

News

World News Briefs

Facing Strong Pushback, GOP Leaders Advance Health Care Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — Over the strong objections of key conservatives and Democrats, House Republican leaders are forging ahead with a health care plan that scraps major parts of the Obama-era overhaul.

The House Ways and Means Committee and the Energy and Commerce Committee will convene what are expected to be marathon sessions on Wednesday to start voting on the legislation. President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence back the plan to repeal Barack Obama's health care law, and Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., is confidently predicting it will pass the House.

But many fellow Republicans don't seem to be listening.

On Tuesday, less than 24 hours after the GOP health bill was launched, a powerful conservative backlash threatened to sink it.

"As the bill stands today, it is Obamacare 2.0," according to a statement by the billionaire Koch Brothers-backed Americans for Prosperity and FreedomWorks groups. "Passing it would be making the same mistake that President Obama, Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi made in 2010. Millions of Americans would never see the improvements in care they were promised, just as Obamacare failed to deliver on its promises."

Rubble and Ash in Mosul Museum Retaken from Islamic State

MOSUL, Iraq (AP) — The antiquities museum in the Iraqi city of Mosul is in ruins, with exhibition halls housing piles of rubble and the basement filled

with ankle-deep drifts of ash.

Associated Press reporters were granted rare access to the museum on Wednesday after Iraqi forces retook it from the Islamic State group earlier this week.

They found the jagged remains of what appeared to have been an ancient Assyrian bull statue and fragments from cuneiform tablets.

IS captured Mosul in 2014 and released a video the following year showing fighters smashing artifacts in the museum with sledgehammers. The extremists view ancient artifacts as idols.

Iraqi officials at the time said most of what the militants destroyed were copies, as much of the museum's inventory had been moved to Baghdad for safe-keeping.

10 Years Gone: No Word of Ex-FBI Man Lost in Iran on CIA Job

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Ten years after a former FBI agent working on an unauthorized CIA mission disappeared in Iran, his family hopes U.S. President Donald Trump will do something America's last two presidents have been unable to achieve: Finally bring him home.

Robert Levinson's family told The Associated Press this week that Trump's background as a deal-making businessman and his harder line on Iran could be an asset in finally determining what happened to the investigator, whose 69th birthday is Friday.

They described the heartbreak of seeing other American prisoners in Iran freed while the mystery surrounding his disappearance remains. They also acknowledged the challenge of keeping his case in the public eye, as he now has been held captive longer than any American in history, if he remains



Iraqi security forces advance during fighting against Islamic State militants in western Mosul, Iraq, Wednesday. IS captured Mosul in 2014 and released video showing fighters smashing museum artifacts with sledgehammers.

alive.

"We believe people can survive 10 years under any circumstances. In the worst places, people survive. We know Bob is alive," his wife, Christine Levinson, told the AP. "Everyone else has gotten out of Iran, but Bob has been left behind every single time. It's now time for him to be returned home to his family."

Levinson disappeared from Iran's Kish Island on March 9, 2007. For years, U.S. officials would only say that Levinson, a meticulous FBI investigator credited with busting Russian and Italian mobsters, was working for a private firm on his trip.

China Says North Korea Could Suspend Nukes for Halt in US Drills

BEIJING (AP) — China's foreign minister said Wednesday that North Korea could suspend its nuclear and missile activities in exchange for a halt in joint U.S.-South Korea military drills, in an unusually public proposal that analysts said showed Beijing's growing alarm over the tensions.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said frictions between the North and Washington and Seoul were like "two accelerating trains" headed at each other, with neither side willing to give way.

"The question is: Are the two sides really ready for a head-on collision?" Wang told reporters. "Our priority now is to flash the red light and apply the brakes on both trains."

Wang said China has proposed that as a first step to defusing the looming

crisis, the North might halt its nuclear program development and missile testing if the U.S. and South Korea suspended their military drills.

"This suspension-for-suspension can help us break out of the security dilemma and bring the parties back to the negotiating table," Wang said, describing the approach as trying to address all parties' concerns in a "synchronized and reciprocal" manner.

Owners Treat Sick Animals with Cannabis

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Michael Fasman's 12-year-old dog, Hudson, limps from pain caused by arthritis and an amputated toe, but Fasman doesn't want to give her painkillers because "they just knock her out."

So the San Francisco resident has turned to an alternative medicine that many humans use to treat their own pain and illness: marijuana.

On a recent morning, Fasman squeezed several drops of a cannabis extract onto a plate of yogurt, which the Portuguese water dog lapped up in seconds. It's become part of Hudson's daily routine.

"We think it's really lifted her spirits and made her a happier dog," Fasman said. "It's not that she's changed. She's just back to her good old self."

As more states legalize marijuana for humans, more pet owners are giving their furry companions cannabis-based extracts, ointments and edibles marketed to treat everything from arthritis and anxiety to seizures and cancer.

MFHM

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We will be having Communion and we will be anointing and praying for everyone. We will also be receiving

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