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Congressional Leaders Eye Next Round of Legislative Priorities Following Key Bill Signings

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This week, President Obama signed into law two bills that were the focus of extensive debate in Congress in recent months: H.R. 4173, the "Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act," and H.R. 4213, the "Unemployment Compensation Extension Act."

Now that these bills have been finalized, congressional leaders are focused on passing a supplemental appropriations bill, H.R. 4899, that will provide funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. This bill also may address a short list of domestic spending priorities and unrelated legislative provisions, although that remains uncertain at this time. An earlier version of this bill, approved by the House on July 1, included provisions that would prevent "pay for delay" settlements that delay the entry of generic drugs into the marketplace. The leadership is planning to finalize the supplemental spending bill by the end of next week, when the House is scheduled to begin its summer recess. The Senate is planning to begin its summer recess on August 7.

Before recessing, the House is planning to take action next week on two of the annual appropriations bills for fiscal year 2011: the "Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act" and the "Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act." In the Senate, short-term legislative priorities include a small business lending bill and a campaign finance disclosure bill. A Senate vote on Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan also is anticipated before the recess.

House Subcommittee Approves Health Bills By Voice Vote

On July 22, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health approved eight health-related bills addressing issues that are mostly non-controversial. The subcommittee approved each of the following bills by voice vote.



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H.R. 903, the “Dental Emergency Responder Act,” proposes a series of changes aimed at enhancing the role of dentists and dental facilities in emergency response plans supported by federal grants.

H.R. 3470, the “NEWBORN Act,” would establish a federal grant program to support the implementation of infant mortality pilot programs.

H.R. 5756, the “TRAIN Act,” would authorize federal grants to support a national training initiative to improve services for children and adults with autism and to address unmet needs related to autism spectrum disorder.

H.R. 1745, the “Family Health Care Accessibility Act,” would deem health professional volunteers at community health centers to be considered employees of the Public Health Service for purposes of receiving liability protections.

H.R. 3199, the “Emergency Medic Transition Act,” would direct the HHS Secretary to award grants to states to provide for the expedited training and licensing, as emergency medical technicians, of veterans who received training as such technicians while serving in the Armed Forces.

H.R. 2923, the “Combat Methamphetamine Enhancement Act,” would require all regulated retail sellers of certain chemical products used to make methamphetamine to submit to the Attorney General a self-certification stating that they understand and agree to comply with the requirements of the Controlled Substances Act.

H.R. 5710, the “National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Reauthorization Act,” would reauthorize an HHS grant program that assists the states in establishing, improving, and operating prescription drug monitoring programs, with the goal of preventing the overuse and illegal diversion of drugs.

H.R. 5809, the “Safe Drug Disposal Act,” proposes a series of changes addressing the safe disposal of unused prescription drugs: establishing a public education and outreach campaign to increase awareness of drug take-back programs; allowing long-term care facilities to dispose of controlled substances on behalf of their patients; and allowing consumers to deliver unused drugs for disposal purposes to



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persons who dispose of such drugs in accordance with regulations issued by the Attorney General to prevent the diversion of controlled substances.

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