
OLYMPIA INDIVISIBLE

Research Report: June 26, 2017
(So sorry, the page numbers are messed up!!)

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|---|-------------|
| 1. Stop TrumpCare in the Senate | Page 2 |
| a. Healthcare from National Indivisible | Page 3 |
| b. Additional Information and Actions on Healthcare | Page 2 |
| 2. Why the Emoluments Clause Matters | Pages 4-5 |
| 3. Our National Monuments Under Threat | Page 6 |
| 4. Whether to Continue Sanctions Against Sudan | Page 7 |
| 5. Washington Initiative 1552 (I-1552) | Pages 8-9 |
| 6. Other Issues | Pages 10-11 |
| a. Russian Sanctions | |
| b. Steve Bannon's Retroactive Ethics Waiver | |
| c. Regulatory Accountability Act | |
| d. Qatar Crisis | |
| e. Mattis Authority in Afghanistan | |
| f. Cuba | |
| g. Privatization of the VA | |
| h. Concerns about Pruitt | |

1. Stop TrumpCare in the Senate

This is clearly the issue to concentrate on this week, and there are several recommendations to follow.

Summary: The Senate is about to do what the House of Representatives did in May: jam through its TrumpCare bill in secrecy, without public hearings and without knowing its full impact on American families. Senate leadership plans to bring the bill to the floor for a vote this week with no more than 20 hours for debate. We are not aware of legislation of this magnitude passed without committee hearings and an opportunity for public review and input.

Talking Points:

- The House TrumpCare bill (American Health Care Act, or AHCA) would strip coverage from at least 23 million people and cut Medicaid by \$800 billion, solely to give hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks to wealthy elites and corporations. It would also undermine critical protections for people with pre-existing conditions, defund Planned Parenthood, and raise premiums for American families.
- The Senate repeal bill closely follows the House version and would allow states to waive Essential Health Benefits (EHB) requirements and replace them with a narrower set of benefits. In waiver states, many insurers would drop coverage for more expensive conditions that were no longer required. The funding proposed will be woefully insufficient to cover individuals with pre-existing conditions, chronic conditions and more expensive conditions. EHB waivers would substantially weaken the ACA’s ban on annual and lifetime dollar limits on coverage, since this ban only applies to essential health benefits.
- The cuts to Medicaid, while occurring over a longer period, are even larger than those in the House bill and will decimate the program and will result in children, disabled, and elderly people losing coverage and needed benefits, including nursing home care, which is largely funded under Medicaid.
- Overall, millions will lose coverage and thousands will die for the sole purpose of enriching the top 1%.

WASHINGTON: (From Indivisible Guide)

Average Premium Increase in 2018	Total Health Insurance Coverage Losses	Medicaid Coverage Losses	Employer-Sponsored Coverage Losses	Individual Market Coverage Losses
\$571	344,300	244,900	69,900	29,300

Our MoCs:

- [Led by Sens. Murray & Hirono, Senate Dems Blast Newly Released Trumpcare Plan for Hurting Patients with Serious, Chronic Diseases](#)
- [VIDEO: In Testy Exchange on Senate Floor, Sen. Murray Slams Republicans’ Secretive Process on Trumpcare Plan: “The American public deserves better”](#)
- [VIDEO: Sen. Murray Challenges Republican Senators to Push for More Time, Open Process to Debate Trumpcare: “You Have the Power to Do Something About It, Not just to Complain About It”](#)

To Do:

- Call Senator Patty Murray [\(253\) 572-3636](tel:253-572-3636) and Senator Maria Cantwell [\(253\) 572-2281](tel:253-572-2281).

- *Script:* Please thank Senator _____ for opposing the Senate Healthcare bill. I encourage her to speak out in the media or on the Senate floor against repeal of the Affordable Care Act. She needs to make it clear that she wants to protect people with pre-existing conditions, those on Medicaid, and everyone else who depends on the Affordable Care Act for health and wellbeing. This is extremely important to me and I will be watching closely for her public statements in opposition. Thank you for your time.
- Call Republicans who have been on the fence about their vote for the bill. Some of these represent states that stand to lose the most:
 - **Lamar Alexander** (TN) Phone: (202) 224-4944
 - **Shelly Capito** (W. Va) Phone: 202-224-6472
 - **Bill Cassidy** (LA) Phone: (202) 224-5824
 - **Susan Collins** (ME) Main: (202)224-2523
 - **Jeff Flake** (AZ) Phone: 202-224-4521
 - **Dean Heller** (NV) Phone: 202-224-6244
 - **John McCain** (AZ) Main: (202) 224-2235
 - **Lisa Murkowski** (AK) Phone: (202)-224-6665
 - **Rob Portman** (OH) Phone: 202-224-3353
 - *Script:* I am calling Senator _____ to urge him/her to oppose the ACA repeal bill, which will strip protections for people with pre-existing conditions, make insurance unaffordable to older/sicker people, and cause untold harm to children, disabled and elderly on Medicaid. The primary beneficiaries of these drastic cuts will be wealthy elites who will get tax cuts. Thank you for your time.

Articles:

- [NYT - Secrecy Surrounding Senate Health Bill Raises Alarms in Both Parties](#)
- [NYT - Trump, in Zigzag, Calls House Republicans' Health Bill 'Mean'](#)

[Healthcare From National Indivisible](#)

[Healthcare Resources from Indivisible Guide](#)

WITHHOLDING CONSENT AND FILIBUSTER BY AMENDMENT CALL SCRIPT

Health Care | June 15, 2017

Do you have a Democratic Senator? Then it means they've publicly committed to voting against TrumpCare. That's great—but it's not nearly good enough. This is a do-or-die moment on the ACA and your Democratic Senator should be doing everything they can to stop this bill from getting through the Senate. Here's how they can really play hardball to defeat TrumpCare.

SAMPLE CALL DIALOGUE: WITHHOLD CONSENT

Caller: Hello! My name is [name] and I'm calling from [place in state]. Am I correct that [Senator] opposes TrumpCare, the American Health Care Act?

Staffer: Yes! [Senator] is totally opposed.

Caller: I'm glad to hear that. Can you tell me what [Senator] has done so far to oppose it?

Staffer: Sure. [Senator] gave a speech on the floor recently that talked about the bill's impact in our state. She's listened to many constituents and heard their personal stories. She's encouraged her colleagues to let us read the bill or have hearings on it. And yesterday she did an epic tweet storm.

Caller: I'm afraid it's going to take more than talk and tweet storms to stop this terrible bill. We have to slow this process way down and call attention to the terrible bill Republicans are trying to jam through in total darkness. We have to use every tool available. Does [Senator] intend to withhold her consent on all Senate business until we have hearings and a complete CBO score?

Staffer: Withholding consent doesn't actually buy us that much time. It would only delay things by 30 hours.

Caller: I'm not just talking about refusing to agree on shortening debate time on TrumpCare or other bills. I'm talking about withholding consent on amendments, placing holds on nominations, and objecting to all unanimous consent requests until there are hearings and a complete CBO score. Will the [Senator] do that?

Staffer: Well, [Senator] thinks that could backfire. We're trying to work together with Republicans on other important issues, like investigating Russian interference in our democracy.. Withholding consent could make that more difficult.

Caller: Of course we want to know more about the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. But 23 million Americans' healthcare, including [coverage loss in state, find [here](#)] is important too. That's what's at stake. This is the most important thing right now and the issue the Senator needs to be focusing on. I don't think anything else is worth healthcare getting ripped away from millions of Americans.

Staffer: I'll let [Senator] know of your thoughts.

Caller: Please do. I expect her to use every tool she has. That also includes offering as many amendments as it takes to draw out Senate debate on this bill during vote-a-rama.

SAMPLE CALL DIALOGUE: FILIBUSTER BY AMENDMENT

Caller: Will [Senator] prepare hundreds or thousands of amendments to offer during vote-a-rama?

Staffer: I'm not sure what you mean. Vote-a-rama only lasts a night or so.

Caller: That's because both parties have always agreed to end it. [Senator] can file thousands of amendments—and then call each of them for a vote—so that debate is prolonged long enough to leave Republicans with no choice but to agree to hearings and a complete CBO score. Along with her colleagues, [Senator] can and should

let the Republicans know they will offer amendments into the July 4 recess or longer, holding the floor with amendments as long as it takes to guarantee Americans can read the bill, see a CBO score, and that the Senate has hearings.

Staffer: Again, the Senator thinks that could backfire. There are other things we want to work on, as well.

Caller: That's terrible. Like I said, this is the most important thing happening right now. I expect [Senator] to get in the arena for her constituents. The stakes are too high to leave any tool at her disposal unused.

Staffer: I'll let [Senator] know of your thoughts.

Caller: Please do. If she isn't using these tools, that means she's not doing everything in her power as a Senator to stop TrumpCare. I expect her to use every tool she has. That includes withholding consent and offering as many amendments as it takes to get a hearing and a CBO score. Please take down my contact information so you can let me know when [Senator] decides to play hardball.

[Additional Information and Actions on Healthcare](#)

Sara Tips, librarian in the Clover Park School District, fellow Indivisible member, and ACLU People Power resistance member: This research was conducted by Vicki Hohner, an OlyEmbrace member, who has worked in health care policy for years (and as a former librarian). It goes hand in hand with calling our senators to oppose the AHCA. It is another tactic to try, and was spurred by the reading of this article: [NYT - The Halfhearted Opposition to the G.O.P.'s Health Care Misery](#)

Pressuring industry on this and other fronts can add pressure on Congress, which often gives more weight to industry input. The more people that can put pressure on all fronts, the bigger effect it should have. This might be another avenue for advocacy, contacting the health industry groups and encouraging them to be more vocal. We can call/write/email and ask them to step up their pressure on Congress. They all have a lot to lose if the current proposal becomes law.

The first part is key large national health organizations who often have the biggest voice nationally. Below that are other organizations that can also be contacted to add their voices (such as organizations for specific diseases and conditions, your health care plan or large provider systems, union and trade organizations that help fight for health care benefits). I would tap the big ones first; if people have time/energy/interest they could continue their efforts by communicating with other groups down the ladder. More voices is more power.

Key health industry organizations and contacts. If people want to do a little more, they can read their statements and add their support to specific items in the statements.

1. America's Health Insurance Plans
 - a. 202.778.3200 | ahip@ahip.org
 - b. Marilyn B. Tavenner - President and CEO (she headed CMS, the agency in charge of Medicare and Medicaid, for a period under Obama so she understands the issue)
2. AHIP letter to the Senate Finance Committee outlining their concerns
 - a. [AHIP Letter to Senate Finance Committee](#)

3. American Medical Association - (800) 621-8335. AMA President Andrew W. Gurman, MD. AMA CEO James L Madara, MD
 - a. [AMA Statement on House Passage of American Health Care Act](#)
 - b. They also have a special physician patient effort to engage in health care changes at Patients before Politics, you can participate at [Patients Before Politics](#).
4. American Hospital Association - 202.638.1100. 1.800.424-4301. Rick Pollack, President, CEO
 - a. [Statement on the American Health Care Act](#)
 - b. They have a series of video presentations under Protect Healthcare TV summarizing the different ways the AHCA could affect individual care; they may be useful in making the case to others. [YouTube - Health care for 23 million Americans is on the line](#)
5. AARP has a nice site following the AHCA progress and changes
 - a. [Stability Fund Won't Keep Premiums From Going Through the Roof for People With Preexisting Conditions](#)
 - b. Statement to Senators on the AHCA
 1. [AARP - Statement to Senators about the AHCA](#)
 - c. State office in Seattle: Address: 9750 3rd Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98115 Phone: (206) 517-9348

2. Why the Emoluments Clause Matters

From National Indivisible:

OUR COUNTRY IS NOT FOR SALE—OR, WHY THE EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE MATTERS

Ethics and Democracy | June 15, 2017

It should go without saying: our country is not for sale. Sadly, we can't take this for granted under Trump. Fortunately, our Founding Fathers knew this could happen. That's why they drafted clear-cut language into the Constitution to protect the United States from corruption and foreign influence. The Founding Fathers wanted elected officials to derive their power from the people and pursue national interests, not personal financial gain. That language is called the "Emoluments Clause" of the Constitution.

WHAT IS THIS "EMOLUMENTS" THING?

You may not have heard of "emoluments" before—that's okay, most people, even in DC, hadn't either until Donald Trump became president. It just means **any profit, benefit, or gain made from ordinary business dealings**. The little known Foreign Emoluments Clause of the Constitution restricts members of the government from receiving these types of benefits from foreign countries without the approval of Congress, even if in exchange for services in a private capacity. This includes the President.

Text of the Foreign Emoluments Clause, U.S. Const. art. I, § 9, cl. 8.

"No Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under [the United States], shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State."

Of course, lots of people have potential conflicts of interest in some form—but the Constitution provides a clear way to for federal office holders to resolve them: getting the consent of Congress. If Congress knows about potential conflicts of interests and approves them, our system is working; there is transparency and checks and balances. Even Benjamin Franklin **sought (and received) congressional approval to keep a diamond encrusted snuff box that was a gift from King Louis XVI**.

DONALD TRUMP IS OPENLY FLOUTING THIS VERY CLEAR REQUIREMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION.

As he himself repeatedly points out, Trump has an extensive, international business network. And he has not shared his tax returns with Congress or the public (see our [explainer](#)). As a result, neither Congress nor the American people can fully assess his conflicts of interest.

The following are just some of the **examples of business dealings** that could constitute foreign emoluments to Trump:

- **Foreign governments paying for a room** or hosting events at Trump's Washington, D.C. hotel after Inauguration Day;
- Entities owned by foreign states **paying rent** at Trump World Tower in New York City; and
- The Chinese government granting **thirty-eight (38) trademarks** to Trump and one of his companies.

But the bigger problem? **There could be many conflicts of interest we don't even know about**. He hasn't told the public, and he certainly hasn't sought consent from Congress. He wants us just to take his word—and we all know how **reliable his word can be**.

THE CONGRESSIONAL EMOLUMENTS LAWSUIT.

Because Trump refuses to divest himself of his business holdings or fully disclose his conflicts of interest to Congress, Senator [Richard Blumenthal \(CT\)](#) and Representative [John Conyers \(MI-13\)](#), along with [194 other members of Congress](#), have filed a lawsuit to force Trump to comply with the Constitution.

THIS IS A BIG DEAL. It is the largest Congressional lawsuit in history, and courts are likely to take it seriously.

WHAT CAN YOU DO? ENCOURAGE YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO JOIN THE LAWSUIT.

Donald Trump's unchecked foreign business dealings directly threaten our country and our democracy. This is not a partisan issue—it's a question of respect for the rule of law. We must all act to protect our democracy.

Your Member of Congress (MoC) has taken an oath to "support and defend the Constitution," which includes the Emoluments Clause. If your MoC is a plaintiff (the full list of plaintiffs is [here](#)), feel free to thank him/her for defending the Constitution.

Our MoCs:

- Both Senators Murray and Cantwell, as well as Representative Heck are plaintiffs to this lawsuit

To Do:

- Thank our Members of Congress for being plaintiffs to this lawsuit
 - Phone calls / Faxes
 - Twitter:
 - @RepDennyHeck – Thanks for being a plaintiff in the congressional emoluments lawsuit.
 - @PattyMurray – Thanks for being a plaintiff in the congressional emoluments lawsuit.
 - @Senator Cantwell - Thanks for being a plaintiff in the congressional emoluments lawsuit.

3. Our National Monuments Under Threat

Summary:

- On April 26, Trump [issued an executive order](#) for Sec. of Interior Zinke to review national monuments of at least 100,000 acres that have been established since 1996, and for him to make recommendations as to modifying or rescinding their protection as monuments. The executive order covers 24 monuments: 10 established by Clinton, 4 by Bush, and 10 by Obama, who also expanded the size of 2 monuments designated by Bush.
- Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's report on Bears Ears National Monument in Utah was released on June 12, 2017 and recommends that the monument be reduced in size and said that Congress should step in to designate how selected areas of the 1.3 million acre site are managed. The interim report also asks Congress to propose a bill that would allow part of the monument be co-managed by the Tribal nations. Further, Zinke recommends Congress take action to protect some areas.

Talking Points:

- It is felt that Zinke did not review Bears Ears in an even handed way, that he spent most of his time discussing Bears Ears with those who are against it.
- Many of the local communities and tribes (if not all?) are supportive of protecting the monuments for many reasons, including sacred lands, environment, recreation, and mixed-use. They experience economic gain from tourism, hunting, fishing, etc.
- The comment period for the other monuments on the list closes on July 10, 2017.
- If Trump tries to rescind monument designation, there will definitely be a legal fight. If he only decreases the size, he has some precedent for doing so.

Articles:

- [CBS - Interior Secretary calls for reducing size of Bears Ears National Monument](#)
- [Think Progress - Tribes gear up for major legal battle with Trump over Bears Ears National Monument](#)
- [NYT - Keep America Wild](#)
- [Resource Pages for National Monuments Under Threat](#)

Our MoCs:

- Senator Cantwell is ranking member on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. She and Senator Murray led a group of Democratic senators in condemning the executive order. [Press release](#), [Statements on video](#)
- [C-Span - Senator Cantwell - All Monuments/Hanford Reach/Bears Ears](#)

To do:

- Go to website and comment on other monuments before July 10, 2017. [How to Comment](#)
- Be ready to ask our MoC to oppose any legislation that would decrease the size of these monuments and support our MoC in the stands they have taken so far.
- Be ready to support tribes and environmental groups as these roll out and possible legal action begins.

4. Whether to Continue Sanctions Against Sudan

Summary of Issue: The Obama Administration relaxed sanctions against Sudan after perceived improvements by Sudan in 5 key areas of governance and human rights. Among those five areas, the US perceived improvements by the Sudan government in (1) helping the US combat terrorism, (2) allowing humanitarian access to Sudanese citizens and others within Sudan, and (3) easing of internal conflict, including attacks by the government against its people and continued attacks against religious minorities. The relaxation of sanctions was set to expire by July 12, 2017, by which time the US Secretary of State is required to advise Trump on whether to dispense with sanctions, continue with the modified sanctions, or return to the old sanctions or institute new, modern, comprehensive sanctions.

Talking Points:

- The Sudan is 1 of 3 countries on the US list of state sponsors of terrorism. The other 2 are Iran and Syria.
- The US concerns regarding Sudan include: the Sudan government wages war on what it perceives to be its internal enemies, suppresses speech, persecutes religious minorities, and launders proceeds from corruption through its banks.
- The Sudan president is wanted by the International Criminal Courts for war crimes, genocide, and crimes related to the Darfur region.
- The US lifted some of its economic sanctions when it appeared the Sudan government was making progress in its humanitarian efforts. Those efforts, though, appear to be very minimal according to the Bloomberg report: “The notion that humanitarian access is at acceptable levels is simply perverse, and completely expedient as an assessment,” said Eric Reeves, a senior fellow at Harvard University’s François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights. “Nobody who actually works in the humanitarian world in Sudan believe that access is at acceptable levels.”
- Removing sanctions – which Sudan very much wants – will assist the US in working more closely with Sudan in helping the US in its efforts to combat terrorism.
- On the other hand, the Sudanese government’s record on human rights is more than abysmal. And an easing of sanctions on Sudan mocks the imposition of new restraints in our relationship with Cuba purportedly because of Cuban’s human rights violations.

To Do:

- Ask our MoCs to sponsor legislation that will require the US government:
 - To require that the US Government continue to impose sanctions against Sudan, to require Sudan to focus on promoting fundamental human rights and religious freedom, stop financial corruption, and restore peace in its borders.
 - Use modern financial pressure, including anti-money laundering efforts, to stop the financial corruption in Sudan.
 - Allow easing of sanctions in the future when Sudan sustains progress in helping fight terrorism, allow comprehensive humanitarian access, and stop internal conflict.
- Ask our MoCs to communicate to the Trump Administration that modified sanctions should be continued against Sudan effective July 12, and until real sustained progress has been made by Sudan.

Articles:

- [Bloomberg - Sudan Ramps Up D.C. Lobbying Bid as Sanctions Deadline Looms](#)
- [Time - Why Donald Trump Needs to Take Action on Sudan](#)

5. Washington Initiative 1552 (I-1552)

What the initiative would do:

“It mandates that public schools segregate bathrooms and that trans students stay out of bathrooms that correspond with their gender. Like last year's proposal, this year's initiative allows students and their families to sue public schools if trans students are allowed to use the bathrooms where they feel safe. This time, however, the maximum fine per incident has been increased to \$5,000. The proposed legislation also repeals state protections for trans people by allowing businesses and public agencies to keep trans people out of gender-segregated bathrooms.” from [The Stranger - Anti-Trans Activists Will Soon Start Gathering Signatures for Their New Ballot Initiative](#)

Talking Points:

- This is a discriminatory initiative that would go against “Washington's long-standing laws protecting LGBT people from discrimination [that] have ensured fair and equal treatment for everyone.” From [Washington Won't Discriminate.org](#)
- If opponents of equality gather enough signatures by July 7 (~260,000 minimum) this dangerous initiative will be on the ballot in 2017.
 - Official Statement of Seth Kirby, a transgender man and chair of Washington Won't Discriminate: “Law enforcement says it's unenforceable and the YWCA and sexual assault groups say it's unnecessary. We don't need self-appointed restroom cops. Since Washington passed the existing law in 2006, there have been no reported increases in public safety incidents in gender-segregated areas” ... “Groups that really want to protect safety are advocating for safer public facilities and more family or individual showers and bathrooms, not unenforceable, unnecessary laws like I-1552.”
- Main organization against I-1552 – [Washington Won't Discriminate.org](#)
 - No on I-1552 campaign's biggest backers this year are the ACLU of Washington and Microsoft.
- Main organization for I-1552 - [Just Want Privacy](#)
 - Their web site says that they have 141,500 signatures as of 6/21/17. One of the largest backers for Yes on I-1552 is Cedar Park Assembly of God, a far-right religious group that also opposes marriage equality.
 - “I-1552 is sponsored by Just Want Privacy, a political committee that's closely linked to the Family Policy Institute of Washington – the two groups share staff and resources.
 - Just Want Privacy does not list its endorsers on its website. However, Just Want Privacy's political contributions are required to be recorded with the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission and made available to the public.”
 - Find those contributors here: [Contributors to Just Want Privacy](#)
- Confusing language in I-1552: “Adding to the proposed legislation's misleading language is the confusing language of the initiative itself. After a back-and-forth with the state Attorney General's Office, the Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs (which is fighting I-1552), and Just Want Privacy, the Thurston County Superior Court issued language that defines the initiative's discrimination as “based on sex at birth.” The proposed legislation, however, actually defines “gender” as “one's sex or gender as determined biologically or genetically at birth”—as if gender (or sex, even without a genetic test) can be determined at birth.” from [The Stranger - Anti-Trans Activists Will Soon Start Gathering Signatures for Their New Ballot Initiative](#)

Our MoCs:

- **Our elected officials, WA and US:**
 - Endorsers for “No on I-1552” as of May 31 on [Washington Won't Discriminate.org](http://WashingtonWon'tDiscriminate.org)
 - 26th Legislative District Democrats
 - 28th Legislative District Democrats
 - State Senator, 22nd Legislative District Sen. Sam Hunt
 - And many others
- Senator Cantwell on rejecting I-1552 –
 - “It is our responsibility to ensure all Americans are protected from bigotry and discrimination, regardless of their gender. That’s why it pains me to see opponents of equality in Washington state collecting signatures for I-1552, a harmful initiative that seeks to roll back non-discrimination protections for our transgender friends, family members and neighbors. I’m joining with Washington Won't Discriminate to stand against this terrible initiative and keep up the fight for equality....”
- Senators Cantwell and Murray speak out strongly for LGBTQ rights on the national level:
 - [As Communities Around Washington State and the Country Mark Pride Month, Senators Murray, Cantwell Hold President Trump Accountable for Administration’s Anti-LGBTQ Agenda](#)

To Do:

- [Decline to Sign I-1552!](#)
- You can volunteer and support in other ways, here: [Washington Won't Discriminate.org](http://WashingtonWon'tDiscriminate.org)
- They also have a page where you can pledge to decline to sign, [Decline to Sign](#)

6. Other Issues

Russian Sanctions

- **Articles:**
 - [NYT - Senate Backs Measure Limiting President’s Power to Lift Sanctions](#)
 - [NYT - Congress Set to Prod Trump, Who Denies Russia Meddled, to Punish Moscow](#)

Steve Bannon’s Retroactive Ethics Waiver

- **Article:**
 - [Daily Kos - Office of Government Ethics nixes Steve Bannon's 'unsigned and undated' retroactive ethics waiver](#)

Regulatory Accountability Act

- **Summary:** The principal bill in this so-called reform package is the Regulatory Accountability Act, a bipartisan proposal sponsored by Republican Senators Rob Portman of Ohio, Orrin Hatch of Utah and Rand Paul of Kentucky, as well as Democratic Senators Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota and Joe Manchin of West Virginia. his measure would subject major rule making by agencies to dozens of new requirements, with a pervasive mandate for cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness analyses. Agencies would also have to periodically review the efficacy of new rules, even if no one was complaining about them. In addition, agencies would have to select a single best regulatory choice measured by monetary metrics and based on “best available” data. As a result, less quantifiable goals behind our protective laws — clean air and water, civil rights, safe drugs and honesty in markets, for example — would fade in importance. Every agency choice about what is “best” or most “cost effective” would become the subject of litigation.
- **Articles:**
 - [NYT - Regulatory ‘Reform’ That Is Anything But](#)
 - [Trump’s Regulatory Accountability Act Is a License to Kill](#)

Qatar Crisis

- **Articles:**
 - [WaPo - The crisis over Qatar highlights Trump’s foreign policy confusion](#)

Mattis Authority in Afghanistan

- **Articles:**
 - [NYT- Trump Gives Mattis Authority to Send More Troops to Afghanistan](#)
 - [NYT - Mr. Trump, Afghanistan Is Your War Now](#)
 - [NYT - For Peace in Afghanistan, Talk to Pakistan](#)

Cuba

- **Articles:**
 - [NYT - Moving to Scuttle Obama Legacy, Donald Trump to Crack Down on Cuba](#)
 - [Daily Kos - Trump renews some restrictions on travel to Cuba—just the ones that hurt his hotel competitors](#)

Privatization of the VA

- **Articles:**
 - [The Hill - Yes Trump is Privatizing the VA](#)

Concerns About Pruitt

- **Articles:**
 - [WaPo - EPA head Pruitt had two government email addresses in his last job](#)