

Pelosi says no State of Union during shutdown

By KEVIN FREKING, MATTHEW DALY AND CATHERINE LUCEY Associated Press



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., responds to reporters after officially postponing President Donald Trump's State of the Union address until the government is fully reopened, at the Capitol in Washington on Wednesday.

WASHINGTON — In a high-stakes case of dare and double-dare, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi served notice Wednesday that President Donald Trump won't be allowed to deliver his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress next week. She took the step after Trump said he planned to show up in spite of Democratic objections to the speech taking place when big swaths of the government are shut down.

Denied that grand venue, Trump promised to come up with some sort of alternative event. But the White House was scrambling to find something matching the gravitas of the traditional address from the dais of the House to lawmakers from both parties, Supreme Court justices, invited guests and a television audience of millions.

"I think that's a great blotch on the incredible

country that we all love," Trump said. "It's a great, great horrible mark."

Fireworks over the speech shot back and forth between the Capitol and the White House as the month-long partial government shutdown showed no signs of ending and with about 800,000 federal workers facing the prospect of going without their second paycheck in a row come Friday.

Pelosi told Trump the House won't approve a resolution allowing him to address Congress until the shutdown ends. Trump shot back that Pelosi was afraid of hearing the truth.

The drama surrounding the State of the Union address began last week when Pelosi asked Trump to make other plans but stopped short of denying him the chamber for his address. Trump called her bluff Wednesday in a letter,



AP Photo/Susan Walsh

President Donald Trump speaks at the White House in Washington on Wednesday.

saying he intended to come anyway.

"It would be so very sad for our Country if the State of the Union were not delivered on time, on schedule, and very importantly, on location," he wrote.

Pelosi quickly squelched the speech, writing back that the House "will not consider a concurrent resolution authorizing the President's State of the Union address in the House Chamber until government has opened."

The president cannot speak in front of a joint session of Congress without both chambers' explicit permission. A resolution needs to be approved by both chambers specifying

the date and time for receiving an address from the president.

The gamesmanship unfolded as the Senate prepared to vote this week on dueling proposals on the shutdown. A Republican one would give Trump money for the wall while one from Democrats would reopen government through Feb. 8, with no wall money, giving bargainers time to talk about it.

Both proposals were likely to fail to reach the 60-vote threshold needed in the Senate, where Republicans hold a 53-47 majority. As well, House Democrats were putting forward a new proposal, aiming to lure Trump away from his demand for a border wall by offering billions of new dollars for other border security measures.

The Constitution states only that the president "shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union," meaning the president can speak anywhere he chooses or give his update in writing. The

address has been delayed before.

Ronald Reagan's 1986 State of the Union address was postponed after the Challenger space shuttle exploded in flight on Jan. 28 of that year.

Presidents Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and Jimmy Carter issued their final messages in print. As Eisenhower recovered from a heart attack in 1956, he prepared a seven-minute, filmed summary of the message from his retreat in Key West, Florida, that was broadcast nationwide. Richard Nixon sent a printed message in 1973; his staff said an oral message would have come too soon after his second inaugural address.

White House officials have been working on a backup plan to have Trump give the speech somewhere else if Democrats blocked access to the House chamber. Nevertheless, they were rattled by Pelosi's move Wednesday and expressed concern it would further sour shutdown negotiations.

Sanders says it's 'laughable' that White House is inaccessible



AP Photo/ Evan Vucci

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders talks with reporters on Wednesday in Washington.

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK — Following the apparent demise of the traditional afternoon briefing of reporters, White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders told Fox News Channel on Wednesday that any notion the Trump administration is not accessible to the press is "absolutely laughable."

"I take questions from reporters every single day," she said.

Sanders' venue for the statement, the morning

show "Fox & Friends," was familiar. Since Dec. 18, the day of the last White House press briefing, she's given eight television interviews — six of them on Fox News Channel, according to networks and the liberal watchdog group Media Matters for America.

She also appeared once on "CBS This Morning" and had a tough interview with Chris Wallace on "Fox News Sunday," which is seen on the Fox broadcast and cable news network.

Sanders has been

interviewed on "Fox & Friends," the agenda-setting morning show popular with Trump supporters, on Dec. 21, Jan. 4, Jan. 9, Jan. 16 and Wednesday.

On Tuesday night, she appeared on Sean Hannity's prime-time show.

President Donald Trump tweeted a day earlier that he had told Sanders not to bother with the afternoon briefing with White House reporters because she has been treated rudely and inaccurately by the "fake news" media.

"We're in the business of getting information to

the American people, not making stars out of people that want to be contributors on CNN and that's a lot of times what we see take place in the briefing room," Sanders said.

"We're more than happy to take questions but we think that there should be a certain level of decorum and a certain level of honesty and responsibility that comes with that."

The White House Correspondents Association condemned the discontinuation of the afternoon briefing as a retreat from transparency and account-

ability. Olivier Knox, president of the WHCA, noted that Sanders takes questions from all reporters in the White House driveway after her live segments on Fox News. Other White House officials frequently do the same.

He said those "gaggles" are basically briefings by another name. But with no set time for these meetings, reporters from smaller news outlets can't always be there to get their questions answered, he said.

Fox News is Trump's most frequent venue of choice for interviews, too.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING

Table with 24 columns (12 PM to 11:30 PM) and rows for various channels including FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, and CABLE.

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Large table with 24 columns (12 PM to 11:30 PM) and rows for various channels including A&E, AMC, ANPL, CMT, CNBC, CNN, DISC, DISN, ESPN, ESPN2, FNC, FOOD, FREE, FX, GOLF, GSN, HALL, HGTV, HIST, LIFE, NICK, PARI, ROOT, SYFY, TBS, TCM, TLC, TNT, UNI, USA, WE, WGN, HBO, HBO2, HBO3, MAX, SHOW, STZENC.

THURSDAY LATE NIGHT & FRIDAY MORNING

Table with 12 columns (12 AM to 11:30 PM) and rows for various channels including FOX, CBS, NBC, ABC, PBS, and PREMIUM.