CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE

The House and Senate have been out of session this week for the Thanksgiving holiday. The House will return on Monday, December 2; the Senate will return the following week, on Monday, December 9.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

BUDGET CONFERENCE LEADERS CONTINUE WORK ON AN FY14 DEAL

Leaders of the House-Senate budget conference committee are working to reach a deal on discretionary spending limits for both FY14 and FY15, with at least a partial reduction of the sequester, according to several news reports. CQ.Com says such a “small-scale” agreement would allow the appropriations committees to write annual funding bills, rather than having Congress fall back on a continuing resolution (CR), which essentially extends program funding with little or no priority setting. Such an agreement also would eliminate some or all of the $20 billion in sequester cuts scheduled for mid-January.

The conference committee is scheduled to report back to Congress on December 13, providing a month to develop and approve a new spending package and avoid another government shutdown when the current CR expires on January 15.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS UNIVERSITY EFFORTS TO ADVANCE INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
The U.S. Department of Commerce earlier this month released a report detailing how universities across the country are supporting innovation and entrepreneurship in order to strengthen their regional economies, create jobs, and keep America competitive. The Innovative and Entrepreneurial University: Higher Education, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Focus is a result of university collaboration with the Department’s National Advisory Council on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (NACIE).

The university activities described in the report were undertaken in follow-up to a letter that NACIE and more than 140 university presidents and chancellors sent to the Secretary of Commerce in 2010. In that letter, the university leaders committed to work more closely with industry, private foundations, investors, and the local, state, and federal governments to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and the commercialization of research results.

The Commerce Department’s Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship worked with colleges and universities around the country to compile the report. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker noted in a press release that “The report unveiled today provides an important look at higher education efforts to advance the innovation economy in communities nationwide.” A fact sheet on the report can be found here.

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