



Thursday, November 15, 2018

## I. Policy Intelligence and Education News

- **Congressional leadership elections** – Yesterday the Senate chose its leaders for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, as did House Republicans; House Democrats will hold their leadership elections on November 28. The leadership results are listed below.
  - **Senate Republican leadership:**
    - Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY);
    - Senate President Pro Tempore Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa);
    - Republican Whip John Thune (R-SD);
    - Republican Conference Chair John Barrasso (R-WY);
    - Republican Policy Committee Chair Roy Blunt (R-MO); and
    - Republican Conference Vice Chair Joni Ernst (R-Iowa).
  - **Senate Democratic leadership:**
    - Democratic Leader and Conference Chair Charles Schumer (D-NY);
    - Democratic Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL);
    - Assistant Democratic Leader Patty Murray (D-WA);
    - Democratic Policy and Communications Committee Chair Debbie Stabenow (D-MI);
    - Democratic Conference Vice Chairs Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Mark Warner (D-VA); and
    - Democratic Conference Secretary Tammy Baldwin (D-WI).
  - **House Republican leadership:**
    - Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA);
    - Minority Whip Steve Scalise (R-LA);
    - Conference Chair Liz Cheney (R-WY);
    - Conference Vice Chair Mark Walker (R-NC);
    - Conference Secretary Jason Smith (R-MO); and
    - Republican Policy Committee Chair Gary Palmer (R-AL).
- **Special budget and appropriations process committee's recommendation** – This morning the Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform is meeting to mark up its recommendations, the main one being to switch the Congressional budget resolution from an annual to a biennial requirement (Congress would still consider appropriations bills annually). You can find detail about the Committee's recommendations in its [report](#). In short, the argument is that this change will remove uncertainty about the topline for appropriations each year and provide more time for Congress to do things other than debate budget resolutions each year. In the second year of a budget resolution Congress could adjust spending, revenue, and other levels (which is actually one of the two main purposes of a budget resolution). Neither the report nor the legislative text of the recommendations make any mention of the impact on the reconciliation process, which

is the other main purpose of a budget resolution. Reducing the budget resolution to a biennial product cuts in half the opportunity for creating a reconciliation package\* that gets expedited consideration in the Senate. The Committee also recommends the eliminating term limits for serving on the House Budget Committee, and that the Administration be required to submit specific supplemental budget data by December 1 each year, rather than waiting to submit it with the President's budget request two months later.

**\*A short aside on reconciliation:** a conference agreement on the budget resolution can contain reconciliation instructions directing specific committees to make changes in programs under their jurisdiction to achieve specific changes in revenues (i.e., a tax cut or increase) or spending by cutting mandatory spending. The resulting reconciliation package of changes is known as a reconciliation bill and it gets expedited consideration in the Senate, with limited debate time and no filibuster possible, which means it needs only a majority vote to pass. There are limits to what can be included in a reconciliation bill – the main ones are that it cannot change Social Security and can only contain provisions that have a budgetary impact – but the ability to provide a reconciliation bill each year is one large incentive for the House and Senate to reach agreement on the budget resolution each year.

As background on this temporary committee, it was created in the February budget deal and held five public hearings to create recommendations, which must be approved by a majority of the 16 of the evenly split Republican and Democratic members. If approved, the recommendations move to the House and Senate floors. In the Senate, the Budget Committee has seven legislative days to vote on the recommendations, or else the recommendations proceed directly to the Senate floor, where it has expedited procedures for consideration.

- **FY 2019 appropriations negotiations in the lame-duck session** – As expected, the issue of how much funding to provide for a southern border wall is the primary sticking point in negotiations to finalize the remaining seven fiscal year 2019 funding bills. The Homeland Security Appropriations bill approved by the House Appropriations Committee contains \$5 billion, while the version approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee contains \$1.6 billion. [Republican senators are planning to meet today with the President to discuss the issue](#). Six other bills – Agriculture, Commerce-Justice-Science, Financial Services, Interior and Environment, State-Foreign Operations, and Transportation-HUD – also need to be completed by December 7, when their extension of funding expires. At that point, Congress will either need to enact additional spending – either full-year funding, a year-long extension of current funding, or another short-term funding bill – or those parts of the government would shut down. My best guess is that there will be another extension for a week to complete all the funding bills not yet finalized. The programs for which Congress has already enacted full-year funding bills, including the entire Department of Education, are set and will continue to operate.
- **Education policy issues in the lame-duck session** – Senate HELP Committee chair Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and ranking member Patty Murray (D-WA) still hope to pass bipartisan legislation to pass the Faster Access to Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Act, S. 3611, to allow the IRS to share tax information with the Department of Education with the goal of simplifying the process for applying for federal student aid. The bill has had no action to date, and there is no standalone companion bill pending in the House, so it's not clear how fast and far the bill could move this session.

- **CEF job board** – We are happy to post job vacancies for CEF members on the members-login part of the [CEF website](#). There are a number of recent openings, including:
  - **Teach for America** – [Manager of Government Affairs](#)

## II. Advocacy

- **Hill Teams visits** – Members of [CEF's Hill Teams](#) are meeting with Republicans interested in being the Appropriations Committee ranking member next year. Yesterday a group met with Adrienne Walker in the office of Rep. Kay Granger (R-TX), currently the chair of the Defense Subcommittee. [Rep. Granger](#) – a former teacher – has focused on school safety in the education realm. We are working to schedule other meetings and will share sign-up information with Hill Teams members once the meetings are set.

## III. Events

- **CEF's upcoming schedule** –
  - **Tomorrow, Friday, Nov. 16, 9-11am**, at AFSCME, 1625 L St, NW, 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room. Guest speaker: Donni Turner, Senate Budget Committee Democratic staff; (tentative) Steve Townsend, Senate Budget Committee Republican staff.
  - **Friday, Nov. 23** – No CEF meeting while Congress is in recess for Thanksgiving.
  - **Friday, Nov. 30**, 9-11am, at AASCU, 1307 New York Ave, NW, auditorium. Guest speaker: TBD.
  - **Friday, Dec. 7**, 9-11am, at AFSCME, 1625 L St, NW, 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room. Guest speakers: (tentative) Democratic staff of the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

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