

Ryan pushes for unity as House panels debate GOP health bill

Associated Press

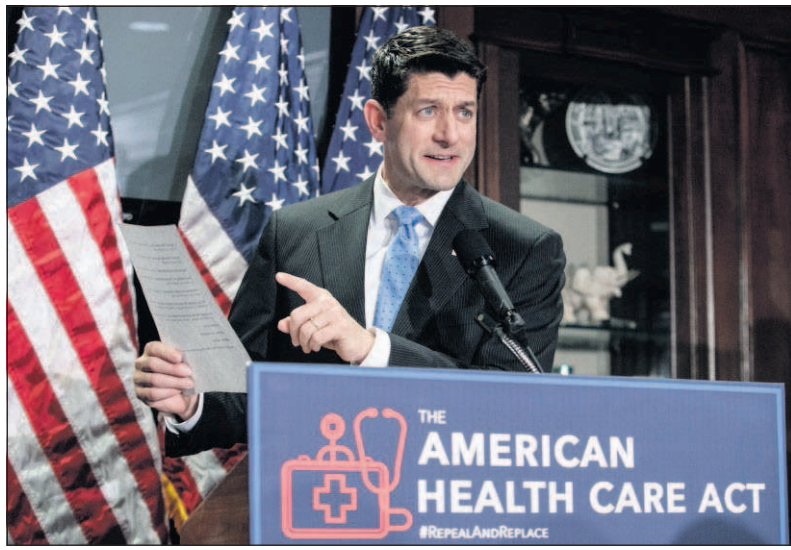
WASHINGTON — Republican leaders labored to rally a divided party behind their high-stakes drive to overhaul the nation's health care system Wednesday, but faced opposition from pivotal industry groups. House Speaker Paul Ryan praised the proposal as "what good, conservative health care reform looks like" as lawmakers cast Congress' first votes on the GOP legislation.

House leaders wanted to push the measure through two committees — Ways and Means, and Energy and Commerce — by week's end. While that seemed likely, they hit a torrent of resistance from Democrats who oppose the seven-year GOP effort to unravel former President Barack Obama's health care law.

Outnumbered Democrats used the panels' sessions for political messaging Wednesday, futilely offering amendments aimed at preventing the bill from raising deficits, kicking people off coverage or boosting consumers' out-of-pocket costs. They even tried, unsuccessfully, to insert language pressuring President Donald Trump to release his income tax returns.

The pivotal challenge for Republican leaders was coming not from Democrats but from rebellion in their own ranks and from potent outside groups. If that upheaval should snowball and crush the legislation, it would be a shattering defeat for Trump and the GOP, so leaders were hoping passage by both House committees this week would give them momentum.

Just as ominous as GOP unrest



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite
House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wis. speaks during a news conference at the Republican National Committee Headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington on Wednesday as the GOP works on its long-awaited plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act.

was hostility from three organizations instrumental in the 2010 enactment of Obama's overhaul: The American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association and AARP, the nation's largest advocacy group for older people.

The hospitals — major employers in many districts — wrote lawmakers complaining about the bill's cuts in Medicaid and other programs and said more uninsured Americans seem likely, adding, "We ask Congress to protect our patients."

In words aimed at his own recalcitrant colleagues, Ryan, R-Wis., declared the legislation "is bold and it is long overdue. And it is us fulfilling our promises." The last was a nod to campaign pledges

by Trump and many GOP congressional candidates.

There were signs of growing White House engagement, and perhaps progress.

Trump met at the White House late Thursday with leaders of six conservative groups that have opposed the GOP legislation, and several voiced optimism afterward.

"I'm encouraged that the president indicated they're pushing to make changes in the bill," said David McIntosh, head of the Club for Growth, though he provided no specifics.

Underscoring Trump's potential impact, Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden, R-Ore., said of GOP holdouts, "A lot of them, they maybe haven't felt the

inertia that comes with Air Force One landing in their district."

The legislation would defang Obama's requirement that everyone buy insurance — a provision deeply disliked by Republicans — by repealing the tax fines imposed on those who don't.

That penalty has been a stick aimed at pressing healthy people to purchase policies. The bill would replace income-based subsidies Obama provided with tax credits based more on age, and insurers would charge higher premiums for customers who drop coverage for over two months.

The extra billions Washington has sent states to expand the federal-state Medicaid program would begin ending in 2020, and spending on the entire program would be capped at per-patient limits. Around \$600 billion in 10-year tax boosts that Obama's statute imposed on wealthy Americans and others to finance his overhaul would be repealed.

Insurers could charge older customers five times more than younger ones instead of the current 3-1 limit, but would still be required to include children up to age 26 in family policies, and they would be barred from imposing annual or lifetime benefit caps.

"We will answer President Trump's call to action," said Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady, R-Texas, adding later, "Relief is on the way."

Democrats said the Republicans would yank health coverage from many of the 20 million Americans who gained it under Obama's statute, and drive up costs for others

because the GOP tax breaks would be skimpier than existing subsidies. And they accused Republicans of hiding bad news by moving ahead without official estimates from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office on the bill's cost to taxpayers and anticipated coverage.

"The bill sabotages the marketplaces where close to 10 million Americans today get coverage and starts a death spiral from which we will never recover," said Ways and Means' top Democrat, Richard Neal of Massachusetts.

On the Republican side, conservatives in particular were up in arms, saying the tax credits would be too expensive and the phase-out of Obama's Medicaid expansion too slow. One conservative group, FreedomWorks, was launching digital and social media ads opposing the legislation, while others like Americans for Prosperity, backed by the wealthy Koch brothers, were working against the legislation.

"It's way more cost and we're already bankrupt," Rep. Dave Brat, R-Va., said of the GOP measure.

Numerous GOP centrists and governors were also antagonistic, worried their states could lose Medicaid payments and face higher costs for hospitals having to treat growing numbers of uninsured people.

Buttressing Republicans, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce was backing the bill. The American Action Network, a political group tied to House GOP leaders, has spent nearly \$8 million this year on TV and digital ads supporting the legislation in 75 House districts, mostly held by Republicans.

'Fearless Girl' statue stares down Wall Street's iconic bull

NEW YORK (AP) — A new statue of a resolute young girl staring down Wall Street's famous Charging Bull was erected by a major asset managing firm for International Women's Day to make a point: There's a dearth of women on the boards of the largest U.S. corporations.

State Street Global Advisors, the Boston-based investment giant, had the statue created to push companies to increase the number of women directors.

Artist Kristen Visbal's "Fearless Girl" drew crowds Wednesday that initially came to pose for pictures with the bull, but the novelty quickly became a New York hot spot.

The girl is sculpted in bronze, her hands firmly planted on her waist, pony-tailed head held high.

"Know the power of women in leadership. SHE makes a difference," reads a plaque at her feet.

"As a steward of nearly \$2.5 trillion of assets, we want to engage with boards and management around issues that we think will drive core results," said Lori Heinel, State Street's deputy global chief investment officer. "And what you find repeatedly is having more diverse boards and more diverse senior management will actually drive better results for companies."

Twenty-five percent of the Russell 3000 — a broad index of U.S. companies — have no women on their boards, according to State



AP Photo/Mark Lennihan
A statue titled "Fearless Girl" faces the Wall Street bull, Wednesday in New York.

Street, which manages many of their assets.

According to ISS Analytics, a business research firm, just 16 percent of board seats on companies in the Russell 3000 are held by women; the average board of directors has eight men and one woman.

"It's going to happen to the end of time unless you change something," says Erik Gordon, a lawyer and professor at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. "It's got to not just be the rules. It's got to be the culture."

State Street has three women on an 11-member board. Heinel said her company also will urge those in Great Britain and Australia to add women to their leadership.

One man working in corporate America needed no convincing.

Chandrasekar Sundaram says a woman is the CEO of

the company he works for in Texas, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, and has quite a few women reporting to her.

"But when it gets to 50 percent, that's when I think it'll be right," said Sundaram, a Dallas resident and native of India who was visiting New York with his family — with the Charging Bull as one of their stops.

The mammoth bronze was a "guerrilla art" act, dropped in the middle of the night in Bowling Green Park in 1989 without permission, by an artist who created it as a symbol of Americans' survival energy following the 1987 stock market crash. The city gave its permission for the bull to remain.

This week, McCann New York, a top advertising agency, installed the statue of the girl before dawn Tuesday — with a city permit for one week. Negotiations are underway for the piece to remain longer.

BRIEFLY

Former Trump aide Flynn says lobbying may have helped Turkey

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, who was fired from his prominent White House job last month, has registered with the Justice Department as a foreign agent for \$530,000 worth of lobbying work before Election Day that may have aided the Turkish government.

Paperwork filed Tuesday with the Justice Department's Foreign Agent Registration Unit said Flynn and his firm were voluntarily registering for lobbying from August through November that "could be construed to have principally benefited the Republic of Turkey." It was filed by a lawyer on behalf of the former U.S. Army

lieutenant general and intelligence chief.

After his firm's work on behalf of a Turkish company was done, Flynn agreed not to lobby for five years after leaving government service and never to represent foreign governments.

Under the Foreign Agent Registration Act, U.S. citizens who lobby on behalf of foreign government or political entities must disclose their work to the Justice Department, disclosing their work.

Ex-aides: Trump has long been worried about recorded calls

WASHINGTON (AP) — Long before he tweeted about wiretaps, Donald Trump worried about who was listening in on his calls.

As a real estate mogul and reality TV star — well

before he alleged on Twitter that former President Barack Obama wiretapped his phones during the campaign — Trump expressed regular concern that his phone lines were not secure, according to three former Trump Organization executives.

At times he talked about possible listening devices and worried that he was being monitored, two executives said. In other times, he was doing the monitoring. One of the executives said Trump occasionally taped his own phone conversations using an old-school tape recorder, although Trump once denied this.

"I assume when I pick up my telephone, people are listening to my conversations anyway, if you want to know the truth," Trump told conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt in 2015. "It's pretty sad commentary, but I err on the side of security."

Little Darlings!




This special section will be filled with photos of and messages for adorable little darlings from Umatilla County. Families will want to keep this special keepsake for their child and family for years to come.

Friday Meals

LENT

March 10th from 5 to 7:00 p.m.
@ the St. Anthony Hospital Blue Mountain Cafe

- Cedar Wrapped Salmon** - \$7.50/Adults - \$7.00/Children & Seniors
with Rice Pilaf & Buttered Green Beans
- Baked Potato Bar** - \$4.00/with toppings
All you can eat.
- Salmon/Potato Bar Combo** - \$11.50
- Clam Chowder Bread Bowl** - \$4.25
Single Cup \$1.25



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*Olivia,
I loved you from the very start.
You stole my breath, embraced my heart.
Our life together has just begun.
You're part of me, my little one.
Love, Mom*

Your Name: _____
Phone Number: _____
Child's Name: _____
Message: _____

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April 6, 2017

Send in, or drop by, a full color high resolution photo, your child's name and a message to your child today!

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