

The National Council of Social Security Management Associations, Inc.
GREYSTONE GROUP WASHINGTON REPORT
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Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Appropriations

Last Monday, following a three-day government shutdown, both the Senate, by a vote of 81-18, and the House, by a vote of 266-159, passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to reopen the government until February 8. As part of the agreement to reopen the government, GOP leaders also pledged to immediately consider immigration legislation if leaders do not reach a deal on immigration before February 8.

The path forward to any sort of omnibus spending bill or perhaps additional stopgap measures, continues to be blocked, however, by the still unresolved adjustments to the statutory spending caps. Reports have indicated lawmakers were close to an agreement in advance of the government shutdown, but until the spending caps are adjusted, the FY 2018 spending bills cannot be finalized.

In agreeing to that latest CR, Congressional leaders said they were hoping to get a deal on spending limits and immigration by the time this latest stopgap expires. Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-TX), however, said last Wednesday that lawmakers may need to pass additional CRs to accommodate decisions on spending caps, plus an immigration compromise. Even if an agreement to raise spending limits is reached by early March, Congress will still need time to compile and pass an omnibus, potentially pushing a final FY 2018 spending package until March, or perhaps later.

FY 2019 Budget Request

Although the FY 2018 appropriations process remains unresolved, the Trump Administration announced it will move forward with its FY 2019 budget request next month. Under the 1974 budget act that created the modern budget process, the president is required by statute to submit a budget request for each new fiscal year by the first Monday in February. The Trump Administration announced late last week that they plan to miss the deadline by a week, with the request being submitted on February 12 or later. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) attributed the delay to the recent government shutdown.

While the proposals and funding recommendations included in a president's budget request are often changed or even disregarded by Congress, we will be particularly interested in reviewing the Social Security Administration's (SSA) materials for a number of key items. These include but are not limited to: overall funding level and policy recommendations, the agency's reorganization plan, and the Commissioner's budget request, which was not included in the Trump Administration's FY 2018 budget request.

NCSSMA provided feedback to SSA as the agency's preliminary reorganization plan was being developed for submission to OMB in June. SSA's final draft was due to OMB in September, but no details have emerged as the Trump Administration has indicated that it would submit a

“governmentwide reform plan” in its FY 2019 budget request made up of agency plans, OMB-coordinated crosscutting proposals and public input. The individual agency plans are expected to include a “long-term workforce reduction plan.”

Social Security Advisory Board Issues Report

The Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB) recently issued the report titled, *Improving Social Security’s Representative Payee Program*. NCSSMA meets with SSAB members and staff on an ongoing basis and provided assistance throughout the Board’s project. SSAB expressed appreciation for NCSSMA’s involvement in the acknowledgements included in the report. We encourage you to review the report, and we will continue to work with the Board on the Representative Payee Program and other issues.

In related news, H.R. 4547, the *Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2017*, continues to gain cosponsors. As of this report, the legislation currently has 66 cosponsors. The measure has bipartisan support with 30 Republicans and 36 Democrats signed on. NCSSMA has worked with members and staff of the House Subcommittee on Social Security and we indicated our support for this legislation when it was first introduced by Subcommittee Chairman Sam Johnson (R-TX-3) and Ranking Member John Larson (D-CT-1) in December.

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