

On first day, Trump signs health care executive order

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump quickly assumed the mantle of the White House on Friday, making his first executive order one aimed at his predecessor's signature health care law and swearing in members of his national security team to his Cabinet.

Hours after delivering a stinging rebuke of the political status quo in his inaugural address, Trump sat at the president's formal desk in the Oval Office as he signed the order that White House chief of staff Reince Priebus said was aimed at "minimizing the economic burden" of the "Obamacare" law.

The order notes that Trump intends to seek the "prompt repeal" of the law and it directs federal agencies not to issue regulations that would expand the law's reach. But in the meantime, it allows the Health and Human Services Department and other federal agencies to delay implementing any piece of the law that might impose a "fiscal burden" on states, health care providers, families or individuals.

Health care experts said the order signaled the Trump administration's interest in unwinding the law as much as possible through administrative means. But they cautioned it could take weeks or months to discern the full impact of Trump's opening day action.

Moments later, Vice President Mike Pence administered the oath of office to Defense Secretary James Mattis and Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly, the first members of Trump's Cabinet to clear Senate confirmation.

The swearing-in ceremonies came amid a hectic set of activity late Friday, before Trump was to attend three inaugural balls. As Trump signed the paperwork, the White House announced Priebus had sent a memorandum to agencies and departments outlining guidelines for slowing regulations.

Asked about his first day as



President Donald Trump, flanked by Vice President Mike Pence and Chief of Staff Reince Priebus, signs his first executive order on health care on Friday in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington.

president, Trump said, "It was busy but good — a beautiful day."

Although Trump campaigned on a detailed 18-point plan of things to do on Day One, he has since backed off some of his promised speed, downplaying the importance of a rapid-fire approach to complex issues that may involve negotiations with Congress or foreign leaders. Trump has said that he expects Monday to be the first big workday, his effective Day One.

On Friday, he switched between the official business of governing and the pageantry of his inauguration, making his first official moves as president in an ornate room steps from the Senate floor. Flanked by Pence and congressional leaders before his congressional luncheon, Trump praised each of his Cabinet nominees as he signed the papers formalizing their nominations. He

also engaged in banter with his new congressional rivals, including Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York and House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California.

Trump also signed a proclamation declaring a national day of patriotism, according to a tweet from White House spokesman Sean Spicer.

Priebus' memo says that agencies shouldn't submit any regulations to be published in the Federal Register unless a Trump-selected agency head approves it. That appears to mean that some regulations that had been approved by President Barack Obama's administration would be halted. It also freezes any regulations that are already in the pipeline to be published and allows time for other pending regulations to be reviewed by Trump's admin-

istration.

The memo is similar to one that Obama's chief of staff issued the day Obama was inaugurated in 2009.

Before Mattis could be nominated, Trump had to sign a bill passed by Congress last week granting a one-time exception from federal law barring former U.S. service members who have been out of uniform for less than seven years from holding the top Pentagon job. The restriction is meant to preserve civilian control of the military.

Mattis, 66, retired from the Marine Corps in 2013. Hours later, he was confirmed by the Senate as Trump watched his inaugural parade from a stand outside the White House. The Senate later confirmed retired Gen. John Kelly to lead the Homeland Security Department.

There were others signs his new government was up and running. Federal websites and agencies immediately began reflecting the transfer of power, and WhiteHouse.gov was revamped for Trump's policy priorities as pages about LGBT rights and the Obama administration's climate change plan were eliminated.

Shortly after Trump became president, the Department of Housing and Urban Development suspended the Obama administration's planned reduction of mortgage insurance premium rates, a move that had been intended to make buying a home more affordable.

More significant policy announcements are expected in the early days of the Trump administration.

Trump's spokesman has said the president intends to withdraw from the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership deal, which he views as detrimental to U.S. businesses and workers. He has also promised to renegotiate the two-decades-old Clinton era North American Free Trade Agreement or withdraw from it.

Given Trump's opposition to Obama's immigration actions, he could also cancel the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, which has protected about 750,000 young immigrants from deportation. The program also offered those immigrants work permits.

Trump also faces an early choice of naming a Supreme Court justice to fill the vacancy left by the late Justice Antonin Scalia. Trump has said he will announce a nominee in about two weeks.

Other issues poised to receive early action include energy, where Trump is likely to undo regulations on oil drilling and coal, and cybersecurity, where he has already said he will ask for a report on the strength of the nation's cyber defenses within 90 days of taking office.

Obama exits the presidency voicing optimism

WASHINGTON (AP) — Closing out a barrier-breaking chapter in history, former President Barack Obama left the White House on Friday much the way he entered it eight years ago: insisting Americans have reason for optimism despite the national sense of unease.

He was gracious to President Donald Trump to the end, warmly welcoming his successor to the home where he raised his daughters. Yet to those fearful about Trump's presidency, Obama suggested it would be a mere blip.

"This is just a little pit stop," Obama told supporters just before departing Washington. "This is not a period, this is a comma in the continuing story of building America."

Obama leaves the national stage as a widely popular figure, with his poll numbers approaching 60 percent. He's being replaced by the least popular president in four decades, polls show — a reality on display in Trump's low-key inauguration. On the National Mall, far fewer showed up than the throng that attended Obama's 2009 inauguration, and some protesters downtown hurled bricks and broke windows in a show of defiance. Many others demonstrated peacefully.

Left unspoken in Obama's final hours was the unpleasant reality that his successor has pledged to reverse much, if not most, of what he accomplished. That has raised the prospect that Obama's major lasting legacy may be as a cultural icon: the first black president, who ushered the country into a new era in which gays can marry, marijuana is legal in more places than ever and white people will soon be a minority.

Yet inside the White House, the Obama imprint that once appeared indelible suddenly seemed more fleeting. Photos of him and his family were taken down from the walls, leaving big, white voids that seemed to beckon the new president to make "the people's house" his own.

Obama's staffers left one reminder on the wall near a West Wing entrance: a collection of newspaper front pages from Obama's proudest moments, including the day he signed the Affordable Care Act and the day the Senate confirmed his nomination of the first Hispanic Supreme Court justice.

Speaking to his former aides at Joint Base Andrews after Trump's swearing-in, Obama sought to reassure those who toiled on his behalf that it was all worth it, no matter what



Former President Barack Obama and his wife Michelle wave to the crowd as they board an Air Force jet to depart Andrews Air Force base on Friday.

Trump might do. He said his supporters had defied the skeptics who "didn't think we could pull it off," invoking themes from his campaign.

"You proved the power of hope," Obama said.

If there were hard feelings toward Trump, Obama didn't let on. He sat stoically as Trump, in his inaugural address, offered a bleak assessment of the state of the country after eight years of Obama's leadership. And at the White House, he and Mrs. Obama tried to gently coach Trump and his wife on the mechanics of presidential pageantry. When Melania Trump presented Mrs. Obama with a gift just as they were expected to pose for photos, Mrs. Obama looked left, then right, for someone to hand it to before Obama himself eventually walked it to a nearby aide.

On his last day in office, Obama left a letter to Trump in the Oval Office, in keeping with presidential tradition. He signed one last bill, codifying a government fellowship program he'd created, and was given a gift by the residential staff: a pair of flags that flew above the White House on the first and last days of his presidency.

Vice President Joe Biden accompanied the Obamas and the Trumps to the swearing-in, then departed Washington, in his characteristically down-home style, by Amtrak train. Obama and his family headed to a vacation in California on the presidential plane,

"You proved the power of hope."

— Barack Obama

stripped of the Air Force One moniker as it ferried the now-former president for the last time.

When Obama took office in 2009, few Americans had an iPhone, which had just been introduced. Nearly 49 million Ameri-

cans had no health insurance, a number that's fallen to 28 million. Unemployment, now 4.7 percent, was nearly 8 percent and climbing. The national debt was about \$10.6 trillion, and has jumped under Obama to just under \$20 trillion.

His presidency started with a burst of legislative activity — the economic stimulus, his health care overhaul — that he would never again be able to replicate. Partisan resistance to him quickly hardened, and by the time his second term started, Obama had mostly assented to the reality that his best hopes to accomplish anything were through executive action and foreign policy.

The next time voters had their say, they chose Obama's opposite.

But Obama tried to stay optimistic until the very end, even as former staffers hoisted their children on their shoulders to see him off.

"Michelle and I, we've just been your front-men and women," Obama said. "We have been the face, sometimes the voice, out front on the TV screen in front of a microphone, but this has never been about us. It has always been about you."

World jittery about Trump's 'America first' inaugural speech

President Donald Trump's inaugural speech promised "America first" policy, but offered no specifics about America's place in the world.

AFGHANS DISAPPOINTED, HOPEFUL

Like many in the Afghan capital of Kabul, restaurant owner Mohammad Nahim watched the presidential inauguration ceremonies but was disappointed to not hear any mention of Afghanistan.

"Trump did not mention a word about Afghanistan in his speech and the salaries of the Afghan army and police are paid by the U.S.," he said. He added that if the U.S. stops helping Afghanistan, "our country will again become a sanctuary to terrorists. I hope Trump will not forget Afghanistan."

MEXICO RESPONDS

Perhaps no country was watching the speech more closely than Mexico. Trump has made disparaging remarks about immigrants who come to the United States illegally and sought to pressure companies not to set up shop in Mexico by threatening a border tariff on goods manufactured there and exported to the United States.

Ricardo Anaya Cortes, president of the conservative opposition National Action Party, called for "the unity of all Mexicans, unity in the face of this protectionist, demagogic and protectionist speech we just heard. Unity against that useless wall, against deportations, against the blockade of investment."

TOKYO CONCERN

Some Tokyo residents are worried that Trump's "America first" policy will usher in an era of populism and protectionism at the

expense of the rest of the world.

Tadashi Gomibuchi, who works in the manufacturing industry, recorded Trump's inauguration speech overnight as he was keen to hear what the new president had to say.

"Trump is trying to make big changes to the way things are. Changes are good sometimes, but when America, the most powerful, loses stability ... it's a grave concern," he said. "If you take his words literally, it may destabilize the world going forward and I'm really worried. I hope things will lead to a soft landing."

CHINA BRACES FOR TROUBLE AHEAD

A Chinese state-run nationalist tabloid, the *Global Times*, says President Trump's inauguration speech indicates that the U.S. and China would inevitably face trade tensions.

The newspaper said in a Saturday commentary following Trump's inauguration that "dramatic changes" lay ahead for the U.S. and the global economic order.

"Undoubtedly, the Trump administration will be igniting many 'fires' on its front door and around the world. Let's wait and see when it will be China's turn," it said.

The paper noted that Trump blamed foreign trade policies for failing to put "America first," and said trade tensions between the U.S. and China seemed "inevitable within the four years ahead."

Zhang Lifan drew a contrast between Trump's focus on domestic issues and Chinese President Xi Jinping's emphasis on international cooperation.

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GRANT FUNDING

Requests for grant funding for projects that promote health and wellness in West Umatilla and Morrow county communities are still being accepted for spring funding. Application forms are available on line at www.gshealth.org or by calling 541-667-3405.

Spring grant deadline is January 31, 2017

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