

## President Trump backs off proposal to eliminate Special Olympics funds

By COLLIN BINKLEY and CATHERINE LUCEY  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump announced Thursday that he was backing off his budget request to eliminate funding for the Special Olympics, reversing course on a proposal that was unlikely to be approved by Congress after days of bipartisan criticism.

Speaking to reporters as he left the White House for a rally in Michigan, Trump said he had authorized funding for the organization. “I heard about it this morning. I have overridden my people. We’re funding the Special Olympics.”

Trump’s announcement came after Education Secretary Betsy DeVos spent days defending the proposal, which drew widespread condemnation from lawmakers, as well as advocates and celebrities. The president’s sudden reversal reflected a political desire to move away from a plan that was not expected to pass Congress, but also underscored Trump’s comfort with undercutting top officials.

Said Trump: “I’ve been to the Special Olympics. I think it’s incredible.”

Walking back her defense of the proposal, DeVos issued a statement, saying: “I am pleased and grateful the President and I see eye to eye on this issue and that he has decided to fund our Special Olympics grant. This is funding I have fought for behind the scenes over the last several years.”

The remarks were a

sharp contrast from her comments to Senate Democrats in a budget hearing earlier in the day. DeVos said her department had to make “tough choices” on the budget and insisted the Special Olympics should be supported through private donations.

In a heated exchange with Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., DeVos said she “wasn’t personally involved” in pushing for elimination of the funding, but she defended it as her agency seeks to cut \$7 billion for the 2020 budget. “Let’s not use disabled children in a twisted way for your political narrative,” she said.

The president’s shift Thursday was not the first time he has undermined a top aide. He repeatedly berated former Attorney General Jeff Sessions in public and private and clashed openly with former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, ultimately firing him in a tweet.

The Trump administration’s education budget proposal called for the elimination of \$17.6 million in funding for the Special Olympics, amounting to roughly 10 percent of the group’s overall revenue. Most of its funding comes from individual and corporate contributions and other fundraising efforts.

The Special Olympics is the largest sports organization in the world for people with intellectual disabilities, with over 5 million athletes from 174 countries participating in competitions while spreading a global message of inclusion and empowerment. The organization celebrated its 50th anniversary last year.

## Dems mock ‘scaredy-cats’ GOP, demand Mueller’s full 300 pages

By LISA MASCARO, LAURIE KELLMAN and MARY CLARE JALONICK  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats intensified their demands for the full Mueller report Thursday after learning the special counsel’s findings from his Trump-Russia investigation run to more than 300 pages while President Donald Trump boasts of total exoneration based on a four-page summary by his attorney general.

House Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler said Attorney General William Barr told him he has no intention of giving the confidential report to Congress immediately as he redacts grand jury testimony and other elements.

Democrats say they may subpoena the report if it’s not forthcoming by a Tuesday deadline they have set.

Through the day, tempers were rising on Capitol Hill.

Shaking her fist for emphasis, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Barr’s summary, which cleared Trump of campaign collusion with Russia and criminal obstruction of Mueller’s federal probe, was “condescending” and “arrogant.”

“Mr. Attorney General,” she said, “show us the report and we’ll come to our own conclusions.” She asked what Trump and the Republicans were afraid of and mocked them as “scaredy-cats.”

Trump himself headed to Grand Rapids, Michigan, for a campaign rally where he was sure to lambaste the Democrats again for the investigation that he has repeatedly dismissed as a “witch hunt.”

The length of Mueller’s still-confidential report makes clear that there are



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

**House Speaker Nancy Pelosi heaps scorn on Attorney General William Barr, saying his letter about special counsel Robert Mueller’s report was “condescending,” after Barr concluded there was no evidence that President Donald Trump’s campaign “conspired or coordinated” with the Russian government to influence the 2016 election, during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington on Thursday.**

substantially more details that he and his team have documented in their investigation than Barr disclosed to Congress and the public. The volume of pages was described on Thursday by a Justice Department official and another person familiar with the document.

The Justice Department official said Barr discussed the length of the report during a phone call Wednesday with Nadler, who would only indicate it was less than 1,000 pages.

Barr would not commit to providing the full report with its underlying evidence, Nadler said.

Both the department official and the other person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the document.

The attorney general has been going through the report amid Democratic concerns that what has been made public so far was tilted in Trump’s favor. It’s unclear whether whatever Barr might release next will be Mueller’s own words or another summary. Nadler

offered to join Barr to seek a judge’s approval to unseal grand jury testimony, an aide said.

Barr has said he’ll provide Congress with at least a partial version in April and also told Nadler he would agree to testify before his committee.

As that battle brews, House Democrats barreled ahead with their own investigation of the Trump administration, and Trump resumed his attack on Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., just as the chairman of the intelligence committee was about to gavel his panel into session.

“Congressman Adam Schiff, who spent two years knowingly and unlawfully lying and leaking, should be forced to resign from Congress!” Trump tweeted early Thursday.

Republicans picking up on Trump’s complaints formalized their demand that Schiff resign as chairman of the intelligence panel over his comments that there was significant evidence the president and his associates conspired with Russia.

“We have no faith in your ability to discharge your responsibilities” in line with the Constitution, the Republicans wrote to Schiff in a missive they read aloud at the hearing.

Republicans pointed to Barr’s synopsis, released Sunday, that said Mueller’s probe didn’t find that Trump’s campaign “conspired or coordinated” with the Russian government to influence the 2016 presidential election.

Schiff stood by his remarks, listing the meetings that people in Trump’s circle had with Russians. He noted Trump’s pursuit of a deal to build a Trump Tower in Moscow.

“There is a different word for that than collusion, and it’s called compromise,” Schiff said, as he opened the session. The hearing was called to provide an overview on how Russia in the past has blackmailed Americans.

Since Barr’s findings were released, Schiff this week has repeated his assertion that evidence of collusion is in “plain sight.” He says Mueller’s failure to find a criminal conspiracy with Russia does not absolve the Trump campaign.

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