



*Week of 1-9-17  
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### **Congressional Overview**

Congress was laser focused on undoing the Affordable Care Act (ACA). More specifically, the Senate passed a budget resolution this week that lays the groundwork for repealing the ACA, despite deep uncertainty about what comes next. The House is expected to pass the resolution before adjourning for the week. Additionally, the Senate started the confirmation hearings for President-elect Trump's cabinet.

Meanwhile, the House considered a package of six bills this week to scale back federal regulations. The Chamber passed two measures last week that give Congress the power to easily reject major rules and eliminate new ones made late in the Obama administration. These legislative measures would: require agencies to choose the lower-cost rulemaking alternative when issuing new regulations, mandate courts to defer to an agency's interpretation of a law when ambiguously worded rules are challenged, automatically delay rules that cost more than \$1 billion annually and force agencies to publish plain-English summaries of newly proposed rules.

### **Trump to Use Taxpayer Dollars to Build Border Wall**

President-elect Trump plans to use taxpayer dollars to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. He said that Mexico will reimburse the U.S. later for the wall's construction. However, former Mexico President Vicente Fox Quesada responded with, "TRUMP, when will you understand that I am not paying for that #@%\$ wall." It is still unclear how and when Trump and congressional Republicans would attempt to fund construction of the border wall.

Funds could be included in the final FY 17 appropriations package needed by the end of April, in a standalone regular or supplemental FY 17 spending bill or provided through regular FY 18 appropriations later this year. Republicans have offered few details about their preferred method for funding the project and/or its price tag. Democrats appear poised to put up a fight. Many Democrats and Homeland Security officials consider a solid border wall an ineffective use of funds to stop illegal immigration.

### **Office of Government Ethics Warns Senate Holding Confirmation Hearings too Quickly**

The Office of Government Ethics (OGE) is warning there is "cause for alarm" if the Senate proceeds with confirmation hearings for some of President-elect Trump's cabinet nominees whose financial and other paperwork have not been certified by the agency. OGE Director Walter Shaub says some of Trump's nominees have yet to provide even preliminary financial disclosures to the federal ethics watchdog and that some nominees who are scheduled for Senate confirmation hearings have not completed the ethics review process.

### **Senate Rejects Two Amendments to Budget Resolution**

The Senate voted to reject two amendments to its budget resolution this week. One amendment was from Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) that would have frozen on-budget spending beginning in FY 18. If the amendment had been adopted, it would have assumed trillions of dollars in cuts in projected spending and wiped out the deficit in about five years. The Senate also rejected an amendment from Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI) that would have raised a budget point of order against "legislation that would privatize Medicare or limit federal spending for Medicaid."