**RESEARCH REPORT FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 27, 2017**

**Affordable Care Act**

**Summary**

* The GOP proposal for the first stage of repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act was originally scheduled for a vote before the full House on March 23. The bill faced opposition from ultra-conservative [Freedom Caucus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_Caucus) members who felt the bill “didn’t go far enough” and more moderate Republicans, who faced intense pressure from constituents concerned about losing affordable healthcare (including the Republican Representative Jaime Herrera Beutler from our neighboring district; article [here](http://www.columbian.com/news/2017/mar/16/health-bill-short-of-votes-gop-leaders-look-to-trump/)). [Washington Post Republican vote tracker](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/03/20/us/politics/health-care-whip-count.html?_r=1).
* Trump made the rounds on Capitol Hill, even saying he’d [“come after”](https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/trump-arrives-on-capitol-hill-to-sell-house-gop-health-care-package/2017/03/21/e8ede3d2-0e2b-11e7-9b0d-d27c98455440_story.html?utm_term=.7d1303dcce02&wpisrc=nl_most-draw14&wpmm=1) Republicans who didn’t vote for the bill. Ryan and Trump try to appease fellow Republicans (especially the Freedom Caucus) with a series of amendments that the [CBO said the revisions would add to deficit without improving coverage](http://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/american-health-care-act-cbo-cost-estimate-coverage-236437?lo=ap_c1).
	+ **Provision would allow individuals between 50 and 64 to deduct more health care costs from their taxes.** The change is intended as a placeholder, expected to cost $85 billion over 10 years. It could be turned by the Senate into targeted tax assistance for older insurance buyers. Not clear why this would not be added directly into the House bill. It is estimated that this funding would only cover a part of the subsidies lost under the ACA for older health care purchasers. It would force House Republicans to take a vote on something the Senate would do later. It is a response to House GOP members concerned about the impact of higher medical costs for older people, who are among their voters.
	+ **ACA taxes repealed earlier.** The taxes funding the ACA Medicaid expansion and marketplace subsidies (largely falling on high-income taxpayers) would be repealed in 2017 rather than in 2018 under the current House bill. This was sought by more conservative members. The tax on higher cost employer health plans would remain, but would be phased out in 2026 rather than in 2025 under the current House bill.
	+ **If individual’s tax credit is worth more than health insurance premium, it would be lost. A** provision in the current bill that would have allowed consumers to move leftover health tax credit money into a Health Savings Account. This amendment would repeal that provision. Some anti-abortion activists saw the provision as allowing individuals to use funds in their Health Savings Accounts to fund abortion services. Few individuals would have been able to use the original provision in the first place because insurance costs would be higher than the tax credit.
	+ **Medicaid per capita reimbursement rates for the elderly and disabled would grow faster than the rate of medical inflation.** This would cover the higher medical inflation affecting older and disabled individuals. This change was requested by GOP governors concerned about the depth of Medicaid cuts to their states.
	+ **States will have the option of converting their Medicaid programs into block grants.**Under current law, Medicaid is an entitlement, and states are paid 50% of actual approved medical costs. Under the Ryan bill, Medicaid was “capitated” and states would receive a set amount for each patient. Under this change, states could choose instead to receive a lump sum amount to use more flexibly. This change was sought by conservative members of the Republican Study Committee (RSC), a conservative policy caucus that met with Trump last week.
	+ **States could impose work requirements to Medicaid for some groups of recipients,** those without young children or who are not elderly or disabled. Under current law, states could only impose such requirements if they received a federal waiver, and none were approved by the Obama Administration. This change was requested by Republican Study Committee members in negotiations with Trump.
	+ **New York could not get federal reimbursement for county payments made outside of New York City.** New York has the highest per-enrollee Medicaid spending of any state. Some county governments in New York pay a share of the state’s expenses. They pay their costs out of property taxes. Those counties want the state to cover the full cost of Medicaid. This change would block New York from obtaining federal reimbursement for payments made by counties, except those within New York City. This change was requested by New York State Republican House members.
	+ There was even discussion of striking the ACA list of **essential health benefits** to appease more conservative members (including maternity care and mammograms). Democrats (including Patty Murray) expressed concerns about the lack of female input Republicans had in these discussions; article [here](http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/03/trump-health-care-summit-white-guys).
* House Republican leaders withdrew legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act from consideration just as voting was set to begin. President Trump had pressed for a vote on the bill so he could shame Republicans who opposed it. Paul Ryan, the House speaker, talked him down.

**Our Members of Congress**

* Murray/Cantwell [warn Ryan](https://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/newsreleases?ID=B25AB906-FC80-4521-BC8F-8E78BA6C02CD) before vote
* [Murray on failure of Trumpcare bill](https://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/newsroom?ID=93C143E6-E0E4-4217-867E-7C73E8A1C527): Women, Families, and Seniors have spoken.
* At the request of Senators Warren and Murray, inspector general agrees to review DHHS decision to stop advertisements and other Marketplace enrollment outreach efforts. IG’s letter [here](https://www.warren.senate.gov/files/documents/2017-3-23_HHS_IG_Letter_re_ACA_enrollment.pdf).
* Maria Cantwell, Twitter: Today the American people sent a clear message: We are not willing to risk the health of this nation. Today your voices were heard.
* Denny Heck, Facebook: President Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan have abandoned plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act. This is in no small part due to the outpouring of opposition to their plan from the South Sound. Many of you marched, called, emailed, wrote postcards, shared your stories, and met with me to show how much you care about access to affordable care. I was able to pass along your incredible stories of overcoming illnesses, disease, and other health conditions and going on to succeed in your everyday life thanks to important provisions of the Affordable Care Act. Every single person who spoke out is a hero, and we couldn’t have defended the Affordable Care Act without you. Going forward, I stand ready to work in a bipartisan fashion to make health care even more affordable and accessible for every American.

**To do**

* Thank our MoCs for their strident opposition to the GOP’s attempts to take healthcare from the sick, the old, and the poor (all in order to give a financial windfall to the wealthy.) Although it appears the GOP may table ACA repeal (for a bit), efforts are still underway to undermine the Affordable Care Act, which is struggling by some metrics. Our MoCs must continue to be diligent to protect and strengthen the Affordable Act.
* Further reading
	+ [Is Trump sabotaging Obamacare?](http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/03/is-trump-sabotaging-obamacare-214907)
	+ [Is Trumpcare already here](http://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/trumpcare-obamacare-health-care-236387?lo=ap_a1)?
	+ [Democrats next move](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/24/opinion/the-democrats-next-move-on-health-care.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=opinion-c-col-left-region&region=opinion-c-col-left-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-left-region)
	+ [How is Obamacare doing?](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/05/upshot/grading-obamacare-successes-failures-and-incompletes.html?hp&action=click&pgtype=Homepage&clickSource=story-heading&module=b-lede-package-region&region=top-news&WT.nav=top-news&_r=0)

**RUSSIA**

1. **House Intelligence Committee’s hearing on Russian interference with US election**

**Summary**: On Monday, March 20, 2017, FBI Director James Comey and Adm. Michael Rogers, National Security Agency Director, appeared in front of the House Intelligence Committee to disclose for the first time that since July 2017 the FBI has been conducting a counterintelligence investigation into whether members of Trump’s presidential campaign worked with Russia to influence the 2016 election.

**Salient Points**

* + - The FBI is asking whether the Trump campaign colluded with the Russians to influence the election.
		- The investigation started in July but could go on for years.
		- Comey said that the FBI has gathered “a credible allegation of wrongdoing or reasonable basis to believe an American may be acting as an agent of a foreign power.”
		- The FBI has evidence that Trump’s associates were in repeated contact with the Russians.
		- There has been further information from news sources that the FBI has information that indicates associates of Trump communicated with suspected Russian operatives to possibly coordinate the release of information damaging to Hillary Clinton’s campaign.
		- The FBI cannot yet prove collusion took place but information suggests collusion is now a large focus of the investigation.
		- We do know that the FBI has been investigating four Trump campaign associates: Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort, Roger Stone, and Carter Page for contacts with Russians known to U.S. intelligence.
		- This week allegations surfaced that Trump’s former campaign manager, Paul Manafort, secretly worked for a Russian billionaire, Oleg Deripaska, to promote Mr. Putin’s government in the United States, offering strategies to sway politics, news coverage, and business deals. Manafort was paid millions of dollars for this work. Apparently, Manafort has indicated a willingness to testify in front of the House Intelligence Committee and the Senate Intelligence Committee.
		- House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes, a Republican, notified Trump that there may have been an incidential collection of communications between Trump and associations. Nunes told Trump this information before telling Democratic members of the House Intelligence Committee, an oversight that Nunes has now apologized for. McCain says House panel lost 'credibility' to handle Russia probe (article [here](http://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/mccain-nunes-russia-probe-schiff-236395)).

**Our Members of Congress**

* Rep. Danny Heck is a member of the House Intelligence Committee. He participated in the hearing on March 20th. He advocates for a full investigation into the Russian interference with our election and calls for an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate. Video of Heck’s questions at the hearing [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-luMIpmjZlo).
* Senators Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell: Both senators have joined with Rep. Heck, and other members of the Washington delegation, to co-sponsor the **Protecting Our Democracy Act**, which would create a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate the allegations of Russian interference (see Russia item #2).

**To do**

* Call or write to Rep. Heck to thank him for his articulate and moving remarks at the March 20th House Intelligence Committee regarding the importance of protecting American democracy and American institutions from intrusion and influence by Russia. Also thank him for the thoughtful questions he asked both Director Comey and Director Rogers.
* Urge Senators Murray and Cantwell, and Rep. Heck, to move the Washington Delegation’s Protecting Our Democracy Act forward, and to strongly advocate for an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate Russian interference and to determine what involvement Trump and his associates had with that interference. The fact that Nunes told Trump about possible incidental interception of Trump and associates’ communications before he told Democratic committee members clearly demonstrates that Nunes is not unbiased and cannot lead an unbiased investigation.
1. **HR 356 - Protecting Our Democracy Act**
	* + **Summary:**
			- Calls for a 9/11- style commission to investigate Russian interference in the 2016 election. The committee should be made up of "distinguished citizens, no Congressmen, no Senators."
			- Supported by all House Democrats and at least 1 Republican, Rep. Walter B. Jones. 198 Cosponsors, including Heck
			- Referred to House Committee on Foreign Affairs
				* Chair: Ed Royce (CA-39); 202-225-4111
				* Ranking Member: Eliot Engel (NY-16); 202-225-2464
	* **To do:** Call Royce and Engel

**IMMIGRATION**

**1) Travel ban**

* On March 18, a federal judge who issued a temporary restraining order against key parts of Trump’s revised travel ban denied a Justice Department request to narrow the injunction.
* In a ruling Sunday, U.S. District Court Judge Derrick Watson rejected a federal government motion asking the judge to limit his injunction to the portion of the travel ban executive order that restricts travel to the U.S. by citizens of six majority-Muslim countries.
* The restraining order Watson issued March 15 appears to halt not only the six-country provision, but also provisions in the Trump order stopping refugee admissions from around the globe for 120 days, capping refugee admissions this fiscal year at 50,000 and ordering a series of studies of vetting procedures and information-sharing with foreign governments.
* The Sunday ruling clears the way for the Trump administration to appeal Watson's initial decision to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.
* The Trump administration is already appealing another injunction issued by a federal judge in Maryland. That order was limited to the six-country visa ban, although U.S. District Court Judge Theodore Chuang left open the possibility he might block other parts of Trump's revised executive order in the future.
* Watson and Chuang are both appointees of President Barack Obama.
* Politico article [here](http://www.politico.com/story/2017/03/hawaii-trump-travel-bid-236234)

**2) ICE Raids**

* One of President Trump’s first executive orders promised a weekly recounting of the crimes committed by undocumented immigrants and a list of the recalcitrant local law enforcement departments that failed to turn those people over to federal officials.
* The Department of Homeland Security on March 19 delivered the first report. But rather than provide a complete tally, it contained misleading information that only prompted confusion and defiance from law enforcement officials from the jurisdictions in question. One of the nation’s larger counties — Nassau County, on Long Island — was erroneously included in the government’s report as a non-cooperative jurisdiction.
* The report covered the time period from January 28 to February 3, during which time ICE issued 3,083 detainers, which are requests to local police departments to hold undocumented immigrants and legal permanent residents who could be deported. Only 206 of those detainers were declined (142 were declined in Travis County, Texas, which includes Austin).
* New York’s Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs, Nisha Agarwal, said the report not only misrepresented New York’s law, but facts about cities’ and counties’ policies. “This ignores the fact that federal courts have repeatedly held that immigration detainers are optional requests and cannot be made mandatory under the Constitution,” Ms. Agarwal said.
* New York Times article [here](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/20/us/politics/ice-report-undocumented-immigrants.html?action=click&contentCollection=us&module=NextInCollection&region=Footer&pgtype=article&version=newsevent&rref=collection%2Fnews-event%2Fdonald-trump-white-house&_r=0)

**3) Trump’s immigration & border wall budget**

* If funded, Mr. Trump’s plan would spend billions of dollars on the design and construction of the wall. It would also prompt a hiring spree in the Justice and Homeland Security Departments to step up enforcement and the deportation of people who are in the United States illegally. Programs and agencies of all sizes from across the federal government would face cuts to pay for the plan.
* The proposal calls for $2.6 billion to be spent on “tactical infrastructure” and other security technology at the border, including money to plan, design and begin building the wall.
* Another $314 million would go toward hiring and training 500 new Border Patrol agents and 1,000 Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel next year. This, despite the fact that these agencies are already struggling to fill *existing* vacancies.
* An additional $1.5 billion would pay to build new detention facilities for illegal immigrants and to fund their removal from the country.
* The budget also dedicates money for enacting a mandatory nationwide E-Verify program for businesses to determine the eligibility of applicants to work in the country.
* Though Mr. Trump has proposed an overall increase of $2.8 billion, or 6.8 percent, to the Homeland Security budget, agencies within the department would face cuts — including $667 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s state and local grant programs, and $80 million from the T.S.A.
* Mr. Trump also is seeking to cut $1 billion from the Justice Department, even as he bolsters its immigration courts by $80 million. That would pay for the hiring of 75 new teams of judges to speed removal proceedings for people in the country illegally.
* Though it does not offer a price tag, the budget also calls for an additional 60 border enforcement prosecutors and 40 United States Marshals to help apprehend and convict those in the country illegally who commit crimes.
* Beyond the funds for detentions in the proposed Homeland Security budget, Mr. Trump is calling for the Justice Department to spend $171 million for short-term holding facilities for federal detainees, including those who are here illegally.
* And foreshadowing what could be years of bitter legal fights with landowners from Texas to California, Mr. Trump wants to hire 20 lawyers to obtain land in the Southwest on which to build the wall or other security facilities.
* New York Times article [here](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/16/us/politics/donald-trump-border-wall-budget.html)
* [Detailed discussion of border wall](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w9jf7nhHSzmswk2u399WJZU7zf4FBygmpc_eguWPqVU/edit)
1. [Trump orders stronger vetting of visa applicants](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/23/us/politics/visa-extreme-vetting-rex-tillerson.html)

**GORSUCH**

**Summary**

* Hearings for Trump’s Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch, began March 20th
* Senator Michael Bennet, Democrat of Colorado — who introduced Judge Gorsuch, his constituent, alongside the state’s Republican senator, Cory Gardner. Mr. Bennet said he had taken no position on Judge Gorsuch, despite his glowing introduction. Another introductory speaker, Neal K. Katyal, an acting solicitor general under Mr. Obama, endorsed the nominee explicitly, in what Gorsuch allies hope will be a powerful testament to his résumé.
* Skeptics of Judge Gorsuch hope to amplify several concerns, turning particular attention to his case history on corporate issues and the rights of employees. Repeatedly, the example of a stranded truck driver was invoked: Judge Gorsuch had written a dissent arguing that a trucking company was permitted to fire a driver for abandoning his cargo for his own safety in subzero temperatures.
* Senator Feinstein (D-CA) said it remained to be seen whether Judge Gorsuch could acquit himself as “a reasonable mainstream conservative.” Other Democrats argued that Judge Gorsuch was handpicked by conservative groups like the Federalist Society rather than principally by Mr. Trump. Senator Patrick J. Leahy, Democrat of Vermont, said Judge Gorsuch was “selected by interest groups.”
* Senator Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT) pushed Judge Gorsuch to say whether a president has constitutional powers to lawfully override torture and wiretap statutes. Judge Gorsuch said he would approach such a case using analysis set out when President Harry S. Truman tried to seize steel mills.
* Mr. Leahy also pressed Judge Gorsuch to say whether he would recuse himself from Supreme Court cases involving the Colorado billionaire Philip Anschutz, who was a former client and helped get him appointed to the appeals court. Judge Gorsuch did not answer directly.
* Gorsuch would not discuss whether President Trump’s business dealings with foreign governments might run afoul of the Emoluments Clause, an obscure constitutional provision that the judge said “has sat in a rather dusty corner” until recently.
* Not long after he started his testimony on Wednesday, Judge Gorsuch defended an opinion he had written that ruled against an autistic student whose parents had sought reimbursement for his education under a federal law, the Individuals with Disability Education Act. Judge Gorsuch said he had merely applied a standard set out in a Supreme Court decision as interpreted by an earlier decision of his court, the United States Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit in Denver. At about the same time Wednesday, the Supreme Court handed down a unanimous decision saying the 10th Circuit had been wrong. All that was required from public school systems, the 10th Circuit had said, was a “more than de minimis” benefit. Writing for the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. disagreed. “When all is said and done, a student offered an educational program providing ‘merely more than de minimis’ progress from year to year can hardly be said to have been offered an education at all.” Asked about the Supreme Court decision later on Wednesday, Judge Gorsuch said he had been bound by precedents from the Supreme Court and from the 10th Circuit in the opinion he had written.
* New York Times [article one](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/20/us/politics/neil-gorsuch-confirmation-supreme-court.html?ref=politics&_r=0), New York Times [article two](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/22/us/politics/what-to-watch-will-democrats-be-more-aggressive-with-neil-gorsuch.html), Democracy Now: [Gorsuch and dark money](https://www.democracynow.org/2017/3/22/neil_gorsuch_backed_by_10_of)
* [Washington Post article](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/judge-gorsuch-experience/): How Gorsuch’s judicial experience compares with his Supreme Court predecessors

**Our Members of Congress**

* Murray, says no to Gorsuch: [Seattle Times article](http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/sen-patty-murray-will-oppose-neil-gorsuch-for-supreme-court/), [Murray press release](https://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/newsreleases?ID=9ABF2AFD-CA9D-40FB-87DA-23D2DDF3D6AC)
* Murray on twitter: I will be voting against the nomination of Judge Neil Gorsuch, and I will oppose a cloture motion ending debate. –PM
* Cantwell statement: I take my responsibility to provide advice and consent very seriously. I will review Judge Gorsuch’s record thoroughly, follow his nomination hearings closely, and I plan to meet with him to ask my own questions. I will be weighing these considerations along with the comments of my constituents as I consider this nomination.

**Executive Order Reorganizing the Executive Branch**

* **Summary:** President Trump signed an [Executive Order](https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/03/13/presidential-executive-order-comprehensive-plan-reorganizing-executive) on March 13, 2017 calling for the creation of a plan to reorganize the Executive Branch in order to remove inefficiencies and waste. The final plan has not been completed yet by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), but the Trump 2018 Budget Blueprint provides clues as to which Executive Branch agencies and programs may be modified or eliminated.
* **Talking Points:**
	+ The text of Trump’s budget recommendation can be found [here](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget).
	+ A detailed overview of Trump’s proposed budget cuts: “[What Trump cut in his budget](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-presidential-budget-2018-proposal/?utm_term=.a9ae0fc8dcb5)”.
	+ Trump wants to increase military spending by $54B by cutting existing non-defense discretionary programs that provide vital service to millions of citizens.
	+ Based on [iiss.org 2016 figures](http://www.iiss.org/-/media/images/publications/the%20military%20balance/milbal%202017/final%20free%20graphics/mb2017-top-15-defence-budgets.jpg?la=en) the United States, before the proposed $54B increase, already spends more on defense than the next 13 countries combined. Is it necessary to increase our defense spending and cut domestic programs at this time?
	+ Trump also wants to cut vital domestic spending in order to fund a $2.6B border wall that many experts contend will not be effective.
	+ Trump wants to cut the EPA by 31%, eliminating more than 50 EPA programs and 3,200 jobs.
	+ Trump wants to eliminate 28% of the Department of State budget, including climate-change prevention programs and pledged payments to U.N. climate-change programs. Trump’s own Secretary of Defense James Mattis once said “[If you don’t fund the State Department fully, then I need to buy more ammunition.](http://www.businessinsider.com/mattis-state-department-funding-need-to-buy-more-ammunition-2017-2)"
	+ Trump wishes to eliminate numerous independent agencies, such as the African Development Foundation, Corporation for Public Broadcasting, U.S. Trade and Development Agency, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, and Overseas Private Investment Corporation.
	+ Detailed discussion of this Executive Order, including analysis of Trump’s budget as a guide of policy priorities and potential targets, can be found [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U9NkdCJ081PzPMN21md3KPrrHIAZqrUXJTTVLJFkvps/edit?usp=sharing).
* **To do:**
	+ While the reorganization plan is in the early stages of development, it is not too early to contact the White House and share your concerns about these and other possible reorganization targets. Look at the budget cuts described in the Washington Post article “[What Trump cut in his budget](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/politics/trump-presidential-budget-2018-proposal/?utm_term=.a9ae0fc8dcb5)”. These agency and program cuts will probably be reflected in the Trump reorganization plan.
	+ Possible script: “I am concerned that the (agency/program) may be damaged or even eliminated under the President’s reorganization plan. The (agency/program) serves a vital public purpose and I ask that it be protected and preserved to the greatest extent possible.”
	+ Contact info for The White House:
		- Message: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>
		- Petitions: <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/>
		- Telephone Comments: 202-456-1111
		- Switchboard: 202-456-1414
		- TTY/TTD: 202-456-6213

**OTHER NEWS OF INTEREST**

* **Budget**
	+ [Heck speaks out](http://thesubtimes.com/2017/03/18/heck-speaks-out-on-white-houses-proposed-budget/)
	+ [Governors speak up](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/22/us/eyeing-trumps-budget-plan-republican-governors-say-no-thanks.html?_r=0)
	+ [Mulvaney justifies cutting aid to the poor](http://www.slate.com/blogs/moneybox/2017/03/16/mulvaney_says_cutting_aid_to_the_poor_is_compassionate.html?wpsrc=sh_all_dt_fb_top)
* **Tillerson in Asia and North Korea issues**
	+ [limited press access](http://www.businessinsider.com/tillerson-addresses-relationship-with-the-media-2017-3)
	+ [dangerous trajectory of Tillerson’s tenure](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/03/20/the-dangerous-trajectory-of-rex-tillersons-tenure/?utm_term=.19459430b5d6)
	+ [“new approach” with North Korea](https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2017/03/24/rex-tillersons-new-approach-to-north-korea-sounds-a-lot-like-the-old-approach/?utm_term=.a2645212d5d1)
	+ [cyberwar against Korean missiles](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/04/world/asia/north-korea-missile-program-sabotage.html?ref=politics)
* **Clayton for SEC, hearing began 3/23:**
	+ [Target of progressive groups](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2017/03/06/progressive-groups-target-trump-nominee-for-sec-chairman-decrying-wall-street-ties/?utm_term=.c2dd2a357fb3)
	+ [The Hill describes him as a fox in the henhouse](http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/finance/323752-jay-clayton-as-sec-chair-akin-to-a-fox-guarding-the-hen-house)
	+ [NPR advance of questioning](http://www.marketwatch.com/story/what-to-expect-when-senators-question-sec-chairman-nominee-clayton-2017-03-17)
	+ [Washington Post article on hearing](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/03/23/sec-nominee-to-face-tough-questions-on-wall-street-connections/?utm_term=.07ea2cb4050e)
* **Education**
	+ [Warren questions DOE hiring of for-profit college officials](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2017/03/20/elizabeth-warren-questions-the-hiring-of-for-profit-college-officials-at-the-education-department/?utm_term=.d273d0d0cdc2)
	+ [Trump sides with lenders, not students](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/grade-point/wp/2017/03/17/trump-administration-rolls-back-protections-for-people-in-default-on-student-loans/?utm_term=.2c85d6fead37)
* **Syria**
	+ [Trump escalates troop involvement](http://www.commondreams.org/news/2017/03/09/trump-escalates-unchecked-war-us-marines-now-inside-syria)
	+ [Lee proposes HR1473](http://lee.house.gov/news/press-releases/congresswoman-barbara-lee-we-must-stop-endless-war)
* **Environment**
	+ Trump issues [Permit for Keystone](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/24/business/energy-environment/keystone-oil-pipeline.html)