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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

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## Vulnerable House Democrats tread carefully in wake of Mueller report

(Reuters) - Vulnerable House Democrats, mindful of President Donald Trump's continued strength among Republican voters, are using caution in how they respond to the special counsel's report, which detailed Trump's efforts to thwart the investigation into Russian efforts to help him win the White House.

More than 30 Democratic representatives, many of whom are in their first term, represent districts that supported Trump in 2016. The party's chances of keeping control of the U.S. House of Representatives likely hinge its ability to defend those seats.

In the report released on Thursday, Special Counsel Robert Mueller said Trump may have obstructed justice and portrayed a president bent on stopping the probe into Russian meddling. But Mueller stopped short of concluding that a crime was committed, leaving it to Congress to make its own determination.

That is putting pressure on congressional Democrats to decide whether to pursue impeachment charges against Trump, whose continued popularity with his Republican base could weigh heavily on Democratic lawmakers in swing districts.

Those incumbent Democrats may have to strike a delicate balance on the campaign trail next year. Too much bashing of the president could turn off voters more interested in kitchen-table issues and motivate Trump sympathizers to rally around him.

Hours after Mueller's findings were released, Abby Spanberger, a Democratic congresswoman from Virginia, held a town hall that saw virtually no discussion of the report. She knocked off a Republican incumbent last year in a district that favored Trump by more than 6 percentage points in 2016.

The 39-year-old representative told reporters before the event that she was more interested in preventing Russia from attacking the electoral process than in "re-litigating" the 2016 presidential contest.



FILE PHOTO - U.S. Representative Haley Stevens speaks with constituents at a town hall meeting in Livonia, Michigan, U.S. April 18, 2019.. REUTERS/Steve Friess

## Foxconn says it remains committed to Wisconsin investment project

TAIPEI (Reuters) - Taiwan's Foxconn said on Friday it remains committed to its contract to build a display plant and tech research facilities in Wisconsin, days after the U.S. state's governor said he wanted to renegotiate the deal. Democratic Governor Tony Evers, who inherited a deal to give Foxconn \$4 billion in tax breaks and other incentives when he took office in January, said on Wednesday he wanted renegotiation because the firm is not expected to reach its job creation goals for the state. Foxconn's proposed 20-million-square-foot Wisconsin campus, announced at a White House ceremony in 2017, marks the largest greenfield investment by a foreign-based company in U.S. history and was praised by President Donald Trump as proof of his ability to revive American manufacturing. Foxconn, a major supplier to Apple Inc, has pledged to eventually create 13,000 jobs in Wisconsin, but said earlier this year it had slowed its pace of hiring. "Foxconn remains committed to our contract," the company said in a statement on Friday. "Foxconn's commitment to job creation in Wisconsin remains long term and will span over the length of the WEDC (Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation) contract and beyond," it said, adding the construction on the LCD display manufacturing facility will commence in the summer.



FILE PHOTO: The logo of Foxconn, the trading name of Hon Hai Precision Industry, is seen on top of the company's building in Taipei, Taiwan, March 30, 2018. REUTERS/Tyrone Siu

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# Warmbier parents blast ‘evil’ North Korea regime after Trump praises Kim

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The parents of Otto Warmbier, an American student who died after 17 months in a North Korean prison, blamed Kim Jong Un's "evil regime" on Friday after U.S. President Donald Trump said he believed the leader's claim not to have known how their son was treated.

Warmbier's parents said they held off commenting during the second summit between Trump and Kim in Hanoi, which was cut short on Thursday after the two sides failed to reach a deal for the reclusive communist nation to give up its nuclear weapons.

"Kim and his evil regime are responsible for the death of our son Otto," Fred and Cindy Warmbier said in a statement. "Kim and his evil regime are responsible for unimaginable cruelty and inhumanity. No excuses or lavish praise can change that." Trump drew criticism after he praised Kim's leadership and said he accepted Kim's assertion that he had not been aware of how Warmbier was treated while in detention.

"He tells me that he didn't know about it, and I will take him at his word," Trump told a news conference.

It wasn't the first time Trump has faced criticism for appearing to side with autocratic leaders. He gave Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman the benefit of the doubt after the killing of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi last year. In July, Trump refused to blame Russian President Vladimir Putin for interfering in U.S. election.

Prominent Republicans on Thursday did not share Trump's acceptance of Kim's word, including close Trump ally U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, who said he didn't "buy it for a minute."

Warmbier parents blame Kim Jong Un for son's death After the family's sharp statement, the White House tried to explain what Trump meant.

"The president agrees with the Warmbier family and holds North Korea responsible for Otto Warmbier's death,"

Trump adviser Kellyanne Conway told Fox News. "What he said was that Chairman Kim says, what he believes Chairman Kim to have said, was that he was not aware of what had happened to Otto Warmbier when it happened."

Warmbier, 22, died on June 19, 2017, shortly after he was flown home to Ohio in a coma after being held by North Korea for 17 months.

"Otto should have never been arrested in the first place and Kim is responsible for that decision and everything that subsequently happened," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director for Human Rights Watch. Cohen turned over to the committee a copy of a \$35,000 check Trump signed on Aug. 1, 2017, one in a series he said was to reimburse him for paying off Daniels after Trump took office.

Cohen said Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., co-signed another check, again for \$35,000. A lawyer for Donald Jr. did not respond to a request for comment. The sweeping claims against Trump, from a man who once said he would take a bullet for his boss, come as Mueller appears to be close to completing his investigation into possible collusion between Trump's campaign and Russian efforts to sway the vote. Trump has called the Mueller investigation a "witch hunt."



FILE PHOTO: Cindy Warmbier speaks as her husband Fred, parents of Otto Warmbier, looks on during a symposium at the United Nations headquarters in Manhattan, New York

U.S. officials have said the emails released by WikiLeaks were stolen by Russia as part of Moscow's campaign of hacking and propaganda during the presidential race aimed at sowing discord in the United States and harming Clinton. Trump has previously denied knowing in advance about the release of hacked Democratic National Committee (DNC) emails during the election.

Cohen said he was in Trump's office in July 2016 when Roger Stone, a self-described "dirty trickster" and longtime political adviser to Trump, called the then Republican presidential candidate. Cohen offers Congress 'new details' on Trump Cohen said Stone told Trump he had been speaking with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who told him there would be a dump of emails within a couple of days that would damage Clinton's campaign.



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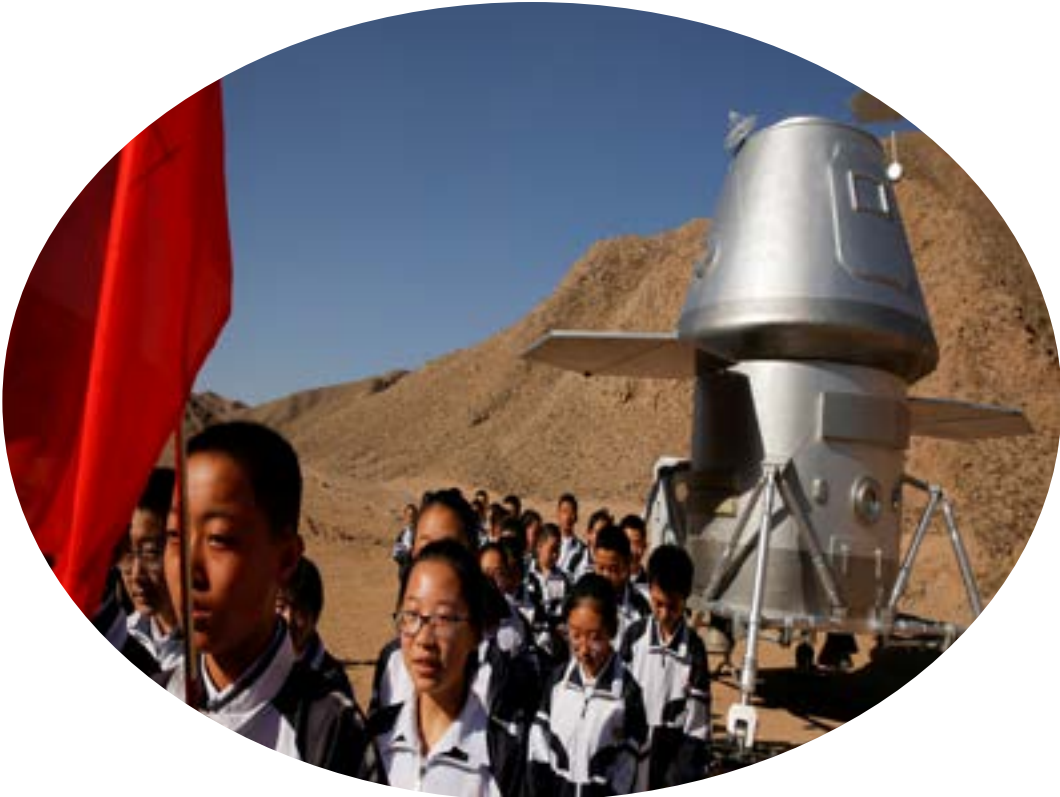
**Editor's Choice**



A staff member puts on the helmet of a mock space suit at the C-Space Project Mars simulation base in the Gobi Desert outside Jinchang



A staff member wearing a mock space suit poses in the Gobi Desert near the C-Space Project Mars simulation base outside Jinchang



Students leave a mock space capsule after a lesson at the C-Space Project Mars simulation base in the Gobi Desert outside Jinchang



The Northrop Grumman Antares rocket with Cygnus resupply spacecraft onboard, is seen in this black and white infrared photograph as it launches from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia



A staff member sets up a sign in the shape of a space suit at the C-Space Project Mars simulation base in the Gobi Desert outside Jinchang



Students listen to a lesson at a mock space capsule at the C-Space Project Mars simulation base in the Gobi Desert outside Jinchang



Northrop Grumman Antares rocket rolls out to Pad-0A at at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility



The world's largest airplane, built by the late Paul Allen's company Stratolaunch Systems, makes its first test flight in Mojave



The cannabis drug arrived at the Lindeen household in a UPS shipping box marked “critical.”

Piper and Brian Lindeen had been monitoring news of Epidiolex for months. The drug meant another chance at treating their 10-year-old son Zach’s ongoing seizures, and a possibility for broader medical cannabis access in Texas.

The cannabidiol, or CBD, made by the British company GW Pharmaceuticals, aims to treat epileptic seizures of patients with Dravet syndrome and Lennox-Gastaut syndrome.

Successful clinical trials, including some with Texas patients, helped Epidiolex become the first CBD medication to gain approval earlier this year from both the Food and Drug Administration as well as the Drug Enforcement Administration. Prescriptions for the drug became available in the United States last month.

Currently the only two legal options to get medical cannabis in Texas are through the limited state registry, known as the Compassionate Use Program, and from prescription Epidiolex.

Marijuana advocates, including the Lindeens in Sugar Land, hope Epidiolex’s federal approval could sway any state legislators wary of expanding legal access to medical cannabis. Several marijuana-related bills were filed for the next legislative session.



State Sen. Jose Menendez, D-San Antonio, authored Senate Bill 90 for expanding the state medical cannabis program, which formally kicked off this year.

He believes the research that went into the development of Epidiolex, and which helped the drug gain federal approval, could be key to pushing his bill and similar ones next year.

“I’m going to use any and every tool pos-

Federally Approved Cannabis Drug Offers Hope For Patients And Marijuana Advocates

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Brian and Piper Lindeen aid their son, Zach, as he experiences an epilepsy seizure Sunday, Dec. 2, 2018, in Sugar Land. The first FDA approved cannabis-based medication is available to U.S. patients through a prescription, but its high cost, \$32,500 a year, puts it out of reach of several patients.

sible,” Menendez said. Yet advocates are also concerned that so much pressure on Epidiolex may backfire if the drug ultimately fails to generate enough positive results. As the Lindeens have learned through years of treating Zach, what may work for one patient doesn’t work for all. “[Epidiolex] is something that’s standardized and reproducible and some people do well with that,” Piper Lindeen said, “but some people need variability.”

**A Sense Of Hope** Zach has been prescribed at least eight different pharmaceuticals for the seizures that began when he was about 3 and half years old. They’ve each worked in varying degrees, but have also left concerning side effects including the risk of losing speech and noticeable aggression. “He punched the end of his bed one time,”

Brian Lindeen said of his son. “I had never seen him so angry.”



It wasn’t until Zach began taking medical cannabis this year from a dispensary in Austin that the Lindeens began to feel a sense of hope. Zach managed to go seizure free for about six months —the longest stretch the Lindeens had ever recorded. Yet in the last few weeks, the seizures returned, about twice a day. By then their neurologist, Dr. Michael

Newmark at Kelsey-Seybold Clinic, who is registered to prescribe medical cannabis through the state registry, suggested the Lindeens consider Epidiolex as a treatment for Zach’s Lennox-Gastaut syndrome.

There was some initial research required, not just of the drug’s clinical test results, but also of its cost.

Earlier this year GW Pharmaceuticals listed the drug’s weighted average price at \$32,500 for the first year of use. For some patients Medicare and Medicaid may cover the cost, but Stephen Schultz, the company’s vice president of investor relations, noted that most patients will rely on a number of private insurance options to make the drug more affordable.

In the case of the Lindeens, a recent switch to a new insurance plan brought their first prescription co-pay to about \$160, which was ultimately covered by co-pay assistance. They’ve been paying about \$500 a month out-of-pocket for medical cannabis from the state-licensed dispensary, Compassionate Cultivation.



In the case of Cindy Welch in College Station, the out-of-pocket cost for Epidiolex for her 1-year-old granddaughter on Medicaid comes to about \$1,500 a month. They currently pay about \$380 a month to Compassionate Cultivation. If it hadn’t been for the dispensary, Welch said, her family would have had to move to Colorado to get medical access. Morris Denton, the dispensary CEO, said he’s already lost patients like the Lindeens whose insurance makes Epidiolex a more

affordable medical cannabis option than his product, which cannot be covered by any insurance. Yet there are several more who must still check to see if their insurers cover Epidiolex.

Time will tell whether the new federally approved drug negatively impacts business at the state’s three existing dispensaries, Denton added. Epidiolex doesn’t contain the THC chemical compound allowed at the state dispensaries which can better help some patients than CBD alone. “It’s ultimately a good thing to have choice,” Denton said.

More options needed

Choice has been a main driver behind Piper Lindeen’s advocacy for marijuana legalization. Treating epilepsy can at times feel like a guessing game, switching medications and doses in and out to find the best fit, she said.



Pharmaceutical options are known to carry harsh side effects and patients can experience physical withdrawals when transitioning between brands. Anecdotally, no such withdrawals have been reported among patients in legal states switching between cannabis options, Lindeen added. But she remains frustrated at only having two medical cannabis options in Texas. “We really need a wide variety of therapeutics,” Lindeen said. Newmark said in an email that he hopes Epidiolex will reduce the number of Zach’s seizures substantially. The neurologist’s only concern is a bit of sedation the boy may experience. “I firmly believe that as more knowledge is obtained about the use of these compounds that there will be much greater acceptance in the future,” Newmark added. “Texas will be unlikely to go against the trend.” (Courtesy the Houston Chronicle)

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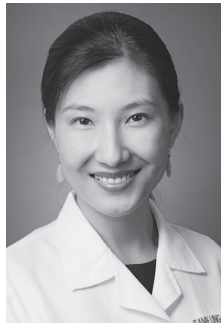
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Dr. Jeanie Ling completed her medical degree at Baylor College of Medicine and her residency in Ophthalmology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville. She also completed her Fellowship in glaucoma at The University of Texas Houston Health Science Center at Houston. Her special clinic interests include diagnosing glaucoma, glaucoma surgery, eyelid and laser surgery.

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President Trump recently indicated plans to change policies for visa holders, tweeting that a “path to citizenship” for H-1B holders was potentially possible under his administration.

In a tweet posted as the president returned from his trip the day before to the U.S.-Mexico border, Trump declared that the U.S. desires to see “talented and highly skilled people” immigrate to the U.S. and pursue careers.

“H-1B holders in the United States can rest assured that changes are soon coming which will bring both simplicity and certainty to your stay, including a potential path to citizenship,” Trump said.

“We want to encourage talented and highly skilled people to pursue career options in the U.S.,” he continued.



The H-1B system, which allows U.S. companies to hire temporary foreign workers to fill needs not met by the U.S. workforce, is not intended as a permanent path to citizenship for immigrants coming to the United States. Immigration reform has been a centerpiece of the Trump administration. (Courtesy <https://thehill.com/blogs>)

**Related**  
**What Changes Are Coming In 2019 To The H1B Visa Program?**

What is the status of the current U.S. H1B visa program and what can we look forward to in 2019?

Foreigners view the H1B visa as the golden gate to furthering their career, starting a family and building a new life in America. The visa is particularly popular because you can also transition from it to a green card. Many applicants are international students

**Trump’s Message To H-1B Visa Holders:  
‘Path To Citizenship’ Could Be Coming Soon**



**Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor**

trying to transition from F-1 student status to H-1B work visas on route to a green card. Each year, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) opens a total of 85,000 such visas — 65,000 for those applicants who have a bachelor’s degree or equivalent, and 20,000 for those with a master’s degree or higher. The USCIS begins accepting applications on the first business day of April each year. Within the first week, the visa allocation is exhausted. This year is the sixteenth year in a row that the H-1B program has experienced such an overload of applicants. In the first week of this fiscal year, nearly 200,000 petitions were received. To cope with this excessive demand for the work visas, the USCIS has employed a lottery to choose successful candidates.

**H1-B VISA STRESS**

The US is set to pass a bill on immigration that seeks to prohibit companies from hiring H-1B employees if they employ more than 50 people in the US and if more than 50% of those employees are H-1B and L-1 visa holders

US Senators Chuck Grassley and Dick Durbin, who introduced the bipartisan legislation, argue that H-1B visas were only meant to fill gaps in areas that couldn't be filled by Americans.

The bill, if passed, will have major implications for the \$246 billion Indian IT sector, which is the largest user of H-1B visas

Source: CNN

Nearly half of Fortune 500 companies were founded by first or second-generation immigrants and no doubt, many were former H-1B visa holders. According to a recent report, U.S. tech giants like Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Intel are among the top 10 employers of approved H-1B applicants. Amazon itself, was the second highest guarantor of H-1B visas in 2017 with 2,515 such visas, sharply up from the previous year. U.S. educators have established without doubt that the entry of foreign-born scientists and engineers remains an unmatched source of “strength and vitality” for the country’s tech industry.



According to an NFAP source, “Employers report the time lost due to the increase in denials and Requests for Evidence has cost millions of dollars in project delays and

contract penalties, while aiding competitors that operate exclusively outside the United States.”



On November 19th, 2018 the U.S. Department of Labor began requiring that employers of H-1B applicants use a new Labor Condition Application form (LCA), ETA 9035. Critics claim the new form is designed to elicit internal information from employers and increase government pressure upon H-1B employed companies, with the intended possibility of negative attention from the press.

The new labor conditions could deter tech companies from hiring skilled graduates abroad lest they fork out too much in annual wages, and could compel them to “hire American” in line with Trump’s new order. Alternatively, if companies cannot source adequate American-born employees, the new conditions may result in selected foreign employees being appointed at much higher salaries. The true effects of this new LCA form have yet to be seen.

From the perspective of both foreigners and international students, the uncertainty of such U.S. policies and denials, can be overwhelming. These U.S. restrictions impact Indian and Chinese nationals most because they account for the vast majority of these visas. For example, they accounted for 82 per cent of H-1B visas in 2016. Indian workers specifically are known to specialize in IT-related jobs, helping fill the gaps in the tech industry.

However, not all U.S. initiatives regarding H-1B visas have necessarily been bad. A change in the way the USCIS conducts its lottery may benefit some H-1B applicants. In particular, international students graduat-

ing from US colleges with master’s degrees (and other advanced degrees) may soon have a much better chance of receiving an H-1B visa in the United States. The proposed new policy changes the rules of the lottery system used to determine who will receive the H-1B visa as follows:

1. USCIS will reverse the order by which USCIS selects H-1B petitions under the H-1B cap and the advanced degree exemption. This will increase the number of selected H-1B beneficiaries with a master’s degree or higher from a U.S. institution of higher education up to 16% (or 5,340 workers).
2. USCIS will require petitioners seeking to file H-1B cap-subject petitions to first electronically register with USCIS. The employers will not need to send in the H-1B petitions and supporting documentation before the cap selection process. This will ease the amount of work required to apply for the H-1B visas.



USCIS expects that shifting to electronic registration would reduce overall costs for petitioners and create a more efficient and cost-effective H-1B cap petition process for USCIS.



As the political landscape in Washington changes following the results of the recent 2018 election, hopefully more positive changes will be introduced to increase the effectiveness of the H-1B visa program. (Courtesy [forbes.com](https://forbes.com))

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