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Trump to host Spain's King Felipe for state visit April 21, says White House



Madrid.—President Donald Trump will host Spain's King Felipe on April 21 for a state visit, the White House said in an announcement yesterday. According to the announcement

the visit "will celebrate our two countries' close friendship and shared history, and reaffirm our commitments to stand together to address today's global challenges."



TOURISTS FIND LOOP HOLE IN NEW BOOZE LAWS

SEE FULL REPORT ON PAGE FOUR INSIDE TODAY

EUTHANASIA BILL SPARKS FIERCE DEBATE IN SPANISH PARLIAMENT

Madrid.—Spain's new left-wing government submitted to parliament yesterday a bill that would allow euthanasia and assisted suicide in certain cases, reigniting a bitter debate on whether to decriminalise both practices. Euthanasia involves a physician taking an active role in ending a patient's life whereas in assisted suicide the doctor provides a lethal substance for the patient to self administer.

Under the current law, helping someone end their life carries a jail term of up to 10

years, but 84% of Spaniards are in favour of decriminalisation, according to a 2018 national opinion poll.

After two previous attempts to change the law failed due to a lack of support and the premature end of the previous legislature last year, the government now has an almost guaranteed majority through the support of the centre-right Ciudadanos and a handful of smaller parties.

"We're talking about clearly debilitating diseases without a cure, without a solution

and which cause significant suffering," government spokeswoman Maria Jesus Montero said yesterday, adding that doctors who object to the practice will be able to opt out. The Catholic Church - historically a lodestar for public opinion in Spain - considers euthanasia to be morally wrong, and the main conservative opposition People's Party (PP) and far-right Vox also want it to remain a criminal offence.

But the church's influence has been on the wane ever since Francisco Franco's dic-

tatorship ended in 1975. Vox spokeswoman Rocio Monasterio said her party would mount "fierce" resistance to the bill, which she said would allow people whose life was no longer considered useful to be "eliminated".

Euthanasia has attracted much attention in Spain, which has one of the world's highest life expectancies, particularly since the 2004 film *Mar Adentro* (The Sea Inside) catapulted the issue into the national spotlight.