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CONTENTS
CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
House Leaders Following Up on Pledge to Cut FY11 Domestic Discretionary Spending  NEW
House Appropriations Subcommittee Chairs Named  UPDATED
OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES
Senators to Introduce New Patent Reform Bill  NEW
EXECUTIVE BRANCH
President Orders Government-Wide Review of Regulations

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

Congress is not in session today. The House is in recess until Monday, January 24; the Senate did not meet this week and is in recess until Tuesday, January 25.

Earlier this week, the House approved legislation to repeal last year’s health care overhaul (H.R. 2) and a House resolution (H. Res. 9) instructing specific House committees to develop alternative health care reform legislation. The repeal vote was largely along partisan lines, with three Democrats joining the Republican majority in a vote of 245 to 189. Because Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) has said the Senate will not consider the House-passed bill, House Republican leaders plan to work to repeal or defund individual portions of the current law.

Next week, the House is expected to vote on a resolution calling on House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) to limit non-security discretionary spending for the rest of FY11 to FY08 levels “or less.” House Republican leaders expect to hold the vote in advance of President Obama’s State of the Union address Tuesday night, January 25. As noted by The Hill, Chairman Ryan already has the authority to stipulate the FY11 spending number in the House under a provision of the House rules package adopted earlier this month. (See budget item below.)

The Senate schedule for next week has not been announced at this writing.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

HOUSE LEADERS FOLLOWING UP ON PLEDGE TO CUT FY11 DOMESTIC DISCRETIONARY SPENDING  NEW
The House next week will vote on a resolution to reduce FY11 non-security discretionary spending to FY08 levels, and news reports continue to indicate that House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) is focused on cuts of about $60 billion in the remaining portion of FY11, with additional cuts in FY12. Defense, homeland security, and veterans affairs would be exempt from the cuts. CQToday reports that Senate Democrats “have called for modest spending restraints, and that puts them on a collision course” with the House Republican majority.

House Republican leaders last year pledged to cut $100 billion from the budget in FY11, a figure that Politico reports would have capped non-security discretionary spending at $378.4 billion, or $100 billion below the President’s FY11 budget request and $84 billion below current levels. That promise, however, was predicated on the expectation that Congress would approve a full-year continuing resolution for FY11. But last year’s Democratic-led Congress was unable to approve a full-year bill and settled for a continuing resolution that expires on March 4. While Chairman Ryan has reduced the proposed cuts in FY11 because of the shortened fiscal year, the next CR is expected to include not only prospective cuts but also funding rescissions, which take back already appropriated funds. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) said January 19 that he planned to “craft the largest series of spending cuts in the history of Congress.”

Complicating the situation for House leaders, the conservative Republican Study Committee (RSC) has proposed cutting non-security discretionary spending in FY11 back to FY08 levels, with further cuts in FY12 to FY06 levels. Funding would be held at the FY06 levels through 2021. While the sources of much of the proposed cut in spending are unspecified, the plan, which has received considerable press attention, does provide some detailed program cuts and eliminations. It would not only drastically reduce federal spending and agency staffing broadly but also eliminate a number of agencies and programs of importance to higher education, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and applied energy programs at the Department of Energy. CQToday notes that while House Republican leaders “did not rush to embrace the proposal,” some 165 House Republicans count themselves as RSC members. The Washington Post adds that the group, which includes 73 freshmen, many of whom were elected with tea party support, represents more than two-thirds of House Republicans.

Politico reports that if budgets for non-security agencies and programs were cut to their FY08 levels in FY11, cuts for some would have to be greater than the overall cut of 18 percent. The maximum Pell Grant could drop by 24 percent from current levels, according to the publication. For that reason, House appropriators might make adjustments rather than impose an across-the-board reduction. House Appropriations Committee member Steven LaTourette (R-OH) said, “Message is important, but this has real life consequences, and that’s why I think you have do to it program by program. You can’t just take a hatchet to things.”

**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRS NAMED UPDATED**

House Democrats on January 19 announced the Democratic members of the 12 House appropriations subcommittees. House Republicans announced the subcommittee chairs on January 7.
The committee chairs and ranking members for the committee and subcommittees will be:

Hal Rogers (R-KY), chair, House Appropriations Committee
Norm Dicks (D-WA), ranking member

**Agriculture:** Jack Kingston (R-GA), chair; Sam Farr (D-CA), ranking member
**Commerce-Justice-Science:** Frank Wolf (R-VA), chair; Chaka Fattah (D-PA), ranking member
**Defense:** Bill Young (R-FL), chair; Norm Dicks (D-WA), ranking member
**Energy and Water:** Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ), chair; Pete Visclosky (D-IN), ranking member
**Financial Services:** Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), chair; Jose Serrano (D-NY), ranking member
**Homeland Security:** Robert Aderholt (R-AL), chair; David Price (D-NC), ranking member
**Interior:** Mike Simpson (R-ID), chair; Jim Moran (D-VA), ranking member
**Labor-HHS-Education:** Dennis Rehberg (R-MT), chair; Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), ranking member
**Legislative Branch:** Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), chair; Mike Honda (D-CA), ranking member
**Military Construction-Veterans:** John Culberson (R-TX), chair; Sanford Bishop (D-GA), ranking member
**State-Foreign Operations:** Kay Granger (R-TX), chair; Nita Lowey (D-NY), ranking member
**Transportation-HUD:** Tom Latham (R-IA), chair; John Olver (D-MA), ranking member

**OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES**

**SENATORS TO INTRODUCE NEW PATENT REFORM BILL  NEW**

Leaders of the Senate Judiciary Committee will introduce patent reform legislation next Tuesday, January 25, when the Senate reconvenes. The measure, which will be the first bill the panel considers, will be introduced by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT), incoming Committee Ranking Member Charles Grassley (R-IA), and Committee Member Orrin Hatch (R-UT).

The provisions in the bill of particular interest to the university community are identical to those in last year’s version of the bill, which the university community strongly supported.

According to a [statement](#) issued by Senator Leahy, the new bill “mirrors key improvements to the long-pending legislation that was announced last March as part of a compromise reached by the bill’s lead sponsors with then-Judiciary Committee Ranking Member Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ), and others…The legislation remains based on the original version introduced in the 109th Congress by House Judiciary Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) and Congressman Howard Berman (D-CA).” Senator Leahy’s statement includes a [summary](#) of the bill and a link to the bill text.

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH**
President Obama issued an Executive Order on January 18 directing federal agencies to re-examine and streamline federal regulations. The order was accompanied by memoranda on regulatory flexibility and regulatory compliance.

The President discussed the initiative the same day in a Wall Street Journal op-ed in which he said he aims to create a “21st-century regulatory system.” He wrote, “…we are seeking more affordable, less intrusive means to achieve the same ends—giving careful consideration to benefits and costs. This means writing rules with more input from experts, businesses and ordinary citizens….We're also getting rid of absurd and unnecessary paperwork requirements that waste time and money. We're looking at the system as a whole to make sure we avoid excessive, inconsistent and redundant regulation.”