

Week Ahead

Legislative Focus: Syrian Refugees, Budget Outlook

The Senate returns today to vote on the nomination of Wilhelmina Marie Wright as judge for U.S. District Court in Minnesota. On Wednesday, the chamber is scheduled to take a cloture vote on a motion to proceed to H.R. 4038, a bill the House passed last year regarding Syrian refugees. The bill would require the heads of the FBI and Department of Homeland Security, as well as the national intelligence director, to unanimously certify a Syrian or Iraqi refugee seeking asylum would not pose a threat to security. The House passed the bill, 289-137, on November 19.

This morning the Congressional Budget Office is scheduled to release a summary of its annual *Budget and Economic Outlook*. The new tax and spending baseline is expected to show a substantial increase in the deficit, perhaps $1 trillion or more, over the next decade. The final report will be released Jan. 25.

On Wednesday, several Senate committees hold hearings of interest to states: Attorney General Loretta Lynch will testify before Senate appropriators on the President's recent executive actions on guns; the Agriculture Committee holds a markup on draft legislation reauthorizing federal child nutrition programs; and the Environmental and Public Works Committee will mark up a bill concerning hunting and fishing access on federal land.

Senate Floor: Convenes at 2 p.m. and is expected to hold a vote at 5:30 p.m. on a judicial nomination.

House Floor: In recess until next week, when it reconvenes Monday, Jan. 25.

Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee

- Full committee markup of the "Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act of 2016." Wednesday, January 20 at 10 a.m.

Senate Appropriations Committee

- Commerce, Justice and Science, and Related Agencies subcommittee hearing on the Justice Department's role in implementing new executive actions related to gun control. Wednesday, January 20 at 10:30 a.m.

Senate Armed Services Committee

- Full committee hearing on the nomination of Eric Fanning to be secretary of the Army. Thursday, January 21 at 9:30 a.m.

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

- Full committee hearing on near-term outlook for energy and commodity markets. Witnesses include, Adam Sieminski, administer of the U.S. Energy Information Administration Tuesday, January 19 at 10 a.m.

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

- Full committee markup of pending legislation, including S.659, the "Bipartisan Sportsman's Act of 2015"; S.1024, the "Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2015." Wednesday, January 20 at 10 a.m.

Senate Finance Committee

- Full committee hearings titled "CO-OPs: A Review of the Financial and Oversight Controls" Thursday, January 21 at 9:30 a.m.

Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

- Full committee hearing titled "Improving the Federal Response to Challenges in Mental Health Care in America." Wednesday, January 20 at 10 a.m.

Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

- Full committee hearing titled "Inside the Mind of ISIS: Understanding Its Goals and Ideology to Better Protect the Homeland." Wednesday, January 20 at 10 a.m.

Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

- Full committee hearing titled "VA's Transformation Strategy: Examining the Plan to Modernize VA." Thursday, January 21 at 10 a.m.

House Natural Resources Committee

- Federal Lands Subcommittee field hearing on "Ensuring Local Input, Legal Consistency and Multi-Use Resource Management in St. George BLM Planning." Friday, January 22 at 12 p.m. EST, St. George, UT.

House Veterans Affairs Committee

- Economic Opportunity subcommittee hearing titled "Finding Solutions for Veterans Homelessness in Southern California." Wednesday, January 20 at 5:30 p.m., Riverside, CA.

Michigan Newsmakers

Rep. Justin Amash (MI-03)
The Hill—January 14th, 2016
Amash Bill Would Repeal New Cybersecurity Law
Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.) on Wednesday introduced a bill to repeal a major cybersecurity bill signed into law just weeks ago.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow
The Hill—January 19th, 2016
Health Groups Urge Senate to Reauthorize Healthy School Meal Standards
Health groups are calling the Senate bill to reauthorize the healthy school meal standards championed by First Lady Michelle Obama a compromise everyone can live with.

Latest Developments

Senate Introduces Bipartisan Child Nutrition Bill

Yesterday the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee released the Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act (ICNIAA), a bipartisan bill to reauthorize federal child and school nutrition programs. The last child nutrition authorization, The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, expired last Sept. 2015. States and districts encountered increased costs, logistical issues and administrative burdens during implementation of the 2010 law. ICNIAA changes the primary grantee for the $22.1 billion school lunch program from "state educational agencies" to "authorized state agencies," allowing governors more flexibility to coordinate state and federal child nutrition efforts. It also shifts the period that states must inspect schools to ensure they are in compliance with federal child nutrition rules—from every 3 years to every 5 years. That change would end a shortened timeframe enacted by the 2010 law that carried considerable costs for states. The Senate Agriculture Committee will mark up ICNIAA Wednesday at 10 a.m. ET.

Education Department, HHS Release Healthy Students Toolkit

On Friday, the departments of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS) sent a letter to governors and state health and education officials outlining the critical role health care coverage and services play in ensuring that all students are ready and able to learn. The departments also highlight the release of a new toolkit, which details five high-impact opportunities for states and local school districts to support stronger communities through collaboration among health and education systems. The toolkit offers resources and guidance for states to increase access to health services and insurance through school-based health centers and to promote healthy environments through nutrition and physical health supports. In addition, it recommends better health care access for at-risk children. For more information on the letter and to access the full toolkit, click here.

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