



Lester Holt: Tonight, Trump's Tax Plan. Our first look at what's in it, what it could mean for millions of families, saving them money including the Trumps, and how does the President plan to pay for it all? North Korea Secrets. Heavy security for an unusual briefing. All U.S. Senators at the White House. What were they told? Hot Housing Market. Surging prices, and some places higher than before the Recession. What buyers and sellers should know. Drugged Driving. For the first time, it's not blamed for more traffic fatalities than alcohol. Dancing Dream. Amazing kids getting their chance to shine. Nightly News begins right now.

Speaker 2: From NBC News World Headquarters in New York, this is NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt.

Lester Holt: Good evening to our viewers in the West. With great buildup, the White House announced a massive Tax Cut Plan today, what it's calling the largest tax cut in history. One that could offer significant relief for a lot of Americans not only families and individuals, but businesses too. The proposed cut on the corporate tax rate, the focus of a lot of the attention tonight because among the prime beneficiaries, businesses like President Trump's. As they say, the devil is in the details, which appear to be fairly sparse at this point. NBC News National Correspondent, Peter Alexander, tells us more.

Peter Alexander: Tonight from the President and his team on taxes, an ambitious opening bid.

Gary Cohn: We have a once in a generation opportunity to do something really big.

Peter Alexander: The White House outlining a sweeping across the board tax overhaul.

Steve Mnuchin: Under the Trump Plan, we will have a massive tax cut for businesses and massive tax reform.

Peter Alexander: The headliner, reducing the number of individual income tax brackets from seven to three, 10%, 25%, and 35%. The Administration doubling the standard deduction for individuals and married couples that would leave more money in people's pockets and make filing taxes easier.

Steve Mnuchin: We are going to eliminate, on the personal side, all tax deductions other than mortgage interest and charitable deductions.

Peter Alexander: A boon for businesses too, both large and small, slashing the corporate tax rate to 15%, a cut that would also extend to personal real estate empires like Mister

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Trumps, a special one-time tax to lure companies to reinvest money kept overseas back here at home, and the elimination of tax breaks for special interests. The goal, stimulating the economy. The specifics, still a mystery.

Gary Cohn: We will be back to you with very firm details.

Steve Mnuchin: We're working on lots of details.

Gary Cohn: We will let you know the specific details.

Peter Alexander: A year ago, candidate Trump told NBC News he believes in raising taxes on the wealthy.

Donald Trump: I do, including myself, I do.

Peter Alexander: Will the President end up paying more or less taxes as a result of this plan?

Steve Mnuchin: Well, let me just comment. I can't comment on the President's tax situation since I don't have access to that.

Peter Alexander: In 2005, the alternative minimum tax, that the President now wants to kill, cost him 31 million dollars, just one example how he could benefit.

Donald Trump: It's a great plan.

Peter Alexander: President Trump tonight deflecting questions about warnings his plan would blow a hole in the deficit.

Douglas Holtz: If you just say, "I can cut taxes without consequence," that's voodoo economics. This is a proposal that's incomplete at best.

Peter Alexander: How much would the President's Tax Plan cost? One leading non-partisan fiscal watchdog group estimates the price tag could approach nearly 6 trillion dollars over the next decade. Experts say there is no way this tax reform would be able to pay for itself or even come closer. Lester.

Lester Holt: Peter Alexander at the White House, thank you. Our Business Correspondent, Ali Velshi, joins us now. Ali, break this down. If these tax proposals become reality, what does it mean for the average taxpayer?

Ali Velshi: Hi, Lester. It means you'll have more money in your bank account. The President wants Americans to spend their tax savings by going shopping. That increases demand, it creates jobs, and it stimulates economic growth. Since the Recession, Lester, Americans have used any tax savings to pay down debt instead of spending it on goods and services. Under this plan, working families will save on taxes. The question is, will they spend the extra cash in a way that

boosts the economy, or will they choose to pay down debt? One of those things helps the economy, the other one just helps the family, Lester.

Lester Holt: Ali Velshi tonight, thank you. Tonight there are signs of life for the Republican plan to repeal and replace ObamaCare. Thought dead just weeks ago, Conservative holdouts now saying they're on board after a controversial addition that could affect people with preexisting conditions. NBC's Kasie Hunt has details.

Paul Ryan: The House will be in order.

Kasie Hunt: The Republican Healthcare Bill making a sudden recovery today. Members of the Conservative House Freedom Caucus, who blocked President Trump's first attempt, announcing they've come to an agreement to support the American Healthcare Act. The move potentially giving House Speaker, Paul Ryan, a lifeline, enough votes to repeal and replace ObamaCare.

Joe Barton: I don't know where the final, final vote tally is, but we should be down, hopefully, in single digits of getting the votes to pass it.

Kasie Hunt: Is this Republican's best chance to repeal ObamaCare?

Tom MacArthur: I think it may be our only chance.

Kasie Hunt: Conservatives are rallying around an amendment that would allow states to opt out of a key tenet of ObamaCare, covering essential health benefits like emergency room visits and maternity care, and also letting insurers charge people with preexisting conditions much more for their insurance. The goal is lowering premiums.

Paul Ryan: Whatever we can do to get those premiums down but also make sure that the guarantee for people with preexisting conditions is met.

Kasie Hunt: That's the risk. Winning over Conservatives could cost Moderate Republican votes. They're concerned about spiking costs for people with preexisting conditions.

You've gone from yes to maybe?

Mike Coffman: Yes to undecided.

Kasie Hunt: The question, when will the House vote to repeal ObamaCare?

Paul Ryan: We'll vote on it when we got the votes.

Kasie Hunt: Before President Trump can claim victory, there's a tough road ahead in the Senate.

Mark Halperin: Getting a Healthcare Bill through the House is a big political win for the President and at the end of his first 100 days, but he's got a lot of work to do to get something through the Senate then get a bill to his desk. That would be a real political victory.

Kasie Hunt: House leaders are now trying to figure out just how many Moderates can't accept this compromise. They want to seize the momentum, but there's that must pass spending bill they have to deal with this week to keep the government open past Friday. Lester.

Lester Holt: Kasie Hunt on Capitol Hill, thanks. Now to the threat from North Korea and something unusual that happened today at the White House, a special briefing for all United States Senators behind closed doors under heavy security. We got details from NBC News White House Correspondent, Kristen Welker.

Kristen Welker: The entire U.S. Senate heading to the White House in buses for an urgent and unprecedented briefing on the North Korea threat.

Speaker 16: It was a sobering briefing.

Kristen Welker: Inside the room, the Defense Secretary, Secretary of State, Director of National Intelligence, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, saying they told Senators North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons is an urgent national security threat, that they are pursuing diplomatic measures but are prepared to defend ourselves and our allies. One Senior Administration official saying, "That includes military preparations."

Ted Cruz: North Korea is the most dangerous spot on the planet right now.

Kristen Welker: It comes as the top commander in the Pacific unveils a new warning tonight, that part of the U.S. is already within striking distance of North Korea's arsenal.

Harry Harris: Kim Jong Un is clearly in a position to threaten Hawaii today, in my opinion.

Kristen Welker: The fear, that North Korea may develop nuclear missiles that can reach the West Coast. Tonight, dueling shows of force, new photos capture Kim Jong Un smiling and watching live fire exercises. While on the other side of the DMZ, U.S. fighter jets and tanks held joint drills with South Korea where key parts of a U.S. missile defense system will be operational within days.

Harry Harris: All options are on the table. We want to bring Kim Jong Un to his senses, not to his knees.

Kristen Welker: Since President Trump's Mar-a-Lago visit with the Chinese President, the U.S. has steadily ramped up its pressure on China to help resolve the crises. North Korea is showing no signs of backing down.

James Stavridis: The rhetoric we're hearing today is roughly what we've heard in the past. What's different is that it is matched by an increasing capability. That is deeply disturbing.

Kristen Welker: Tonight, the Trump Administration is still focusing on diplomacy over military action. One option under consideration, new sanctions against banks that do business with North Korea. Lester.

Lester Holt: Kristen Welker, also at the White House tonight, thank you. A free-speech firestorm has erupted at one of the country's most historically progressive universities. At the center of it, Conservative pundit Ann Coulter, who was scheduled to speak tomorrow at UC Berkeley. With her appearance canceled amid fears of violent protests, some unlikely people are voicing their support for Coulter tonight. NBC's Catie Beck explains.

Catie Beck: It's scenes like this, violence, chaos, and bloodshed at a pro-Trump rally just ten days ago that UC Berkeley says made them cancel a speech this week by Conservative firebrand, Ann Coulter. The University forced to sacrifice its reputation as the cradle of the free-speech movement for safety, according to officials. Coulter insisted she would go regardless, until she lost the support of the Conservative groups who invited her today. "It's sickening," she said on Twitter, "when a radical thuggish institution like Berkeley can so easily snuff out the cherished American right to free speech." Groups from the far left and right have clashed in the city several times in recent months.

In February, Berkeley canceled a speech of alt-right provocateur, Milo Yiannopoulos, when violent protests broke out. In a statement defending the cancellations, Berkeley's Chancellor said, "This is a university not a battlefield." For civil rights advocates, the scenario raises real concern.

Peter Eliasberg: It's very important that the government not buckle down and not allow people to silence speakers of any point-of-view.

Catie Beck: The cancellation has also made some, who normally criticize Coulter, come to her defense, including Senator Bernie Sanders who called the move, "intellectual weakness." Growing questions tonight for Berkeley about betraying its First Amendment roots. Catie Beck, NBC News Los Angeles.

Lester Holt: There is news tonight of the economy. The U.S. Housing Market heating up more than it has in a decade before the Great Recession devastated so many families. Realtors say there hasn't been a better time to be a seller in recent memory. Where does that leave buyers? Here's NBC's Gabe Gutierrez.

Christopher H.: When do you want to get going?

Gabe Gutierrez: For Christopher Hendricks and his wife Melima, this is getting ridiculous.

Melima: It's quite overwhelming.

Gabe Gutierrez: They're hoping to buy their first home in Southern California but are facing fierce competition. This open house drew more than a hundred potential buyers. Three years ago, it sold for \$600,000. Now it could go for more than 800,000.

Christopher H.: I think it's just what we're used to growing up, and the reality of what things cost here is completely different.

Gabe Gutierrez: In Dallas, home prices have skyrocketed 35% above their high before the Recession. Denver, 36%. Seattle and Portland also seeing huge spikes since last year.

Tell me about this house.

Realtors say entry-level homes are in highest demand.

Courtney Hall: It's been crazy. Every house goes for over list price. There's usually ten offers. I tell my buyers, "We have to go in at least at list price, if not more aggressive."

Gabe Gutierrez: Nation wide, sales of new single-family houses have jumped 15% over the past year. About half of homes sold in March were on the market for less than a month. Why? Not enough homes for sale and not enough new construction. The advice for buyers? Be ready with a sizeable down-payment, 10% will no longer cut it. Don't wait even 24 hours to put in that first offer.

Ralph M.: This spring buying season is a seller's market. In fact, for home buyers, it's shaping up to be the worst spring buying season in decades.

Gabe Gutierrez: Tonight, the Hendricks family is rethinking their dream home.

Christopher H.: It seems like there's always going to be at least one large compromise on any house that we choose.

Gabe Gutierrez: It's tough to put a price on that. Gabe Gutierrez, NBC News Los Angeles.

Lester Holt: Now to the important new that impacts everyone who uses the internet. The Trump Administration today announcing plans to role back Obama Era net neutrality rules on equal access. The move would allow internet service providers to pick and choose who gets fast service and who doesn't. NBC's Tom Costello explains how it affects you.

Tom Costello: The best way to understand net neutrality is to think of the internet as a sort of congested super highway with most of the fast lanes taken up by big, fat trucks carrying content like Amazon, Netflix, and Hulu. In 2015, the Obama Administration ruled those big companies cannot pay to dominate the fast

lanes. Everyone from e-commerce giants to mom-and-pop websites must be treated equally.

Richard Dorment: Without these regulations, one website could make sure that their content is reaching consumers faster than others, which, again, ultimately would result in less choice for the consumer.

Tom Costello: The White House and the Nation's internet service providers, or ISPs, like NBC parent company Comcast, AT&T, Verizon, Cox, and others argue the rule stifles competition and creativity. Now the FCC is planning to roll back the rule.

Ajit Pai: One of the things we don't want to put on the table is the FCC micromanaging the business practices of private companies.

Tom Costello: Democrats objects. The Internet Association, which represents many of the giants, says, "Scrapping net neutrality will only hurt consumers by allowing ISPs to throttle speed." Saying in a statement, "Robust net neutrality rules benefit all players in the ecosystem by attracting more people to the web and increasing demand for internet connections." Tonight, the Nation's internet service providers say they will not interfere with block or throttle internet traffic, but many consumer advocates worry the biggest players could soon pay to speed through the fast lane while many smaller players are stuck in the slow lane. Tom Costello, NBC News Washington.

Lester Holt: Still ahead tonight, an eye opening alert about a growing danger on the road that's now deadlier than drunk driving. Why police are struggling to keep up with the crisis.

A new report out today is revealing a growing and deadly problem on our Nation's roads. For the first time ever, drugs are now to blame for more traffic fatalities involving drivers than alcohol. The research comes as a wave of states across the country legalize marijuana in some form, what experts warn could be a contributing factor to a problem on the rise. NBC National Correspondent, Miguel Almaguer, has details.

Miguel Almaguer: It's called drugged driving, and now more Americans killed behind the wheel are testing positive for drugs than alcohol. According to a report released today, drugs were present in 43% of drivers killed in 2015. For the first time, outpacing alcohol related deaths at 37%. Carol Akers says her son Jacob was killed by a driver high on opioids.

Carol Akers: The physical pain you eventually heal from, but the emotional pain just never ...

Miguel Almaguer: The study by the Governor's Highway Safety Association includes all categories of drugs, illegal and prescription. The numbers are a dramatic rise as 29 states and Washington D.C. legalize some form of marijuana.

Police Officer: Were you smoking in the car?

Miguel Almaguer: Unlike a breathalyzer test for drunk drivers, police have no standard roadside test to detect most drugs.

How difficult is it to know if somebody's on a drug?

Tony Garrett: It could be extremely difficult if you don't know what you're looking for.

Miguel Almaguer: With police across the country in need of training, the study says many drugged drivers are combining multiple substances.

Mary Gaston: I can still hear the impact-

Miguel Almaguer: Mary Gaston says her son Blake was killed by a driver high on medical marijuana.

Mary Gaston: There's a perception that marijuana does not impair you like alcohol does, that you can smoke a couple joints, eat a couple brownies, and go out and drive. That's not true. You are impaired.

Miguel Almaguer: Tonight, the lives behind the numbers, the sobering truth about drugged driving. Miguel Almaguer, NBC New Los Angeles.

Lester Holt: We're back in a moment with why this was such a sad day for Hollywood and movie lovers.

Tonight, Hollywood is mourning the loss of acclaimed director, Jonathan Demme. He won an Oscar for the 1991 Classic, *Silence of the Lambs*, starring Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins. Then went on to direct Tom Hanks in *Philadelphia*. His career spanned over 40 years and included the documentary, *Stop Making Sense*, about the Talking Heads considered one of the best concert films ever. Jonathan Demme passed away from complications of Esophageal Cancer. He was 73 years old.

Sports fans, you might notice your favorite TV or radio personalities missing next time you tune into ESPN. The Sports Network began laying off, roughly, 100 employees today including some familiar faces like longtime NFL reporter, Ed Werder, NFL analyst and former quarterback, Trent Dilfer, and Sports Center anchor, Jay Crawford. ESPN has struggled in recent years as viewing habits continue to shift.

When we come back, in the spotlight, the joy and the hearts of these kids realizing their dancing dreams.

Finally tonight, an update to a story that's touched so many of our viewers about kids breaking down barriers to realize their dreams of dancing on stage.

My, how the program has grown since we first visited more than a decade ago. NBC's Kristen Dahlgren with the story.

Kristen D.: So many little girls dream of being a ballerina, but for some that can seem out of reach ... until now.

Speaker 36: Are you ready to dance?

Joann Ferrara: I'm ready to dance. Are you ready to dance?

Kristen D.: Joann Ferrara founded Dancing Dreams on a whim to help one of her physical therapy patients.

Joann Ferrara: She looked at me and just matter of factly said, "I wish I could be a dance, but nobody wants me." At that moment, it just struck me.

Kristen D.: What started as just five girls is now a hundred girls and boys. After months of rehearsals ... a full costume, full house show.

Speaker 38: Dancing is not just for girls, it's only for boys too.

Kristen D.: The kids have different physical challenges.

Joann Ferrara: We say, "Everyone plies, they just do it in their own way."

Kristen D.: Learning moves and so much more.

Speaker 39: It shows me if you get it wrong the first time, not to give up.

Kristen D.: The physical benefits can be tremendous, but it's the smiles that keep them coming back.

Speaker 40: Sometimes I don't even have words for how excited I am.

Joann Ferrara: This is their chance to shine, be on stage, be a star, do what their friends, their relatives, their sisters do.

Kristen D.: Each has at least one volunteer always with them to help with the dances. For the parents, it's a moment they've dreamed of too.

Speaker 41: You get to see your child on stage, and perform, and be a ballerina. It's amazing.

Kristen D.: A program making dreams come true ... and making sure every last child takes a bow. Kristen Dahlgren, NBC News New York.

Lester Holt: That's going to do it for us on a Wednesday night. I'm Lester Holt. For all of us at NBC News, thank you for watching and goodnight.