

FY 17 Omnibus Vote Expected on Thursday; Hearings on FY 18 Move Forward Despite Lack of Budget Resolution

Article By:

Pamela K. Welsh

Mallory A. Richardson

Legislative Activity

On April 29th, an agreement for a fiscal year 2017 Omnibus bill had been reached. Although the text was not available at the time of posting, it is expected to be released in short order. Last week, as anticipated, a Continuing Resolution (CR) was enacted to allow for additional time to iron out the final details of the FY 17 omnibus measure. Negotiations for that legislation progressed more quickly after President Trump dropped his insistence on funding for a border wall and denial of funding for health insurance subsidies. Controversial policy provisions on which Republicans and Democrats were debating include but are not limited to- funding for Planned Parenthood; financial aid for Puerto Rico; the Department of Labor's fiduciary rule; and health benefits for coal miners.

Last week, House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) stated that House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) has said that a vote would be scheduled for Thursday. This would allow the customary full 72-hours to review the text of the bill. Once the House clears the measure, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has said that his chamber would take up the bill immediately. House and Senate leadership from both parties have not suggested that another CR would be needed.

In addition, despite the lack of a budget resolution, work on FY 18 has begun in earnest, with several hearings scheduled this week in the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

This Week's Hearings:

House Appropriations Committee

- On Wednesday, May 3, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government has scheduled a hearing titled "IRS Oversight Hearing." The witnesses will be:
 - The Honorable J. Russell George, Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration; and

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- Nina E. Olson, National Taxpayer Advocate, Internal Revenue Service.
 - On Wednesday, May 3, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies has scheduled a hearing titled “Oversight of the 2020 Census.” The witnesses will be:
 - The Honorable John H. Thompson, Director, U.S. Census Bureau;
 - Kevin Smith, Chief Information Officer, U.S. Census Bureau;
 - Robert Goldenkoff, Director of Strategic Issues, Government Accountability Office; and
 - David Powner, Director of Information Technology, Government Accountability Office.
 - On Wednesday, May 3, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies has scheduled a “Public Witness Hearing.” The witnesses will be announced.
 - On Wednesday, May 3, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch has scheduled a “Members of Congress and Outside Witnesses Hearing.” The witnesses will be announced.
 - On Wednesday, May 3, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies has scheduled a hearing titled “2018 Veterans Affairs Oversight.” The witness will be:
 - The Honorable David J. Shulkin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

House Budget Committee

- On Wednesday, May 3, the House Budget Committee has scheduled a hearing titled “Failures of Fiscal Management: A View from the Comptroller General.” The witness will be:
 - The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States, U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Senate Appropriations Committee

- On Tuesday, May 2, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies has scheduled a hearing titled “U.S. European Command: Theater Assessment and European Reassurance Initiative Progress.” The witness will be:
 - General Curtis M. Scaparrotti, U.S. Army, Commander, U.S. European Command, NATO Supreme Allied, Commander, Europe.
- On Wednesday, May 3, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense has scheduled

a hearing titled “A Review of Defense Innovation and Research Funding.” The witnesses will be:

- The Honorable Robert O. Work, Deputy Secretary of Defense;
 - Dr. Steven H. Walker, Acting Director, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency; and
 - Dr. William B. Roper, Jr., Director, Strategic Capabilities Office.
- On Thursday, May 4, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies has scheduled a hearing titled “Telemedicine in the VA: Leveraging Technology to Increase Access, Improve Health Outcomes and Lower Costs.” The witnesses will be:
 - Dr. Kevin Galpin, M.D., Executive Director, Telehealth Services, Veterans Health Administration; and
 - Bill James, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Enterprise Program Management Office, Office of Information and Technology, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Senate Budget Committee

- On Wednesday, May 3, the Senate Budget Committee has scheduled a hearing titled “Private Sector Growth and the Economy.” The witnesses will be:
 - Michael Strain, Ph.D., Director of the Economy Policy Studies, American Enterprise Institute;
 - William Dunkelberg, Ph.D., Chief Economist, National Federation of Independent Business; and
 - Jeffrey D. Sachs, Ph.D., Professor and Director, Center for Sustainable Development, Columbia University.

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