OLYMPIA INDIVISIBLE

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PROTEST THE DACA DECISION
Trump’s Dreadful Decision

Summary:
Trump had Attorney General Sessions announce on September 5 that he will end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program with a six-month delay. DACA has allowed youth that entered the country with their parents when they were children to legally work and go to school. The move by Trump has encountered significant opposition from congressional Republicans and from business leaders, including Microsoft and other PNW businesses. The latest polling shows 64% support for continuing the program and 30% opposition. The State of Washington and 14 other states have filed a lawsuit against Trump and the federal government challenging the revocation of the DACA program.

Talking points:

- The government will no longer accept new applications for DACA, even for those who are otherwise eligible.
- Those who have applied for DACA but are still waiting to hear back will have their applications processed just as they would have been in the past.
- Those enrolled in DACA will be able to continue working until their permits expire. Those whose permits expire on March 5, 2018 or before will be permitted to renew their two-year period of legal status if they do so by October 5.
- Those who currently have DACA, but whose protections end after March 8, 2018 will not be able to renew (even if they have already applied for renewal).
- Work permits will be valid until the expiration date on the work permit. New applications and renewal requests already received will be reviewed and validated on a case-by-case basis. No details about what criteria will be used have been released.
- DACA recipients will no longer be able to apply for “advance parole” to allow them to leave the US and reenter legally. Current grants of advance parole will remain valid. Pending applications will be denied.

ALSO: Immigration officials said that DACA recipients will not be targeted as priorities for deportation, but no specific guidance will be issued to agents to shield DACA recipients from deportation and they would no longer be able to work legally. There are no plans for Homeland Security to share personal information, including home addresses, of DACA recipients who registered for work permits with law enforcement officers unless there is an immediate concern over national security.

To Do: Call Senators Murray and Cantwell, and Rep. Heck to say: I am __________ from Olympia, Washington. I know that you oppose the end of the DACA Program. I agree with you and ask that you support any legislation that legalizes the DACA recipients, and to write legislation that creates sensible and equitable immigration reform.
Stop the Wall

Summary: It has been reported that the Trump Administration has chosen four firms to build concrete prototypes of a proposed border wall. Construction of the prototypes will take place in San Diego.

Talking Points:

- Congress has appropriated $20 million in the current budget for the prototypes.
- Each of the four contracts are for between $400,000-500,000.
- The Department of Homeland Security announced that it will award up to four more contracts for non-concrete prototypes this week. Prototype construction will begin in two weeks and should be completed this fall.
- The prototypes will be 30 feet long and up to 30 feet high. DHS officials will spend 1-2 months testing the prototypes resistance to penetration. The wall must be able to withstand digging for at least six feet below the surface.
- There is currently 700 miles of fencing along the border.

To Do: Ask our MoCs to refuse to support any funding of the Trump’s wall and to block any funding bill that finances any further prototypes, and prototype construction. Remind the MoCs that our nation was built by immigrants and to work, instead, in crafting smart immigration reform.
North Korea’s Hydrogen Bomb

Summary: North Korea conducted another underground nuclear test. They claim that they detonated a hydrogen bomb.

Talking Points:

- Up to now, the only countries with H-bombs are the US, Russia, the UK, France and China.
- It is unclear whether the North Koreans actually detonated an H-bomb. It may take several weeks to know for sure through detection of the trace gases that are released from such a detonation. However, South Korea reports that it has detected radioactive material present after the detonation.
- The yield of the blast was 100 kilotons, far more destructive than any prior North Korean blast. To give a sense of scale, the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima bomb had a yield of 15 kilotons.
- North Korea has claimed that it has miniaturized an H-bomb to fit on an ICBM.
- News reports indicate that North Korea could test another missile this weekend.

Our MoCs:

- Murray 2006 “We cannot accept a nuclear North Korea.”
- Cantwell 2017 “North Korea presents a real threat and we must work to find the best path to peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.”

To Do: Tell your MoC to speak out against Trump’s warmongering, and add that we don’t war with North Korea. Encourage our MoCs to support the US State Department, to oppose any spending cuts to the US State Department, and to courage this Administration, especially the State Department, to resolve this matter through diplomacy.
Sinclair-Tribune Merger

Summary: Sinclair Broadcasting, a heavily right-wing leaning media company, has been working to acquire Tribune Media in order to expand its reach into households across the country. The Trump administration's FCC Chairman (Ajit Pai) is allowing Sinclair to count just half of its UHF stations against the national limit expanding its reach to 72% of U.S. households.

Talking Points:
- Trump: Sinclair agreements gave Trump more access in swing states during the campaign.
- Sinclair requires stations, including KOMO, to air segments tilting to the right. You may want to boycott KOMO news.
- NYT - How a Conservative TV Giant Is Ridding Itself of Regulation
- Politico - Kushner: We struck deal with Sinclair for straighter coverage
- 5 Calls - Prevent the Expansion of Sinclair Broadcasting
- Sea Times - Sinclair requires stations, including KOMO, to air segments tilting to the right

To Do:
- Contact Senator Cantwell (who sits on the Commerce Committee) and thank her for her public concern about the Sinclair-Tribune Merger: Cantwell Leads Democratic Senators in Call for Scrutiny of Sinclair-Tribune Broadcasting Deal, Senate Hearings
- Contact Senators John Thun (202-224-2321) and Chuck Grassley (202-224-3744) the chairman of the Senate Commerce and Judiciary Committees, asking that they examine the pending Sinclair-Tribune Merger, expressing your concern that this is not in the best interest of American Democracy and would decrease competition and diversity in broadcasting.
- Call Ajit Pai, FCC Chairman 202-418-1000
  - Hi, my name is [NAME] and I’m a constituent from Olympia. I’m calling in opposition to the merger of Sinclair Broadcasting and Tribune Media. The merger will expand Sinclair's reach beyond its legal audience cap of 39% to a massive 72% of US households. The FCC should not bend rules or roll back regulations in order to grow Sinclair’s pro-Trump, right wing messaging. Thank you so much for your time.--[IF LEAVING A MESSAGE: Please leave full address to ensure call is tallied.]
**Mueller’s Investigation of the Russian Connection**

**Summary:** Robert Mueller has enlisted the help of agents from the IRS Criminal Investigations unit in his probe of the Russian influence on the election and other Russian action. It appears that the financial portion of the investigation initially is focusing on the financial dealings of Robert Manafort. In addition, Politico reported that Robert Mueller’s team is working with New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman on its investigation into Paul Manafort and his financial transactions.

**Talking Points:**

- This could provide Mueller with leverage to cooperate with the investigation because while Trump can pardon anyone for federal criminal violations, he cannot pardon anyone for state violations.
- The two teams have shared evidence and have talked frequently in recent weeks about a potential case. Both Mueller and Schneiderman have collected evidence on financial crimes, including money laundering. No decision has been made on where or whether to file charges and nothing is imminent.
- Schneiderman is also looking into some of Trump’s business transactions and could potentially share those records with Mueller’s team. Those inquiries are in the preliminary stage. Schneiderman won a $25 million settlement against Trump in November in a Trump University case.
- Special counsel Robert S. Mueller III has alerted the White House that his team will probably seek to interview six top current and former advisers to President Trump who were witnesses to several episodes relevant to the investigation of Russia’s meddling in the 2016 election, according to people familiar with the request. Mueller’s interest in the aides, including trusted adviser Hope Hicks, former press secretary Sean Spicer and former chief of staff Reince Priebus, reflects how the probe that has dogged Trump’s presidency is starting to penetrate a closer circle of aides around the president.
- Donald Jr. is set to testify in private September 7 in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee. His testimony is to focus on his June 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer ostensibly to get negative information from the Russian government on Hillary Clinton.
- The **Special Counsel Independence Protection Act** (S Bill 1735), introduced by Senators Graham (R-SC) and Booker (D-NY), and co-sponsored by Senators Whitehouse (D-RI) and Blumenthal (D-CN), would allow a special counsel to be fired only if a federal court first establishes that they had exhibited “misconduct, dereliction of duty, incapacity, conflict of interest, or other good cause for removal.”
- The **Special Counsel Integrity Act** (S Bill 1741), introduced the same day by Republican Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC), would do essentially the same thing, but allow the judicial review to take place retroactively too. So if Trump fired Mueller, a three-judge panel could reinstate the special counsel within 14 days.

**To Do:**

Call Senators Murray and Cantwell and Rep. Heck and ask them to ensure that Mueller’s investigation is protected from any attempt by the Administration to stall the investigation and to support S Bill 1735 and S Bill 1741.
Health Care – Don’t Let Him Get Away With It!

Summary: The Washington Post reported that the Trump Administration is cutting federal funds that help people sign up for health coverage under the ACA. They are cutting grants to grass-roots groups to provide “navigators” to assist with ACA enrollment by 41% (from $62.5 million down to $36.8 million) and cutting an enrollment advertising budget from $100 million to $10 million.

Talking Points:

- The announcement August 31 is just nine weeks before the start of the annual enrollment period. The enrollment period in 2017 will start November 1 and only last six weeks instead of three months.
- The Senate parliamentarian has announced that reconciliation instructions run out September 30, ending the Republican ability to pass health care reform with 51 votes in the Senate under the current budget resolution. The Senate is only expected to be in session for 15 more days this month.
- John McCain said that he backed a proposal that would end the ACA’s Medicaid expansion and insurance subsidies and instead distribute the funds to states for whatever health insurance programs they favored. McCain said he would support the proposal “If it’s not through regular order, then it’s a mistake. But it doesn’t mean I wouldn’t vote for it.”
- There is no bill text yet, so nothing for the CBO to score. Graham said that there would be bill text out this week. Susan Collins and Lisa Murkowski expressed concerns about the plan, though Collins said she hadn’t yet made a decision. Kellyanne Conway said Trump would sign such a bill.
- The Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee held a hearing September 6 on stabilizing the individual insurance markets through the ACA exchanges.
- Lamar Alexander, chair of the committee, said that he wanted a health care market stabilization bill to both provide funding for cost-sharing reduction payments and to provide states with more flexibility to deviate from a variety ACA rules, including the essential health benefit requirements in the ACA.
- Patty Murray, ranking minority, said that senators have a very narrow window to agree before September 27, when the government requires insurers participating in the exchange to sign contracts for the coming year. She said that agreement will not be easy, and accused Trump of sabotaging the law, most recently when the administration dramatically cut funding for outreach and sign-up assistance for this enrollment period, starting November 1. She made clear Democratic differences with Republicans on stabilization. She said that the government should promise insurers cost-sharing reduction payments for multiple years and recreate a reinsurance fund that existing in the ACA’s first three years to buffer insurers from the expense of customers with very high medical costs.
- Mike Kreidler, the Washington State Insurance Commissioner, said Washington had seen a serious jolt to the system because of the growing uncertainties and actions of the administration and that the state’s individual markets are in serious peril. He said Congress should guarantee cost-sharing reduction payments on a permanent basis and that Congress should leave in place rules governing essential health benefits as well as the share of insurance costs consumers pay.

TO DO: Nothing yet, but keep a watch on this for the next couple of weeks. See https://www.indivisibleguide.com/resource/trumpcare-another-name-graham-cassidy/
Addendum
Harvey, Irma, Jose and the burning West and climate change

Summary
Harvey was the biggest rain event recorded in the continental US. Hurricane Irma is the most powerful Atlantic Hurricane ever recorded. Hurricane Jose is following close behind. While no single hurricane can be attributed to climate change, it is predicted to result in stronger storms. The west is on fire, in Montana, in BC, in Washington, Oregon and California. One climate effect is more summer drying in the west, with the danger of more (and more destructive) fires.

Talking points
- Harvey’s 52 inches of rain is the largest rain event ever recorded in the continental US. The rain that fell in less than a week in Houston is equal to the rain that fell in the past seven months in Olympia (in one of our wettest winters).
- Hurricane Irma is the largest and most intense hurricane ever recorded in the Atlantic and one of the largest such storms worldwide. It has had sustained winds of 185 miles per hour (mph) and gusts of well over 200 mph. As it nears Florida landfall, it still has sustained winds of over 140 mph. Irma followed quickly after Harvey and Hurricane Jose (also a category 5 storm) is following right behind, and Hurricane Katia is about to make landfall in Mexico.
- While no single weather event can be clearly linked to climate change, it has the effect of increasing the intensity of storms and their wind speed as waters warm and the atmosphere carries more water vapor. There is already 4% more water vapor over the ocean than 20 years ago, and water temperatures in the southern Atlantic and Caribbean are higher.
- The west is on fire. There are massive wildfires all over the US and Canadian west, with over a million acres burning in Montana, over two million in BC, massive fires in Washington, Oregon and California. In Washington, there are fires on the east side of the Cascades near the Canadian border, near Cle Elem (Jolly Mountain), near Mt. Rainier (Norse Peak), the western Columbia Gorge is on fire (Eagle Creek), as is the Chetko Bar wilderness in southern Oregon and there are fires near Yosemite and Los Angeles, too.
- Western fires were caused both by the extremely hot summer, with the last 90 days exceptionally warm and dry, and by the large amount of fuel for the fire. That fuel resulted both from a misguided 20th Century focus on fire suppression and from the very wet winter this past year, which resulted in more plant growth to fuel fires.
- There is an exponential relationship between fire and aridity (caused by heat). Every degree of warming does more to promote fire than the previous degree. The western US is 2.7 degrees F hotter than it would be in the absence of climate change, in addition to this summer’s heat wave. The area of annual burned forest in the Northwest has increased by 5,000 percent since the early 1970’s. Despite this increase, only 10% of the forests have burned. By the end of the century, the western US is projected to warm by another 6.3 degrees F, with a massive increase in fires likely.

Where our members stand
- All of our members support of efforts to combat and adapt to climate change. Senator Cantwell has focused extensively on climate change in the Senate. Denny Heck has also been outspoken on climate change in the House. He held a local town hall/panel session in Lacey on climate change in August.
- All of our members voted for the just-passed legislation that provided initial funding to respond to Harvey and Hurricane Irma, along with a short-term debt limit increase and government funding package.
- Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell and bipartisan group of western states senators urged Senate leaders to add wildfire funding to future disaster funding. They seek to ensure that funding to fight fires doesn’t compete with funding needed to reduce their intensity and mitigate their damage through thinning and other activities.

What to do
- Thank our members of Congress for voting for disaster aid to provide initial assistance for those impacted in Texas and Louisiana by Hurricane/Tropical Storm Harvey and those expected to be harmed in Florida and the Southeast by Hurricane Irma.
• Urge our members of Congress to support funding for programs designed to prevent and to respond to major natural disasters. In the Northwest, that includes forest thinning and changing the funding formula for fighting wildfires, so that the funds used to fight the growing number and intensity of fires don’t compete with the funds needed to thin the forests and help fire proof nearby structures to reduce the intensity and destructiveness of fires.
• Urge our members to increase their efforts to push the Congress to address climate change. Thank them for the work they have already done, given the climate denial attitude in the administration and among many members in the majority.