



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

eREGIONS

NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

House Appropriations Committee to Adopt Labor, Health, Education Funding Bill

Tomorrow, June 26, the House Appropriations Committee is expected to approve the FY 2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education funding bill. The bill is likely to be adopted along party lines with essentially the same funding that Congress appropriated last year, which is greater than the amount requested by the administration.

The bill, if adopted into law, would appropriate more than \$177 billion in discretionary funds, funding most programs at current levels. Small increases in funding were provided for substance abuse and mental health programs, including those that would address opioid and heroin abuse, health research at the National Institutes of Health, early childhood and Head Start programs, special education, and programs for seniors and veterans.

The committee is likely to recommend that programs like the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) be level funded, and workforce programs – a constant target of funding cuts – be reduced by a small amount, mostly due to the \$200 million decrease in funding for the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* dislocated worker program.

House Budget Committee Adopts FY 2019 Budget Resolution

Late last week, the House Budget Committee adopted a proposed budget resolution that is not very popular in Congress. The budget saves more than \$8 trillion dollars over ten years but does so at the expense of cuts to healthcare programs, including \$1 trillion in cuts from Medicaid and \$537 million in cuts from Medicare.

Moreover, the economic growth projections the committee is using substantially exceed the two percent growth proposed by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) – using 2.6 percent growth instead. Other cuts would come from welfare, veterans, student loan, and agriculture programs, as well as prohibiting individuals from receiving disability and unemployment benefits at the same time.

The budget resolution also provides reconciliation instructions that would enable Congress to adopt legislation by a simple majority, which would make the tax cuts passed into law last year permanent.

The larger question is whether this budget proposal can survive the House, where many members on both sides of the aisle have expressed concerns, and the Senate where cuts to Medicare are likely to be greeted with substantial opposition.

House Approves Farm Bill Legislation

In a narrow vote of 213-211, the House passed its version of the Farm Bill (**H.R. 2**), which is estimated to spend \$860 billion over the next 10 years. While Democrats unanimously opposed the bill due to stricter eligibility criteria and work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), eight conservative Freedom Caucus members flipped their positions

from last month's vote to ensure its passage on Thursday. The Senate is expected to vote on its version, which has wide bipartisan support, as early as this week. There are many expected points of contention between the bills, including the extent of SNAP reforms; changes to commodity subsidies; and the differences of approach to conservation programs, especially the elimination of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Conservation Stewardship Program proposed by the House.

House Passes Walden-Led Package to Combat Opioid Crisis

In a bipartisan vote of 396-14, the House passed the *Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act (H.R. 6)* – a piece of legislation that combines dozens of opioid-related bills passed over the last two weeks with base text and provisions that passed through the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The bill tackles many aspects of the opioid crisis, helping advance treatment and recovery initiatives, improving prevention, and authorizing state and local grants for the establishment or operation of public health labs to detect fentanyl and other synthetic opioids. See this [bill summary](#) for further detail.

Senate Rejects Rescissions Package

Last week, the Senate rejected President Trump's proposal to rescind \$15 billion in appropriated funds from various federal agencies. Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Susan Collins (R-ME) joined Democrats to vote against the bill, which failed in a 48-50 vote. The proposal's first version was released in May and a slightly modified version passed the House in a 210-206 vote earlier this month. Since the Senate did not pass the bill by the June 22 deadline, their special procedural powers allowing them to pass the legislation by a simple majority have expired. If the Senate takes up the measure again, they will now need 60 votes to pass it – a bar they are unlikely to reach.

Federal Government Reorganization Plan

The administration introduced an ambitious **proposal** to shrink the federal government and change how it carries out services. White House Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney led the effort to create this plan, which he calls the biggest reorganization of the government since the New Deal. While the plan is unlikely to make it far in Congress, there are some changes that do not require congressional consent.

Here are a few of the proposal's highlights:

- Merge the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Labor into a single agency called the U.S. Department of Education and the Workforce;
- Eliminate the Community Development Block Grant program;
- Limit government mortgage subsidies and move some of the rural housing programs to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- Restructure and possibly privatize the U.S. Postal Service;
- Move the Army Corps of Engineer's civilian work to the U.S. Department of Transportation; and
- Give the U.S. Department of the Interior management over dams, ecosystem-restoration work, and the *Clean Water Act* permitting program.

State and Local Governments Win Landmark Online Sales Tax Case

Last Thursday in the *South Dakota v. Wayfair* case, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) ruled that state and local governments can collect sales tax from vendors that do not have a physical presence in their state. In the 5-4 decision, SCOTUS offered three reasons why it ruled on the side of the localities and states: "First, the physical presence rule is not a necessary interpretation of the requirement that a state tax must be 'applied to an activity with a substantial nexus with the taxing State.' Second, *Quill [v. North Dakota]* creates rather than resolves market distortions. And third, *Quill [v. North Dakota]* imposes the sort of arbitrary, formalistic distinction that the court's modern Commerce Clause precedents disavow." The largest state and local government associations have **applauded the decision**, stating that "for 26 years Congress has failed to act and through the efforts of Justice Anthony Kennedy, the federal government has finally recognized the changing nature of commerce and state efforts to simplify the collection process."

OTHER NEWS

Harvard Releases State of the Nation's Housing Report

The Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies recently released its 30th annual housing report, *The State of the Nation's Housing 2018*. Managing Director Chris Hebert said, "By many metrics, the U.S. housing market in 2018 is on sound footing. But a number of challenges highlighted in the first *State of the Nation's Housing* report 30 years ago persist today, and in many respects, the situation has worsened for both the lowest-income Americans and those higher up the income ladder." Long-term challenges that the report has identified include: an increase in cost-burdened households, constraints in the supply of new housing, more expensive land prices and housing construction costs, and decreased rates of homeownership among young adults and black households. See this **recorded webcast** for a discussion about the implications of the report's findings.

Route Fifty Navigator Awards Nominations

Nominations Due: July 11, 11:59 PM ET

Know an individual or team that deserves recognition for working in or with state, county, or municipal government? Apply for *Route Fifty's* third annual Navigator Awards. Awards are given in five categories that recognize those that successfully implement a great idea that improves public sector services and the communities they serve. Nominations will be reviewed by three measurements: innovation, implementation, and outcomes.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

Davis County Delegation Meets with the White House

Late last week, a delegation from Davis County, Utah – including County Commissioner and NARC Board Member Bret Millburn from Wasatch Front Regional Council – came to Washington to meet with White House administration staff. The afternoon meeting was a rapid-fire discussion, touching on a wide range of issues that impact Davis County and the region surrounding it. NARC hopes that the meeting developed stronger ties between Davis County and the administration as they work diligently to tackle their largest challenges on both county and regional levels.

MEMBER REQUEST

ACOG Request: Policies and Procedures Re: Uniform Grant Guidance

The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) needs assistance in developing written policies and procedures, especially those required by the Uniform Grant Guidance to be in writing. Please share copies of your policies and procedures.

Additionally, ACOG does not have staff available and qualified to take on this project from scratch and would appreciate information on a consultant who does this, and a sample RFP used to procure such a consultant. Please send your responses to Maci Morin at maci.hurley@narc.org.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Ageing and Disability Resource Center Specialist

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Legal Counsel

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

FUNDING

[View full list of grants!](#)

Promoting Aging in Place by Enhancing Access to Home Modifications

Applications Due: August 13

Older adults overwhelmingly prefer to stay in their homes and communities as they age. However, the U.S. Census Bureau reveals that a third of older adults have trouble using some features in their home. The risk of falling is also a major concern that is most likely to occur in or around the home and can be life-changing. Home modifications and repairs can help older adults age in place

and maintain their independence. The Administration on Aging, an agency within the Administration for Community Living, is awarding one \$250,000 cooperative agreement designed to address barriers to optimal access and use of home modifications that support aging in place. The project should provide technical assistance and serve as a repository for home modification best practices and innovations that can be replicated at the local level.

Notice of Funding Opportunity: FY 2018-2020 RNTA

Applications Due: September 30, 2020

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has published the FY 2018-2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for Research and National Technical Assistance (RNTA) projects. The NOFO makes \$1.5 million available for Research and Evaluation (R&E) projects and \$1 million available for National Technical Assistance (NTA) projects:

- *R&E*: Through this program, EDA supports the development of tools, recommendations, and resources that shape federal economic development policies and inform economic development decision-making. R&E program investments provide critical, cutting-edge research and best practices to regional, state, and local practitioners in the economic development field, thereby enhancing understanding and implementation of economic development concepts throughout the country.
- *NTA*: This program supports a small number of projects that provide technical assistance at a national scope. These projects support best practices among communities trying to solve problems related to economic development goals. By working in conjunction with its national technical assistance partners, EDA helps states, local governments, and community-based organizations achieve their highest economic potential.

EVENTS

[*View full list of events!*](#)

Outdoor Water Use and Green Infrastructure

June 26, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

Stacey Eriksen, urban watershed revitalization coordinator for U.S. EPA Region 8, will discuss improving the approach to stormwater management by using low-impact development and green infrastructure. Topics will include viewing stormwater as a resource, managing stormwater on-site, reducing pollutant loads, and supporting multi-functional infrastructure. This webinar is cosponsored by EPA's WaterSense program and the Alliance for Water Efficiency.

2018 State Primaries: What You Need to Know

June 27, 2:00-3:00 PM ET

With 36 governor races and nearly two dozen state legislatures up for grabs, 2018 could be a pivotal election year. Democrats hope a "blue wave" of anti-Trump voters will impact state elections across the country, but support for the president and other Republican candidates remains high in many places. *Governing* will check in on the state primaries – the candidates, races, and issues that will shape the elections in November – and look at some primary season highlights, including the surge of women running for office. Join this webinar for frontline insights on ballot results and trends and find out how they may impact your priorities.

South Dakota v. Wayfair – What's Next for Internet Sales Tax?

July 12, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

State and local governments awaited the Supreme Court ruling on whether out-of-state vendors would be required to collect sales tax. Join this National League of Cities webinar for a discussion with Tillman Breckenridge and Bailey Glasser, who wrote the State and Local Legal Center amicus brief in the South Dakota v. Wayfair case, about the court's opinion. Also hear from the Streamlined Sales Tax Governing Board and Government Finance Officers Association on implementation, lobbying strategy, and how Congress and state and local government chief financial officers are reacting to the decision.

Regulation of Wireless Facilities by Local Governments

July 10, 1:00-2:15 PM ET

Some residents report that workmen are painting white circles or installing fiberglass poles on their front lawns – placement marks for the installation of mini-cell towers. What rights do

municipalities have to regulate wireless facilities? Because Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS) create a physical impact on rights-of-way, new financial burdens, and aesthetic issues in residential neighborhoods, some local governments have united to maintain their legal rights. The rapid evolution of cell technology has resulted in struggles for municipal planning and relevant ordinances as laws are updated. Imminent changes by lawmakers may eliminate the zoning authority of local government over wireless facilities, and consequently affect other portions of Zoning Code. Join this webinar to see what you can do to maximize your authority.

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