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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

The House adjourned late last evening for the two-week Easter recess and will return on Tuesday, April 25. The Senate has been in session today to continue consideration of immigration reform legislation.

CongressDaily reports that Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) plans to spend the week of April 24 debating and voting on the FY06 emergency supplemental funding bill. Also still outstanding is action on the tax reconciliation package and a possible conference report on pension legislation. Senator Frist has said that the first week of May will focus on health care issues, specifically, on a new Republican medical malpractice bill to cap non-economic damages at $750,000, and a bill to allow small businesses to band together to establish association health plans. Neither bill is expected to draw enough Democratic votes to pass.

The House is expected to reconsider the FY07 budget resolution when it returns to session the week of April 24.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

HOUSE FAILS TO PASS FY07 BUDGET RESOLUTION  NEW

House Republican leaders last night abandoned efforts to approve the FY07 budget resolution (H. Con. Res. 376) before the Easter recess, after they were unable to broker a deal among House Republican conservatives, moderates, and appropriators.
*CongressDaily* reports that House conservatives want new rules cracking down on earmarks and restrictions on non-defense emergency spending. They also believe that House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) is too willing to make concessions to the moderates, who want increased funding for domestic programs. Chairman Lewis argues that the committee already has reduced the number of earmarks and that allowing earmarks to be challenged on the floor would create a game of “ping-pong” between the House and Senate, delaying important spending bills. He also opposes the proposal to require any non-defense emergency spending above $4.3 billion to be approved first by the Budget Committee. He urged his committee colleagues to vote against a budget resolution containing the measures called for by conservatives.

*CongressDaily* also reports that the moderate House Republicans want Chairman Lewis to shift $7 billion from defense, homeland security, and foreign aid into domestic programs such as education and health, but that he is unwilling to move more than $3 billion from defense. That was not enough to sway the moderates.

In a prepared statement, House Majority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) attributed the failure of the budget resolution to Democrats for refusing “to consider a fiscally-responsible approach rejecting the failed policies of more taxes and more spending.” He said he remained committed to “working with all members to reach agreement on budget process reforms so we can move forward with the budget after the Easter District work period.” The statement is available at: [http://www.majorityleader.gov/news.asp?FormMode=Detail&ID=584](http://www.majorityleader.gov/news.asp?FormMode=Detail&ID=584).

The Student Aid Alliance, a coalition of more than 60 organizations, including AAU, sent a letter to all Members of the House on April 6 urging them to vote against the budget resolution. The letter said, “This budget fails to adequately maintain the nation’s decades-old commitment to educational opportunity and access to a college education, leaving millions of prospective students without the resources they need to acquire the knowledge and skills demanded by the global economy.”


**HOUSE MEMBERS URGE INCREASED FUNDING FOR NEH**

A group of 119 Members of the House sent a letter to leaders of the House Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee on April 6 urging them to provide the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) with an FY07 budget of $156 million. That is $15 million above the FY06 level and the President’s FY07 request. The letter, spearheaded by House Humanities Caucus co-chairs Jim Leach (R-IA) and David Price (D-NC), said in part:

“Today, the humanities play an increasingly important role in preparing our students and the public to be citizens in a global society…Additional funding will support NEH’s ability to promote teaching, research, preservation, and public programs in the humanities through the United States. It will strengthen the base of democracy, and prepare our citizens with the broad range of tools necessary to live and thrive in our rapidly changing world.”
THE LETTER IS AVAILABLE ON THE AAU WEB SITE AT:  

OTHER CONGRESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

SENATE UNABLE TO AGREE ON IMMIGRATION REFORM PACKAGE  NEW

Although it appeared yesterday that Senate Republican and Democratic leaders had found a compromise on immigration legislation that could pass the Senate, the deal fell apart over whether a group of Republicans would be allowed to offer amendments to the compromise dealing with illegal immigrants.  CQToday reports that Democratic supporters of the compromise were concerned that Senators opposed to providing a path to citizenship for certain illegal immigrants could harm “the fragile compromise” with hostile amendments.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

DEPT. OF EDUCATION ISSUES LETTER ON TWO NEW GRANT PROGRAMS  NEW

The Department of Education has issued a letter with information on how the agency will manage two new grant programs created by the budget reconciliation package earlier this year:  the Academic Competitiveness Grant and the National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent programs.


OTHER

CAPITOL HILL HUMANITIES BRIEFING SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 10

Five organizations, including AAU, are sponsoring a Capitol Hill briefing about the humanities on Monday, April 10, 2:00-3:00 p.m., in Room 2105 Rayburn House Office Building.  Congressional staff who handle humanities issues, as well as members of the CFR, are encouraged to attend.

Those interested in attending are asked to RSVP to Erin Smith at the National Humanities Alliance at esmith@nhalliance.org or 202-296-4994, extension 150.

The one-hour session, which is sponsored by AAU, the National Humanities Alliance, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, the National Coalition for History, and the National Council of Teachers of English, will be divided into three parts: a review of NEH funding and the agency’s work with state humanities councils, colleges and universities, and K-12 schools; a discussion of NEH history programs; and a short film, “Opening Minds to Great Ideas.”