

OBAMACARE: 148,836 have signed up in Oregon

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the GOP's job any easier. New Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said that if the Republicans do scuttle the health care law, they will have to come up with a replacement plan before Democrats consider whether to help them revamp the system.

That adds pressure on Republicans, who for years have battled among themselves over what a new law would look like, including how to finance its programs and whether to keep Obama's expansion of Medicaid for more lower-income people.

"They're repealing, we're not. It's their obligation to come up with a replacement," Schumer said, a sentiment he said he believed Democrats shared unanimously.

Obama and Pence held dueling strategy sessions with lawmakers at the Capitol as the new Republican-led Congress commenced its drive to dissolve the health care statute. The 2010 overhaul, which has extended coverage to 20 million people and reshaped the nation's \$3 trillion-a-year health care system, has long stood as one of Obama's proudest triumphs and the ascendant GOP's top target for extinction.

"Despite the negativity you have a big chunk of the

country that wants this thing to succeed," Obama told Democrats, according to an aide who attended Wednesday's session.

The two sides traded insults through the day.

"Don't let the Schumer clowns out of this web," Trump wrote on Twitter.

Said Schumer: "The Republican plan to cut health care wouldn't make America great again, it would make America sick again."

Previewing an attack line sure to be heard again in this year's debate, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said the GOP is aiming to also scuttle Medicaid and Medicare, going after programs that are "very personal in the lives of the American people."

Even with White House and congressional control, annulling "Obamacare" and replacing it looms as a daunting task for the GOP.

Leaders hope to have legislation voiding much of the law on Trump's desk by late next month, Republicans said. But after six years of failing to unite behind an alternative, GOP leaders are discussing postponing when repeal would take effect for 18 months or longer, allowing more time to craft replacement legislation.

Underscoring the law's widespread constituency, the Obama administration said at least 8.8 million people

signed up through Dec. 31 for coverage in 2017. In Oregon, 148,836 signed up for coverage.

Even so, outside experts doubt the administration will meet its nationwide target of 13.8 million signups.

Millions more have coverage under the statute's Medicaid expansion.

Trump has provided few details about how he would redesign the law, but has said he wants to retain popular provisions like ensuring coverage for people with pre-existing medical problems.

Republicans will also need to figure out how to protect health coverage for millions of Americans during a transition period and how to avoid marketplace bedlam as nervous insurance companies stop selling policies or boost rates. Seemingly acknowledging that danger, Trump tweeted warnings to GOP lawmakers.

"Massive increases of ObamaCare will take place this year and Dems are to blame for the mess," he wrote. "It will fall of its own weight — be careful!"

Republicans said Pence told them in their private meeting to argue that Democrats broke the health care system and Republicans will fix it.

Trump's team is already working with GOP congres-

sional leaders on plans to undo Obama's law with both legislation and executive action that the president and federal agencies would be able to take, Pence said. Lawmakers said that according to Pence, Trump would sign some orders the day he takes office.

Pence did not specify what those actions would be. But House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., told reporters they would involve "transition relief."

In the Democrats' meeting, Obama accepted some blame for not sufficiently promoting it.

"The president said, I guess we all could have done a better job of messaging to the American people," said Rep. Joe Crowley, D-N.Y.

Obama made his remark about looking out for the American people as he left the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Senate voted 51-48 Wednesday to begin debating a budget that, once approved, will prevent Democrats from using a filibuster to block future Republican legislation to void the health care law.

Republicans control the Senate by 52-48, but it takes 60 votes to end a filibuster, a procedural roadblock that can kill legislation.

The Senate is expected to complete the budget by next week, with House approval to follow.



AP Photo/Mark Lennihan

An injured passenger is assisted by an EMS worker as he lies on a gurney outside Atlantic Terminal after a Long Island Rail Road incident, Wednesday in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

Train crashes at end of platform; 100 injured

NEW YORK (AP) — A packed Long Island Rail Road rush hour train crashed at the end of a platform as it pulled into a major transportation hub on Wednesday, hurling passengers onto the floor and slamming them into each other.

The front of the slow-moving train hit a bumping block as it pulled into Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn, left the tracks and smashed into a small structure, apparently a work area. A rail pierced the floor of a train car, authorities said.

About 100 people were treated for minor injuries after the 8:30 a.m. crash. Many had been standing as they prepared to get off the train at the last stop.

Some people were removed on stretchers. Others sat, stunned, on the pavement outside, bleeding, holding ice packs on their heads, rising and limping away with help from rescuers.

"The entire structure started shaking," said Steben Medina, who was having coffee at the terminal when he heard the crash and screams. "I thought a bomb had gone off or something."

The most serious injury, though, appeared to be a broken leg, Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo said: "Luckily ... all things considered, this was a

relatively minor accident."

The terminal is beneath a shopping mall in downtown Brooklyn, next to the Barclays Center, home to Brooklyn Nets basketball, New York Islanders hockey and major concerts.

A similar accident in nearby Hoboken, New Jersey, in September was much worse. There, a New Jersey Transit commuter train plowed off the end of a track, killing a woman standing in the station. Federal investigators are examining whether a more modern bumper or other barriers could have made a difference.

The train in Wednesday's wreck originated in the Far Rockaway section of Queens and was carrying around 450 people, officials said.

"People just went flying," passenger Donette Smith told The New York Times. "It was very scary."

The National Transportation Safety Board dispatched investigators. NTSB investigator Jim Southworth said it will take three to seven days to investigate the accident scene before they determine what caused it.

He said event recorders have been recovered and the train's engineer has undergone drug testing. The results of that testing aren't known yet.

COLLEGE: O'Hanlon urged students to take dual-credit courses

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to becoming an officer after graduation and getting a signing bonus, which he said could be used for a down payment on a house but he planned to use for a Chrysler 300.

Bridges told the audience that it was OK to party, as long as they weren't stupid about it

• Gracie Lyon picked the Oregon Institute of Technology in Klamath Falls because of its medical imaging program, which is the focus of her major.

Lyon said she's always been interested in the medical field and liked that the radiology field wouldn't require the same time commitment as medical school.

Lyon advised her former peers against failing a class, which she said is a waste of time and money.

She went to a campus event when she started school and met a lot of the people in her residential hall and learned a valuable lesson.

"I met some people I really don't like," she said, stressing the importance of finding an atmosphere that worked for each of them.

• Ellie Richards received a softball scholarship to attend the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, where she's majoring in business.

Juggling academics and athletics gives Richards a busy schedule, but she said she's already formed some of her strongest friendships with the other women on the team.

Richards told the high schools students that they needed to take time to meet with professors because they had the final say on grades.

Richards said her schedule



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton graduate T.J. O'Hanlon talks about his first term studying physics while attending U.C. Berkley to a group of students Wednesday at Pendleton High School.

will really kick into high gear when she returns to campus — the softball season starts in February and because of Northern Indiana's cold winters, the team will spend its first two months traveling to California, North Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

• Kaleigh Waggoner moved from Pendleton to attend George Fox University in Newburg so that she could major in nursing.

Although she chose George Fox because it offered a smaller campus, Waggoner admitted she experienced a few bouts of homesickness when she first arrived.

Waggoner, a 2017 Round-Up princess, said the homesickness has evolved to a deeper appreciation of Pendleton and all it has to offer.

Like Lyon, Waggoner said it was important for students to surround themselves with the right people.

"There's still drama," she said. "Just choose your friends wisely, because it can make or break the drama."

• A great physics program spurred T.J. O'Hanlon to move south and attend the University of California, Berkeley.

O'Hanlon spent most of his time giving out "tips and tricks" on how to deal with college classes.

Unlike high school, O'Hanlon said there was no reason to schedule classes at 8 a.m., especially if students were already struggling to wake up in the morning as it is.

O'Hanlon also encouraged students to take dual-credit courses in high school. Because of some of the college credits he earned in high school, O'Hanlon won't have to take any English courses at Berkeley, which he said could be brutal.

• Jolie Dickerson is a bioresource research major

at Oregon State University with the intent of eventually becoming a large animal veterinarian.

Dickerson pushed students to seek out scholarships because she was already taking out student loans and was now looking toward getting some of her future research sponsored to alleviate some of the financial burden.

Her major requires 1,000 hours of research and will involve studying the rising wolf population in Eastern Oregon.

Dickerson is involved in a country western dance club and a steer club, where she and other members are raising a steer to adulthood.

"It's going to suck when we have to kill him, but that's just part of the game," she said.

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Tillerson leaving Exxon with \$180M retirement package

NEW YORK (AP) — Rex Tillerson will get a \$180 million retirement package from Exxon Mobil Corp. if he is confirmed as President-elect Donald Trump's secretary of state.

Tillerson will give up more than 2 million Exxon shares he would have received over the next 10 years. In exchange, the company will make a cash payment equal to the value of those shares to a trust to be overseen by a third party.

Exxon said Wednesday that Tillerson has already promised the State Department that he will sell another 611,000 shares he currently owns, worth about \$55 million at Wednesday's price, if confirmed. His Senate confirmation hearing begins next week.

Tillerson's selection raised potential conflict-of-interest issues because Exxon has business interests around the globe, including Russia. Putting his retirement nest egg into a trust is intended to ease concerns that Tillerson could make decisions as secretary of state that would financially help himself or his former associates.

Federal ethics rules do not require government officials to sell off their investments but they must recuse themselves from matters that would affect those investments. Given Exxon's global operations, ownership of Exxon stock could severely limit Tillerson's actions as the nation's chief diplomat.

Tillerson's move comes as pressure mounts on Trump to make clear how he would separate himself from his company. Presidents are exempt from federal ethics rules, though most recent holders of the office have

sold off their financial holdings and put them in trusts as if the rules did apply to them.

Trump has said he would hand management control of his business to his two adult sons, along with executives,

but has given no indication he plans to sell his ownership interest in his company.

Tillerson has been CEO and chairman of the Irving, Texas, oil giant since 2006. Exxon spelled out the arrangement with Tillerson in a

regulatory filing Wednesday with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Edwin Williamson, a former State Department legal adviser who has reviewed the agreement, said that Tillerson agreed to put the cash he gets from Exxon in a trust that will invest only in Treasury securities and diversified mutual funds.

Democratic Sens. Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, however, called Tillerson's payout egregious. Baldwin is proposing to ban corporate payments that are tied to an employee accepting a government job.

To avoid violating federal rules, business executives moving into top government jobs have often sold shares and created trusts as Tillerson is doing. This also gives them freedom to weigh in on policy without constantly consulting lawyers about the possible impact on their personal finances.

Henry Paulson, who was CEO of Goldman Sachs when President George W. Bush nominated him as Treasury secretary, sold about \$500 million worth of Goldman stock. His predecessor, former Alcoa chairman Paul O'Neill, sold his stock and options after first saying he should have been able to keep them.

WHEAT: Newsom doubts Trump will be positive for agriculture

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U.S. wheat growers.

According to Bloomberg.com, one U.S. dollar is currently worth roughly 117 Japanese yen. In the past year, it's been as low as 99 Japanese yen. One U.S. dollar is worth roughly 0.95 euros. During the past year, it's been as low as 0.86 euros.

A strong dollar will mean the U.S. industry will struggle to move grain onto the global market, Newsom said. Federal Reserve rate hikes are likely to continue to strengthen the dollar, further putting U.S. wheat at a disadvantage, he said.

Newsom doesn't see much evidence yet that President-elect Donald Trump will be positive for agriculture, citing Trump's plans to put tariffs on Chinese imports, which would result in retaliation from China; breaking the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada and ending the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, which would work against Japan and increase



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Gary Polson, left, and his sister-in-law, Diane Polson, right, combine wheat on hilly terrain of the family farm north of Waterville, Wash., Aug. 18. Analysts say wheat prices will likely remain depressed in 2017.

China's role in Asia's export and import markets.

"So far what we've heard could possibly disrupt trade with our first, second, third and maybe four out of the top five trading partners we

have globally when it comes to U.S. grain," Newsom said. "Maybe it was all just bluster, none of it's true and maybe none of it's going to happen, but certainly his statements and his position seems to be anti-ag industry."

Wheat in general won't be impacted at first, he said. But if agriculture comes under fire, Newsom foresees long-term disruption to the market.

Steiner predicts a short-term negative effect, but the economy would improve overall in the long-term, benefiting demand compared to a shock to the supply side.

"If demand is based on people who have got a job, they can pay their bills and they want to eat a better diet, that's a whole lot more sustainable than praying for a drought or praying somebody suffers a catastrophe some place in the world," he said.