuesday issued a rare public disclosure of his private counsel to the president, warning that another health care fight would be politically costly and doomed to fail now that Democrats control the House. The usually tight-lipped leader said afterward that the president agreed to shelve his health care push until after the campaign.

"I made it clear to him that we were not going to be doing that in the Senate," McConnell told reporters Tuesday.

Facing a court deadline, Trump seized on health care last week, backing a lawsuit seeking to strike down the Affordable Care Act. He didn't want to cede the issue again in the 2020 campaign, according to a person familiar with the conversations.

"We're going to keep the presidency, and we'll vote in the best health care package we've ever had," Trump said.

## WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

### Trump takes a step back from threat to close southern border

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump eased up on his threats to close the southern border as officials across his administration explored half-measures that might satisfy the president's urge for action, like stopping only foot traffic at certain crossings.

Facing a surge of Central American migrants trying to enter the U.S., Trump last week threatened to seal the border this week if Mexico did not immediately halt all illegal immigration into the U.S., a move that would have enormous economic consequences on both sides of the border.

While Trump on Tuesday did not back off the idea completely, he said he was pleased with steps Mexico had taken in recent days and renewed his calls for Congress to make changes he contends would solve the problem.

With southern border facilities near a breaking point, U.S. officials are busing many migrants hundreds of miles inland and dropping them off at bus stations and churches. Trump has mocked and vowed to end that "catch and release" practice but overwhelmed authorities saw no choice.

### House Judiciary panel approves subpoenas for Mueller report

WASHINGTON — The House Judiciary Committee approved subpoenas today for special counsel Robert Mueller's full Russia report as Democrats pressure the Justice Department to release the document without redactions.

The committee voted 24-17 to give Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., permission to issue subpoenas to the Justice Department for the final report, its exhibits and any underlying evidence or materials prepared for Mueller's investigation. Nadler has not yet said if he'll send the subpoenas.

House Democrats had given Attorney General William Barr until Tuesday to produce the full report to Congress. The Justice Department ignored that deadline, with Barr telling committee chairmen in a letter last week that a redacted version of the full 300-page report would be released by mid-April, "if not sooner."

The vote further escalates the Democrats' battle with the Justice Department over how much of the report they will be able to see, a fight that could eventually end up in court if the two sides can't settle their differences through negotiation. Democrats have said they will not accept redactions and want to see the evidence unfiltered by Barr.

### Police: Suspected killer of rapper Hussle arrested

LOS ANGELES — Police on Tuesday arrested a man they say fatally shot rapper Nipsey Hussle and evaded authorities for two days.

Eric Holder, 29, was captured in Bellflower, a Los Angeles-area city about 20 miles southeast of Hussle's clothing store, where the musician was shot Sunday.

Hussle and Holder knew each other, and the two had some kind of personal dispute in the hours before the rapper was killed, Police Chief Michel Moore said.

The police chief and the president of the city's Police Commission had been scheduled to meet with Hussle on Monday to discuss the relationship between the police force and the inner city.

### Brunei invokes laws allowing stoning for gay sex, adultery

SINGAPORE — New Islamic criminal laws that took effect in Brunei today, punishing gay sex and adultery by stoning offenders to death, have triggered an outcry from countries, rights groups and celebrities far beyond the tiny Southeast Asian nation's shores.

The penalties were provided for under new sections of Brunei's Shariah Penal Code. Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah instituted the code in 2014 to bolster the influence of Islam in the oil-rich monarchy of around 430,000 people, two-thirds of whom are Muslim.

Even before 2014, homosexuality was already punishable in Brunei by a jail term of up to 10 years. The first stage of the Shariah Penal Code included fines or jail for offenses such as pregnancy out of wedlock or failing to pray on Fridays.

But under the new laws — which also apply to children and foreigners, even if they are not Muslim — those found guilty of gay sex can be stoned to death or whipped. Adulterers risk death by stoning too, while thieves face amputation of a right hand on their first offense and a left foot on their second.



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