

Trump Jr., Manafort in talks with Senate panel

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's eldest son and his former campaign chairman are discussing being privately interviewed by a Senate committee investigating Russia's meddling in the 2016 election, the panel confirmed Friday.

The committee initially called for Donald Trump Jr. and Paul Manafort to appear publicly next week. But the top Republican and Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee now say the men are negotiating the terms of their appearances, and lawmakers don't currently plan to issue subpoenas to force them to publicly testify.

In a joint statement, Sens. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, and Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., also said they are negotiating with Trump Jr. and Manafort about possibly turning over documents.

Both men face questions about attending a Trump Tower meeting with a Russian lawyer in June 2016 that was described to Trump Jr. in emails as part of a Russian government effort to help his father's campaign. Trump Jr. was told the lawyer had damaging information that could be used against Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and top White House aide, also attended the meeting. He is scheduled to speak behind closed doors with the Senate intelligence committee Monday and with the House intelligence committee Tuesday.

Spicer exits as Trump shakes up his beleaguered press team

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House press secretary Sean Spicer abruptly resigned Friday over President Donald Trump's decision to tap a camera-ready financier to lead the beleaguered White House communications team. The departing spokesman said the president "could benefit from a clean slate" as he seeks to steady operations amid the Russia investigations and ahead of a health care showdown.

Spicer, whose daily briefings once dominated cable television and delighted late-night comics, quit in protest over the hiring of Anthony Scaramucci as the new White House communications director. Spicer denounced what he considered Scaramucci's lack of qualifications, according to people familiar with the situation.

As his first act on the job, Scaramucci, a polished television commentator and Harvard Law graduate, announced from the White House briefing room that Sarah Huckabee Sanders would take Spicer's job. She had been Spicer's deputy.

The shake-up among the president spokespeople comes as Trump is suffering from dismal approval ratings and struggling to advance his legislative proposals. As his effort to replace Barack Obama's health care law crumbled this week, the



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

Incoming White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci blows a kiss after answering questions during the press briefing Friday.

president continued to vent frustration about the attention devoted to investigations of allegations of his election campaign's connections to Russia. Trump has blamed his own messengers — as well as the "fake news" media — for his woes.

Trump, who watches the press briefings closely and believes he is his own best spokesman, saluted Spicer's "great ratings" on TV and said he was "grateful for Sean's work on behalf of my administration and the American people."

In Senate, ailing lawmakers given time to recover

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. John McCain's treatment for brain cancer could keep him out of Washington for weeks, perhaps months, and yet it's unlikely anyone will challenge his extended leave.

Congress has a long tradition in which no one questions ailing lawmakers taking time to recover. For starters, it's just poor form. And, frankly, it's up to the stricken member of Congress and their doctors to decide when — or even if — they return to work. Some have recuperated away from the Capitol for a year or more.

It's an unwritten courtesy that often doesn't extend to the real working world where employees are forced to file for medical disability or take unpaid leave.

Julie Tarallo, McCain's spokeswoman, said Friday that "further consultations with Sen. McCain's Mayo Clinic care team will indicate when he will return to the United States Senate."

McCain had taken to Twitter on Thursday promising a quick return.

"Unfortunately for my sparring partners in Congress, I'll be back soon, so stand-by!"

said the six-term Arizona Republican and 2008 GOP presidential nominee.

Poland's senators approve contentious court overhaul

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Poland's Senate approved a contentious law on Saturday that gives politicians substantial influence over the Supreme Court, in defiance of European Union criticism.

The bill proposed by the populist ruling party only needs the signature of President Andrzej Duda to become binding. Duda has so far followed the ruling party line.

It was met with boos from protesters gathered in front of the Senate building.

EU leaders say the bill would kill judicial independence and threaten the rule of law in the EU's largest member in Central and Eastern Europe. The U.S. Department of State voiced concern on Friday.

Jaroslav Kaczynski, head of Poland's ruling Law and Justice party, contends the judiciary still works along a communist-era model and harbors many judges from that time. Communist rule ended in 1989. He says the justice system needs "radical changes" to become efficient and reliable.

Prime Minister Beata Szydlo says the legislation is an internal matter and the government will not bow to any foreign pressure.

Hawaii prepares for 'unlikely' North Korea missile threat

HONOLULU (AP) — Hawaii is the first state to prepare the public for the possibility of a ballistic missile strike from North Korea.

The state's Emergency Management

Agency on Friday announced a public education campaign about what to do. Hawaii lawmakers have been urging emergency management officials to update Cold War-era plans for coping with a nuclear attack as North Korea develops nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles that can reach the islands.

Starting in November, Hawaii will begin monthly tests of an "attack-warning" siren the state hasn't heard since the end of the Cold War in the 1980s. The wailing siren will be tested on the first working day of each month, after a test of an "attention-alert" steady tone siren with which residents are already familiar.

Informational brochures, along with TV, radio and internet announcements will help educate the public about the new siren sound and provide preparedness guidance. "If they're not educated, they could actually be frightened by it," agency Executive Director Toby Clairmont said of needing several months to introduce the new siren.

Because it would take a missile 15 minutes — maybe 20 minutes — to arrive, the instructions to the public are simple: "Get inside, stay inside and stay tuned," said Vern Miyagi, agency administrator. "You will not have time to pick up your family and go to a shelter and all that kind of stuff. ... It has to be automatic."

He stressed that his agency is simply trying to stay ahead of a "very unlikely" scenario, but it's a possibility that Hawaii can't ignore.

Kentucky told to pay attorney fees in same-sex marriage case

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — A federal judge has ordered Kentucky taxpayers to pay more than \$220,000 in legal fees because a county clerk refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples in 2015.

U.S. District Judge David Bunning on Friday ordered the state to pay \$222,695 in fees to the attorneys of two same-sex couples and others who sued Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis for refusing to give them marriage licenses. He also awarded the \$2,008.08 in other costs. Bunning said the county and Davis herself did not have to pay.

But Davis' attorney said she will appeal the ruling anyway. The judge ruled Davis lost the case. Attorney Mat Staver said they did not lose. He said the case was dismissed as moot after the state legislature changed the law in 2016 to remove the names of county clerks from marriage licenses.

If the appeal succeeds, Staver said, state taxpayers would not have to pay legal fees because that money can only be awarded to a "prevailing party."

William Sharp, legal director for the ACLU of Kentucky, said he hopes the ruling reminds Kentucky officials that "willful violations of individuals' civil liberties ... will not only be challenged but will also prove costly."

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