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## NOTIFICATIONS

## BREAKING

Aug 1

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Alec Baldwin to Melania Trump: 'Come over to the light. We will welcome you as a hero'

By DEENA ZARU Jun 24, 2018, 8:48 PM ET

PHOTO: First Lady Melania Trump announces her "Be Best" childrens initiative in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, May 7, 2018.Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images, FILE

WATCH First lady wears controversial jacket to border

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Alec Baldwin invited first lady Melania Trump to "come over to the light" -- and then asked the first lady to join him on NBC's "Saturday Night Live."

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—Dear Melania- We know what you're thinking. What you're feeling. You are quaking w anticipation. Shuddering w a strange, newfound courage," Baldwin tweeted on Saturday. "Come. Come over to the light. We will welcome you as a hero in ways you never imagined possible. And then do SNL w me. Sincerely, Alec."

Dear Melania-

We know what you're thinking.

What you're feeling.

You are quaking w anticipation.

Shuddering w a strange, newfound courage.

Come. Come over to the light.

We will welcome you as a hero in ways you never imagined possible.

And then do SNL w me.

Sincerely,

Alec

- ABFoundation (@ABFalecbaldwin) June 23, 2018

Baldwin's invite came amid a firestorm over a jacket that the first lady wore while traveling to McAllen, Texas, to visit a center that houses migrant children.

The words "I really don't care, do u?" were printed on the back of the green hooded jacket, but when asked whether the first lady intended to send a message by wearing this jacket, her spokeswoman, Stephanie Grisham, said: "It's a jacket. There was no hidden message. After today's important visit to Texas, I hope the media isn't going to choose to focus on her wardrobe."

PHOTO: First Lady Melania Trump departs Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, June 21, 2018, wearing a jacket emblazoned with the words I really dont care, do u?Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

First Lady Melania Trump departs Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland, June 21, 2018, wearing a jacket emblazoned with the words "I really don't care, do u?"more +

The actor also tweeted an old picture of himself and Melania Trump from the Hilaria and Alec Baldwin Foundation Twitter account with the caption, "We have a chair waiting for you in the @nbcsnl make-up room."

We have a chair waiting for you in the @nbcsnl make-up room: pic.twitter.com/Q4seoAgUer

- ABFoundation (@ABFalecbaldwin) June 23, 2018

A spokeswoman for Melania Trump, Stephanie Grisham, said Baldwin may have a "crush" on the first lady.

"He mentioned her again?" she said. "I used to say he was using her name for publicity, but now I'm starting to think Mr. Baldwin may have a crush on Mrs. Trump that is becoming borderline obsessive."

PHOTO: Pictured: (l-r) Kate McKinnon as Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway, Alec Baldwin as President Donald J. Trump during White House Cold Open in Studio 8H on Saturday, December 2, 2017.Will Heath/NBC/NBCU Photo Bank via Getty Images

Pictured: (l-r) Kate McKinnon as Counselor to the President Kellyanne Conway, Alec Baldwin as President Donald J. Trump during "White House Cold Open" in Studio 8H on Saturday, December 2, 2017.more +

Baldwin, who has been playing President Trump on "SNL" since 2016, said in March that every time he does his presidential portrayal it's "agony."

This prompted a rapid response from the president, who slammed "SNL" and Baldwin several times and previously described the show's portrayal of him as "a hit job."

"Alec Baldwin, whose dying mediocre career was saved by his terrible impersonation of me on SNL, now says playing me was agony," Trump tweeted in response to the actor's March comments. "Alec, it was agony for those who were forced to watch. Bring back Darrell Hammond, funnier and a far greater talent!"

Alec Baldwin, whose dying mediocre career was saved by his terrible impersonation of me on SNL, now says playing me was agony. Alec, it was agony for those who were forced to watch. Bring back Darrell Hammond, funnier and a far greater talent!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) March 2, 2018

Although the President has consistently slammed "SNL," Trump famously hosted the show as a candidate in 2015 amid several protests and then boasted about his episode's ratings.

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In Trump's shadow, Scott Walker seeks 3rd term as Wisconsin governor

By MEENA VENKATARAMANAN Aug 2, 2018, 11:51 AM ET

PHOTO: Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump is welcomed to the stage by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker during a campaign rally at the W.L. Zorn Arena, Nov. 1, 2016 in Altoona, Wisc. Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump is welcomed to the stage by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker during a campaign rally at the W.L. Zorn Arena, Nov. 1, 2016 in Altoona, Wis. more +

### Email

As incumbent Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker seeks reelection to a third term, he may be in for a rough road ahead that reflects the GOP's struggle to hold onto its identity in the age of President Donald Trump.

In fact, a new NBC News/Marist poll shows Tony Evers, the state superintendent of schools who's poised to win the August 14 Democratic primary, leading Walker, a Republican, by 13 points in what's bound to be a competitive race.

After surviving a 2012 recall election and a failed 2016 presidential run, Walker has attempted to appeal to both Trump supporters and moderate voters -- an approach that may cost him reelection this fall.

PHOTO: Flags fly in front of the headquarters of iconic American motorcycle builder Harley-Davidson on June 1, 2018 in Milwaukee, Wis.Scott Olson/Getty Images

Flags fly in front of the headquarters of iconic American motorcycle builder Harley-Davidson on June 1, 2018 in Milwaukee, Wis.more +

The Badger State has been hit hard by Trump's tariffs on aluminum and steel imports, which led Milwaukee-based motorcycle manufacturer Harley-Davidson to outsource production overseas in June -- a move the president heavily criticized -- while the state's dairy farmers struggle to combat retaliatory tariffs in what appears to be an intensifying trade war.

A Harley-Davidson should never be built in another country-never! Their employees and customers are already very angry at them. If they move, watch, it will be the beginning of the end - they surrendered, they quit! The Aura will be gone and they will be taxed like never before!

— Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) June 26, 2018

—The Chinese and the European Union are making it more difficult for Wisconsin firms to sell new products. 90% of products from our state's dairy industry go overseas, I Evers told ABC News.

After endorsing Trump in the 2016 election, Walker —respectfully asked the president to —reconsider his position on the tariffs.

PHOTO: Cows stand in the milking parlour at the Lake Breeze Dairy farm in Malone, Wisc. on May 31, 2016. Daniel Acker/Bloomberg via Getty Images

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"If the President wants to protect good-paying, family-supporting jobs in America, especially here in Wisconsin, then he should reconsider the administration's position on these tariffs, particularly on ultra-thin aluminum, Walker said in a March press release.

Since then, he's praised Trump's efforts to bring manufacturing jobs to the U.S., and appeared alongside the president at the June groundbreaking of a new Foxconn plant in Wisconsin.

"Foxconn will earn tax credits based on actual investment in job creation. No jobs and investment? No credits," Walker says in a new series of ads released Tuesday touting the Foxconn deal.

Despite Walker's support for the Foxconn deal popularized by Trump, Evers believes the president's rhetoric on trade is —already negatively impacting manufacturers and that Walker is doing little to stop it.

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Let's be clear: Obamacare is collapsing. Washington failed to act, so Wisconsin is leading yet again. Our bipartisan plan got approval from the Trump Administration and now we're going to help drive down premiums, increase choices & improve health care!

- Scott Walker (@ScottWalker) July 29, 2018

But critics have called Walker's plan an election-year move to help him score points on health care after repeatedly trying to dismantle Obamacare during his past two terms.

—Walker has refused to expand Medicaid and authorized a lawsuit to overturn the Affordable Care Act, T.J. Helmstetter, a Wisconsin Democratic Party senior adviser, told ABC News. —He's trying to rewrite history, but it's not working. His numbers are still in the toilet.

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But he now labels himself the —pro-education governor, stating on his campaign website that his \_Act 10' reforms made funds —more likely to be spent in the classroom.

—Gov. Walker remains focused on achieving real results for Wisconsin's families by investing record actual dollars into our classrooms, Altenburg told ABC News in a statement.

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—The most ironic, egregious, and hypocritical thing about this ad is that this school district had to ask for \$15 million in a referendum to voters just to keep its doors open last fall, Helmstetter said.

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While Trump hasn't officially endorsed Walker just yet, Evers hopes voters will see through what appears to be a growing Trump-Walker alliance.

—People make decisions based on what Donald Trump says. But I don't think Trump's [potential] endorsement will help Walker at all, he said.

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WH not combating Russian election interference: Durbin on Powerhouse Politics

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White House: Trump receives new letter from Kim Jong Un

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Ivanka Trump says news media not 'enemy of the people'

Conservative artist's painting puts a Trump twist on iconic image and ignites Twitter

Pastor praises Trump as 'pro-black' at prison reform event

Obama announces first wave of midterm election endorsements

Al Franken might run for office again

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## ADD INTERESTS

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Trump administration seeks to freeze gas mileage standards for new cars

By STEPHANIE EBBS Aug 2, 2018, 12:20 PM ET

PHOTO: Cars on the Grand Central Parkway pass LaGuardia Airport in New York, Aug. 1, 2018. The Trump administration has proposed rolling back tougher Obama-era gas mileage requirements that are set to take effect after 2020.PlayFrank Franklin II/AP

WATCH EPA chief announces rollback of Obama-era mileage

standards Email

The Trump administration wants to stop requiring automakers to make cars more fuel efficient beginning in 2020, setting up a potential fight with states that have voluntarily set higher gas mileage standards.

Under the Obama administration, the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Transportation set requirements for how much gas per mile new cars should use, saying that the standards would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

The policy would require automakers to manufacture cars that averaged at least 35 miles to a gallon in 2020 and continue to improve efficiency every year up to 50 miles per gallon by 2025.

The new proposal would freeze the 2020 requirement for at least five years.

The EPA announced earlier this year that it would re-evaluate that policy to look at whether factors like gasoline prices have changed enough to change the rule.

(MORE: Trump EPA moving to relax Obama-era auto fuel efficiency, emissions standards)

The proposal released by the EPA and DOT says that the fuel efficiency standards raise prices on new cars, leading more Americans to drive older cars longer and making the roads less safe.

"There's some tension between calling for ever-increasing fuel efficiency standards on the one hand and the effect it has on highway safety on the other hand," assistant administrator in the EPA's air office Bill Wehrum told reporters.

PHOTO: Cars on the Grand Central Parkway pass LaGuardia Airport in New York, Aug. 1, 2018. The Trump administration has proposed rolling back tougher Obama-era gas mileage requirements that are set to take effect after 2020.Frank Franklin II/AP

Cars on the Grand Central Parkway pass LaGuardia Airport in New York, Aug. 1, 2018. The Trump administration has proposed rolling back tougher Obama-era gas mileage requirements that are set to take effect after 2020.more +

Heidi King, the deputy administrator of the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, said the administration is excited about the idea of getting more modern cars on the road to replace older, less efficient ones.

"The source of the safety benefits is from getting folks into affordable, more fuel efficient, cleaner safer cars," she told reporters.

(MORE: EPA chief announces rollback of Obama-era mileage standards)

Environmental groups who support the gas mileage standards, consumer advocacy groups, and medical associations that aimed to reduce air pollution slammed the proposal.

"The Trump administration's proposal to slam the brakes on America's successful Clean Car Standards is a massive pileup of bad ideas," Environmental Defense Fund President Fred Krupp said in a statement. "This proposal will substantially increase pollution and will cost the average American family hundreds of dollars a year extra for gas.

"It's a proposal that attacks the states' right to protect people from dangerous pollution, one that no one -- not the American public, not the states, not even most automakers —really wants, and one that's being presented to the public under the false and easily discredited guise of improving public safety," the statement continued.

PHOTO: President Donald Trump arrives for a campaign rally at Florida State Fairgrounds Expo Hall, on July 31, 2018, in Tampa, Fla. Evan Vucci/AP

President Donald Trump arrives for a campaign rally at Florida State Fairgrounds Expo Hall, on July 31, 2018, in Tampa, Fla.

Another potential wrench in the proposal is that California and several other states have voluntarily adopted higher gas mileage standards, setting up a conflict between automakers that want a uniform standard for all states. The proposal announced Thursday would withdraw California's waiver to set its own fuel efficiency standard, saying that the state has not proven that it needs its own standards to meet "compelling and extraordinary conditions" to address environmental problems.

The California attorney general and 19 other states have said that they will sue if the federal government tries to force the state to lower its standard.

"The Trump Administration has launched a brazen attack, no matter how it is cloaked, on our nation's Clean Car Standards," California Attorney General Xavier Becerra said in a statement. "The California Department of Justice will use every legal tool at its disposal to defend today's national standards and reaffirm the facts and science behind them. Our nation's Clean Car Standards save consumers thousands of dollars, protect our families' health, and ensure that we continue tackling climate change, the most important global environmental issues of our time. We are ready to do what is necessary to hold this Administration accountable." But Andrew Wheeler, the acting chief of the EPA, told lawmakers on Wednesday that he doesn't want the federal standard to contradict states that want to require higher gas mileage.

PHOTO: Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler speaks to staff at the Environmental Protection Agency headquarters on July 11, 2018 in Washington, D.C.Mark Wilson/Getty Images, FILE

Acting EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler speaks to staff at the Environmental Protection Agency headquarters on July 11, 2018 in Washington, D.C.more +

"It's my goal and this administration's goal to come up with a 50-state solution, and we want to have a 50-state solution that does not necessitate preempting California. However it's important there's a number of goals amid the proposal and there's important goals on highway safety, so we'd have to make sure that those are met," Wheeler told a Senate committee on Wednesday.

The proposal, which was released Thursday, will be available for public comment for 60 days and the EPA and DOT plan to hold three public hearings to hear testimony on the issue.

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Trump's Sessions eruption hints at concern over direction of Mueller probe

Stephen Collinson Profile

Analysis by Stephen Collinson, CNN

Updated 1303 GMT (2103 HKT) August 2, 2018

Trump: Sessions should end Russia probe now

LAS VEGAS, NV - FEBRUARY 23: Donald Trump Jr. (L) looks on as his father, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, speaks at a caucus night watch party at the Treasure Island Hotel & amp; Casino on February 23, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The New York businessman won his third state victory in a row in the "first in the West" caucuses. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

Trump lawyers challenge Mueller probe in letter

Cillizza fact-checks Trump's Mueller claims

Mueller: Manafort attempted witness tampering

Cuomo: Why should Trump be above the law?

WASHINGTON, DC - MAY 05: Latest appointee to President Donald Trump's legal team and former Mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani speaks at the Conference on Iran on May 5, 2018 in Washington, DC. Over one thousand delegates from representing Iranian communities from forty states attends the Iran Freedom Convention for Human Rights and Democracy. (Photo by Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images)

Giuliani: Trump probably has power to pardon himself

Giuliani: Our recollections keep changing

President Donald Trump listens during a meeting with Joshua Holt, who was recently released from a prison in Venezuela, in the Oval Office of the White House, Saturday, May 26, 2018, in Washington. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

NYT: Trump lawyers make case in memo to Mueller

President Donald Trump speaks during a graduation and commissioning ceremony at the U.S. Naval Academy, Friday, May 25, 2018, in Annapolis, Md. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

Trump claims Mueller team will meddle in midterms

US President Donald Trump departs the White House July 31, 2018 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)

Trump: Sessions should end Russia probe now

NEW YORK, NY - AUGUST 08: Robert S. Mueller III, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), speaks at the International Conference on Cyber Security (ICCS) on August 8, 2013 in New York City. The ICCS, which is co-hosted by Fordham

University and the FBI, is held every 18 months; more than 25 countries are represented at this year's conference. (Photo by Andrew Burton/Getty Images)

CLEVELAND, OH - JULY 21: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump gives two thumbs up to the crowd during the evening session on the fourth day of the Republican National Convention on July 21, 2016 at the Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, Ohio. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump received the number of votes needed to secure the party's nomination. An estimated 50,000 people are expected in Cleveland, including hundreds of protesters and members of the media. The four-day Republican National Convention kicked off on July 18. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Trump rails against Mueller in tweetstorm

Cohen: Mueller will probably indict Trump Jr., Kushner

Giuliani says Trump wants Mueller sit-down

Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort leaves Federal Court on December 11, 2017 in Washington, DC.

In October, Trump's one-time campaign chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates were arrested on money laundering and tax-related charges. Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images

Mueller: Manafort made \$60M from Ukraine work

Mueller seeking immunity for five witnesses

Giuliani: Can't find basis for Mueller probe

Giuliani won't detail Mueller's alleged 'conflict'

LAS VEGAS, NV - FEBRUARY 23: Donald Trump Jr. (L) looks on as his father, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, speaks at a caucus night watch party at the Treasure Island Hotel & amp; Casino on February 23, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The New York businessman won his third state victory in a row in the "first in the West" caucuses. (Photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images)

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Mueller: Manafort attempted witness tampering

Cuomo: Why should Trump be above the law?

WASHINGTON, DC - MAY 05: Latest appointee to President Donald Trump's legal team and former Mayor of New York City Rudy Giuliani speaks at the Conference on Iran on May 5, 2018 in Washington, DC. Over one thousand delegates from representing Iranian communities from forty states attends the Iran Freedom Convention for Human Rights and Democracy. (Photo by Tasos Katopodis/Getty Images)

Giuliani: Trump probably has power to pardon himself

Giuliani: Our recollections keep changing

President Donald Trump listens during a meeting with Joshua Holt, who was recently released from a prison in Venezuela, in the Oval Office of the White House, Saturday, May 26, 2018, in Washington. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

NYT: Trump lawyers make case in memo to Mueller

President Donald Trump speaks during a graduation and commissioning ceremony at the U.S. Naval Academy, Friday, May 25, 2018, in Annapolis, Md. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

Trump claims Mueller team will meddle in midterms

US President Donald Trump departs the White House July 31, 2018 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Win McNamee/Getty Images)

Trump: Sessions should end Russia probe now

NEW YORK, NY - AUGUST 08: Robert S. Mueller III, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), speaks at the International Conference on Cyber Security (ICCS) on August 8, 2013 in New York City. The ICCS, which is co-hosted by Fordham

University and the FBI, is held every 18 months; more than 25 countries are represented at this year's conference. (Photo by Andrew Burton/Getty Images)

CLEVELAND, OH - JULY 21: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump gives two thumbs up to the crowd during the evening session on the fourth day of the Republican National Convention on July 21, 2016 at the Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, Ohio. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump received the number of votes needed to secure the party's nomination. An estimated 50,000 people are expected in Cleveland, including hundreds of protesters and members of the media. The four-day Republican National Convention kicked off on July 18. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Trump rails against Mueller in tweetstorm

Cohen: Mueller will probably indict Trump Jr., Kushner

Giuliani says Trump wants Mueller sit-down

Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort leaves Federal Court on December 11, 2017 in Washington, DC.

In October, Trump's one-time campaign chairman Paul Manafort and his deputy Rick Gates were arrested on money laundering and tax-related charges. Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images

Mueller: Manafort made \$60M from Ukraine work

Mueller seeking immunity for five witnesses

Giuliani: Can't find basis for Mueller probe

Giuliani won't detail Mueller's alleged 'conflict'

(CNN)Donald Trump and his political and legal teams are mounting an extraordinary escalation of his attacks against the special counsel's investigation, an apparent sign of

increased worry among his allies that Robert Mueller's findings could potentially be deeply damaging to the President.

Trump issued his most explicit and public call on Jeff Sessions to shut down the probe on Wednesday, the latest of a series of threats and pressure on the attorney general and the Justice Department that if carried out would move the drama into Nixonian territory.

"This is a terrible situation and Attorney General Jeff Sessions should stop this Rigged Witch Hunt right now, before it continues to stain our country any further," Trump tweeted. "Bob Mueller is totally conflicted, and his 17 Angry Democrats that are doing his dirty work are a disgrace to USA!"

The President tweeted again after midnight in the early hours of Thursday morning to praise a Fox News analyst whose new book, Trump said, told "the Real Story of the Rigged Witch Hunt!"

The flurry of activity comes a week after CNN reported that the President's former lawyer Michael Cohen is prepared to tell Mueller that the then-presidential candidate knew in advance about a Trump tower meeting in June 2016 in which Russians planned to offer dirt on Hillary Clinton.

Trump's lawyers updated him on the Mueller investigation. Then Trump tweeted.

Trump's lawyers updated him on the Mueller investigation. Then Trump tweeted.

Trump has denied all knowledge of the encounter.

And the tweets also coincide with the start of the trial of Paul Manafort that could boost the credibility of the special counsel operation if it secures a conviction and could also increase the chances that Trump's former campaign chairman decides to cooperate with Mueller.

RELATED: Suits, cars and real estate: Manafort's lifestyle put on trial

Trump's words on Sessions set his lawyers and subordinates scrambling and could become a legal liability as the special counsel seeks to establish whether there was a corrupt motive in any effort by the President to obstruct justice.

It also followed a week in which several Trump legal representatives, including Rudy Giuliani, began to publicly question whether collusion -- the question of whether Trump or aides conspired with Russia on election meddling -- is actually a crime.

Those musings set off a torrent of speculation over whether Giuliani understands there is evidence to support such a finding by Mueller and whether he was therefore trying to defuse its potential impact.

Then, on Wednesday, Giuliani again upped the stakes, warning that the coming midterm election would be fought on the question of whether Trump would be impeached.

The 37 strangest lines in Rudy Giuliani's off-the-rails CNN interview

The 37 strangest lines in Rudy Giuliani's off-the-rails CNN interview

His comment was clearly part of an effort by Trump's team to motivate the President's supporters to go the polls in the midterm election to stave off a blue wave that could help Democrats seize the House of Representatives.

But it also implied that Mueller could produce evidence in a report that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein will feel compelled to send to Congress for possible impeachment proceedings.

A Republican House is seen as far less likely to move against the President, especially after the President's intense efforts to persuade his supporters that the Mueller investigation is corrupt, unfair and biased against him. It could be a much different story under a new Democratic House if the midterms go against the GOP.

Since no one outside Mueller's inner circle knows the extent of the evidence he has collected, and few people not in Trump's orbit have a full picture of his potential exposure, it is impossible to say for sure what is motivating the apparent evolution in the President's defense.

But it does appear that significant statements from the President this week and his legal and political teams at least embrace the possibility that their defense must eventually need to move on from the theoretical possibility of an adverse report by Mueller to a practical response to such an eventuality.

Could a tweet be evidence of obstruction?

Trump's tweet to Sessions immediately provoked conversation about whether he had shown an intent to obstruct justice in plain sight, following a long succession of previous tweets pressuring Sessions that appear to undermine arguments that Trump was acting with no malice in firing former FBI Director James Comey at the time he was in charge of the Russia investigation.

"This is another piece in the puzzle to someone trying to put together a picture of attempted obstruction," said Preet Bharara, the former US attorney for the Southern District of New York on CNN's "The Situation Room."

"Over time, a portrait is developing that the President wants the Russia investigation to be ended."

But Giuliani and the White House argued that the President was merely exercising his right to free speech and offering an "opinion." The former New York mayor pointed out that Trump said Sessions "should" stop the probe not that he "must" stop the probe.

Giuliani says Trump team received response from Mueller on possible interview

Giuliani says Trump team received response from Mueller on possible interview

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders, while lashing the "corruption" and "dishonesty" of the "witch hunt," said, "It's not an order, it's the President's opinion." In defense of the President, other Republicans pointed out that Sessions did not have the capacity to end the investigation anyway, since he has recused himself in favor of Rosenstein.

The pushback from the Trump camp revived the debate over whether Trump's tweets are official statements of policy and intent, or should merely be taken as some kind of ongoing conversation with the American people that has no political or legal significance.

From Mueller's point of view, it may not matter. The New York Times reported last week that Mueller was examining Trump's tweets about Sessions and Comey as he considers whether Trump showed corrupt intent in the firing of the former FBI director and puts pressure on the attorney general in a way that suggests a pattern of obstruction.

"Your motivation, the reason why you do something, your opinion actually has legal significance here," said Susan Hennessey, a CNN legal and national security analyst. "We know that Robert Mueller is looking at these tweets for exactly this purpose."

The tweet could also take on more significance should Trump decide in future to dismiss Sessions in order to appoint an attorney general who is not recused fromoversight of the Mueller investigation who would be prepared to shut it down.

But Giuliani this week ridiculed the notion of "obstruction by tweet."

Trump in a dark place

It is not clear exactly what brought on Trump's latest volcanic intervention in the Mueller drama. But he is clearly agitated about the meltdown of his relationship with Cohen, amid rising speculation that his one-time confidant could agree to a plea deal if he is charged as a result of a federal probe in New York and could spill secrets to prosecutors about Trump's financial affairs.

Though the White House insists that the Manafort trial in Virginia on tax and fraud charges has nothing to do with the President -- Trump's tweets appear to indicate that he is closely keeping tabs on news coverage of the case.

"Looking back on history, who was treated worse, Alfonse Capone, legendary mob boss, killer and 'Public Enemy Number One,' or Paul Manafort, political operative & Reagan/Dole darling, now serving solitary confinement - although convicted of nothing? Where is the Russian Collusion?" Trump tweeted.

'Wild' Trump revives spirit of '16 -- but can it work a 2nd (and 3rd) time?

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CNN's Kevin Liptak reported Wednesday said that there was not one trigger for the President's Twitter rage on Wednesday but that he's been angry for months about Sessions and was sent into a dark place by the stories about Cohen last week.

Trump also lamented "a lot of bad people in Washington" on Wednesday, during a call with Rush Limbaugh's radio show, though it wasn't clear to whom he was referring.

"You have a lot of bad people in Washington. You knew that a long time ago, frankly, before I knew it," Trump said, congratulating Limbaugh on his 30th anniversary of his radio program. "I had no idea how evil some of them are, but you have a lot of great people too. And outside of Washington you have the greatest people in the world."

But his behavior is perplexing allies who believe that the President would be best served by not behaving in a way that makes it look as though he has something to hide and expects Mueller's investigation to be ultimately damaging towards him.

Republicans who are eying tough midterm elections in November just wish the President would keep his attention on what they believe is a credible story they have to tell on the economy.

"The President can voice his opinion, I don't deny him that ability, in this case I wish he wouldn't I just don't think it helps him," Republican Rep. Chris Stewart of Utah told CNN's Wolf Blitzer.

He added, "I wish he would just let the special counsel finish his work and show the American people what he has found."

This story has been updated with additional Trump tweets and statements.

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### FOOTBALL

This town backed Brexit. Now, it's back in Europe (Well, kind of)

Bale, Warburton, Thomas ... The Welsh school which breeds sporting greats

Updated 1531 GMT (2331 HKT) July 31, 2018

Whitchurch High wall of fame

Cylists ride on a cobblestone street through the village of Haworth as they take part on the third and final day of the inaugural 'Tour de Yorkshire' in Haworth on May 3, 2015.

AFP PHOTO / OLI SCARFF (Photo credit should read OLI SCARFF/AFP/Getty Images)

Cycling hits ... Yorkshire??

Zurl is aiming to become the

Extreme Cuba: 1450km, 57 hours, 1 song

Mountain biking on Europe's 'sunny coast'

TOPSHOT - The peloton rides during the first stage of the 8th edition of the cycling Tour of Oman between al-Sawadi Beach and Naseem Park on February 14, 2017 in Manumah.

Norway's Alexander Kristoff from Team Katusha Alpecin won the stage ahead of Italian Kristian Sbaragli (L) from Team Dimension Data who came second and Italian Sonny Colbrelli (R) from Bahrain Merida in third place. / AFP / Eric Feferberg (Photo credit should read ERIC FEFERBERG/AFP/Getty Images)

Tour of Oman: cycling by the deserts and sea

Whitchurch High's 'Wall of Fame'

The school that produced three sport icons

The Israel Cycling Academy team greets the audience during the team presentation of the 101st edition of the Giro d'Italia (Tour of Italy) championship on May 3, 2018 in Jerusalem. (Photo by LUK BENIES / AFP) (Photo credit should read LUK BENIES/AFP/Getty Images)

Giro D'Italia: Biggest sports event in Israel

Belgium's Greg Van Avermaet celebrates as he crosses the finish line at the end of the 115th edition of the Paris-Roubaix one-day classic cycling race, between Compiegne and Roubaix, on April 9, 2017 in Roubaix, northern France. / AFP PHOTO / François LO PRESTI (Photo credit should read FRANCOIS LO PRESTI/AFP/Getty Images)

Welcome to 'The Hell of the North'

Cylists ride on a cobblestone street through the village of Haworth as they take part on the third and final day of the inaugural 'Tour de Yorkshire' in Haworth on May 3, 2015.

AFP PHOTO / OLI SCARFF Images) (Photo credit should read OLI SCARFF/AFP/Getty

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AFP PHOTO / OLI (Photo credit should read OLI SCARFF/AFP/Getty SCARFF Images)

Cycling hits ... Yorkshire??

Story highlights

Geraint Thomas won cycling's Tour de France Sunday Welshman

went to same school as Gareth Bale & Sam Warburton

Whitchurch High is a state school in Cardiff

(CNN)Gareth Bale, Sam Warburton and Geraint Thomas. Three sporting greats, Welshmen who have created history and, astonishingly, world stars who went to the same school. The exploits of Thomas, who Sunday became the first Welshman and only the third Briton to win the Tour de France, has put the spotlight firmly on the Welsh state school with a reputation for breeding champions.

"It should be written into a Hollywood film," says Huw Jones-Williams, headteacher of Whitchurch High in Cardiff.

Thomas -- also a double Olympic gold medalist and a Commonwealth champion -stands alongside Real Madrid star Bale, once the world's most expensive footballer, and former Wales and Lions rugby union captain Warburton in the school's celebrated sporting trinity.

Warburton and Bale, both 29, were in the same year, while the 32-year-old Thomas was three years above.

Is there something in the water? Not quite, says Jones-Williams.

Thomas is the first Welsh rider to win the Tour de France.

Thomas is the first Welsh rider to win the Tour de France.

"It's almost a fairytale," Jones-Williams, who was deputy head when the trio were pupils, tells CNN World Sport.

"Just one would be incredible, two would be the most amazing coincidence, three? Somebody up there is looking down on us with the most amazing blessing. It's absolutely unreal. It should be written into a Hollywood film because it feels of that stature.

"I've not heard of anyone at any school with a similar thing, and particularly major sports. I'm not sure it will ever be repeated. It's certainly once in a lifetime. You can't believe what has happened with those three sports superstars."

READ: Thomas wins 105th Tour de France

Incredible achievement from a fellow Whitchurch High pupil! @GeraintThomas86 What a win! #TDF2018 pic.twitter.com/6Aa9ckmNwY

— Gareth Bale (@GarethBale11) July 29, 2018

Absolutely awesome @GeraintThomas86! Thoroughly deserved, and couldn't happen to a nicer guy #Legend https://t.co/UnCMdH8rf6

- Sam Warburton (@samwarburton\_) July 28, 2018

Both Bale and Warburton were quick to congratulate Thomas, who could be set for a homecoming parade in the Welsh capital after winning cycling's most prestigious race.

"Incredible achievement from a fellow Whitchurch High pupil," tweeted Bale, a fourtime Champions League winner, while the recently retired Warburton tweeted: "Absolutely awesome @GeraintThomas86! Thoroughly deserved, and couldn't happen to a nicer guy #legend"

It has been quite the summer for all three stars.

Not only has Thomas succeeded in a Grand Tour for the first time, but Bale scored twice in a man-of-the-match performance in the Champions League final in May. Earlier this month Warburton, who captained Wales a record 49 times and led the British and Irish Lions on two tours, announced his shock retirement from rugby.

READ: Tour temporarily halted by protestors

READ: Colombia's cycling obsession

'Make sure students dream big'

Whitchurch High's "Wall of Fame" boasts some impressive alumni.

Whitchurch High's "Wall of Fame" boasts some impressive alumni.

With 2,300 pupils, Whitchurch is one of the biggest comprehensive schools in the United Kingdom.

The celebrated trio are the standout faces in the school's "Wall of Fame," which helps inspire pupils, says Jones-Williams.

The wall includes a signed Real Madrid jersey from Bale, a Wales grand slam shirt worn by Warburton and a signed photo of Thomas.

"It's doing what every good school does," says Jones-Williams of the school's secret to sporting success.

"You want to make sure students dream big, make sure they're grounded. You've got to nurture them, encourage them, give them the opportunity, and the greatest gift as a teacher is not what they do in school but what they do after school.

"In Geraint's case, goodness me, hasn't he dreamed big."

Jones-Williams describes Thomas, a promising rugby union player in his youth, as not only a talented sportsman but gifted academically, too.

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"He was a bright student," he says.

"He's not just someone who has got a great set of lungs and legs and can pedal faster than anyone else in the world, he's an amazing individual and that's the inspiration everybody gets walking down the wall of fame -- and it's adults not just students as well.

"The last three days the whole nation willed him on. I don't think any of us have got any fingernails left.

"But on that Saturday when we knew he'd won the Tour and could come riding down the Champs-Elysees toasting a glass of champagne, who would ever have believed a boy from Whitchurch in Cardiff could ever have done that?

"That's absolutely amazing. It's still reverberating around Cardiff, still reverberating around Wales."

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Record-breaking temperatures could hit Spain, Portugal and create drought conditions, forecasters warn

The hottest month ever on Earth

Rare drone footage captures life in war-torn city

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