October 7, 2011

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

Congress Approves Six-Week Continuing Resolution
Senate Leader Hopes to Consider Three FY12 Funding Bills This Month
Innovation Task Force Urges Deficit Committee to Sustain Nation’s Innovation Path  NEW

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Both chambers met in pro forma session today, with no legislative business.

When the House returns after the Columbus Day holiday on Tuesday, October 11, it will continue consideration of a bill to restrict certain regulatory activities of the Environmental Protection Agency (H.R. 2250).

When the Senate returns on October 11, it will consider a judicial confirmation, continue consideration of a bill dealing with currency exchange rates (S. 1619), and vote on a cloture motion to proceed to a version of the President’s jobs proposal (S. 1660).

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

CONGRESS APPROVES SIX-WEEK CONTINUING RESOLUTION

The House on October 4 approved and sent to the President for signature the six-week continuing resolution (CR) that will keep the government running through November 18. The House voted 352 to 66 to pass the measure, which the Senate had approved last week. Fifty-three Republicans and 13 Democrats voted against the CR.

The CR includes $2.65 billion for FY12 emergency disaster assistance, without offsets from other spending. Additional emergency disaster assistance could be added later in the year, also without offsets, because the Budget Control Act that was agreed to in August provides for up to $11.3 billion in additional emergency disaster relief aid in FY12.

The measure also extends through November 18 the authorization for the Small Business Innovation Research Program, the Small Business Technology Transfer Program, and the Commercialization Pilot Program.
SENATE LEADER HOPES TO CONSIDER THREE FY12 FUNDING BILLS THIS MONTH

CQToday reports that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) hopes to take three FY12 appropriations bills to the Senate floor this month in an effort to give Senate Democrats “some extra leverage in the omnibus appropriations negotiations with the GOP House.” The three bills are Agriculture, Transportation-HUD, and Commerce-Justice-Science, the latter of which includes funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) and NASA. The publication reports that the three bills were chosen because they were reported from the Senate Appropriations Committee with strong bipartisan support.

Staff-level discussions on an FY12 omnibus appropriations package have begun, according to the publication, “but there remains only an outside chance that the measure will get to the president’s desk before the [continuing resolution] taking effect tomorrow runs out.” The CR, as noted above, lasts through November 18.

So far, the House has approved six of its 12 FY12 appropriations bills and the Senate has approved just one.

INNOVATION TASK FORCE URGES DEFICIT COMMITTEE TO SUSTAIN NATION’S INNOVATION PATH

The Task Force on American Innovation, a university-industry group in which AAU participates, wrote to members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction on October 6, urging members to consider the important role of research and education in driving innovation and productivity.

The Task Force letter says that all parts of the federal budget should be placed on the table for deficit reduction. It notes that nearly all deficit reduction measures so far have focused on discretionary spending, where research funding is based. The letter concludes: “We urge you to make recommendations that, over the long run, will enable this generation to leave future generations a legacy not of excessive debt and limited prospects but of renewed technological leadership and economic opportunity.”

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