

McCain making dramatic Senate return for health vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — John McCain will make a dramatic return to the Senate for a make-or-break vote on GOP health care legislation Tuesday, just days after getting diagnosed with a brain tumor.

The decision by the 80-year-old senator to travel to Washington from his Arizona home was announced by his office in a brief press release late Monday night. It comes with the GOP health care bill to repeal and replace “Obamacare” on the brink as Majority Leader Mitch McConnell pushes toward a pivotal vote Tuesday prodded by an impatient and frustrated President Donald Trump.

“Senator McCain looks forward to returning to the United States Senate tomorrow to continue working on important legislation, including health care reform, the National Defense Authorization Act, and new sanctions on Russia, Iran and North Korea,” his office said.

It was the latest head-spinning turn of events for health legislation that’s survived several near-death experiences in recent weeks, yet could make it past a critical hurdle Tuesday with Republicans determined to make good on seven years of promises to get rid of former President Barack Obama’s law.

McCain’s startling decision to return suggests McConnell believes Tuesday’s vote will be successful — with McCain’s vote.

Trump intensifies criticism of his own attorney general

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump took a remarkable new swipe at his own attorney general on Monday.

He’s referring to Jeff Sessions in a tweet as “beleaguered” while privately musing about whether he should fire his longtime ally.

Trump again directed his displeasure at Sessions while fuming about the ongoing investigations into Russian meddling in the 2016 election and possible campaign collusion with foreign officials.

He has speculated aloud to allies in recent days about the potential consequences of firing Sessions. That’s according to three people who have recently spoken to the president and demanded anonymity to discuss private conversations.

But Trump often talks about making staff changes without following through. Those who have spoken with the president caution that a change may not be imminent or happen at all.

No collusion, Trump son-in-law Kushner tells Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senior White House adviser Jared Kushner denied Monday that he colluded with Russians in the course of President Donald Trump’s White House bid and declared he has “nothing to hide.”

Behind closed doors, Kushner spoke to



In this 2015 file photo, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., speaks on Capitol Hill. McCain has been diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer.

staff members of the Senate intelligence committee for nearly three hours at the Capitol, then made a brief public statement back at the White House.

“Let me be very clear,” he said. “I did not collude with Russia nor do I know of anyone else in the campaign who did so.”

Kushner left without taking questions. In an 11-page statement, released hours before the Capitol session, he detailed four contacts with Russians during Trump’s campaign and transition. It aimed to explain inconsistencies and omissions in a security clearance form that have invited public scrutiny.

In the statement, Kushner said that none of his contacts, which included meetings at Trump Tower with the Russian ambassador and a Russian lawyer, was improper.

Kushner arrived Monday morning at a Senate office building, exiting a black sport utility vehicle and greeting photographers with a grin and a wave. When he left, he responded to shouted questions, saying the interview went “great” and that he answered as many questions “as they had.”

In speaking to Congress, Kushner — as both the president’s son-in-law and a trusted senior adviser during the campaign and inside the White House — became the first member of the president’s inner circle to face questions from congressional investigators as they probe Russian meddling in the 2016 election and possible links to the Trump campaign. He is to meet with lawmakers on the House intelligence committee Tuesday.

11 states sue over EPA delay of new chemical safety rules

WASHINGTON (AP) — A coalition of 11 states has filed a legal challenge to the Trump administration’s decision to delay new chemical plant safety rules from taking

effect for at least two years.

The group led by New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman filed a petition for review by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. The states say Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt exceeded his legal authority by delaying the new Accidental Release Prevention Requirements until 2019.

The Obama-era regulations are aimed at preventing explosions, fires and poisonous gas releases at more than 12,000 chemical facilities across the country.

In addition to New York, the other states joining the lawsuit are Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington.

Israel removes metal detectors from holy site entrance

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel began removing metal detectors from entrances to a major Jerusalem shrine early Tuesday morning to defuse a crisis over the site that angered the Muslim world and triggered some of the worst Israeli-Palestinian clashes in years.

The Israeli security Cabinet had met for a second straight day Monday to find an alternative to the metal detectors, which were installed following a deadly Palestinian attack at the holy site.

Associated Press photos showed a worker dismantling one of the devices at Lions Gate

before 2:00 a.m.

“The Security Cabinet accepted the recommendation of all of the security bodies to incorporate security measures based on advanced technologies (“smart checks”) and other measures instead of metal detectors,” Israel announced Tuesday morning.

It said the measure will “ensure the security of visitors and worshippers” at the holy site and in Jerusalem’s Old City. It added that police will increase its forces in the area until the new security measures are in place.

Israeli media earlier reported high resolution cameras capable of detecting hidden objects would be deployed.

Israel erected the metal detectors after Arab gunmen killed two policemen from inside the shrine, holy to Muslims and Jews, earlier this month. The move incensed the Muslim world and triggered violence.

The fate of the site is an emotional issue at the heart of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Even the smallest perceived change to delicate arrangements pertaining to the site sparks tensions.

Immigrants wept, pleaded for water and pounded on truck

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The tractor-trailer was pitch-black inside, crammed with maybe 90 immigrants or more, and already hot when it left the Texas border town of Laredo for the 150-mile trip north to San Antonio.

It wasn’t long before the passengers, sweating profusely in the rising oven-like heat, started crying and pleading for water. Children whimpered. People took turns breathing through a single hole in the wall. They pounded on the sides of the truck and yelled to try to get the driver’s attention. Then they began passing out.

By the time police showed up at a Walmart in San Antonio around 12:30 a.m. Sunday and looked in the back of the truck, eight passengers were dead and two more would soon die in an immigrant-smuggling attempt gone tragically awry.

The details of the journey were recounted Monday by a survivor who spoke in a federal criminal complaint against the driver, James Matthew Bradley, who could face the death penalty over the 10 lives lost.

Bradley, 60, of Clearwater, Florida, appeared in federal court on charges of illegally transporting immigrants for financial gain, resulting in death. He was ordered held for another hearing on Thursday.

“Even though they have the driver in custody, I can guarantee you there’s going to be many more people we’re looking for to prosecute,” said Thomas Homan, acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

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Pictured in the EO newsroom staff photo. L-R: Front row: Kathy Aney, Tammy Malgesini, Renee Struthers, Kathryn Brown, Jade McDowell Second row: Antonio Sierra, Tim Trainor, Daniel Wattenburger, Jayati Ramakrishnan, Drew Langton, Matt Entrup Third row: Eric Singer, George Plaven • Top row: EJ Harris, Phil Wright