

White House press briefing [via FNC's *America Reports*]

07/17/25

1:48:26 p.m.

3 minutes and 1 second

KAROLINE LEAVITT: Finally, last night, Senate Republicans passed President Trump's \$9 billion recessions package. This will help restore fiscal sanity in our country by rescinding billions in wasteful foreign aid and finally ending taxpayer funding for PBS and NPR, two media organizations that have ridiculously used federal dollars to push a partisan, left-wing agenda for many years. The House should pass this recessions package immediately and send it to the President's desk for signature. On another note, I know that many in the media have been speculating about bruising on the President's hand and also swelling in the President's legs. So, in the effort of transparency, the President wanted to share a note from his physician with all of you today. "In recent weeks, President Trump noted mild swelling in the lower legs. In keeping with routine medical care and out of the abundance of caution, this concern was thoroughly evaluated by the White House medical unit. The President underwent a comprehensive examination, including diagnostic vascular studies. Bilateral, lower extremity — venous doppler ultrasounds were performed and revealed chronic venous insufficiency, a benign and common condition, particularly in individuals over the age of 70. Importantly, there was no evidence of deep vein thrombosis or arterial disease. Laboratory testing included a complete blood count, comprehensive metabolic panel, coagulation profile, D-dimer, B-type natriuretic peptide, and cardiac biomarkers. All results were within normal limits. An echocardiogram was also performed and confirmed normal cardiac structure and function. No signs of heart failure, renal impairment or systemic illness were identified. Additionally, recent photos of the President has shown minor bruising on the back of his hand. This is consistent with minor soft-tissue irritation from frequent handshaking and use of aspirin, which is taken as part of a standard cardiovascular prevention regimen. This is a well-known and benign side effect of aspirin therapy. And the President remains in excellent health," which I think all of you witness on a daily basis here, so the President wanted me to share that note with all of you and I am happy to take further questions on it. We will provide the memorandum from the President's physician to all of you as we always do. And we'll get to questions. Here in our new media seat, we have Frank Corva, who's the White House correspondent for Bitcoin Magazine, which comes at a timely week with crypto legislation moving across capitol hill. So why don't you kick us off, Frank, and thanks for being with us.

FRANK CORVA: Thank you so much. Appreciate it. Miss Leavitt.

LEAVITT: Sure.

CORVA: I was curious to hear if the President was in favor of removing any and all language around central bank digital currencies from the Genius Act, maybe as a — as a means to get it across the line and get it on his desk. And then my second question was about something the President spoke about in this room. He talked about a \$600 de minimis tax exemption for Bitcoin and other crypto spending, so I was just wondering if you could comment on those.

(....)

1:52:51 p.m.

3 minutes and 14 seconds

JACQUI HEINRICH: There's been a lot of discussion about Epstein files and the President's comments yesterday calling it a hoax. Can you clarify which part of the Epstein hoax is a hoax part?

LEAVITT: The President is referring to the fact Democrats have now seized on this as if they ever wanted transparency when it comes to Jeffrey Epstein, which is an asinine suggestion for any Democrat to make. The Democrats had control of this building — the White House — for four years and didn't do a dang thing when it came to transparency in regards to Jeffrey Epstein and his heinous crimes. It was this President who directed the Department of Justice and the attorney general to do an exhaustive review of all files related to Jeffrey Epstein, which they did. The attorney general and the FBI, led by Pam Bondi, Dan Bongino, Kash Patel, these are great patriots — some of the trust of voices in the Republican Party movement. It's part of the reasons the President appointed him — appointed them to these high law enforcement positions. And they spent many months going through all of the files related to Jeffrey Epstein and they concluded what they found in that memo, which they drafted and released. So, the President has been transparent and followed through his promises to the American people, but he doesn't like to see is Democrats and the mainstream media covering this like it is the biggest or the American people care about. The President has been working so hard this week. On Tuesday, he went to Pennsylvania where \$90 billion security and investments for the commonwealth, for the people of that state. After that, he came back to the Oval Office at 8:00 p.m. He went in there to whip votes to get the Genius Act signed into law. And, because of his efforts, that bill is now going to be signed and passed. The following day, yesterday, he meets with foreign leader, the king of Bahrain to secure more investments into this country. Then, yesterday afternoon, the President is the East Room of the White House mourning with parents who have lost their children because of fentanyl, signing a bipartisan piece of legislation and not a single cable network in this country took that event live and covered that event like they should. Those are the issues the President cares about. What could be more important to the American people than helping families who have lost their children? Those are the issues that this President is going to remain focused on.

HEINRICH: I understand he wants to move on from this story. But you do have some prominent figures, including the Senate Majority Leader, the House Speaker voicing support for the files to come out. Representative Massie collecting signatures that would force a discharge petition for a vote on the floor for this. It doesn't seem to be going away. What — what is stopping the administration from just redacting any sensitive information, grand jury information, and putting out what is appropriate so that the American people can decide and then let the story die?

LEAVITT: Well, in terms of redactions or grand jury seals, those are questions for the Department of Justice. Those are also questions for the judges who have that information under a seal and that would have to be requested and a judge would have to approve it. That's out of the President's control. He has said, in agreement with some of the leaders on Capitol Hill, that if the

Attorney General and the Department of Justice come across any other credible evidence, they should provide that to the American people. The President has said that, and he agrees with them on that.

HEINRICH: Why did he fire Maurene Comey?

LEAVITT: The Department of Justice did, and I would defer you to them.

(....)

1:58:50 p.m.

2 minutes and 32 seconds

REAGAN REESE: First, on Congress, Congresswoman Salazar introduced legislation that would give some illegal immigrants in the country a path to citizenship. Ten Republicans signed on to what she's calling the Dignity Act. I'm curious what the White House's position is on the legislation, and if the President would veto this bill if it made it to his desk?

LEAVITT: From my understanding, the White House nor the President has actually read through this legislation. We've been focused on, of course, the One Big Beautiful Bill which passed, which is another historic accomplishment of this President in record time, the Genius Act this week, the rescissions package, that's been the focus of the White House. But the President has made it very clear he will not support amnesty for illegal aliens in any way.

REESE: I want to give you a chance to respond to the CEO of NPR. She's claiming that the cuts to their network will "be a real risk to public safety of the country." Congresswoman [sic] — Murkowski has argued that public broadcasting stations save lives. Could you respond to these concerns?

LEAVITT: The NPR CEO said cutting NPR will be a risk to public safety? I am not sure how NPR helps the public safety of our country, but I do know that NPR, unfortunately, has become really just a propaganda voice for the left. So, just a few examples for you. In 2020, NPR refused to cover — refused to cover the Hunter Biden laptop scandal and the run up to the election. They said their "assertions don't amount to much," writing "they did not want to waste the listeners and readers time on stories that are just pure distractions." That does not sound like an unbiased opinion. That sounds like a partisan opinion to me. And this is a taxpayer funded organization. In 2018, that same CEO that you're talking about called the President in the Oval Office, who nearly 80 million Americans elected, she called him racist, shared a photo of herself wearing a Biden for President campaign hat, serves on the board of a Soros-funded activist group. In 2020, PBS's white House correspondent at the time characterized President Trump's speech, then at Mount Rushmore, as a love letter to white resentment, promoting the myth of America. In 2017, PBS devoted an entire panel talking about what it means to be woke and white privilege. In 2023, PBS's *Washington Week* roundtable covered up Joe Biden's clear mental decline. That's actually quite the clip. I would encourage all of you to look at it. These are not honest news organizations. These are partisan, left-wing outlets that are funded by the taxpayers and this administration does

not believe it's a good use of the taxpayers time and money.

(....)

2:05:02 p.m.

58 seconds

OWEN JENSEN: Good afternoon, Karoline. In Gaza today, Holy Family Catholic Church was struck by an Israeli shell.

LEAVITT: Yes.

JENSEN: Three people were killed, ten wounded. What is the President's reaction to that church coming under fire?

LEAVITT: It was not a positive reaction. He called Prime Minister Netanyahu this morning to address the strikes on that church in Gaza. And I understand the prime minister agreed to put out a statement. It was — it was a mistake by the Israelis to hit that Catholic Church. That's what the Prime Minister relayed to the President and you should look at the Prime Minister's statement that will be coming. [TO HOLLAND] Steve, go ahead.

STEVE HOLLAND: Back to your letter that you read at the beginning.

LEAVITT: Sure.

HOLLAND: The President — you said mild swelling in his legs.

LEAVITT: Yes, sir.

HOLLAND: Is it causing him any discomfort? How are you treating it?

LEAVITT: Nope. No discomfort from the President at all. And you probably all see that on a day-to-day basis. He's working around the clock. As for the treatments, I can defer to the President's physician and we'll get you this letter. I think it will answer all your questions.

(....)

2:07:00 p.m.

45 seconds

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: Today, tens of thousands of folks rally nationwide to honor legacy of Congressman John Lewis. Meanwhile, Republicans and Texas reportedly working to redraw congressional maps at President Trump's urging. How has President Trump reconciling his call to action with Texas with the legacy of Representative John Lewis?

LEAVITT: I'm not quite sure how the two things are related. I think the President would agree that John Lewis served our country for many, many years and has nothing to do with redistricting efforts that are currently underway by Texas Republicans to add seats to their legislature. They have the right to do that. The President spoke to the congressmen and women who serve the great state of Texas about it, but it's up to them and it's up to their legislature to get that approved.

(....)

2:10:13 p.m.

4 minutes and 37 seconds

ELIZABETH MITCHELL: I'll start off with the President said last week he would not be getting involved in the New York City mayoral race. If that mayoral race — if that's still the case, given his history drawing a large crowd in New York City, what's his reason for staying out of it in that way?

LEAVITT: Well, look, I think the President reserves the right to get involved in races or not get involved in races. And he's made the decision not to weigh in on the New York mayoral race, as you rightly pointed out, although he has gone as far to say he absolutely does not want to see Zamdani elected, who is a known communist, who supports the abolishment of private property, the defunding of police. He has made very well known anti-Semitic statements. It would be a disaster for New York and for this country and I think it's quite telling that this individual, a known communist, has been spending time in Washington this week meeting with leaders on Capitol Hill. This is truly where the Democrat Party is headed. Clearly, they learned nothing from November 5 in the President's overwhelming victory. [TO OLOHAN] Mary, Mary go ahead.

MARY MARGARET OLOHAN: Thank you, Karoline. I wanted to backtrack to the hospitals that have stopped providing transgender surgeries and hormones for kids. On this front, does that have anything to do with the DOJ subpoenas last week? Should we expect any more hospitals be shutting down their programs? And I wanted to also ask what you make of all these media reports, especially the AP, which I noticed, which portrays these children as losing something that's saving their lives.

LEAVITT: Yes. I think the President spoke a lot about this issue, which is a political issue, but also really a cultural issue that impacts children and families. He talked about it a lot on the campaign, and I think he was quite surprised by the uptick we were seeing in the embracement by the Democrat Party when it comes to the chemical castration and mutilation of young, innocent bodies. And so, the President made it a very early priority to sign very strong executive orders to cut off the funding for any hospital or any medical facility in this country that provides such barbaric procedures. And, as a result of that strong policy and the President's strong common sense position on this issue, we've had such an overwhelming response, which is great for children in Arizona. Phoenix Children's Hospital has stopped providing puberty blockers and hormone therapy to minors. In California, Stanford Medicine ended sex change surgeries for minors. Children's Hospital Los Angeles is closing its center for Trans Youth Health and Development surgical program. In Illinois, Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago stopped sex

change surgeries. Again, let's think about what we're talking about here. Sex change surgeries for minors. These are barbaric practices that no children, no child, innocent child should have to endure. And the President wants to protect the innocence of children and I know the vast majority of Americans support him in that effort. This is a wildly popular and common sense endeavor this administration has taken, and we've seen many of these medical institutions have — have followed through with the President's executive orders, but we'll continue to take further action on this important issue. [TO HAAKE] Garrett.

GARRETT HAAKE: I have two, if you'll indulge me.

LEAVITT: Sure.

HAAKE: On the Rescissions package, I wonder what the White House makes of this theory that it increases the odds of a shutdown. The theory is basically, why would any Democrat vote for a bipartisan spending deal with Republicans? If Republicans can turn around and claw the money back the next day?

LEAVITT: Look, \$9 billion worth of crap that it was in our federal funding that is now being rescinded. This is a good thing for the American people and the American taxpayer and I think our Office of Management and Budget director was saying this process should be more bipartisan. Democrats — there was a time in this country where Democrats, too, cared about getting rid of waste, fraud and abuse in our federal spending. I think every American agrees the government spends way too much money on things that don't matter. Some of those things include PBS and NPR, or for instance, the Democracy Fund, which was funded to the tune of \$83 million through the Department of State. But they were giving hundreds of thousands of dollars for gender equality and empowerment hubs in Yemen, \$3.9 million for strengthening information integrity, equality and democracy for LGBTQI population of the western Balkans. These are not good uses of taxpayer funds, and Republicans are proud to lead that effort. And we wish more Democrats would join us in that.

HAAKE: I wanted to follow up on the Maurene Comey question. Just to clarify, did the White House have any knowledge or did the President sign off on her firing?

LEAVITT: This was a decision that was made by the Department of Justice.

(....)

2:20:08 p.m.

1 minute and 1 second

LIBBEY DEAN: Two questions for you. The first is during The Hill Nation summit, Secretary Noem suggested there could be some changes to TSA's liquid limits. Is the President aware of that? Is that an idea that he's backing? And what would that timeline and the changes look like?

LEAVITT: Sure. I would defer you to the Department of Homeland Security, but I did see

Secretary Noem's comments and I think it's great that, on day one, she asked TSA what are we doing right? What are we doing wrong? How can we make air travel more efficient while maintaining utmost security for American passengers and travelers? And I know they announced no more shoes — or you don't need to take off your shoes anymore at the airport, which I think is welcome news to all of us who travel a lot, but further guidance or decisions, of course, that's in the Secretary of Homeland Security's overview, and I would defer to her.

DEAN: And the other question for you, it's on Bondi and Burgum's trip today to Alcatraz. I'm curious what the funding is going to look like for that, and who the President does want to see incarcerated there —

LEAVITT: Sure.

DEAN: — if it were to become [inaudible]

LEAVITT. Well, this was an idea of the President. He spoke about it in May, and he directed his administration to review a reopening plan for Alcatraz, if it is possible, which is why the Attorney General and the Secretary of Interior have traveled there today. They are touring the site and if the Alcatraz prison is reopened, it would be under the purview of the Bureau of Prisons and the Secretary of Interior also would play a big role in this as well. So, they're there to review the site today, and I'm sure you'll hear more from them on it later. And just to follow up, Libby, on who the President wants to see housed in Alcatraz, the worst of the worst criminals in this country, both American criminals who commit heinous — convict — heinous crimes, but also illegal alien criminals before deportation as well.