

Week Ahead

Legislative Focus: Tax Bill, Spending Caps, Higher Education
On Wednesday tax conferees meet for the first time to discuss differences between the House and Senate tax bills with negotiations already underway behind the scenes. Also on Wednesday the President will deliver a message on the importance of completing tax reform during an address at the U.S. Department of Treasury. Republican leaders in Congress hope to finalize the tax bill by the end of this week, but negotiations will likely extend into next week.

On Friday Congress passed a stop-gap spending bill that funds the government through December 22nd. Congressional leadership and senior Senate and House appropriations leadership are close to finalizing a two-year deal that would increase budget caps. The deal reportedly could increase defense caps by at least $50 billion and non-defense discretionary caps by at least $30 billion. The deal may also include enough room under discretionary caps for reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) that would ease the current difficult process of finding offsets to pay for an extension of the program. A final year-end deal might also include cost-sharing reduction (CSR) payments for insurers and a short-term funding program for states to jump start reinsurance programs.

On Tuesday the House Committee on Education and the Workforce is expected to markup a bill to reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA), which will kick off the first comprehensive congressional higher education debate for the first time in nearly a decade. The House bill under consideration is partisan and Democrats are expected to offer dozens of amendments. The bill has been praised for opening up federal higher education funding to more career-focused programs, but it has been criticized for limiting options available to individuals for loans and repayments.

House: The House convenes at 2:00 p.m. ET to consider five bills under suspension of the rules. The first vote is expected to take place at 6:30 p.m. ET.

Senate: The Senate convenes at 4:00 p.m. ET to resume consideration of the nomination of Leonard Steven Grasz to be a U.S. Circuit Court judge on the 8th Circuit. A vote is expected at 5:30 p.m. ET.

Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee

- Business meeting on the nomination of Stephen Vaden to be General Counsel, USDA. Monday, December 11 at 5:45 p.m.
- Full committee hearing on "Safeguarding American Agriculture in a Globalized World." Wednesday, December 13 at 9:30 a.m.

Senate Armed Services Committee

- Personnel Subcommittee hearing on "Update on Research, Diagnosis, and Treatment for Traumatic Brain Injury / Concussion in Servicemembers." Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.
- Full committee hearing on "U.S. Policy and Strategy in the Middle East." Thursday, December 14 at 10 a.m.

Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee

- Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet Subcommittee hearing on "Digital Decision-Making: The Building Blocks of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence." Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.
- Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast Guard Subcommittee hearing on "National Ocean Policy: Stakeholder Perspectives." Tuesday, December 12 at 2:30 p.m.
- Executive session to consider the below legislation and nominations. Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.
    - S. 2202 "National Transportation Safety Board Reauthorization Act"
    - S. 2200 "National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2018"
    - S.1768 "National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2017,"
    - Nomination of Barry Lee Myers to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
    - Coast Guard promotions

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

- Business meeting (before full committee hearing) to consider the following nominations: Dr. Linda Capuano to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration and Dr. Timothy R. Petty to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior (Water and Science). Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.
- Full committee hearing to examine the permitting processes at DOI and FERC for energy and resource infrastructure projects. Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

- Full committee hearing on "Oversight of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission." Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.

Senate Finance Committee

- Conference committee on H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. Wednesday, December 13 at 2 p.m.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

- Europe and Regional Security Cooperation Subcommittee hearing on "European Energy Security: U.S. Interests and Coercive Russian Diplomacy." Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.
- Africa and Global Health Policy Subcommittee hearing on "The Future of Zimbabwe." Tuesday, December 12 at 2 p.m.
- Full committee hearing on "Using Force: Strategic, Political, and Legal Considerations." Wednesday, December 13 at 9:30 a.m.
- Full committee hearing on the below treaties. Wednesday, December 13 at 2:30 p.m.
    - Extradition Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, signed at Pristina on March 29, 2016 (Treaty Doc.: 115-2); submitted to the Senate January 17, 2017.
    - Extradition Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Serbia, signed at Belgrade on August 15, 2016 (Treaty Doc.: 115-1); submitted to the Senate January 17, 2017.
    - The Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Kiribati on the Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries, signed at Majuro on September 6, 2013, and the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia on the Delimitation of a Maritime Boundary, signed at Koror on August 1, 2014 (Treaty Doc.: 114-13); submitted to the Senate December 9, 2016.
    - The United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade, done at New York on December 12, 2001, and signed by the United States on December 30, 2003 (Treaty Doc.: 114-7); submitted to the Senate February 10, 2016.

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

- Full committee hearing on "The Cost of Prescription Drugs: An Examination of The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Report "Making Medicines Affordable: A National Imperative." Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.
- Full committee hearing on "Implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act: Responding to Mental Health Needs." Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.
- Executive session on the below nominations. Wednesday, December 13, time TBD.
    - Kenneth Marcus to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education
    - Johnny Collett to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education
    - Scott Mugno to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Labor
    - William Beach, Ph.D., to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor
- Full committee hearing (closed) on "New Counterterrorism Guidance." Thursday, December 14 at 10 a.m.

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

- Full committee hearing to consider the below nominations. Thursday, December 14 at 10 a.m.
    - Margaret M. Weichert to be Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget
    - John E. Dupuy to be Inspector General, Office of Personnel Management

Senate Judiciary Committee

- Full committee hearing on “Oversight of the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act.” Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.
- Full committee hearing to consider the below nominations. Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.
    - Elizabeth L. Branch to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit
    - R. Stan Baker to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Georgia
    - Charles Barnes Goodwin to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma
    - Matthew J. Kacsmaryk to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Texas
    - Matthew Spencer Petersen to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia
    - Eli Jeremy Richardson to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee
- Antitrust, Competition and Consumer Rights Subcommittee hearing on “The Consumer Welfare Standard in Antitrust: Outdated or a Harbor in a Sea of Doubt?” Wednesday, December 13 at 2:30 p.m.

House Armed Services Committee

- Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee hearing on “Addressing Physiological Episodes in Fighter, Attack and Training Aircraft.” Wednesday, December 13 at 3:30 p.m.

House Education and the Workforce Committee

- Full committee markup of H.R. 4508 "Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act.” Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.

House Energy and Commerce Committee

- Environment Subcommittee and Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee hearing on “Update on the Corporate Average Fuel Economy Program (CAFE) and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Motor Vehicles.” Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.
- Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee hearing on “Examining Concerns of Patient Brokering and Addiction Treatment Fraud.” Tuesday, December 12 at 10:15 a.m.
- Health Subcommittee hearing on “Examining the Drug Supply Chain.” Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.
- Energy Subcommittee hearing on “The Impacts and Future of North American Energy Trade.” Wednesday, December 13 at 10:15 a.m.

House Financial Services Committee

- Full committee markup of below legislation. Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.
    - H.R. 435 “Credit Access and Inclusion Act of 2017”
    - H.R. 1457 “Making Online Banking Initiation Legal and Easy Act of 2017”
        - An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute expected to be offered by Mr. Tipton is being distributed with this notice. Members wishing to offer amendments are counseled to do so with reference to this text.
    - H.R. 2219 “End Banking for Human Traffickers Act of 2017”
    - H.R. 2319 “Consumer Financial Choice and Capital Markets Protection Act of 2017”
    - H.R. 2948 to amend the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 to provide a temporary license for loan originators transitioning between employers, and for other purposes.
    - H.R. 3179 “Transparency and Accountability for Business Standards Act”

- H.R. 3864 "Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2017"
    - An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute expected to be offered by Mr. Pearce is being distributed with this notice. Members wishing to offer amendments are counseled to do so with reference to this text.
- H.R. 4464 "Common Sense Credit Union Capital Relief Act of 2017"
- H.R. 4519 to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to repeal certain disclosure requirements related to resource extraction, and for other purposes.
- H.R. 4529 "Accelerating Access to Capital Act of 2017"
- H.R. 4537 "International Insurance Standards Act of 2017"
- H.R. 4545 "Financial Institutions Examination Fairness and Reform Act"
- H.R. 4546 "National Securities Exchange Regulatory Parity Act"
- H.R. 4560 "GSE Jumpstart Reauthorization Act of 2017"
- H.R. 4566 "Alleviating Stress Test Burdens to Help Investors Act"

- Monetary Policy and Trade Subcommittee hearing on "Examining the Operations of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS)." Thursday, December 14 at 10 a.m.

House Foreign Affairs Committee

- Asia and Pacific Subcommittee hearing on "Cambodia's Descent: Policies to Support Democracy and Human Rights." Tuesday, December 12 at 12 p.m.
- Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations Subcommittee hearing on "Protecting North Korean Refugees." Tuesday, December 12 at 2 p.m.
- Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Subcommittee hearing on "The Future of the North American Free Trade Agreement." Tuesday, December 12 at 2 p.m.
- Full committee markup of below legislation. Thursday, December 14 at 9:30 a.m.
    - H.R. 2219 "End Banking for Human Traffickers Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 2646 "United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Extension Act"

House Homeland Security Committee

- Full committee markup of below legislation. Wednesday, December 13 at 9:30 a.m.
    - H.R. 1486 "Securing American Non-Profit Organizations Against Terrorism Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4433 "Securing Department of Homeland Security Firearms Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4553 "Terrorist Screening and Targeting Review Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4555 "DHS Interagency Counterterrorism Task Force Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4559 "Global Aviation System Security Reform Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4561 "Security Assessment Feasibility for Equipment Testing and Evaluation of Capabilities for our Homeland Act"
    - H.R. 4564 "Post-Caliphate Threat Assessment Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4567 "DHS Overseas Personnel Enhancement Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4569 "Counterterrorism Information Sharing Improvement Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4577 "Domestic Explosives Detection Canine Capacity Building Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4578 "Counter Terrorist Network Act"
    - H.R. 4581 "Screening and Vetting Passenger Exchange Act of 2017"

House Judiciary Committee

- Full committee markup of below legislation. Tuesday, December 2 at 10 a.m.
    - H.R. 1865 "Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act"
    - H.R. 2595 "Strengthening the Department of Homeland Security Secure Mail Initiative Act"
- Full committee oversight hearing with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.

House Natural Resources Committee

- Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee hearing on "Examining Consequences of America's Growing Dependence on Foreign Minerals." Tuesday, December 12 at 2 p.m.
- Full committee markup of below legislation. Tuesday, December 12 at 5 p.m. and Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.
    - H.R. 200 "Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act"
    - H.R. 1157 to clarify the United States interest in certain submerged lands in the area of the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes
    - H.R. 1349 to amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes
    - H.R. 1350 to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes;
    - H.R. 1675 "National Landslide Preparedness Act"
    - H.R. 2888 "Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Establishment Act"
    - H.R. 3400 "Recreation Not Red-Tape Act"
    - H.R. 3588 "RED SNAPPER Act"
    - H.R. 4033 "National Geologic Mapping Act Reauthorization Act";
    - H.R. 4264 "Hyde Park Land Conveyance Act"
    - H.R. 4266 "Acadia National Park Boundary Clarification Act"
    - H.R. 4465 "Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4475 "National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System Act"
    - H.R. 4568 "Enhancing Geothermal Production on Federal Lands Act"
    - S. 825 "Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium Land Transfer Act of 2017"
    - S. 1285 "Oregon Tribal Economic Development Act."
- Federal Lands Subcommittee hearing H.R. 4558 "Grand Staircase Escalante Enhancement Act." Thursday, December 14 at 9:30 a.m.

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee

- Full committee hearing on "Oversight of the Bureau of Prisons and Inmate Reentry." Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.

House Rules Committee

- Full committee meeting on below legislation. Tuesday, December 12 at 3 p.m.
    - H.R. 1638 "Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act"
    - H.R. 2396 "Privacy Notification Technical Clarification Act
    - H.R. 4015 "Corporate Governance Reform and Transparency Act of 2017"
    - H.R. 4324 "Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act"

House Science, Space and Technology Committee

- Research and Technology Subcommittee hearing on "Head Health Challenge: Preventing Head Trauma from Football Field to Shop Floor to Battlefield." Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.
- Energy Subcommittee hearing on "Advancing Solar Energy Technology: Research Trumps Deployment." Wednesday, December 13 at 2 p.m.

House Small Business Committee

- Agriculture, Energy and Trade Subcommittee hearing on "Bridging the Entrepreneurial Gap: Addressing Barriers to Small Business Formation and Growth." Monday, December 11 at 9:30 a.m.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

- Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management Subcommittee hearing on "The Opioid Epidemic in Appalachia: Addressing Hurdles to Economic Development in the Region." Tuesday, December 12 at 10 a.m.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee

- Economic Opportunity Subcommittee hearing on "An Update on the Implementation of the Forever GI Bill, the Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017." Tuesday, December 12 at 2 p.m.
- Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee hearing on "Pre-Discharge Claims Programs: Are VA and DOD Effectively Serving Separating Military Personnel." Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.

House Ways and Means Committee

- Oversight Subcommittee hearing on "Taxpayer Experience with the Internal Revenue Service." Wednesday, December 13 at 10 a.m.

Michigan Newsmakers

MLive—December 7th, 2017

Lawmakers want larger EPA role in Michigan PFAS problem

A bipartisan group of Congressional delegates from Michigan is asking the Environmental Protection Agency to take a stronger hand in the investigation into toxic fluorochemical contamination at 28 sites in 14 communities around the state.

Rep. Fred Upton (MI-06)

Herald Palladium—December 7th, 2017

Upton named to tax bill committee

U.S. Rep. Fred Upton will serve on the conference committee tasked with merging the Senate and House tax bills.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow

The Washington Times—December 7th, 2017

Schumer announces Senate Democratic conferees for tax legislation

Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer on Thursday announced the seven senators who will represent the Democratic caucus on the bicameral conference committee tasked with reconciling the $1.4 trillion tax-cut plans passed out of the House and Senate.

Latest Developments

Government Avoids Shutdown with Signing of Continuing Resolution

On Friday President Trump signed H.J.Res. 123, a continuing resolution that funds the government through Dec. 22. Yesterday, the House and Senate approved the resolution, with the House passing the bill by a 235-193 vote and the Senate by a 81-14 vote. Among other things, the bill extends the authorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) through Dec. 22 as well.

Senator Cantwell Introduces Bill on Small Vessel Discharge Exemption

On Thursday Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) introduced the Fishing and Small Vessel Relief Act (S. 2194). The bill would extend for three years the exemption for fishing vessels and vessels under 79 feet from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permitting requirements for incidental discharges. The current exemption is set to expire on December 18. In May, the Senate Commerce Committee passed the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2017 (S. 1129) which includes provisions (Title VIII, the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act) which would set uniform standards for commercial vessel ballast water discharges and infringe on states' rights to set water quality standards. A fishing and small vessel exemption is also included in those bills.

EPA Releases List of Superfund Sites

On Friday the EPA announced a list of twenty-one Superfund sites flagged by Administrator Pruitt for immediate and intense action. The Superfund program was established to investigate and clean up hazardous waste sites and convert them into community resources. Administrator Pruitt targeted sites based on the Superfund Task Force's recommendations released this summer, though the EPA affirms it will continue work at all sites.

FERC Granted Extension on Grid Resiliency Pricing Proposal

On Friday Secretary Perry granted newly installed Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Chairman Kevin McIntyre's request for a 30-day extension to take action on DOE's proposed rule on grid resiliency pricing. Proposed in October, the rule would stem retirements of coal-fired and nuclear power plants and follows recommendations in DOE's recently-released grid reliability study. The extension requires FERC to take action or issue an interim final rule by January 10.

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