

Trump says he’s open to immigration ‘compromise’

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump, signaling a potential shift on a signature issue, indicated Tuesday that he’s open to immigration legislation that would give legal status to some people living in the U.S. illegally and provide a pathway to citizenship to those brought to the U.S. illegally as children.

The president, in a lunch with news anchors ahead of his address to Congress on Tuesday night, said, “The time is right for an immigration bill as long as there is compromise on both sides.” A person with knowledge of the discussion confirmed his comments to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity.

Trump campaigned as an immigration hardliner, vowing to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and pledging to step up deportations.

Since taking office, some of his policy moves have hewed closely to those promises, including new guidance from the Department of Homeland Security that would subject any immigrant in the country illegally to deportation if they are charged or convicted of any offense, or even suspected of a crime.

But the president also has suggested he is open to finding a solution for the so-called Dreamers — those who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children. Although he railed against

President Barack Obama’s executive actions to protect those immigrants from deportation during the campaign, Trump has not rolled back those safeguards and has suggested he has other priorities.

During a White House news conference earlier this month, Trump said he would deal with the Dreamers with “great heart” but didn’t say what his administration’s policy would be. He called their status “one of the most difficult subjects I have, because you have these incredible kids.”

Immigration activist Astrid Silva, who came to the U.S. as a child, was slated to deliver a Spanish version of the Democratic response to Trump’s Tuesday night address.

Trump has flirted with a more lenient immigration policy before, saying during the campaign that he was open to “softening” his position. But he ultimately landed where he started, declaring during a speech in September that under his presidency, there would be “no legal status or becoming a citizen of the United States by illegally entering our country.”

Congress last took up immigration legislation in 2013, after Hispanic voters overwhelmingly backed Obama in his re-election campaign. A measure including a pathway to citizenship passed the Senate, but stalled in the House.

Trump: ‘time to join forces’ to fix U.S. problems

WASHINGTON (AP) — Heralding a “new chapter of American greatness,” President Donald Trump stood before Congress for the first time Tuesday night and issued a broad call for overhauling the nation’s health care system, significantly boosting military spending and plunging \$1 trillion into upgrading crumbling infrastructure.

Striking an optimistic tone, Trump declared: “The time for small thinking is over.”

Trump’s address came at a pivotal moment for a new president elected on pledges to swiftly shake up Washington and follow through on the failed promises of career politicians. His opening weeks in office have been consumed by distractions and self-inflicted wounds, including the bungled rollout of a sweeping immigration and refugee executive order that was blocked by the courts.

Trump, who typically relishes flouting political convention, embraced the pomp and tradition of a presidential address to Congress. He stuck largely to his script, made occasional overtures to Democrats and skipped the personal insults he so often hurls at his opponents.

The president was greeted by enthusiastic applause as he entered the House chamber, though it was filled with Democrats who vigorously oppose his policies and many Republicans who never expected him to be elected. Most



Jim Lo Scalzo/Pool Image via AP  
**President Donald Trump addresses a joint session of Congress on Capitol Hill in Washington on Tuesday. Vice President Mike Pence and House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wis. listen.**

Republican lawmakers have rallied around him since the election, hopeful that he will act on the domestic priorities they saw blocked during President Barack Obama’s eight years in office.

Topping that list is undoing Obama’s signature health care law and replacing the sweeping measure. Trump offered a basic blueprint of his priorities, including ensuring that those with pre-existing conditions have access to coverage, allowing people to buy insurance across state lines and offering tax credits and expanded health savings accounts to help Americans purchase coverage. He suggested he would get rid of the current law’s requirement that all Americans carry insurance coverage, saying that “mandating every American to buy government-approved health insurance was never the right solution for America.”

Making a direct appeal for bipartisanship, Trump turned to Democrats and said, “Why not join forces to finally get the job done and get it done right?”

Democrats, now firmly ensconced in the minority, sat silently while Republicans stood and cheered. Some wore blue, pro-health care buttons that read “Protect our care,” and dozens of Democratic women wore white in honor of the suffrage movement.

Trump was vague in his call for tax reform, another Republican priority. He promised “massive tax relief for the middle class” and a reduction in corporate tax rates, but glossed over how he would offset the cuts.

The president also urged Congress to pass a \$1 trillion infrastructure package financed through both public and private capital.

“The time has come for a new program of national rebuilding,” he said.

Trump sent unexpectedly mixed messages on immigration, one of his signature campaign issues. He pledged to vigorously target people living in the U.S. illegally who “threaten our communities and prey on our citizens.” But he told news anchors before his speech that he was open to legislation that could provide a pathway to legal status, and he told Congress he believed “real and positive immigration reform is possible.”

First lady Melania Trump sat with special guests who were on hand to amplify the president’s agenda, including the family members of people killed by immigrants living in the U.S. illegally. The widow of former Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia also sat alongside Mrs. Trump, a reminder of the president’s well-received nomination of federal appeals court Judge Neil Gorsuch to fill Scalia’s seat.

The majority of Trump’s address centered on the domestic, economic-focused issues that were at the center of his presidential campaign. His national security message centered largely on a call for significantly boosting military spending and taking strong but unspecified measures to protect the nation from “radical Islamic terrorism.”

Trump also voiced support for NATO but reiterated his call for partner countries to meet their financial obligations.

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