

Week Ahead

Legislative Focus: Tax Bill and Government Funding
With one week to go before the end of the Congressional year, Congress looks to pass both a sweeping tax reform package, as well as another continuing resolution to keep the government open until mid-January.

Late on Friday House and Senate Republicans released the final text for H.R.1, legislation to extensively reform the federal tax code for the first time in over thirty years. The final bill would cut the corporate tax rate to 21 percent and convert the long-standing deduction for state and local taxes to a would be capped deduction of $10,000 for property taxes plus either sales or income taxes. The final bill does maintain the exemption for private activity bonds. Both the House and the Senate are expected to pass the legislation early this week, sending it to the President for signature before Christmas.

Immediately following passage of the tax bill, the House and Senate will turn their attention to keep the government open passed December 22nd. The House and Senate have released competing bills to keep the government open. The House is expected to send the Senate their fiscal year 2018 defense spending bill, with a continuing resolution that would fund other agencies at fiscal year 2017 levels through January 19th and include a five-year extension of the Child Health Insurance Program. The Senate has indicated that they lack the 60 votes needed to pass the bill, if it does not include similar non-defense increases.

House: The House convenes at 2:00 p.m. ET to consider eight 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 3:00 p.m. ET to resume consideration of the nomination of J. Paul Compton Jr. to be General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Owen West to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense. A vote is expected at 5:30 p.m. ET.

Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee

- Executive session to vote on the below nominations. Tuesday, December 19 at 10 a.m.
    - The Honorable Scott Garrett to be President of the Export-Import Bank
    - Kimberly A. Reed to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank

- The Honorable Spencer Bachus III to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank; reappointment as a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank;
- Judith Delzoppo Pryor to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank
- Claudia Slacik to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank; reappointment as a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank
- Mark L. Greenblatt to be Inspector General of the Export-Import Bank.

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

- Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee hearing on "Freight Movement: Assessing Where We Are Now and Where We Need to Go." Wednesday, December 20 at 10:30 a.m.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee

- Full committee hearing on "U.S. Strategy for Syria after ISIS." Tuesday, December 19 at 10 a.m.
- Full committee hearing to consider the below nominations. Tuesday, December 19 at 2 p.m.
  - Peter Hendrick Vrooman to be U.S. Ambassador to Republic of Rwanda
  - Joel Danies to be U.S. Ambassador to Gabonese Republic and Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

Senate Rules and Administration

- Full committee hearing to consider S.Res. 355, an original resolution to improve the procedures for the consideration of nominations in the Senate. Tuesday, December 19.

House Administration Committee

- Full committee markup on "Implementing Mandatory Anti-Harassment, Anti-Discrimination Training Guidelines." Tuesday, December 19 at 12:15 p.m.

House Education and the Workforce Committee

- Full committee hearing on "Examining the Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Education." Witnesses include The Honorable Betsy DeVos, Secretary, Department of Education. Wednesday, December 20 at 2 p.m.

House Rules Committee

- Full committee meeting on H.R. 3312, Systemic Risk Designation Improvement Act of 2017, and the Conference report to H.R. 1. Monday, December 18 at 5 p.m.
- Full committee meeting on Senate Amendment to H.R. 1370, Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017. Tuesday, December 19 at 3 p.m.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee

- Full committee markup of H.R. 4242, the VA Care in the Communication Act. Tuesday, December 19 at 10 a.m.

Michigan Newsmakers

Rep. Bill Huizenga (MI-02)
Holland Sentinel—December 12th, 2017
Huizenga small business bill approved by the House
Legislation introduced by Rep. Bill Huizenga, R-Zeeland, regarding small business mergers and sales was unanimously approved by the U.S. House.

Latest Developments

Unified Agenda Gives Insight to 2018 Rulemaking

On Thursday the White House's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) released a report outlining FY2017 Administrative actions and actions agencies intend to take in the next year. The Regulatory Plan and Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory actions (the "Unified Agenda") highlights the Trump Administration's actions to-date, including: issuing 67 deregulatory actions and three new regulatory actions for an estimated $570 million in regulatory cost-savings a year. In FY2018 the Administration expects future deregulatory actions to save an estimated $687 million in regulatory cost-savings a year. Click here to view specific regulatory action of interest to states. The White House's statement, fact sheet and OIRA's website are linked.

DOE Announces Reorganization Efforts

On Friday Secretary of Energy Rick Perry announced the reorganization of the Department of Energy (DOE). The Secretary has the authority under the DOE Organization Act to organize the Department to meet current needs and advance the Administration's priorities. Secretary Perry stated the reorganization will support DOE goals, including energy dominance, energy and national security, and improving environmental management outcomes. It will also support research and technology innovation. Under the plan, DOE will split the office of the Under Secretary for Science and Energy into two new offices: the office of the Under Secretary of Energy and the office of the Under Secretary for Science. Additionally, it will replace the Office of Energy Policy and Systems Analysis with an Office of Policy, while maintaining the office of the Under Secretary for Nuclear Security and National Nuclear Security (NNSA) Administration. Finally, the Deputy Secretary of Energy will adopt some responsibilities currently managed by the office of Under Secretary for Management and Performance.