

Government Shutdown Looms as Current Continuing Resolution Expires Friday; White House Expresses Interest in Bipartisan Negotiations

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Legislative Activity

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Congress faces a short time frame to pass a spending package for the remainder of the current fiscal year and prevent a government shutdown as the current FY 2017 Continuing Resolution (CR/P.L. 114-254) expires Friday at midnight. House and Senate leadership remain optimistic that an FY 2017 omnibus will be passed this week, with House Appropriations spokeswoman Jennifer Hing indicating “a shutdown is not on the table;” but there has also been discussion of passing a week-long CR before April 28 to allow more time for negotiations. The White House also remains optimistic, with Kellyanne Conway and White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer offering confidence that a government shutdown is unlikely.

As for the likely vehicle for the spending bill, the omnibus could be added as an amendment to the March 8 passed FY 2017 Defense funding bill that is currently in the Senate, or the House could use one of the Appropriations Committee-passed bills to originate the omnibus and subsequently send it to the Senate.

The greatest obstacles to passing an omnibus is the Trump Administration’s request for \$3 billion for border security, an extra \$30 billion for defense spending, and a prohibition on funds to “sanctuary cities.” Democrats are reportedly countering these GOP requests with measures to include funding for Affordable Care Act (ACA/PL 111-148/PL 111-152) health insurance subsidies and increased spending for overseas famine relief.

Late last week, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney indicated the White House is open to including ACA cost-sharing subsidies in the FY 2017 spending package in exchange for including the administration’s request for increased funds for border security and defense. Mulvaney offered this negotiation to Democrats saying the White House is “ready to talk

about” a compromise, but that ultimately “we want wall funding” included in the spending bill.

This Week’s Hearings:

- On Tuesday, April 25, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs has scheduled a hearing titled “United States Assistance for Egypt.” The witnesses will be:
 - The Honorable Elliott Abrams, Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies, Council on Foreign Relations;
 - Michele Dunne; Director and Senior Fellow, Middle East Program, Carnegie Endowment for International peace; and
 - The Honorable Tom Malinowski, Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

- On Wednesday, April 26, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense has scheduled a hearing titled “A Review of National Guard & Reserve Programs and Readiness.” The witnesses will be:
 - General Joseph L. Lengyel, Chief of the National Guard Bureau;
 - Lieutenant General Charles D. Luckey, Chief of the Army Reserve;
 - Lieutenant General Maryanne Miller, Chief of the Air Force Reserve; and
 - Vice Admiral Luke M. McCollum, Chief of the Navy Reserve.

- On Thursday, April 27, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies has scheduled a hearing titled “Preventing Veteran Suicide.” The witnesses will be:
 - Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Organizational Excellence, Veterans Health Administration;
 - Harold S. Kudler, M.D., Chief Consultant for Mental Health Services, Veterans Health Administration;
 - Stephanie A. Davis, Ph.D., Suicide Prevention Coordinator and Staff Psychologist, VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System, Veterans Health Administration; and
 - Ms. Melissa Jarboe, Chief Executive Director, Military Veteran Project, Topeka, Kansas.

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