



AP Photo/Daniel Ochoa de Olza, File

In this Jan. 3, 2019, file photo, a woman takes a snapshot by the border fence between San Diego, Calif., and Tijuana, as seen from Mexico.

Deal: President Trump's signature planned Friday

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The Senate passed the legislation by 83-16 with both parties solidly on board. House passage was assured Thursday night, with Trump's signature planned Friday.

Lawmakers exuded relief that the agreement had averted a fresh closure of federal agencies just three weeks after a record-setting 35-day partial shutdown that drew an unambiguous thumbs-down from the public. But in announcing that Trump would sign the accord, White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders also said he'd take "other executive action, including a national emergency," prompting immediate condemnation from Democrats and threats of lawsuits from states that might lose federal money.

In an unusual joint statement, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said such a declaration would be "a lawless act, a gross abuse of the power of the presidency and a desperate attempt to distract" from Trump's failure to force Mexico to pay for the wall, as he's promised for years.

Pelosi and Schumer also said that "Congress will defend our constitutional authorities." They declined to say whether that meant lawsuits or votes on resolutions to prevent Trump from unilaterally shifting money to wall-building, with aides saying they would wait to see what he does.

Democratic state attorneys general said they would consider legal action to block Trump. Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello told the president on Twitter "we'll see you in court" if he makes the declaration.

Despite widespread opposition in Congress to proclaiming an emergency, including by some Republicans, Trump is under pressure to act unilaterally to soothe his conservative base and avoid looking like he's surrendered in his wall battle.

The uproar over what Trump would do next cast an uncertain shadow over what had been a rare display of bipartisanship in Congress to address the grinding bat-



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

President Donald Trump speaks during a cabinet meeting on Tuesday at the White House in Washington.

tle between the White House and lawmakers over border security.

The abrupt announcement of Trump's plans came late in an afternoon of rumblings that the volatile president — who'd strongly hinted he'd sign the agreement but never definitively — was shifting toward rejecting it. That would have infused fresh chaos into a fight both parties are desperate to leave behind, a thought that drove some lawmakers to seek heavenly help.

"Let's all pray that the president will have wisdom to sign the bill so the government doesn't shut down," Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, said after a chaplain opened Thursday's Senate session.

Moments before Sanders spoke at the White House, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., took to the Senate floor to announce Trump's decisions to sign the bill and declare an emergency.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, who is close to McConnell, told reporters that there were two hours of phone calls between McConnell and the White House before there were assurances that Trump would sign. In a surprising development, McConnell said he would support Trump's emergency declaration, a turnabout for the Kentucky Republican, who like many lawmakers had opposed such action.

Democrats say there is no crisis at the border and Trump is merely sidestepping Congress. And some Republicans warn that future Democratic presidents could use his precedent to force spending on their own priorities such as gun control.

GOP critics included Maine Sen. Susan Collins, who said emergency declarations are for "major natural disasters or catastrophic events" and said its use would be of "dubious constitutionality."

White House aides and congressional Republicans have said that besides an emergency, Trump might assert other authorities that could conceivably put him within reach of billions of dollars. The money could come from funds targeted for military construction, disaster relief and counterdrug efforts.

Congressional aides say there is \$21 billion in military construction money that could potentially be used by Trump if he declares a national emergency. But according to the law the money has to be used in support of U.S. armed forces, they say.

The Defense Department declined to provide details on available money.

With many of the Democrats' liberal base voters adamantly against Trump's aggressive attempts to curb immigration, four declared presidential hopefuls opposed the bill in the Senate: Cory Booker of New Jersey, New York's Kirsten Gillibrand, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Kamala Harris of California. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota voted for it, as did Vermont independent Bernie Sanders, who is expected to join the field soon.

Notably, the word "wall," the heart of many a chant at Trump campaign events and his rallies as president, is absent from the compromise's 1,768-page legislative and descriptive language. "Barriers" and "fencing" are the nouns of choice, a victory for Democrats eager to deny Trump even a rhetorical victory.

The agreement, which took bargainers three weeks to strike, would also squeeze funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, in an attempt to pressure the agency to detain fewer immigrants. To the dismay of Democrats, however, it would still leave an agency many of them consider abusive holding thousands more immigrants than last year.

Climb: 'I do it in honor of my grandpa'

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Overall, the event, which started in 1991, has raised more than \$17 million for leukemia and lymphoma research.

Gorham, who was one of the first team members to participate 10 years ago, started because he thought it would be fun to support the cause and have something to train for.

But in 2012, the event's purpose became more meaningful to him.

"In 2012, my youngest daughter with leukemia," he said.

His daughter went into treatment, and is now cured — it's been three years since her last treatment. But he still likes to involve his family in the event, and

has had them come to Seattle for it.

In addition, he said, several other team members have had family members affected by blood cancers or other cancers.

"I do it in honor of my grandpa, who I lost in 2000 to leukemia," said UCFD paramedic Danny Hinton. He is in his fifth year of the Stair Climb.

The event is popular, and usually sells out within the first 20 minutes that sign-ups are open. The team does some additional training for the climb, putting in work on the stair mill at the gym, and adding in a few extra leg days. On the day of the climb, they suit up in full firefighter gear, including coats, boots and air tanks.

Climbers' times vary

widely. According to last year's results, the fastest finisher completed the stair climb in 11 minutes and 55 seconds, and the last finishers took more than two hours — but the point of the event is more than climbing the stairs in the shortest amount of time.

"There are survivors and honorees that come to watch, support and cheer on the climbers," Gorham said.

Some firefighters who are cancer survivors also do the climb.

UCFD will be hosting a fundraiser at Club 24 on Monday, Feb. 18, and will have a table set up collecting donations. To donate, people can also visit the website www.firefighter-stairclimb.org, or contact UCFD at 541-567-8822.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Assistant fire chief Shawn Penninger looks out over the vehicle bay under construction at the building site for the new fire station Wednesday in Pendleton.

Station: 'I want to see this end of town rejuvenate'

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The lack of work stoppages means the fire station is starting to resemble the final product.

During a tour of the building, Hull started with the apparatus bay, the garage where the fire department will store all its vehicles.

The new bay offers more space, a heating system, and a training area where firefighters can receive hands-on lessons on ladders, rappelling, extraction, and more.

Comparing the current bay, where employees frequently need to move vehicles in and out of the garage to store them properly, and the new one is all but impossible, assistant fire chief Shawn Penninger said.

"It would be like comparing a Model A pick-up truck and a Ford F-150," he said.

The bay is sealed away from the living quarters and reception area, another upgrade from the current building.

Instead of sleeping in the same room, each firefighter and paramedic will sleep in their own second-floor dormitory, a setup Penninger believes will better suit their female personnel and prevent illnesses from spreading around the department.

Beyond exposure to smoke and carcinogens, another frequent health concern for firefighters is being woken up in the middle of the night to respond to an emergency.

As it stands now, every firefighter at every station is notified of an emergency



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Javier Martinez, of Kennewick, installs insulation in a dormitory room in the new fire station Wednesday in Pendleton.

regardless of whether they are called to respond to it or not.

Hull said the new station has an electronic system that will only wake up the firefighters and paramedics needed for the job.

That same system also shuts off gas to the station's cooking equipment if an emergency is called, preventing the station from burning down and a great deal of irony.

Seeking neighbors

Once the ribbon is cut and the firefighters moved in, Hull hopes it can help spur investment in a part of Pendleton that hasn't seen much in the way of new development.

"I want to see this end of town rejuvenate," he said.

St. Anthony put the whole 1400 block of Southeast Court Avenue for sale after it demolished its old hospital, but the city only needed to buy the former parking lot for the fire station.

St. Anthony spokesman Emily Smith said the hospital is still trying to sell property, but didn't have an

update beyond that.

St. Anthony was able to donate its old hospice building to Cason's Place — Grief Support for Children and Families of Eastern Oregon. Up until recently, it looked like it might have an interested party for the only building left standing from the demolition — a medical office building.

In November, Umatilla County agreed to team up with Columbia River Health Services to apply for a grant for the Boardman clinic to expand its services into Pendleton.

If Columbia River Health could raise the money, the clinic planned to acquire the three-story medical office building and provide primary care services like pediatrics, mental health, and family medicine.

But in an interview Thursday, Columbia River Health interim CEO Sheila Corpus said those plans fell through once the clinic took another look at its finances and realized it wasn't fiscally feasible, even with a grant.



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