

# New president, same old shutdown talk

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AP Photos

**There's an unconventional new president in the White House and Republicans have a lock on Congress, but Washington is still up to its old tricks. Just as occurred repeatedly during the Obama administration, Congress and the White House are days from a government shutdown, engaged in familiar partisan brinkmanship that demonstrates how little has really changed in the capital. Clockwise from top left: House Speaker Paul Ryan, President Donald Trump, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi.**

WASHINGTON — There's an unconventional new president in the White House. And the Republicans now have a new lock on both ends of Washington's Pennsylvania Avenue. But the capital city is still up to its old gridlock tricks.

Just as occurred repeatedly during the Obama administration, the government is only days away from a shutdown, and Congress and the White House are engaged in familiar partisan brinkmanship.

How little has really changed under President Donald Trump.

Some of the issues are different this time around as lawmakers scramble to finish up the annual government-wide spending bills that are Congress' most basic function. The \$1 trillion catch-all legislation for the remainder of the 2017 budget year is leftover business from last year and comes due Friday at midnight.

Without action before then, the government will partially shut down on Saturday, which happens to be the 100th day of Trump's presidency.

Will that happen? Lawmakers do not expect a shutdown.

Instead, a very short-term extension of existing funding levels is likely. Such "continuing resolutions" are familiar on Capitol Hill when Congress needs a little more time to complete its business, yet signing one to keep the government running while Trump marks his 100th day in office is an ignominious position for him.

The difficulties point to a weakness of Trump's administration, some Republicans privately say: Despite his self-proclaimed deal-making prowess, he had little exposure to the rituals and rhythms of Congress before taking office, and his team is light on experienced legislative hands. The former lawmakers he has brought on board, such as Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, were not known for cutting deals during their time on Capitol Hill.

"I'm sure the president has a much better sense of

## GOP drops wall demands as spending talks advance

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional negotiators on Tuesday inched toward a potential agreement on a catchall spending bill that would deny President Donald Trump's request for immediate funding to construct a wall along the Mexico border. The emerging measure would increase the defense budget and eliminate the threat of a government shutdown on Trump's 100th day in office this Saturday.

Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer said Republican negotiators were following the lead of Trump, who signaled Monday evening that he would not insist on \$1 billion worth of wall funding now as an addition to the \$1 trillion-plus spending bill. Trump told a gathering of conservative media reporters that he might be willing to wait until September for the funding.

Other stumbling blocks remain, but the decision by Trump and his GOP allies to back down on the wall steered the talks on the spending measure in a positive direction.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said he was optimistic the talks would produce "an

**"The wall is going to get built."**  
— President Donald Trump

**"It's not a negotiation. No wall."**  
— Sen. Chuck Schumer

agreement in the next few days."

An existing temporary funding bill expires Friday at midnight and all sides anticipated that another stopgap measure would be required to buy time for the House and Senate to process the massive spending bill, which would wrap together 11 unfinished agency spending bills through September.

Trump campaigned throughout the country last year promising a wall across the entire 2,200 mile southern border, promising that Mexico would pay for it. But while the idea is a priority of Trump's most fervent supporters, it is resolutely opposed by Democrats and even many Republicans, who see it as wasteful and who prefer other steps like

new technologies and additional border agents to curb illegal immigration.

"I support additional border security funding," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a GOP critic of Trump who dined with the president Monday at the White House. "But a 2,200-mile wall, I don't think there's a whole lot of support for it."

Trump vowed to fight for the wall. "The wall is going to get built," he said at the White House Tuesday. Asked when, he said, "Soon."

Democrats vowed not to give up, either, and look forward to the fight.

"It's not a negotiation," Schumer said. "No wall."

Meanwhile, Trump appeared poised to procure about \$15 billion to boost the military. Democrats said they were satisfied with the emerging outlines of the measure, which stick closely to versions of the legislation that were being negotiated late last year.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., observed that GOP negotiators "have simply ignored" a roster of "\$18 billion in extreme cuts" offered by White House budget director Mick Mulvaney.

the legislative process than he did a year ago or even 100 days ago, and every president does, no matter how well prepared they think they are for that job," said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo.

"Congress generally works on the calendar not the clock, and when you say that April 28 is going to be the day, I think you have to assume not much gets done before

April 28," Blunt added.

The remainder of the year will only bring more crucial deadlines. Once this year's federal spending is finally set, bills for the 2018 budget year must be passed. And the government's borrowing limit needs to be raised or the U.S. risks an unprecedented default this fall.

Under the Obama administration, divisions among

Republicans were already causing problems. Over the objections of GOP leaders, a faction of conservatives tried to use must-pass spending bills to promote one pet cause or another, with little to show in the end. An unsuccessful push to "defund Obamacare" led to a 16-day partial shutdown in 2013, temporarily tanking the GOP's poll numbers.

Having an outsider Republican president in the White House has not eliminated those divisions, as has already become clear from the House's failure to advance a health care bill.

On the spending legislation the intraparty divisions emerged in a different form, as Trump himself, or at least some of his White House lieutenants, threw a last-

minute wrench into negotiations by suddenly demanding money for construction of a border wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Up until then negotiations had been proceeding fairly smoothly, according to participants. With Democratic votes needed to pass the legislation, senior Republicans had no expectation of achieving the president's most contentious policy objectives in the spending bill, and instead planned to include border security money that would not be designated specifically for a wall.

Trump's sudden push for the wall money sent talks into a tailspin and Democrats into high dudgeon. And even after he backed off, apparently clearing the way for final work toward a deal, the episode left some fellow Republicans questioning whether their party, now in full control of Washington, will be able to perform any better under Trump than under Obama.

"This remains our challenge here in the House. We've had a very difficult time performing the very basic fundamental tasks of governing," said Rep. Charlie Dent, R-Pa. "I certainly hope those dynamics change."

Republicans accuse the Democrats of courting a shutdown for political gain.

"Our colleagues on the other side of the aisle feel that any kind of shutdown works in their favor, because Republicans always get blamed for it," said Sen. John Hoeven of North Dakota. "So they're negotiating really hard, I mean we're really going the extra mile."

Democrats, on the other hand, say Republicans have only themselves to blame.

"I think the main reason they're really struggling to pass the FY17 appropriations is not because of vigorous opposition from Democrats, it's because of internal disagreements," said Democrat Chris Coons of Delaware. "The reality is a Republican president and a Republican-controlled Congress ought to be able to get the government funded and moving forward."

That's something else that never changes: No matter who's in charge and what they're fighting over, the other party is to blame.

## GOP budget hawks open to Trump tax plan despite deficit

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans who slammed the growing national debt under Democrat Barack Obama said Tuesday they are open to President Donald Trump's tax plan, even though it could add trillions of dollars to the deficit over the next decade.

Trump is scheduled to unveil the broad outlines of a tax overhaul Wednesday that includes a massive cut in the corporate income tax, reducing the top rate from 35 percent to 15 percent. The plan will also include child-care benefits, a cause promoted by Trump's daughter, Ivanka.

Echoing the White House, Republicans on Capitol Hill argued Tuesday that tax cuts would spur economic growth, reducing or even eliminating any drop in tax revenue.

"I'm not convinced that cutting taxes is necessarily going to blow a hole in the deficit," said Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, chairman of the Finance Committee.

"I actually believe it could stimulate the economy and get the economy moving," Hatch added. "Now, whether 15 percent is the right figure or not, that's a matter to be determined."

The argument that tax cuts pay for themselves has been debunked by economists from across the political spectrum. On Tuesday, the official scorekeeper for Congress dealt the argument — and Trump's plan — another blow.

The nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation said Tuesday that a big cut in corporate taxes — even if it is temporary — would add to long-term budget



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

**Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin speaks to the media during the daily briefing in the Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House in Washington on Monday.**

deficits. This is a problem for Republicans because it means they would need Democratic support in the Senate to pass a tax overhaul that significantly cuts corporate taxes.

The assessment was requested by House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., who has been pushing a new tax on imports to fund lower overall tax rates. Senate Republicans have panned the idea, and officials in the Trump administration have sent mixed signals about it.

The import tax is not expected to be part of Trump's plan.

Trump dispatched his top lieutenants to Capitol Hill Tuesday to discuss his plan with Republican leaders. They met for about half an hour. No Democrat was invited.

Afterward, Hatch called it, "a preliminary meeting."

"They went into some suggestions that are mere suggestions, and we'll go from there."

maneuver that would allow them to pass a tax bill without Democratic support in the Senate — but only if it didn't add to long-term deficits.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said the Senate was sticking to that strategy.

"Regretfully we don't expect to have any Democratic involvement in" a tax overhaul, McConnell said. "So we'll have to reach an agreement among ourselves."

Democrats said they smell hypocrisy over the growing national debt, which stands at nearly \$20 trillion. For decades, Republican lawmakers railed against saddling future generations with trillions in debt.

But with Republicans controlling Congress and the White House, there is no appetite at either end of Pennsylvania Avenue to tackle the long-term drivers of debt — Social Security and Medicare. Instead, Republicans are pushing for tax cuts and increased defense spending.

## Judge blocks order on sanctuary city funding

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday blocked any attempt by the Trump administration to withhold funding from "sanctuary cities" that do not cooperate with U.S. immigration officials, saying the president has no authority to attach new conditions to federal spending.

U.S. District Judge William Orrick issued the preliminary injunction in two lawsuits — one brought by the city of San Francisco, the other by Santa Clara County — against an executive order targeting communities that protect immigrants from deportation.

The injunction will stay in place while the lawsuits work their way through court.

The judge rejected the administration's argument that the executive order applies only to a relatively small pot of money and said President Donald Trump cannot set new conditions on spending approved by Congress.

Even if the president could do so, those conditions would have to be clearly related to the funds at issue and not coercive, as the executive order appears to be, Orrick said.

"Federal funding that bears no meaningful relationship to immigration enforcement cannot be threatened merely because a jurisdiction chooses an immigration enforcement strategy of which the president disapproves," the judge said.

It was the third major setback for the administration on immigration policy.

The Justice Department had no immediate comment. San Francisco City Attorney Dennis Herrera said the president was "forced to back down."

"This is why we have courts — to halt the overreach of a president and an attorney general who either don't understand the Constitution or chose to ignore it," he said in a statement.

## STUDENT OF THE WEEK



**Gage Harwood**  
McLoughlin High School

Gage Harwood is a senior at Mac-Hi. He has held a class office all four years. This year Gage is ASB Vice President. He is a member of Varsity Club and our Leadership class. Gage spends many hours doing community service for our school and community. He volunteers his time to DJ Jr. Hi dances with his Officers. Gage has been a mentor in our Elementary schools.

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