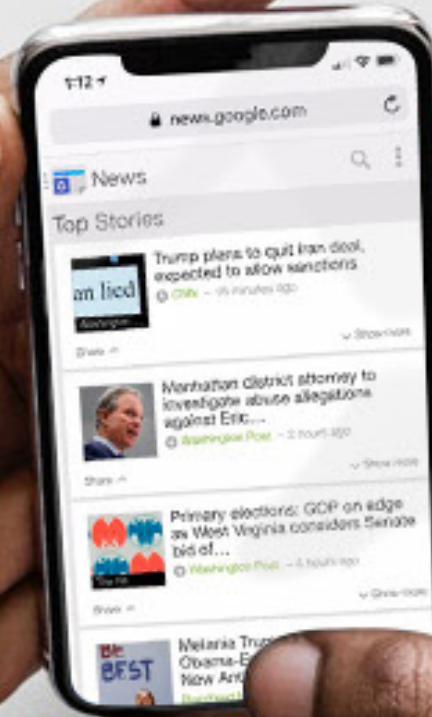




AMCHAM  
GUATEMALA

AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



# USA OUTLOOK

Weekly newsletter | December 09 to 12



Foto: Yahoo News

## U.S., Canada and Mexico sign agreement – again – to replace NAFTA

Top officials from Canada, Mexico and the United States signed a fresh overhaul of a quarter-century-old trade pact on Tuesday that aims to improve enforcement of worker rights and hold down prices for biologic drugs by eliminating a patent provision.

The signing ceremony in Mexico City launched what may be the final approval effort for U.S. President Donald Trump's three-year quest to revamp the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a deal he has blamed for the loss of millions of U.S. manufacturing jobs. The event at the National Palace at noon local time, was attended by Mexico President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, Canadian Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and U.S. White House adviser Jared Kushner.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) was signed more than a year ago to replace NAFTA, but Democrats controlling the U.S. House of Representatives insisted on major changes to labor and environmental enforcement before bringing it to vote.

The delay at times threatened to scuttle the deal, creating investment uncertainty in all three countries and worrying U.S. farmers already suffering tariffs stemming from Trump's trade war with China.



Foto: The Guardian

## Trump claims wins on wall, Space Force in \$738 billion NDDAA defense policy bill

President Donald Trump on Wednesday signaled he will sign the massive defense policy bill lawmakers unveiled this week, a bipartisan measure that authorizes a major spending boost to the Pentagon and endorses his proposed new Space Force.

The legislation poses significant wins for a handful of Mr. Trump's top priorities, including the Space Force, authorizing a 3.1% pay raise for military personnel, and the elimination of specific language that would restrict Department of Defense funds for building a border wall with Mexico.

The legislation also authorizes 12 weeks of paid parental leave for federal workers, while giving a major sign of support for NATO and approving more military aid to Ukraine. In a move that angered progressives, language requiring explicit congressional authorization for military action against Iran was stripped from the final bipartisan text.

The massive \$738 billion National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) still has several hurdles to get through before making it to the president's desk. The House is expected to vote on the legislation this week, and the Senate will likely to follow closely behind.

Lawmakers are racing to pass the bill as Congress is scheduled to leave Washington for the holiday recess next week. A separate stopgap appropriations bill that funds the Defense Department expires Dec. 20.



Foto: US News & World Report

## Survey finds fragmented system impedes Health Care in the U.S.

The U.S. Health Care system is so fragmented that primary care doctors struggle to coordinate patient care as frequently as providers in other high-income countries, a new survey says.

Researchers from the Commonwealth Fund surveyed more than 13,000 primary care providers in 11 countries – Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. – and identified key gaps in care coordination among primary care doctors, other providers and social services. For example, just under half of U.S. primary care doctors said they get information from specialists about changes to their patients' medications or care plans, compared to 70% or more of doctors in Norway, France and New Zealand.

"Compared to physicians in other countries, substantial proportions of U.S. physicians did not routinely receive timely notification or the information needed for managing ongoing care from specialists, after-hours care centers, emergency departments, or hospitals," according to the study, published this week in Health Affairs.



Foto: POLITICO Europe

## Democrats unveil articles of Impeachment against Trump

Leading House Democrats unveiled two articles of impeachment against U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday, accusing him of abusing his power for personal political gain and obstructing the congressional impeachment inquiry.

It was only the fourth time the 243-year history of the United States that impeachment charges have been brought against an American leader, although Trump's removal from office remains unlikely.

House Judiciary Committee chairman Jerrold Nadler, head of the panel that will first consider the impeachment articles, contended that Trump "sees himself as above the law". Nadler alleged that Trump threatened U.S. national security by withholding key military aid to Ukraine. He said the president threatened the integrity of the 2020 election, in which he is seeking a second term in office, and sought to block congressional review of his actions.





Foto: Reuters

# At least 250 journalists in jail worldwide, with most in China: Report

At least 250 journalists are jailed around the world, with the largest number held in China, amid a growing crackdown by authoritarian regimes on independent media, a press watchdog group said yesterday.

Many of those imprisoned face “anti-state” charges or are accused of producing “false news”, according to the report by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), which also cited Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Eritrea, Vietnam and Iran for their jailing of journalists.

The press freedom watchdog said it counted at least 48 journalists jailed in China, one more than last year, as

President Xi Jinping ramps up effort to control the media.

Campaigners say the global total of 250 remains disturbingly high even if it’s slightly below the 255 counted last year and the record 273 in 2016.