



Congress Returns From Recess to Address Wide-Ranging Legislative Agenda

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Congress reconvened early this week following the Fourth of July recess, and made progress on one major issue – final passage of a financial regulatory reform bill – to kick off the July work period. The next stretch of the 2010 session will be relatively brief, as the House is scheduled to begin its summer recess on July 31 and the Senate is planning to recess again on August 7. The summer recess will extend through September 12 for both chambers.

H.R. 4173, the “Restoring American Financial Stability Act,” was approved by the Senate on Thursday by a vote of 60 to 39. The House approved this legislation on June 30, and the President will sign it into law next week. Looking forward, congressional leaders are now focused on trying to send a supplemental appropriations bill and an extension of unemployment benefits to the President’s desk in the next few weeks. A Senate vote on Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan is also on the short-term agenda. Other legislative priorities include the annual appropriations process, energy legislation, a defense authorization bill, proposals relating to the Gulf oil spill, small business lending, and campaign finance disclosure.

Senate leaders also are considering options for revisiting the extenders/jobs debate. An extension of increased federal matching funds for state Medicaid programs may be part of this effort, although this priority continues to face obstacles because of concerns about deficit spending. The nation’s governors are continuing to urge congressional action on the Medicaid funding issue.

Congressional Hearings

A number of Senate and House committees will hold hearings on health-related issues next week:

- The House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Health will hold a July 20 hearing on “Efforts to Promote the Adoption and Meaningful Use of Health Information Technology.”



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- The Senate HELP Committee will hold a July 21 hearing on “Treating Rare and Neglected Pediatric Diseases: Promoting the Development of New Treatments and Cures.”
- The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will hold a July 22 hearing on “Direct-To-Consumer Genetic Testing and the Consequences to the Public Health.”
- The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on State, Local, and Private Sector Preparedness and Integration will hold a July 22 hearing on “A Review of Disaster Medical Preparedness: Improving Coordination and Collaboration in the Delivery of Medical Assistance During Disasters.”

PPACA Amendments Considered During Markup of Labor-HHS Appropriations Bill

On July 15, by a vote of 11 to 5, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education approved a fiscal year 2011 appropriations bill for federal programs and agencies within its jurisdiction.

Rep. Todd Tiahrt (R-KS), the subcommittee’s ranking Republican member, offered several amendments on issues relating to the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” (PPACA). The following amendments offered by Tiahrt, all of which were defeated, would have:

- repealed PPACA and replaced it with an alternative set of health reforms;
- repealed the individual coverage requirement;
- established a statutory prohibition against the use of PPACA funds to pay for abortion services; and
- established a series of requirements aimed at preventing federal funds for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) from being used to provide health coverage to illegal immigrants.

The spending bill approved by the subcommittee would appropriate \$76.77 billion in fiscal year 2011 for programs and agencies within HHS. This represents a 5.2 percent increase over the amount appropriated last year.



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