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TELEPHONE 919-682-2913

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A different kind of freshman marks Pelosi's new majority

By Lisa Mascaro and Laurie Kellman

WASHINGTON (AP) - It wasn't exactly a mic-drop moment. But when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi abruptly ended a conversation as a freshman lawmaker no longer seemed to be listening, it showed just now far the Democratic leader and the new majority have to go in getting used to each other.

A lot has changed in the 12 years since Pelosi last ran the House.

The California Democrat is finding a freshman class whose members seem more eager to lead than be ed. Part of a younger generation of lawmakers, mostly women and minorities, they bring perspectives and expectations different from some who have walked the halls for decades. A few, like New York's Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, carry their own starpower in real-time on social media.

Their willingness to question the protocols of Congress is exposing Pelosi's leadership team to high-profile stumbles. Leaders could not hold their majority in line on a routine procedural vote last week. And his week, a debate spilled into the open over a leadership plan for a resolution condemning anti-Semitism and Islamophobia largely in response to remarks made by Minnesota's Ilhan Omar.

"So, we have some internal issues," Pelosi acknowledged during a private caucus meeting.

By March 7, the House was back on track with plans to vote on the resolution that Pelosi said would 'speak out against anti-Semitism, anti-Islamophobia, anti-white supremacy and all the forms that it takes." Democrats wanted to swiftly push past at least one of the big issues that was dividing them and tangling their legislative agenda.

It was during that March 6 behind-closed-doors session that another newly elected Democrat, Jahana Hayes of Connecticut, stood to speak about the resolution, according to those in the room.

Hayes wanted more input on the process. Others worried that their legislative agenda had drifted way off track. Some questioned why Omar's actions were being singled out when others - namely President Donald Trump and Republicans in Congress - had repeatedly made offensive comments on race and reigion.

When Pelosi addressed her, Hayes turned to walk away. Exasperated, Pelosi said if Hayes wasn't going o listen, the conversation was over. She set down the microphone.

Hayes later told reporters that she didn't realize Pelosi was talking to her. But, she said, she's ready to

speak up again, every time she needs to.
"I don't want to wait two years before I raise my voice," she said. "I know that looks different or feels

different to people. ... But I didn't come here to just sit quietly and fall in line."

Hayes said, "I don't mean that to be disrespectful. But the people in my district deserve a voice. These

are important decisions." She added, "A new crop of freshmen, I guess."

Every new majority has its growing pains. GOP Speaker John Boehner never really figured out a way to control the tea party Republicans who ultimately forced his retirement. And Pelosi's predecessor, Republican Paul Ryan, called it quits rather than try to do much better.

Pelosi, who made history in 2007 as the first female speaker, has always been seen as a particularly strong leader. She fended off attempts to topple her return this year, and her stock soared among some Democrats as she took on Trump during the 35-day partial government shutdown.

But Pelosi faces a changed media environment that is rapidly chronicling every move of the historic freshmen class in real-time and a president in the White House eager, with his GOP allies in Congress, to capitalize on the divisions. Trump tweeted March 6 about the resolution debate, saying it was "shameful"

Democrats wouldn't take a stronger stand against anti-Semitism in their conference.

Democrats also returned a veteran leadership team, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland and Majority Whip Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, who, along with up-and-comers, have made no secret of their interest in Pelosi's job. They are responsible for setting the floor schedule and counting the votes, and share some responsibility - and blame - for the leadership's early pitfalls.

While Democrats had a larger majority 12 years ago, the caucus was not as racially and ethnically liverse the first time Pelosi was speaker. There was a sense March 6 among Democrats that Pelosi and her leadership team may have underestimated the anger and opposition that a resolution dealing only with anti-Semitism would inflame among progressives, who now include the first two Muslim women to serve

n Congress.

Rep. Katie Hill, D-Calif., a freshman liaison to Democratic leaders, said Pelosi is juggling several lynamics. Managing the social media and instantaneous reaction that turned the issue "into this massive

explosion ... is one of the biggest challenges," she said.

In fact, it wasn't Pelosi's idea to put forward the resolution on anti-Semitism, according to those fa-

niliar with the situation. They and others spoke about private conversations on condition of anonymity. But after fielding some 100 calls over the weekend from other lawmakers, some proposing it as a response to Omar's comments about Israel, Pelosi agreed to the idea and suggested they broaden the resolution to include a rejection of anti-Muslim bigotry. Omar is Muslim-American and faces criticism, ncluding by GOP lawmakers, and public threats.

The early drafts, though, went too far for some lawmakers, but not far enough for others. Jewish law-nakers, in particular, preferred the more narrow approach to anti-Semitism. Others wanted a more sweeping statement against other forms of racism and bigotry that, as Clyburn put it, was "anti-hate."

After Wednesday's (March 6) session, Pelosi pivoted, temporarily shelving the issue that had already trained Democrats of much of their focus on the week's agenda.

"This is a distraction," said Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, D-N.J., who made similar remarks during

the private session. "We came in promising a rigorous agenda for the people."

Others, though, said Democrats needed to remind Americans, and others, of the dangers of anti-Senitic tropes. Omer last week suggested the Jawish state's supporters are pushing leavested to democrate the last state of the dangers of anti-Senitic tropes.

nitic tropes. Omar last week suggested the Jewish state's supporters are pushing lawmakers to pledge 'allegiance' to a foreign country.

"It's important for us to have this conversation and for people to understand the history," said Rep. Juan Vargas, D-Calif. He faced his own run-in after Ocasio-Cortez tweeted about his views in what would have

Rep. Hank Johnson, D-Ga., said Pelosi is adroit at being able to "adapt to the reality once that reality becomes clear to her." He added, "We don't have a perfect leader, but she's doing an excellent job."

Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., a progressive who is allied with Ocasio-Cortez and others in the new class, said, "I don't agree with Nancy Pelosi on a number of things, but I understand that she knows more about low the system works than I know."

Khanna added that the freshmen have brought "great energy and great voice, but ultimately Washington is still about getting things done, and Nancy Pelosi understands power."

N Carolina county judges adopt policy to reduce cash bail

(AP) - A North Carolina county's top judges have revised bail and pre-trial release policies in an effort to minimize the use of cash bail.

Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Orlando Hudson tells The Herald-Sun that Durham County judges agree cash bail isn't the best way to assure a defendant's presence in court.

Hudson says state law doesn't allow judges to eliminate cash bonds, but the new policy "de-emphasizes" the option, instead highlighting choices like unsecured bonds, written promises to appear in court and electronic monitoring.

District Attorney Satana Deberry ran on criminal justice reform. She commended the new policy for "pushing Durham toward a system in which detention is no longer wealth-based."

But on March 8, around two dozen people protested the new policy, saying it relied on risk assessment instead of need assessment.



Womens Hall of Fame - This undated photo provided by the National Women's Hall of Fame shows Angela Davis who is among the 10 members of the National Women's Hall of Fame Class of 2019, that was announced Friday, March 8, 2019, in New York City. Davis has been politically active for decades, including as a member of the Black Panther Party, Student-Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Communist Party USA. More recently, she has been an outspoken supporter of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement targeting Israel's treatment of Palestinians. (Courtesy of National Women's Hall of Fame Class via AP)

Nation's oldest black college has plan to address money woes

PHILADELPHIA (AP) - The nation's oldest historically black college, which has struggled with plummeting enrollment and financial woes in recent years, announced a plan March 5 to balance the school's budget and lure new, top-tier students.

An ambitious fundraising campaign and sweeping changes to the school's business model were outlined by Cheyney University president Aaron Walton at a news conference.

"We will have a balanced budget," he said, vowing to make it happen by June 30.

Among the revenue-generating plans is a local environmental company's commitment to set up a new headquarters at Cheyney, he said, and Thomas Jefferson University's construction of a medical facility on the campus about 30 miles (50 kilometers) west of Philadelphia.

Epcot Crenshaw Corp., a West Chester, Pennsylvania-based company that develops technology to solve environmental problems, will establish research labs, greenhouses and an aquaponics facility, were Cheyney students can get real-world experience in emerging environmental technology, he said.

A joint research project has already begun between Thomas Jefferson University and Cheyney that focuses on health disparities in the Philadelphia region. The collaboration also is designed to help Cheyney graduates enter postgraduate studies at Jefferson. Jefferson will also place a medical facility on campus to give practical experience to Cheyney students interested in health sciences.

The announcements come weeks after Daniel Greenstein, chancellor of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, told state senators that Cheyney was likely to lose accreditation and looked as if it would be short on cash by as much as \$10 million. The university may have to operate as an unaccredited institution, he said, possibly offering career training.

After Greenstein and Walton met with Gov. Tom Wolf last week, Walton said all were committed to Cheyney's future, according to The Philadelphia Inquirer.

Kenn Marshall, a spokesman for the state system, told the Inquirer on March 5 that the chancellor stands by his remarks at the Senate hearing.

"We're going to continue to work with Cheyney and support them," Marshall said. "Obviously, President Walton has a plan, and we hope it's successful."

During the news conference, Walton said he expected the university to retain its ac-

creditation and asserted that much of the \$10 million funding hole Greenstein referenced is a cash-flow problem he expects to be resolved, the Inquirer reported.

The university hopes to raise about \$4 million over the next few months under a new

The university hopes to raise about \$4 million over the next few months under a new campaign to make sure the budget is balanced.

Without accreditation, the school is ineligible for federal and state financial aid -

which most of its just over 400 students depend on.

Founded in 1837, Cheyney gave African Americans a chance at education when other

schools would not.

Alumni include civil rights activist Octavius V. Catto; Bayard Rustin, a chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington; and "60 Minutes" broadcast journalist Ed Bradley.