Research Report: Action Items for the week of March 11, 2017

We continued to research the three major issues: (1) Protecting the ACA and stopping the Republican’s proposed replacement, (2) Russian interference in our election and (3) New travel ban issued on March 6, 2017 via executive order. In addition, we have included information about (4) Trump’s proposed budget and talking points.

1. The Republican’s proposed replacement of the ACA

- **Summary:** On March 6, the Republicans released its repeal and replace bill. The new bill will cut taxes on the rich, raise premiums on the old, and cut subsidies for low-income people.
  - **This bill is happening in the dark:** the GOP will hold committee votes on their bill *two days after releasing it* and plan to pass it out of the House with the following weeks. This rush will prevent the Congressional Budget Office from analyzing it so Congress and the public may have *no idea how much it costs and how many people will lose coverage*.
  - **Replacing premium subsidies with tax credits:** Under Obamacare subsidies are on a sliding scale so lower income families receive larger subsidies. The GOP’s tax credits are based on age. The result: *millions of low-income families will be unable to afford coverage*.
  - **Caps Medicaid funding to states:** Currently, the states and the federal government share responsibility for funding Medicaid. This change would *break that partnership* and, over time, states would pay an ever-increasing percentage of the costs. States would have to cut benefits, cut the number of people served or cut reimbursement to providers. Hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and other health-care providers would have to provide more uncompensated care. This plan *will hurt low-income families, children, disabled people and seniors*.
  - **Charges older adults more:** Allows insurers to charge older customers five times as much as younger ones and gives states the option to set their own ratio. Older adults will see their premiums increase by thousands of dollars.
  - **Cuts taxes on the rich but provides little new funding:** The bill eliminates the taxes on high-income earners (for example, those making more than $700,000) that were the major source of ACA funding, but does not provide much new income. This would likely sharply increase the deficit or new funding sources would be added.
  - **Groups opposing the Republican version:** AARP, the American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Catholic Health Association, and the Children’s Hospital Association.

- **Updated Talking Points:**
  - **Tell your story.** Best thing to do is to tell a story about a successful outcome for you, a family member or friend due to the Affordable Care Act and the impact a repeal would have.
  - **The ACA was successful:**
    - 22 million people now have coverage – the highest proportion insured in US history
• Eliminated the **pre-existing condition** exclusion which prevented many people from getting coverage
• Young adults can be covered on parents’ plan till **age 26**
• Medicare Part D **doughnut hole** for drug coverage **going away**
• **Extended life of Medicare** Trust Fund by over 10 years
• **Lowered health care inflation** dramatically
• If the Republicans really want to change the ACA, then the replacement must be at least as good as **what Congress gives themselves**.
• Ask member to **take leadership** in defending the ACA and to send you a reply.

**Our MoCs:**
**WHAT TO DO:**
- Kudos to Cantwell: @SenatorCantwell Thank you for doing everything you can to protect and improve the ACA.
- Kudos to Murray: @PattyMurray Thank you for doing everything you can to protect and improve the ACA.
- Kudos to Heck: @RepDennyHeck Thank you for doing everything you can to protect and improve the ACA.
- Call our 3 MoCs to publicly demand that they vote against the Republican proposal and that they advocate for the ACA
- Call the 4 Republican Chairs below and tell them to reject the Republican proposal.

**Congressional committees**
- Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee
  Chair: Lamar Alexander (TN)
  Ranking: Patty Murray (WA)
- House Energy and Commerce Committee
  Chair: Greg Walden (OR-2)
  Ranking: Frank Pallone (NJ-6)
  No Washington members are on the committee
- Senate Finance Committee
  Chair: Orrin Hatch (UT)
  Ranking: Ron Wyden (OR)
  Maria Cantwell is on the committee
- House Ways and Means Committee
  Chair: Kevin Brady (TX-8)
  Ranking: Richard Neal (MA-1)
  Dave Reichert and Suzan DelBene are both on the committee

2. **RUSSIAN INVESTIGATION/Trump Campaign and Russia Links Talking Points**

**SUMMARY:**
**Initial facts:** Michael Flynn resigned as National Security Advisor after 24 days in office. It was later announced that Trump had requested his resignation. This followed revelations that he had lied to the Vice-President and others in the Administration about whether he had discussed the lifting of sanctions with the Russian ambassador during a phone call during the transition. Subsequent news stories revealed that the acting Attorney General had informed the White House Counsel of phone call transcripts of the call and that Flynn had lied about it. Later stories discussed contacts between Flynn and other Trump campaign aides and known members of Russian intelligence during the campaign.

**Late February update:** The FBI is currently investigating the Russian hacking of the election and the contacts between Trump’s aides during the campaign and period after the election but before January 20. The CIA is supporting the FBI in the investigation. AG Sessions has the legal ability to stop the investigation. CIA director Pompeo has the legal ability to restrict CIA cooperation in the investigation. The Senate Intelligence Committee is conducting a wide investigation into Russian involvement in these issues and has subpoena power. The House Intelligence Committee had only announced an investigation into government leaks on the issue, while Intelligence Committee Chairman Nunes had stated that he had seen no evidence of wrong-doing.

**Latest news:** Last week, press accounts detailed that Press Secretary Spicer asked intelligence officials and the chairs of House and Senate Intelligence committees to go to the press to say, in effect, nothing to see here. This was confirmed by the White House. All of them did as requested, with the sole exception of the FBI. Note that Trump subsequently attacked the FBI.

This increased pressure in the Senate for a full investigation, though there was not agreement regarding the need for an independent panel. Senate Armed Services committee (McCain is chair) has not said it will hold a hearing. There is not as much pressure in the House, where the House Intelligence Chair has said there is no evidence to pursue (though the investigation has just begun). House Judiciary committee will not hold a hearing. Cong. Darrell Issa has called for an independent panel, but this may be explained by the fact that he does not have a clear path to reelection in a district moving sharply less Republican.

**March 2 update:** On the evening of March 1, the Washington Post and Wall Street Journal both reported that AG Sessions had had contacts with the Russians during the campaign and that he had arguably lied to direct congressional questioning during his confirmation hearing. This led Cong. Chaffetz (chair of House Oversight Committee) to call for Sessions to recuse himself from the FBI investigation. Senator Portman (R-OH) made the same call. Majority Leader McCarthy initially called for recusal, but later walked that back. Speaker Ryan said that there is nothing to the story. Intelligence Committee Chair Nunes said now that his committee will hold a full investigation (a reversal from a day earlier). Press Secretary Spicer said that it was all a partisan attack. Subsequently, numerous House and Senate Republicans called on Sessions to recuse himself. At 1 PM PST, he held a press conference and recused himself from any investigations of Russian attempts to affect the election and of investigations into any Trump campaign or associate involvement with the Russians during the campaign.

The New York Times reported that during the late days of the Obama Administration, officials concerned that the investigation into Russian involvement in the US election would be buried in
a Trump Administration, spread information regarding that involvement around the US government.

**March 5 update:** At 6 AM Saturday DC time, Trump tweeted out the accusation that Obama had wiretapped Trump tower. This accusation was made with no evidence to follow it up and was promptly denied by Obama personnel. It also appears that Obama could not have ordered such a wiretap under federal law and practice. On Sunday, Trump called for these accusations to be investigated by Congress as part of the Russia investigations. Again, no evidence was provided. His staff, when questioned about this, said the Obama wiretap claim is what he believed, and provided a few news articles, nearly all from Breitbart or other extreme right news sources with a history of false accusations. Members of Congress, interviewed about the accusations seemed baffled.

New York Times reported that FBI director Comey requested that the Justice Department state that there was no truth to the Trump accusations of wire-tapping. He was concerned that the public would believe that it would mean that a crime had been committed. Justice Department turned him down. This account was later confirmed by another high-ranking FBI official.

There appear to be three possible explanations for this odd behavior: Trump could be unhinged because of the pressure of the Russia investigations; Trump could be repeating conspiracy theories he picked up from reading Breitbart stories; Trump could be using these conspiracy stories to distract the press and public from the Russia investigations (and Sessions lying to Congress and recusing himself). Of the three, the third (distracting public attention) is by far the most likely, given Trump’s history of responding to an accusation about his behavior with a counter-accusation. However, it would not preclude the possibility of the others also being true.

**Congressional committees that will deal with the issue**

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence  
Chair: Richard Burr (NC)  
Ranking: Mark Warner (VA)

There are no Washington members on the committee. Ron Wyden, Diane Feinstein and Kamala Harris are on the committee.

House Intelligence Committee  
Chair: Devin Nunes (CA)  
Ranking: Adam Schiff (CA)  
Denny Heck is on the committee.

**Draft talking points to our MoCs**

- We want you to support and push for an independent, full, thorough, bipartisan and transparent investigation of the Russian hacking of the US election and the connections between Trump campaign officials and Russian officials (including intelligence officials) during the campaign and after the election but before January 20. Most importantly, the investigation results should be shared with the public as soon as possible and to the fullest extent possible.
• Efforts by White House to compromise intelligence officials and the FBI as well has chairs of House and Senate Intelligence committees in order try to quash press interest in the story make the need for an independent panel more urgent.

• While Sessions recusal is important, his lying to Congress and the unprecedented situation of the FBI investigating the Attorney General make his resignation necessary.

• Trump’s accusations that he was wiretapped by former-President Obama is an obvious attempt to distract Congress and the public from the deepening scandal of his campaign’s Russia connection and its implications for national security. Don’t be distracted by these unfounded accusations.

• **WHAT TO DO:**
  o Russian Investigation:
    ▪ Kudos to Cantwell: @SenatorCantwell Thank you for pushing for an independent special prosecutor to conduct the investigation on Russian and Trump.
    ▪ Kudos to Murray: @PattyMurray Thank you for pushing for an independent investigation on Russian and Trump.
    ▪ Call Rep Heck to ask that, as a member of the House Intelligence Committee, he do everything he can to pursue a full independent investigation.
    ▪ Call Chair Burr and Ranking Member Warner on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to conduct a full investigation into Russian interference in our election, and the Trump administration’s involvement in the interference.
    ▪ Call Chair Nunes and Ranking Member Schiff on the House Intelligence Committee on to conduct a full investigation into Russian interference in our election, and the Trump administration’s involvement in the interference.

2a. Demand that Jeff Sessions resign

  o **Summary:** Attorney General Jeff Sessions has [recused himself](https://www.indivisibleguide.org/) from investigations of Russia’s interference in the election, but that’s not good enough. According to Sessions himself, officials who commit perjury should be removed from office—and his claims to the Senate Judiciary Committee that he hadn’t communicated with Russian officials obviously fit the bill. [Many MoCs have already called for him to resign](https://www.indivisibleguide.org/): if your Senators and Representative aren’t already on the list, tell them to join, and if they won’t, be sure to ask them why not. Check out our new script calling for Sessions’ resignation and also demanding a broader investigation into the administration’s ties with Russia. (from indivisibleguide.org)

  o **WHAT TO DO:**
    ▪ Call Senator Cantwell to ask that he call on AG Session to resign.
    ▪ Call Representative Heck to ask that he call on AG Session to resign.
    ▪ Send kudos to Senator Murray: @PattyMurray Thank you for calling for the resignation of AG Jeff Sessions. He perjured himself during his confirmation hearings.
3. The new Travel Ban signed by Trump via Executive Order on March 6, 2017

- **Summary**
  
  *New executive order:* A new executive order was released Monday, March 6. The order is drafted to try to avoid 9th Circuit Court concerns. The order:

  - Bans US entry from six Muslim countries (Iran, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Libya and Yemen); the order will not include citizens of Iraq in the list. The US refugee program will be suspended for 120 days and the US will not accept more than 50,000 refugees a year, down from the 110,000-person cap set by the Obama administration.

  - The order will not include green card holders. It blocks the issuance of only new visas and does not impact current visa holders, although those whose visas expire will have to reapply. It does not impact dual-nationals who use a passport from another country than the six countries named. It does not apply to those who have already been granted asylum or refugee status. The order does not include an exemption for religious minorities. It also does not include an indefinite prohibition on travelers from Syria. It will not go into effect until March 16, to prevent the scenes at airports that resulted from the prior ban.

  - Trump directed the Department of Homeland Security to perform over the next 120 days a global country-by-country review of the identity and security information each country provides to the US to support US visa and other immigration determinations. Countries will have 50 days to respond to any US requests to update or improve the quality of information provided. This suggests that; a) many more countries than the six listed could face a ban on entry; b) that bans could last for far longer than the 90 or 120 days listed in the executive order; c) that bans could be permanent; and d) that vetting procedures could become sharply more difficult visa applicants and immigrants from a wide range of countries.

  - The new ban lays out a more specific national security basis for the order. The order claims that since 2001, hundreds of people born abroad have been convicted of terrorism-related crimes in the United States. It cites two specific examples: one is the case of two Iraqi nationals who came to the United States as refugees in 2009, who were convicted of terrorism-related offenses (note that Iraq is not listed in the executive order) and oddly, the case of a Somali native brought to the country as an infant child refugee sentenced decades later to 30 years in prison for plotting to detonate a bomb at a Christmas tree-lighting ceremony in Oregon. That man had become a naturalized U.S. citizen. This case would appear to argue against allowing in refugees as babies because they might later become terrorists. The new ban also says that more than 300 people who entered the country as refugees were the subject of active counterterrorism investigations. U.S. officials declined to specify the countries of origin of those being investigated, their immigration status, or whether they had been charged with crimes.

  - The order details specific sets of people who would be able to apply for case-by-case waivers to the order, including those previously admitted to the United States for “a continuous period of work, study, or other long-term activity”; those with “significant business or professional obligations”; and those seeking to visit or live with family. The
The executive order implies that visas will be issued until March 16, but people already at the point of boarding a US-bound airplane or arriving at an American airport aren’t supposed to be affected by the new executive order.

- The order creates a new office of victims of immigrant crime, and the Department of Homeland Security is tasked with tracking crime by immigrants. This appears to be a one-sided effort to claim that immigrants are disproportionately committing crimes. The reality is the opposite, that immigrants commit far fewer crimes per capita than other US citizens or residents.

- Contradicting the order, two Department of Homeland Security reports were issued in the past week assessing the terrorist threat posed by people from the seven countries covered by the president’s original travel ban cast doubt on the necessity of the executive order, concluding that citizenship was an “unreliable” threat indicator and that people from the affected countries had rarely been implicated in U.S.-based terrorism. These reports were leaked after Administration officials tried to stop them from becoming public.

This order is drafted to be harder to stop legally because it avoids many of the issues that led the 9th Circuit court to issue a stay. The government does usually have broad authority over immigration and immigrants not yet in the country do not have the rights guaranteed to citizens or residents. The government still cannot impose a religious test, however, and must provide a rational basis for its actions. Earlier Administration actions may undercut the argument that this is not a Muslim ban, and it is unclear whether the arguments for restricting immigration really provide a rational basis for the action, especially given the Homeland Security reports noted above. While it is presented as a limited halt to immigration from a few countries, it would likely result in far more dramatic limitations in immigration policy.

**News stories:** Last week, the press reported that the White House told intelligence agencies to give them proof that there was danger in allowing in citizens of the seven countries included in the Muslim ban executive order. That is, they told them the outcome before the investigation. They received a report from the Department of Homeland Security that stated that immigration from these countries does not pose a threat and that place of origin is a poor predictor of terrorism threats. The report notes that terror attacks on the US have come from citizens of Europe, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan as well as from US citizens and permanent residents, but not from the citizens of these countries. The White House then tried to quash the report. The report was then leaked to the AP. A second report had also been requested, with a similar result. It was also attempted to be quashed and was then leaked.

**Latest court action:** The district court in Seattle has refused to stop court action on original executive order because that order has not been rescinded. Court has ordered briefing on this case soon. **March 6:** Because the original order has been rescinded, this case is likely moot.

**Funding:** Funding for the wall and for additional 10,000 Customs agents and 5,000 Border Patrol agents expected in President’s budget.

**ICE agents:** Round-ups continuing, with more evidence that ICE agents feel emboldened in enforcement. Some examples include: detention and vigorous questioning of a French scholar on the Vichy government going to give talk at Texas A&M; an Australian children’s book author
coming to give a talk, arresting a DACA recipient while she was going to get her permit reauthorized, arresting an undocumented immigrant as she was leaving court to get a restraining order regarding domestic violence, agents forcing all passengers on a US domestic flight to show ID before any could exit the plane as they were looking for a single undocumented immigrant.

**Efforts to change US demographics:** Recently published interviews with Steven Miller and Stephen Bannon, current White House aides formerly involved with Breitbart News, describe a radical effort to shift US demography. This would take place by: deporting undocumented residents; sharply limiting visas granted; banning or sharply restricting Muslim immigration and immigration from Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. Projected follow-up moves include: limiting visas; dramatically reducing legal immigration; reducing or eliminating H-1B and other related programs; and shifting to an undefined “merit-based” immigration system, focused on immigration of immigrants with needed skills rather than on national quotas or family reunification, as at present.

**Congressional committees that deal with immigration**

*Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs*
Chair: Ron Johnson (Wisconsin)
Ranking: Clair McCaskill (Missouri)
No Washington state members are on the committee.

*House Committee on Homeland Security*
Chair: Michael McCaul (Texas-10)
Ranking: Bennie Thompson (Miss-2)
No Washington state members are on the committee.

**WHAT TO DO/TALKING POINTS**

- **Tell your own immigration story**—your family’s story, stories about friends, co-workers, others in the community. Explain why the issue matters to you. This is the key to effectively communicating on this.

- **Immigration strengthens the US, not weakens it.** It is the reason that the US is the only advanced country that is not facing population decline. Immigration has resulted in numerous new businesses, from local restaurants to Silicon Valley tech firms. Immigrants use social services at a dramatically lower level than other US citizens and residents.

- **Immigrants are not criminals.** They commit crimes at dramatically lower rates than other US citizens and residents, despite the mean-spirited effort by the Trump Administration to suggest otherwise.

- **Stopping all influx of refugees is inhumane and a violation of our values.** It is reminiscent of the denial of visas to Jews to enter the US before World War II. Refugees from war-torn Middle East war zones already go through an 18 month to 2-year vetting process, the most extensive in the world. While refugees use social services when they first arrive in the US, it is temporary, and is repaid many times over when they find employment or create employment by starting new businesses.
• **Stopping all immigration from selected Muslim countries threatens our interests with our Muslim allies.** It signals to American Muslims that they are not fully accepted here, which is the kind of action that has produced homegrown terrorism abroad; It amplifies the very message that terrorists have been sending about the West—that Muslims will never be fully accepted. Stopping such immigration does not protect us, because potential terrorists can still arrive from Europe and lone-wolf attacks, like those we have already seen, are primarily done by citizens who are later radicalized on the Internet. It also prevents entry of those people who have suffered most in desperate war zones who are seeking safety. With the US acting to prevent entry, it makes entry everywhere more difficult.

• **DACA recipients are in the US through no fault of their own.** They have no experience of their country of origin because they were so young when they arrived here. It would be inhumane not to allow them to remain in the US legally. They have received valuable skills and it would be a waste of talent to not allow them to continue to work here. This is also true of other people that are being deported.

• **The ban will not reduce terrorism, but may increase it.** While the Administration argues that the ban will reduce terrorism, their arguments are directly contradicted by two reports from their own Department of Homeland Security. Those reports make clear that country of origin is not a predictor of who commits terrorist acts. The ban is more likely to increase terrorism by isolating American Muslims and appearing to confirm the arguments of terror groups that Muslims will never be accepted in the US.

• **This is part of a radical plan to change the demographic makeup of the US.** The Administration’s ban and other proposed immigration policies, such as trying to limit legal immigration and moving away from family reunification in immigration policy appear to be trying to affect US demography by restricting Hispanic and Muslim immigration, rather than reacting to actual security threats. **This is counter to American values and tradition and we want you to oppose it.**

4. **Trump’s Proposed Budget**

Trump’s proposed budget. What we know so far is that he’s proposing a defense spending increase of $54 billion, offsetting that by cuts in “discretionary” spending. He’s also calling for a major tax cut. During the campaign he pledged “limited or no changes in Social Security and Medicare” but Ryan, Trump’s director of OMB (Office of Management and Budget) Mike Mulvaney, and other Republicans want to cut SS & Medicare.

**Committee:**
The budget process is long and contentious and goes through many committees. The House Committee on the Budget is chaired by Diane Black, (TN-06), ranking member is John Yarmuth, (KY-03). Seattle’s Pramila Jayapal, (WA-07) is Vice Ranking Member. Also from WA, Democrat Suzan DelBene, (WA-01)
Summary of Issue: We are still a couple weeks away from seeing the actual text of the President's budget “blueprint.” Many controversial pieces of the plan have been revealed, including a $54 billion hike in military spending, and deep cuts to the State Department, the Environmental Projection Agency and the Coast Guard, among other departments and agencies.

At a press briefing on Feb 27, OMB director Mulvaney said that Trump’s budget outline will not “attempt any sort of revenue projections. It will merely provide “topline” numbers on discretionary spending that the various agencies will be expected to abide by.”

Federal agencies will be allowed to appeal any proposed budget cuts once Trump proposes a full federal budget. The funding decisions will ultimately be made by Congress.

Often when a president presents his blueprint, some part of Congress declares it “dead on arrival,” followed by everyone trying to promote their interests in the media, online, in hearings, etc.

The way I understand it, it’s not quite time to take focused action on the budget per se, but the budget is part of most - if not all - legislation being considered by Congress. See points below.

Talking points:

Trump’s unrealistic scenario for raising spending (military, border wall, etc.) and cutting taxes has been tried by Republicans before, and hasn’t worked (“trickle down economics”). They cut taxes on corporations and the wealthiest individuals, which causes the deficit to rise, thus giving them even more excuses to cut programs that are needed for the social safety net, the environment, etc.

Trump’s overly optimistic predictions: Trump said “his tax cuts and the repeal of the Affordable Care Act will unleash a torrent of growth. … Few if any economists foresee this burst of growth. The Congressional Budget Office predicts that the real gross domestic product will grow at an average annual rate of 2.1 percent through the end of 2018. Even the president’s own budget office is using an optimistic forecast — 2.4 percent economic growth — to calculate the White House’s anticipated deficit for the coming fiscal year. That rate is above most other estimates but well below the 3 percent Trump appears to be counting on.”

ACA – Budget/taxes are a huge part of Republicans trying to repeal ACA, and they are rushing the process, not talking about numbers, in an attempt to keep these numbers from the public. Even if they can only repeal the budget parts, they could then justify repealing the rest of ACA because it needs the funding to work. The Affordable Care Act includes taxes that would go away if the ACA is repealed. – “The congressional Joint Committee on Taxation issued estimates this week showing how much revenue the government could lose starting in 2018 under the Republican bill, which the party has called the American Health Care Act, as a result of repealing taxes on drug makers (nearly $25 billion over 10 years), insurers (nearly $145 billion), makers of medical devices (nearly $20 billion), and high-income households (more than $270 billion from taxes on earned income and investment income).

SEQUESTER - The basic structure of the Trump budget blueprint would go against the 2011
sequestration agreement (which split cuts evenly between defense and non-defense programs) and thus require a change in the law in order to even be considered. Removing the sequestration cap off the defense budget would require at least 60 votes in the Senate.

Discretionary cuts will disproportionately impact the poor. The “discretionary” part of the budget “pays for pretty much everything the government does other than the military, pensions and health insurance for older people ... It adds up to only some $500 billion, hardly the best place to balance a $4 trillion federal budget. ... there is little political cost for Trump in going after means-tested programs for the poor.” (NYtimes)

Some specific proposed cuts:

- **EPA** (for specific to WA info, see below) - proposed deep cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency’s budget that would reduce the agency’s staff by one-fifth in the first year and eliminate dozens of programs, As proposed, the EPA’s staff would be slashed from its current level of 15,000 to 12,000. Grants to states, as well as its air and water programs, would be cut by 30 percent. the document eliminates funding altogether for the office’s “contribution to the U.S. Global Change Research Program,” a climate initiative that President George H.W. Bush launched in 1989. Any cuts would have to be codified through the congressional appropriations process and would probably face resistance from some lawmakers. Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), a former chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on interior, environment and related agencies, said he did not think Congress would approve such a steep drop in funding.
- **State Department** - cut of 37% has been reported, “but the White House declined to confirm any specific number.” (WaPo)
- **Foreign Aid** proposed cuts – Republican Senators Rubio and Graham, said Trump’s proposal to reduce spending on foreign aid would be unwise for fiscal and security reasons.
- **NOAA** - Major cuts to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, one of the government’s climate science agencies - Trump administration wants a 17 percent cut in National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)’s overall budget— with the deepest cuts coming from earth observation. NOAA studies the atmosphere and oceans— often using satellites—to better understand climate and weather. NOAA’s satellite program would be cut by more than a half billion dollars. Satellites are also critical for agricultural forecasting, disaster planning, weather prediction, and predicting the path of extreme events like hurricanes, tsunamis, and tornadoes.
- **Coast Guard** - a 14 percent cut in funding to help pay for a crackdown on illegal immigration, according to a new report. OMB is also eyeing the budgets of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for similar cuts.
- **HUD’s** budget would shrink by about 14% to $40.5 billion in fiscal 2018, which begins in October.
- **IRS** also a target for austerity
Cuts to EPA and Washington state:

Trump’s proposal would almost wipe out EPA funding for Puget Sound restoration, according to a leaked memo. Under the proposal the EPA funding would be slashed by 93 percent, dropping from nearly $28 million in the current fiscal year to $2 million. The money, in years past, has been used to help finance a wide range of projects to help restore the Sound, such as purchasing farmland to convert to wetlands, restoring floodplains and removing fish passage blockage.

In a statement released Friday Mar 3, Reps. Derek Kilmer and Denny Heck, both Democrats, opposed the cuts to funds that have been a source of grants to state, local and tribal governments. U.S. Rep. Denny Heck, D-Wash., from a south Sound district, stressed potential costs that would accrue from losing money and seeing programs eliminated.

(Seattle PI) "When the federal government fails to invest in the health of critically important bodies of water like our Puget Sound, environmental problems become environmental disasters," Heck said. …

Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., argued on Saturday that the Puget Sound cleanup can be defended purely on economic grounds.

"From struggling salmon fisheries, declining Orca populations, and massive shellfish die-offs from ocean acidification -- slashing Puget Sound recovery funding shows a blatant disregard for our environment," said Cantwell. "A failure to confront the environmental challenge the Sound faces will have disastrous consequences for our economy."

To press the case, Kilmer and Heck have founded a Puget Sound Recovery Caucus.


Two Republican members of Congress from Washington hold seats on the House Appropriations Committee.


Newhouse served as State Agriculture Director under Democratic Gov. Christine Gregoire. He has, however, been an EPA critic. Herrera Beutler is the lowest profile member of Washington's delegation, and a protégé of House Republican Caucus Chair Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash.

The loyalties of Newhouse and Herrera Beutler, whether to Donald Trump or to their home state, will be tested. (Seattle PI)

Heck: "It is in our nation's best interest to continue an adequate level of funding for Puget Sound restoration. The return on investment is strong and the price of doing nothing is costly beyond our imagination."