

The National Council of Social Security Management Associations, Inc.
GREYSTONE GROUP WASHINGTON REPORT
Legislative Report 03-2020
March 13, 2020

As this momentous week comes to a close, I wanted to provide an update on some of the federal activities in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). I will provide additional information as the situation is very fluid and continues to evolve.

Capitol Hill Update

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin spent much of today negotiating the latest coronavirus response legislation. Earlier this evening Speaker Pelosi announced that Democrats had struck a deal on a COVID-19 response package that would provide free testing for the uninsured, paid sick leave and family leave, food aid for low-income individuals and families, and increased Medicaid funding for states. As of this report, the revised bill text has not been released, and some sources are reporting that top Republicans have said it is not locked down yet. The House is expected to take up the package later tonight, although this may change.

There is already discussion of a third legislative response package, which would include items that could not be negotiated as part of the current legislation. It is also likely that we will see provisions aimed at helping the travel industry, and the tax cuts that President Trump has been seeking when the next round of negotiations begins.

Executive Branch Update

This afternoon, President Trump announced a new series of measures to combat the coronavirus and treat those who are affected. The President declared a national emergency that could free up \$50 billion to help fight the pandemic. He also said that he was empowering the secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to waive certain laws and regulations to ensure the virus can be contained and patients treated. President Trump also announced he would waive interest on federal student-loan payments.

On Wednesday, March 11, President Trump announced three Executive actions:

- Directed the Small Business Administration (SBA) to exercise available authority to provide loans to businesses affected by the coronavirus;
- Instructed the Department of the Treasury to defer tax payments for certain individuals and businesses negatively impacted by the coronavirus; and
- Would soon be taking emergency action to provide financial relief for workers who are ill, quarantined, or caring for others due to the coronavirus.

Washington, DC Update

The United States Capitol Complex is closed to non-Members of Congress and Congressional staff, and some offices now have staff working remotely. Visitors to House and Senate Office Buildings will require a staff escort from the building entrance, and at all times within the

building. This will significantly impact any planned visits to Capitol Hill for the next several weeks.

Most tourist attractions, including the Capitol Building, White House, and Smithsonian Museums are all closed until further notice. Large upcoming events such as the annual Cherry Blossom festival have been cancelled.

It is not clear as to what changes we will see to the legislative and appropriations schedule moving forward. Both chambers were scheduled to be on recess next week, but the Senate will return to session on Monday to consider this latest coronavirus supplemental. It is anticipated that both chambers will then recess once an agreement is reached on the coronavirus response legislation, giving leadership time to assess the situation. We should have a better idea of the schedule in the coming days and weeks.

NCSSMA Twitter Account

Reminder: NCSSMA has a Twitter account and we encourage you to join in and follow us! You can view and follow our page on your **home computer** at <http://twitter.com/NCSSMAORG> or your **personal mobile device** at <https://mobile.twitter.com/NCSSMAORG>.

Greystone Group LLC
3303 South Wakefield Street
Arlington, VA 22206
202-547-8530
Contact: Rachel A. Emmons
E-mail: rachele@greystone-group.com