CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

The Senate did not meet today. The chamber will reconvene on Monday, January 28, when it will begin consideration of the House-passed supplemental appropriations bill for Hurricane Sandy relief (H.R. 152).

The House met in pro forma session today, with no votes, and is scheduled to return to session the following week, on Monday, February 4. The legislative program has not been yet been announced.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

HOUSE APPROves BILL TO SUSPEND Debt CEILING UNTIL MID-May  NEW

Under pressure to avoid the threat of a government default, the House on January 23 approved legislation (H.R. 325) to suspend the debt ceiling until May 18. The measure would effectively postpone any confrontation over the ceiling on the national debt until after Congress deals with the scheduled implementation of the across-the-board spending cuts under the sequester on March 1 and expiration of the FY13 continuing resolution (CR) on March 27. The Senate is expected to approve the measure, and the White House has said the President will not oppose the bill.

The House measure includes a provision that requires the House and Senate each to approve an FY14 budget resolution by April 15 or have its members face a suspension of their pay. The expressed goal is to prod the Senate to pass a budget resolution, which it has not done for four years.
Meanwhile, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), the new chair of the Senate Budget Committee, has announced her intention to move an FY14 budget resolution. On January 24, she released a 12-page memorandum to her Democratic colleagues laying out what Congress and the Administration have already done to reduce the deficit over the past two years, as well as the consequences of the three “cliffs” still ahead: allowing the budget sequester to be implemented, not extending the CR, and not raising the debt ceiling. The memorandum calculates that Congress and the Administration have already reduced the deficit and debt by at least $2.4 trillion over the past two years, and that the “majority” of deficit reduction has come from cuts in discretionary spending. The document calls for a balance of “responsible spending cuts and additional revenue from those who can afford it most.”

**EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

**NIH WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDS REDUCTION IN USE OF CHIMPANZEES IN RESEARCH**

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Council of Councils Working Group on the Use of Chimpanzees in NIH-Supported Research (WG) released a report on January 22 that generally recommends a reduction in the number of chimpanzees used in NIH-funded biomedical research studies. NIH followed up on the report the next day by issuing a notice requesting public comments on the report’s recommendations.

The WG was formed to implement the findings of an Institute of Medicine report, “Chimpanzees in Biomedical and Behavioral Research: Assessing the Necessity,” which was issued in December 2011. The 84-page report presented to the Council of Councils on January 22 contains 28 recommendations in three general categories: ethnologically appropriate physical and social environments; research colony size and placement; and a review process for future proposals to use chimpanzees in NIH-supported research.

Collectively, the recommendations call for a major reduction in the number of studies involving chimpanzees, including shutting down nearly half of the 30 projects currently funded by NIH and reducing the number of chimpanzees NIH owns or supports to a single colony of about 50 chimps. The WG suggests that future projects involving chimpanzees might be better conducted in nontraditional research settings, such as zoos or animal sanctuaries. The report also recommends specific requirements for housing chimpanzees, as well as training of personnel working with chimpanzees in research settings.

NIH is accepting comments on the report and its recommendations until March 23rd.

**OTHER**

**CAMPUS LEADERS URGED TO MAKE COLLEGE COMPLETION A TOP PRIORITY NEW**

The American Council on Education’s (ACE) National Commission on Higher Education Attainment issued an open letter to the higher education community on January 23 calling on campus leaders to make student retention and attainment a “critical” campus priority. “We
believe every institution must pay as much attention to the number of degrees it grants—
completion—as it does to success in admissions and recruitment,” said the letter. “It is now time
for all colleges and universities to marshal the resources needed to make completion our strategic
priority.”

The Commission’s letter calls on campus leaders to consider three main areas for reform:
changing the campus culture, improving cost-effectiveness and quality, and making better use of
data. The letter includes possible strategies to advance the goal of increased attainment.

The Commission, chaired by E. Gordon Gee, president of The Ohio State University, was
created with participation by the six presidentially based higher education associations, including
AAU, and has members nominated by each association, representing two-year, four-year, public
and private institutions. The participating commissioners recommended by AAU were Michael
V. Drake, chancellor of University of California, Irvine; Morton Schapiro, president of
Northwestern University; and Holden Thorpe, chancellor of The University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill.

ACE will follow up on the media roll-out of the Commission’s recommendations at regional
meetings in Los Angeles and Austin, Texas, and at the association’s annual meeting in
Washington, D.C.

End of document

Please visit us at www.aau.edu and follow us on Twitter at @AAUniversities.