

The National Council of Social Security Management Associations, Inc.
GREYSTONE GROUP WASHINGTON REPORT
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Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Budget And Appropriations

With less than two weeks left until federal government funding expires, the leadership of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees continued to meet this past week to work through the differences in the FY 2020 spending bills. Some Subcommittees have indicated they are very close to finalizing their bills, while others are still working through big issues such as funding for the border wall, election security, gun violence research, and family planning. As to be expected, the Labor-HHS bill, which includes administrative funding for the Social Security Administration (SSA) is in the “still working through big issues” category.

Early last week, House Democratic leaders said that all 12 FY 2020 spending bills must be finalized before any of them will go to the floor for a vote. However, finishing all 12 measures before the December 20 deadline could prove to be extremely difficult given the ongoing stalemate in the Homeland Security measure over funding for the border wall.

House Appropriations Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) did indicate that negotiators were moving along “efficiently” and that she still hopes to get all the bills wrapped up by December 20, rather than resorting to a third Continuing Resolution (CR). Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL) was less optimistic, saying the border wall issue continues to hamper negotiations and that lawmakers aren’t moving fast enough to avoid another CR. Subcommittees were instructed to resolve all remaining issues in advance of this past weekend and to elevate any unresolved items to Committee Leadership. In addition, Chairwoman Lowey noted that work would continue through the weekend to finalize the spending package deal.

While an omnibus measure could be a way to move all 12 bills, President Trump has vowed he will never sign another \$1 trillion-plus omnibus that gets little scrutiny, so appropriators have continued to talk about passing final bills in smaller-sized bundles. We have heard that the current plan is to pass two six-bill packages possibly starting as early as this week.

If passing all 12 bills proves impossible, it remains unclear whether Congress would get any of the measures passed yet this month, or if lawmakers would resort to another CR extending current funding levels to avoid a government shutdown. While most lawmakers have said they oppose a year-long CR, approving another short-term stop gap that extends funding into next February or March comes with its own set of problems. If the House votes to impeach President Trump this month, the Senate could very well be consumed with an impeachment trial early next year that could last for more than a month making it even more difficult to resolve final FY 2020 spending bills.

We will continue to communicate with the Hill and others regarding SSA’s funding needs and provide updates.

FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Includes Paid Parental Leave

Last week also saw the wrap up of the House-Senate conference on the NDAA. The final version has been circulating for signature by the conferees, and it is looking hopeful that lawmakers will be able to finish it up this week. The conference report will be released publicly today, but the

agreement includes 12 weeks of paid parental leave for federal employees. Most sources are reporting that this provision was included in exchange for making “Space Force” the sixth branch of the U.S. military. It is important to note that the agreement must still be finalized, but this is certainly a positive step in the legislative process for a provision that NCSSMA has supported through the Federal-Postal Coalition (FPC). We will continue to provide updates.

2020 Senate Schedule

The Senate 2020 schedule was released this past week. Of note, the calendar leaves out January due to possible impeachment proceedings that have yet to be determined. The House is scheduled to convene for the second session of the 116th Congress on January 7, 2020. A combined House and Senate calendar can be found [here](#).

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