



# Trump sees 'very good chance' of China trade deal, says no link to Biden probe request

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that his administration has a "very good chance" of making a trade deal with China, and insisted there were no links between China talks and his desire for Beijing to investigate Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

Trump, speaking to reporters before departing the White House, said negotiations to end the U.S. trade war with China were separate from any investigation into Biden, whom Trump has accused of foreign corruption.

"One thing has nothing to do with the other," the Republican president said when asked whether he would be more likely to make a deal with China if it investigated Biden. "I want to do a trade deal with China, but only if it's good for our country."

Top-level U.S.-China trade talks are scheduled to resume next Thursday and Friday, when Chinese Vice Premier Liu He meets with U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in Washington

The talks will be preceded on Monday and Tuesday by deputy-level discussions, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said earlier. Trump has waged a two-year effort to change China's trade, intellectual property and industrial policy practices, which he has long said are unfair and have cost millions of U.S. jobs. His administration is seeking stronger protections of U.S. intellectual property, an end to forced transfers of American technology to Chinese firms, curbs to industrial subsidies and increased access to China's largely closed domestic markets.

In a trade war that has lasted 15 months, the

United States and China have heaped hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs

"I view China as somebody we're trying to make a deal with, we have a very good chance of making a deal with," Trump said. Right now, we're in a very important stage in terms of possibly making a deal. If we make it, it will be the biggest trade deal ever made."

On Thursday Trump publicly urged Beijing to investigate Biden, a Democrat, again raising concerns that he has invited foreign interference in the U.S. presidential election. Last week Trump released a transcript of a call where he asked Ukraine's president to also look into Biden, a request that has triggered an impeachment inquiry by House of Representatives Democrats.

### FINANCIAL SERVICES HOPES

Kudlow, in television interviews, held out hope for progress in opening China's financial services markets to American companies in next week's talks, adding the U.S. team was heading into them "open-minded"

"Everything's on the table, we'd love to go back to where we were in May when we were a lot closer," Kudlow told Bloomberg TV.

The Trump trade team hoped to revisit a mostly agreed text from which China had backtracked in May, causing talks to break down, he said. The text at that time included an agreement negotiated by Mnuchin that involved the lifting of foreign ownership caps on financial services firms in China.

"I'm not giving you news. I'm just saying we had some pretty good things last spring, like financial services opening - that could be extended," Kudlow said in a subsequent interview on Fox Business Network. "I say 'could' and the president would have to sign off on it, but don't rule out the possibility of good news."

Kudlow declined to make any predictions about



FILE PHOTO: Director of the National Economic Council Larry Kudlow speaks to the media at the White House in Washington, U.S., September 6, 2019. REUTERS/Joshua Roberts

the talks but said there had been a "softening of the psychology on both sides" over the past month, with the United States delaying some tariff increases and China making some modest purchases of American farm products.

Kudlow also said the impeachment inquiry was unlikely to affect the trade talks with China.

"I don't think that's an impact right now. I think maybe it has only the tiniest, tiniest effect, maybe occasionally on stock market psychology,"

Kudlow said. However, he said the Trump administration continued to monitor freedom and democracy protests, which he said could have an impact on the talks, without specifying how. China-backed Hong Kong authorities have struggled to curb anti-government protests that have continued for four months.

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# Editor's Choice



Anti-government office workers wearing masks attend a lunch time protest, after local media reported on an expected ban on face masks under emergency law, at Central, in Hong Kong



U.S. Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren reacts as she holds an outdoor rally in San Diego, California, U.S., October 3, 2019. REUTERS/Mike Blake TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Riot police officers are pictured outside the Legislative Council complex in Hong Kong



Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam attends a news conference to discuss sweeping emergency laws at government office in Hong Kong, China October 4, 2019. REUTERS/Athit Perawongmetha TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Athletics - World Athletics Championships - Doha 2019 - Women's Heptathlon 800 Metres - Khalifa International Stadium, Doha, Qatar - October 3, 2019. Britain's Katarina Johnson-Thompson in action. REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Athletics - World Athletics Championships - Doha 2019 - Women's Shot Put Final - Khalifa International Stadium, Doha, Qatar - October 3, 2019. China's Lijiao Gong reacts after winning gold. REUTERS/Dylan Martinez TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Priest sprinkles holy water on a dog as a part of a religious blessing ceremony to honor Saint Francis of Assisi at the Saint Joan the Evangelist Church in the municipality of Escobedo



Tennis - Japan Open - Men's Singles - Quarter-Finals - Ariake Coliseum, Tokyo, Japan - October 4, 2019. Novak Djokovic of Serbia plays against Lucas Pouille of France. REUTERS/Kim Kyung-Hoon TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY

## Baseball Card Collecting World Rocked By Fraud Scandal

The FBI has launched a criminal investigation into the world of baseball card collecting — one that involves an industry-leading appraisal firm, a well-known memorabilia dealer, and an auction house, WashPost reports.

**Details:** This scandal began after two online collectors tracked hundreds of cards as they were (1) graded by an appraisal firm, (2) obtained by a “card doctor,” (3) altered and resubmitted for a higher grade, and then (4) sold through an auction house.

•Collectors rely on appraisal firms to determine the condition and market price of cards. The higher the grade, the higher the cards’ market value.

•For his part, the alleged “card doctor” told WashPost that he doesn’t alter cards, but rather seeks out cards that he believes were “undergraded” and resubmits them in hopes of better value.

**The backdrop:** Modern baseball card collecting erupted in the 1990s when appraisal firms began grading cards’ conditions on a 1 to 10 scale.

•This offered collectors an objective measurement of a card’s condition for the first time and gave hobbyists an easy way to upgrade their collections: simply purchase a higher-graded card.



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



•“That encouraged friendly competition ... and some card connoisseurs began treating their collections as financial assets, similar to stocks, bonds or works of fine art,” notes WashPost’s Jacob Bogue.

**The big picture:** Forbes will tell you

that, if a decade ago you had put your money in trading cards instead of the stock market, your payoff would be more than twice as big.

•That fact is based on data generated by the auction house at the heart of the FBI’s investigation.

•And the cards they sold were graded by an appraisal firm that charges customers based on the grades they give their cards rather than a flat-fee, thus incentivizing them to give higher, possibly inaccurate grades.

**The bottom line:** Card collecting is a hobby — and a billion-dollar industry — built entirely on trust, and this scandal threatens to erode that on the eve of the National Sports Collectors Convention in Chicago.

“This is a crisis. There’s just too much upside to being unethical in this industry. ... This is bad. This is really bad.”

— Darren Rovell of the Action Network

**Related**  
**Baseball card collectors suspected rampant fraud in their hobby. Now the FBI is investigating.**



**A boy looks at a display of baseball cards last year in Philadelphia. The card collecting hobby is being rocked by a scandal concerning allegedly altered cards. (Hunter Martin/Getty Images)**

Federal law enforcement officials have launched a criminal investigation encompassing one of baseball card collecting’s largest authentication firms, a well-known sports memorabilia dealer and one of the hobby’s largest auction houses, among others, according to four

collectors who have been interviewed by investigators.

The scandal started after a pair of online collectors began identifying and documenting cards that were allegedly improperly modified. They have identified 316 such cards, retouched by nearly a dozen “card doctors,” that sold for a combined \$1.4 million. The four collectors who spoke with investigators say the FBI suspects thousands of additional cards with similar issues are still circulating through the hobby. (All four collectors spoke to The Washington Post on the condition of anonymity, concerned about the repercussions of discussing an ongoing investigation.)

At the heart of the scandal is the memorabilia market’s system for assessing baseball cards, a term widely used to describe any athletic trading card. Collectors rely on grading companies — California-based Professional Sports Au-

thenticator (PSA), part of publicly traded Collectors Universe, dominates the market — to help determine the condition and market price of cards. An improved grade can increase a card’s value several times over — hence the existence of so-called doctors, who take worn cards, alter them to make them appear in better condition and resubmit them to grading companies in search of a better mark.



Investigators are asking questions about one such alleged doctor, Gary Moser, who is implicated by the online research, according to the four collectors who have talked to the FBI. Investigators are also asking about other smaller-scale doctors, along with PSA’s grading practices and an Oregon-based auction house, PWCC, according to those four collectors.

PWCC acknowledged in a statement that it is cooperating with law enforcement officials over cards graded by PSA and submitted by Moser. A PSA spokesman declined an interview request but said the company was conducting its own investigation and cooperating with law enforcement. It also decertified the Musial card, which indicates the company no longer stands by the grade it once assigned. Moser denied altering cards. An FBI spokesperson would not confirm the existence of a current probe into PWCC, PSA or Moser, citing Bureau policy.

The scandal has thrust the hobby into chaos as casual and serious collectors alike review their stockpiles of cards to search for potentially damaged goods that may be worth significantly less than the price for which they were purchased. “It’s a nightmare what’s going on right now, but it’s been a problem in the industry forever, and it’s time that it was brought to light,” said Al Crisafulli, who runs Love of the Game Auctions in Great Meadows, N.J. “I think we’ve all been burned at some point or another.” (Courtesy <https://www.washingtonpost.com/>)

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Will Offer A Path To Citizenship U.S. House Passes Immigration Bill To Protect 'Dreamers'



The U.S. House of Representatives passed a sweeping immigration bill on June 4 that would grant citizenship to more than 2 million undocumented immigrants, including "dreamers." (Photo/Reuters)

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

The House on Tuesday passed a bill that would offer a path to citizenship to more than 2 million undocumented immigrants, including "dreamers" who were brought to the United States as children.

The vote was 237 to 187 for the American Dream and Promise Act of 2019, which would grant dreamers 10 years of legal residence status if they meet certain requirements. They would then receive permanent green cards after completing at least two years of higher education or military service, or after working for three years.

Cheers erupted in the chamber when the bill received the necessary votes, along with chants of "Yes we can!" Seven Republicans broke ranks to join all 230 Democrats present in backing the bill.

The measure would provide long-awaited clarity to the millions of dreamers who have been caught in legal limbo amid years of partisan maneuvering on the issue. The Obama administration granted work permits to many of them through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, but President Trump ended the program in late 2017. Its fate rests with the Supreme Court, which may take up the issue in the coming months.

Democrats are proposing the bill as Trump and Republicans argue that more needs to be done to address the humanitarian crisis at the U.S.-Mexico border, underscoring that the parties are approaching the issue of immigration overhaul from markedly different perspectives.

Rep. Joe Neguse (D-Colo.), a freshman congressman and the son of Eritrean refugees, prompted cheers and a standing ovation from Democrats as he quoted President Ronald Reagan to defend immigration as integral to the fabric of the country. He also described dreamers as "young people all across our country who know no other home but the United States."



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), joined by other Democrats at the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday. (Photo/Shutterstock)

"We can't allow these young people to continue to live in fear, to be at risk," Neguse

said. Versions of the bill have been introduced in Congress over the years but never passed, despite support among members of both parties. The debate over the legislation has been emotional at times; in 2010, more than 60 young people crowded into the Senate gallery to push for passage of a previous version of the bill known as the Dream Act. The chamber ultimately defeated the measure.

"This is legislation that is consistent with who we are as Americans, as an aspirational people, as a nation of immigrants and as a place where people can come to pursue the American Dream," Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, told reporters ahead of Tuesday's vote.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-Calif.), the lead sponsor of the current bill, noted that Tuesday marked "the first time the Dream Act will be passed by a chamber of Congress as a top Democratic priority."

The House measure was introduced in March. That month, two groups of senators introduced similar legislation that would protect dreamers. One bill was authored by Sens. Lindsey O. Graham (R-S.C.) and Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.). The other was introduced by a group of Democrats, including Sens. Chris Van Hollen (Md.), Ben Cardin (Md.), Dianne Feinstein (Calif.) and Tim Kaine (Va.).



House Democratic leaders on Tuesday voiced optimism that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) would bring up the legislation in the Senate.

"There should be nothing partisan or political about this legislation," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said at a news con-

ference, flanked by other Democrats and supporters of the measure. "We are proud to pass it, we hope, in a bipartisan way."

But it is unlikely that the Senate will consider the bill: McConnell and other Senate Republican leaders made no mention of the bill at their weekly news conference Tuesday afternoon.

The measure's consideration comes more than a year after the Senate rejected four competing immigration proposals. Among those proposals was one backed by Trump that included citizenship for dreamers, billions of dollars in funding for the president's U.S.-Mexico border wall and changes to laws to speed up deportations, as well as sharp cuts to legal immigration.

As the 2020 presidential race heats up, Trump has taken a host of actions — such as declaring a national emergency over his border wall and threatening tariffs on imports from Mexico — that suggest that immigration will be a central focus of his reelection campaign.

House Republicans contended Tuesday that Democrats have not offered a proposal to pay for the legislation, which the Congressional Budget Office estimates would cost more than \$30 billion.



They also argued that the bill does not include funding for border security or changes to U.S. asylum laws, an issue that Trump emphasized in a White House memo in April proposing fees for those applying for humanitarian relief.

"If Democrats were serious about immigration, they would do something about the humanitarian and national security crisis along our southern border, but Speaker Pelosi has chosen to spend the House's time on H.R. 6, an expensive, partisan show vote," House

Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) said in a statement.

Rep. Douglas A. Collins (R-Ga.), the top Republican on the House Judiciary Committee, said that his party wants to provide legal status to DACA recipients but that "we want to do it the right way — to minimize fraud, ensure criminals cannot get legal status and bolster border security."

"Sadly, Democrats are making us consider a bill to worsen the border crisis by incentivizing more people to cross our borders illegally in hopes of getting a piece of the amnesty pie," Collins said. "No doubt at this very minute, the smuggling cartels are getting the word out: Congress is going to legalize millions."

In addition to dreamers, Tuesday's bill would offer protections to people with temporary protected status, which has allowed people from El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras and other countries to avoid being deported to nations engulfed in war or affected by natural disasters.



A smaller group of Liberians who have been granted "deferred enforced departure" also would be protected. Trump also has sought to end these protections, spurring lawsuits that halted at least one of the efforts.

Immigrants with temporary protected status or deferred deportations could immediately apply for green cards if they have been in the country for at least three years, had their status as of September 2016 and passed background checks. Five years after obtaining a green card, members of both groups could apply for citizenship. (Courtesy washingtonpost.com)

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