



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Overview

Senate votes for President Donald Trump's cabinet nominees are expected on the floor and in multiple committees this week. Last week, two non-Cabinet officials were confirmed: CIA Director Mike Pompeo and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley. The Senate will resume consideration of the nomination of Rex Tillerson to be secretary of State and Elaine Chao to be secretary of Transportation. Committee action on several other nominees include:

- Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee will vote Linda E. McMahon for Administrator of the Small Business Administration
- Senate Judiciary Committee will vote on Jeff Sessions for U.S. Attorney General
- Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee vote on Ryan Zinke for interior secretary
- Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee vote on Rick Perry for energy secretary
- Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee will vote on Elisabeth Prince DeVos for education secretary
- Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee will vote on Mick Mulvaney for Office of Management and Budget director (Mulvaney needs additional approval from the Senate Budget Committee)
- Senate Finance Committee will meet to vote on the nomination of Rep Tom Price (R-GA) to be HHS Secretary

As the Trump Administration continues to fill out the personnel needed to keep the federal government moving, Congress continues to hear from the new President's Cabinet designees. U.S. Department of Energy Secretary-designate Rick Perry expressed support for all forms of energy, including renewables. U.S. Department of the Interior-designate Ryan Zinke voiced his support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which provides fund to support parks, and confirmed

that a national infrastructure plan should include maintenance and repair of America's national parks.

The remaining unconfirmed Cabinet nominees include Ben Carson for housing and urban development secretary, Sonny Perdue for agriculture secretary, Wilbur Ross for commerce secretary, David Shulkin for veterans affairs secretary.

On Friday, Trump signed an executive memorandum to boost military spending. The directive requires a broad review of military readiness and calls for writing a budget amendment to allow for an undefined increase in this year's defense budget.

Executive Order Aimed at Reducing Regulations

President Donald Trump ordered government agencies to propose repealing two regulations for each new one they issue. Agencies will propose regulations to repeal when they write new ones, and the White House will approve them. Administration officials say that the military and regulations related to national security will be exempt from the executive action.

Senate Democrats Infrastructure Plan

Senate Democrats released a *Blueprint to Rebuild America's Infrastructure* on Tuesday, pledging a trillion dollars over the next ten years to repair, modernize, and build infrastructure from ports to schools. Infrastructure spending as a percentage of GDP is lower than it has been in the past twenty years, and the Democrats proposal highlights areas where infrastructure spending is most needed. The blueprint targets sixteen discreet areas of investment and outlines potential options for spending. These investments include \$100 billion towards reconstructing roads and bridges, a \$10 billion TIGER Grant expansion, \$25 billion for community resilience projects, \$110 billion for water and sewer rehabilitation, and \$130 billion to repair and expand transit systems. The Democrats expect this federal investment to generate 15 million new jobs in industries like construction and manufacturing. To pay for these investments, Democrats suggest closing tax loopholes or relying on the generation of revenue through job creation, but ultimately left the question of how to fund their proposal to the administration.

President Trump Invited to Address Joint Session of Congress

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) has invited President Trump to address a joint session of Congress on February 28. This speech traditionally takes the place of a State of the Union address during an inaugural year and gives the president a chance to outline his priorities to Congress. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer has said that President Trump has accepted the invitation.

Speaker Ryan also discussed President Trump's plan to introduce an infrastructure proposal in the first 200 days. Ryan indicated that the size of the package has yet to be determined and will depend on the fiscal space that is created in the spring budget. It is noteworthy that the speaker's outline for his legislative agenda does not include infrastructure in the timeline for the first 200 days.

OTHER NEWS

NACo Resources: In Search of Civility

Civility is much more than just behaving politely. Civil behavior shows that we have respect for others and their opinions, especially when we disagree. The exercise of self-control is central to civil discourse and demonstrates an investment in the institutions we share responsibility to care for as a civil society. Polarization and the resulting lack of civility has crept into the governing process at the local level, sometimes even when the issues in front of local elected bodies seem to have little to do with the national hot-button topics that divide us. The National Association of Counties (NACo) takes a look at civility today and provides a brief assessment, guide to the rules of civil engagement, and a few examples and resources on the subject.

Recession Led to Fewer Government Workers

The U.S. Census Bureau recently published updated state-level estimates of public employment and payrolls from its annual survey of local governments. Governing compared each state's pre-2010 peak aggregate totals to the latest 2015 data, excluding the education sector. Their analysis shows the agencies and states that suffered the largest payroll cuts since the start of the recession. After

nearly a decade, localities in many parts of the country have restored public payrolls to prior levels but some still employ far fewer workers than they did before the downturn.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

Climate Resilience and Planning Peer Exchange Report: ARC

On October 4-5, 2016 the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) co-hosted a climate resilience and planning peer exchange with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Staff from several MPOs, state DOTs, and public and private organizations gathered together to share best practices for climate resilience. Staff also provided guidance to FHWA on what resources would be helpful in addressing climate risks to fulfill the FAST Act requirements for integrating resilience into the planning process. FHWA's report on this peer exchange includes summaries of the presentations, discussion take-aways, and FHWA next steps. Other MPOs who participated include Broward MPO, Hillsborough County MPO, North Central Texas Council of Governments, and Puget Sound Regional Council.

FEATURED JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Director, Information Technology and Facilities Management

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Washington, DC

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Reminder! EJ Small Grants Program Accepting Applications

Applications due: January 31

EPA's Environmental Justice (EJ) Small Grants program provides financial assistance to community-based organizations, and local and tribal governments working on projects to address environmental and public health concerns. EPA awards grants that support activities designed to empower and educate affected communities and to identify ways to address environmental and public health concerns at the local level. Approximately 40 one-year projects will be awarded at up to \$30,000 each nationwide.

Reminder! Prepare Communities for Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks Grant Program

Application Period Closes: February 10 at 11:59:59 PM ET

The grant application period for the FY16 Program to Prepare Communities for Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks (CCTA Program) is currently open. The CCTA program provides \$35.94 million to state, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions to improve their ability to prepare for, prevent, and respond to complex coordinated terrorist attacks in collaboration with the whole community. The FY 2016 CCTA Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (**NOFO**) is also located on the **Grants.gov website** Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 97.133. Send questions to FEMA's Intergovernmental Affairs Division at 202.646.3444 or **FEMA-IGA@fema.dhs.gov**.

EVENTS

[View full list of events!](#)

2017 National Conference of Regions

February 12-15 – Washington Court Hotel, 525 New Jersey Ave NW Washington, DC

The National Conference of Regions is NARC's forum to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda for the year ahead, targeting topics central to our members' missions and their local elected officials' focus. Additional information will be available soon. Capitol Hill Day is the final day of the conference, February 15, 2017.

Save the date! 51st Annual Conference & Exhibition

June 4-7 - Monterey, CA

Join NARC and the California Association of Councils of Governments for NARC's 51st Annual Conference and Exhibition, which focuses on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education.

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