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CONTENTS
CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW
BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS
Efforts Continue to Bridge Differences over Budget and Deficit Issues  NEW
FY12 Appropriations Markups Could Begin Soon  NEW
OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES
Small Business Bill Stalls in Senate, House Panel Marks up Its Bill  UPDATED

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

The Senate did not meet today and will reconvene on Monday, May 9. The House met in pro forma session today and will reconvene on Tuesday, May 10.

On Monday, the Senate will consider the nomination of James Cole as Deputy Attorney General. At this writing, the House schedule for next week is not available.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

EFFORTS CONTINUE TO BRIDGE DIFFERENCES OVER BUDGET AND DEFICIT ISSUES  NEW

Jockeying over the federal budget and deficit reduction continues in Washington, with multiple efforts to find areas of bipartisan agreement and/or score political points in the run-up to next year’s elections. At issue, and intertwined, are the federal budget in FY12 and beyond and the necessary increase in the debt ceiling.

Vice President Joe Biden convened a bipartisan group of six House and Senate leaders yesterday to look for areas of commonality. The New York Times reports that both Republicans and Democrats have indicated that any budget compromise “is likely to be based less on specific policy changes than on proposals setting deficit-reduction targets for coming years. Those targets would be combined with triggers to make automatic cuts in spending — and tax increases, in Democrats’ view — if the targets are exceeded.”
Also in play, the Senate bipartisan “Gang of Six” still hopes to offer a comprehensive, long-term debt reduction package that can be widely supported. But the Senators have yet to announce an agreement.

On the FY12 budget, the House on April 15 adopted its FY12 budget resolution (H. Con. Res. 34), which reflected the deficit cutting priorities of House Republicans. Among other provisions, the budget resolution cuts overall discretionary spending by $30 billion from the level provided in the FY11 continuing resolution (CR), supports tax reform and no added taxes, and calls for turning Medicare into a voucher program.

CQ.com reports that Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad (D-ND) is readying an FY12 budget resolution for mark up in his panel next week, but “the fate of the blueprint—and whether it, or something else, is debated on the Senate floor—will depend on what happens in the debt reduction talks.” Various news reports indicate that Senator Conrad’s proposal will be based on the plan offered by last year’s Simpson-Bowles deficit reduction commission, and will include savings in defense and additional tax revenues.

**FY12 APPROPRIATIONS MARKUPS COULD BEGIN SOON**  
**NEW**

The House and Senate appropriations committees continue work on their respective FY12 funding processes, though the chances of a House-Senate agreement on a final FY12 budget resolution “still appear remote,” reports CQ.com.

House appropriations subcommittees could begin moving their FY12 funding bills as early as May 23, says the publication, based on the discretionary funding cap the House approved last month in its FY12 budget resolution. As noted above, that cap is $30 billion below the level approved in the final FY11 continuing resolution. The bills funding veterans programs and the Department of Homeland Security are likely to move first.

In the Senate, appropriators do not have an overall discretionary spending cap to work with, but they remain optimistic they can move quickly once an overall spending number is approved. CQ.com reports that even if the full Senate is unable to adopt an FY12 budget resolution, appropriators could begin markups based on a budget resolution approved by the Senate Budget Committee.

**OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES**

**SMALL BUSINESS BILL STALLS IN SENATE, HOUSE PANEL MARKS UP ITS BILL**  
**UPDATED**

The Senate on May 4 rejected an effort to invoke cloture on the small business research bill (S. 493) that has been mired down in the Senate since March 15 over a number of unrelated amendments. The vote to invoke cloture and move to final consideration of the bill was 52 to 44, eight short of the 60 votes needed to cut off debate. Senate Small Business Committee Chairwoman Mary Landrieu (D-LA) said in a statement in response to the vote, “The door may have shut today for reauthorization of programs that have given us companies that are the envy
of the world, like Qualcomm, Sonicare, and iRobot, but rest assured at some point, we will find a way to get this done.”

The small business bill would reauthorize the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs. AAU supports reauthorization of the programs but opposes the increase in the small business research set-aside included in the Senate bill.

The House Science, Space and Technology Committee on May 4 marked up its version of the bill, H.R. 1425, which does not include an increase in the set-aside. AAU sent a letter to committee members earlier that day expressing support for the measure. During the markup, the panel approved an amendment offered by Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) to create a new proof of concept pilot program at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). AAU and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities supported the amendment.

CQ.com reports that the SBIR and STTR programs have been operating under a series of extensions since their legislative authorizations expired in 2008 and 2009, respectively. The current extension (P.L. 112-1) expires on May 31.

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