



NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

Congress is in session.

Overview

With only a week left until the House and Senate head home for their Fourth of July recess, there is a lot going on.

At the top of the list is a push by Senate leaders to pass their version of legislation that would repeal-and-replace the *Affordable Care Act* by Thursday, June 29. The **Senate bill**, which was introduced on June 22, would undo much of Medicaid, and eliminate individual and business mandates, minimum health care requirements, and many of the financial subsidies now available through Obamacare.

There is significant opposition from Republican moderates and conservatives, and word on the street is that efforts are underway to rewrite parts of the bill to garner enough support from moderates and conservatives to reach the 51 vote threshold – the number needed to pass the bill under a procedure known as reconciliation. And now that the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) just announced that 22 million Americans would lose coverage over the next 10 years if the bill is adopted, and a total of 49 million Americans below age 65 would be without insurance, the odds of passage decreased dramatically.

These numbers do represent an improvement over the **House bill** passed in May, but they are not so much better that the Senate can claim they addressed the problem. CBO estimated that 14 million people would lose their health insurance the first year and an additional nine million by year five. CBO also concluded that by 2026, 51 million Americans below age 65 would have no health insurance.

While the Senate works on health care, and both chambers continue to investigate Russia's involvement in the most recent presidential election, the administration will focus much of its efforts on what the White House has dubbed "Energy Week." The president will discuss his energy policies in a speech at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) where he will argue that the U.S. is in a position to dominate the world's fossil fuel markets and use its newfound power to influence global politics.

On Tuesday, the House Appropriations Energy and Water Development Subcommittee is expected to take its first crack at crafting a budget for DOE. Also on Tuesday, **EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is expected to testify** before the Senate's Interior and Environment Subcommittee on the president's budget proposal, which would cut the agency's funding by 31 percent and eliminate a wide range of programs important to states and localities. Labor Secretary Alex Acosta will testify before the Senate Appropriations Committee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies; he is likely to be questioned about the cuts to the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) in light of the president's expressed commitment to create millions of new jobs. And the **House Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection will hold a hearing** to review 13 bills that would scale back regulations and make it easier for autonomous vehicles to hit the road, including one

bill that would remove requirements for pre-market approval and give up to 100,000 autonomous cars a year exemptions from regulations that the automotive industry claims are geared toward traditional vehicles.

On Thursday, the Senate Banking Subcommittee is holding a hearing on elements of housing finance reform legislation that would revamp the way the federal government offers housing assistance.

Finally, look for the Senate to remain in session as Republican leaders try to pass a health care bill that would repeal-and-replace the *Affordable Care Act*, unless negotiations among Republicans fall apart.

CDBG Support Letter

Earlier this month, **1,867 national, state, and local organizations signed** onto a letter to members of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Committee urging a minimum FY 2018 appropriation of \$3.3 billion in formula funding for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). The letter highlights CDBG achievements and how they have been impacted by the decrease in appropriations since FY 2001. CDBG formula funding has been reduced by \$1.4 billion over the last 15 years, from \$4.4 billion in FY 2001 to \$3.0 billion in FY 2016. These cuts reverberate throughout local communities; hurting low- and moderate-income residents, including seniors, children, veterans, and working families.

Hatch Requests Public Feedback on Tax Reform

In an open letter, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) **requests feedback from the public on tax reform**. Chairman Hatch specifically asks for recommendations on providing tax relief to middle-class households, strengthening business, removing impediments and disincentives for savings and investment, and updating the nation's international tax system. Recommendation letters must be submitted by email to taxreform2017@finance.senate.gov by July 17.

Tax Credits Lift Poor Communities

Joe Flatley, president of Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation and a New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Coalition Board member, wrote an op-ed published by the *Boston Herald* about the importance of the NMTC program. According to Flatley, the program has proven to be an effective, targeted, and cost-efficient financing tool, which has generated over \$80 billion in investments and created 750,000 jobs in low-income communities nationwide over the last 10 years. In an effort to protect the program, Representatives Richard Neal (D-MA), Pat Tiberi (R-OH), and Tom Reed (R-NY) reintroduced the *New Markets Tax Credit Extension Act of 2017* (**H.R. 1098**). A similar measure (**S.384**) was introduced in the Senate by Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO) and Ben Cardin (D-MD).

OTHER NEWS

Kitchen and Farm Incubators Support Access to Local Food Systems

Looking for a way to jump-start the locally sourced food market in your region? Some communities have borrowed a page from the playbook of the tech industry and have been providing co-working spaces and incubator programs for local food entrepreneurs. The National League of Cities (NLC) interviewed some experts on the benefits that these programs offer. Communities have the assurance that food is produced, prepared, and served locally, which helps provide healthier food options at a more affordable price. For food businesses that are in the startup stage, access to a professional commercial kitchen or farmland allows these businesses to invest more money in growth, awareness, and branding. These incubators also provide educational training, industry-specific advice, and mentorship program opportunities for its members. Check out the NLC's **Food-Based Business Incubator Programs Municipal Action Guide** to learn more about how you can bring kitchen and farm incubators to your area.

Infrastructure a Key Discussion at the U.S. Conference of Mayors

With the proposed cuts the Trump administration has made to the New Starts and TIGER grant programs, finding ways to provide the \$4 trillion that America needs for infrastructure became a big topic at the U.S. Conference of Mayors conference. Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti stressed that public-private partnerships, local money, federal grants, innovation, and streamlined

processes would offer real solutions to our infrastructure funding issues. D.J. Gribbin, the president's special assistant on infrastructure, said that the administration plans to spend \$200 billion to help incentivize local and state government revenue streams for infrastructure projects. Gribbin's team is also looking to restructure statutes for a significantly shortened timeline during the permitting process. Watch the [full discussion](#) for further detail.

REGION SPOTLIGHT

DMAMPO's Approach to Bike Trail Maintenance

The Des Moines Metropolitan Planning Organization (DMAMPO) is using an innovative method for collecting data and measuring the health of recreational trails. This summer, a DMAMPO intern will be cycling central Iowa's 600 miles of paved trails on a "data bike," equipped with an electric hub to ensure constant speed for accurate data collection. As the wheels run over ruts and cracks, an app designed by a Canadian company, Rival Solutions, graphs the vibrations via a smartphone strapped to the frame. At the same time, a Samsung Gear 360 camera attached to the rear of the cargo cage takes snapshots every two seconds. The data will allow local agencies to pinpoint — and make plans to repair — cracks, ruts, and other issues.

Tips to Combat Cybersecurity Threats in Your Region

As represented by the global WannaCry ransomware attack last month, it is evident that the frequency and severity of cyber-attacks are on the rise. Many of the cyber threats in existence are already well understood by cybersecurity experts, and there are ways to mitigate the damage if your organization becomes a victim. Route Fifty has released a special report, ***Ready or Not: The Challenging Cybersecurity Realities for State Governments***, which outlines today's threats to government cybersecurity and how these entities can be more prepared. The author largely focuses on cybersecurity threats to the nation's voting system, detailing how hackers use tactics such as accessing voter machine memory cards and vote management systems, sending phishing emails, using camera and mic capture tools, and developing innovative malware. He proposes several solutions to help protect governments from hacking, such as identifying and extinguishing system vulnerabilities, increased funding for more secure voting machines and audits, and hiring cyber-educated personnel to help identify problems as they arise.

eBook Offers Case Studies and Lessons Learned on Natural Disasters and Resiliency

Route Fifty released an eBook, ***The Geography of Disaster Risk and Resiliency in America***, for emergency planners, first responders, public officials, and other emergency response stakeholders. Disasters big and small can occur without warning, and local governments must be ready to respond. The author uses locations in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest as case studies on how disasters can strike and offers lessons learned on building resiliency into disaster planning efforts. Regions can incorporate these into their emergency response planning to ensure that their communities can thrive after a disaster.

MEMBER REQUESTS

OECD Survey Opportunity for Regional Councils Involved in Decentralised Development Co-operation

The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** (OECD) and the **European Commission** (DG DevCO) need your input! OECD and DG DevCO are teaming up to study how international cooperation of local and regional governments have evolved over the last decade. They request that local and regional governments that have significant Decentralised Development Co-operation activities complete a **survey** to share your knowledge and experiences. If you are interested in participating, please direct any questions or submit the survey by June 30th to Stefano.Marta@oecd.org. The results of the study will be available in an OECD report expected in March 2018.

Seeking NARC Member Feedback on USDOT Notice Regarding Transportation Regulations

USDOT recently placed a **Notice in the Federal Register** seeking input from stakeholders regarding current agency regulations that slow the project approval process and that should be removed or revised. This notice is in line with the focus that the president and others in the administration have placed on this issue, and is likely to be a major piece of any infrastructure package later this year.

Comments on this notice are due by July 24. NARC is reaching out to both inform you of this deadline and to ask if you would tell us about what you have identified as barriers. Please send us your input, so that we can use those examples for a potential NARC comment to the docket.

We will begin by holding one-on-one conversations with members, and may expand it later to a broader conversation with the entire membership. **If you have ideas in this area you would like to discuss with us, please send an email ASAP to erich@narc.org** and we'll work together to set up a time with the appropriate members of your staff.

FEATURED JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Lead – Transportation Planning

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

Lead – Regional Planning

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

Neighborhood Development Director

City of Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

Environmental Justice Planner I or II – Long-Range Transportation Planning

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Transportation Planner I or II – Sustainable Development

North Central Texas Council of Governments, Arlington, TX

Systems Planning Manager

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Principal Planner

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

Veteran Mobility Specialist

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Principal Transportation Planner

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

Transportation Planner

Spokane Regional Transportation Council, Spokane, WA

Transportation Planner

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, Lowell, MA

Alamo Regional Transit Assistant Director

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

FUNDING

View full list of grants!

HHS Administration for Community Living: Innovations in Nutrition Programs

Applications Due: August 7

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Community Living (ACL) is awarding competitive grants under the OAA Title IV authority to increase the evidenced based knowledge base of nutrition providers, drive improved health outcomes for program recipients by promoting higher service quality, and increase program efficiency through innovative nutrition service delivery models. Funding will support innovative and promising practices that move the aging network towards evidenced based practices that enhance the quality, effectiveness of nutrition services programs, or outcomes within the aging services network.

NEH Wants to Fund Your Public Humanities Projects

Applications Due: August 9

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Public Humanities Project is currently **accepting applications** for its fall 2017 deadline to fund projects aimed at bringing the humanities to life for communities. NEH encourages applicants to use this grant as an opportunity to bring together humanities scholars, local artists, and the public to develop and build programming that will showcase themes such as history, ethics, or issues in contemporary life. There are five separate competitions that applicants can apply for funding for: 1) community conversations grants, 2) exhibitions planning grants, 3) exhibitions implementation grants, 4) historic places planning grants, and 5) historic places implementation grants.

Grants Available Through HHS to Fight for Elder Justice Awareness

Applications Due: August 14

HHS is looking to **fund projects** that will increase awareness and communicate best practices for adult protective purposes. The primary purpose of this grant opportunity is to ultimately reduce the harm that elder Americans may face due to abuse, neglect, and/or financial exploitation through education and outreach. Ideal projects will develop materials and programs that speak to current issues surrounding elder justice, or establish/contribute to evidence-based knowledge in the field.

Strengthening Coordinated Transportation Systems for People with Disabilities and Older Adults

Applications Due: August 30

ACL is seeking assistance to continue their work on involving people with disabilities and older Americans in the design and implementation of transportation systems. The purpose is to ensure that coordinating transportation systems across the U.S. are responsive to the unique needs of these specific populations. They are looking for **applications** proposing projects that will complete the following outlined priorities:

1. Build on the partnerships, transportation policy, and ACL programs developed over the last five years;
2. Continue growing and building peer-to-peer support networks in this area across the U.S.;
3. Administer a small grants demonstration program to encourage inclusive transportation planning; and
4. Work with ACL to develop an evaluation program.

EVENTS

View full list of events!

Recording Available! New Approaches to Support the Next Generation of Scenario Planning in Transportation

NARC, FHWA, and the Eno Center for Transportation hosted a webinar on June 14th, discussing the trends, issues, and importance of scenario planning in transportation. The webinar focused on FHWA publication, *The Next Generation of Scenario Planning - A Transportation Practitioner's Guide*, and NARC report, *Advancement of Performance-Based Scenario Planning for Regional Planning and Decision-Making*, which surveyed 24 regional entities on their use of scenario planning. Both reports will be available soon.

Land Use Planning and Zoning for Public Health: Exploring Legal Issues

June 27, 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM ET

This session will expand upon the legal basis of planning to promote and protect public health through land use and zoning. Speakers will address the historic connection between zoning, public health, and environmental justice, as well as the legal and ethical challenges to zoning for health. Representatives from both national and local agencies will offer their perspectives, followed by time for Q&A.

Municipal Know-How for Energy Efficiency: Energy Data, ESPCs, and Outdoor Lighting

June 27, 3:00 - 4:00 PM ET

Does your state or local government want to implement big energy efficiency changes, but isn't

sure how to finance them? Is your municipality ready to upgrade their outdoor lighting infrastructure? Better Buildings Public Sector Partners have contributed to solutions that invigorate energy efficiency in the built environment. Following in the footsteps of the Energy Data Accelerator, two recent efforts, known as the Energy Savings Performance Contracting Accelerator and the Outdoor Lighting Accelerator, concluded after three years of developing solutions to market barriers, identifying innovative and proven approaches, and creating toolkits that offer a wide array of resources. Each program lead will review key accomplishments, introduce the resulting toolkit, and discuss the application of the toolkit to current state and municipal projects.

NACTO's Urban Street Stormwater Guide

June 29, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

The National Association of City Transportation Officials is giving a first look at their **Urban Street Stormwater Guide**, which shows public leaders how they can incorporate Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) to have a more efficient stormwater management system. Having a thorough GSI design plan will lead to a positive effect on the environment, public health, street safety, and overall urban street aesthetics.

Navigating Financing Options for Energy Efficiency Webinar

June 29, 3:00-4:00 PM ET

The Environmental Defense Fund Climate Corps and DOE's Better Buildings Initiative are teaming up through a series of webinars to help educate public and private sector leaders on how they can make homes and buildings more energy efficient. This week, they will be introducing the **Better Buildings Financing Navigator**, a new DOE tool that helps organizations find the best financing options that can fund their unique projects. They will also be discussing the current state of affairs and future trends of the energy efficiency financing market.

CONTACT US

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