



*Week of 11-11-19
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Congressional Overview

The House impeachment inquiry continued this week. Three individuals testified in what was the beginning of the inquiry's public phase. Both the House and Senate were in session, with few legislative days remaining in the year and the clock ticking on the current continuing resolution funding the government (which expires on Nov. 21). Time is also running out to pass the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) before year's end.

FY 20 Appropriations Update: Congress Expected to Pass New Continuing Resolution

House and Senate Appropriations Chairs Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Richard Shelby (R-AL) met Tuesday evening to discuss a way forward on FY 20 Appropriations Bills. They agreed on a new continuing resolution (CR) date to extend the existing government funding until Dec. 20, which is the last day of session before the Christmas/End of Year Recess. The White House officials are open to a CR through December, as long as it does not place additional strings on administrative transfer authority for border wall funding.

House and Senate Appropriators at Odds over FY 20 National Defense Authorization

House and Senate FY 20 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) negotiators are still at odds over both chambers' versions of the bill. For the past 58 years, the NDAA has passed the Congress with bipartisan/bicameral support. The major disagreement is with the House-passed version of the bill, which explicitly prohibits the administration from using Defense Department funds for construction of the border wall. Sen. James Inhofe's (R-OK) "skinny" defense bill containing only noncontroversial provisions did not garner support from the House.

Trump Administration to Publish Guidelines on e-Cigarette Flavors

President Trump said last week that guidelines on e-cigarette flavors will be published this week. He hinted that the guidelines will walk back some parts of the flavor ban they proposed two months ago. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said the root cause of the illnesses may be vitamin E acetate found in unregulated marijuana vaping products. Per the CDC there were 2,051 cases of the lung illnesses and 39 deaths as of November 5th.

Representative Peter King Retires

Rep. Peter King, a 14-term Republican from New York's Long Island, announced that he does not plan to run for reelection. Rep. King stated "the prime reason for my decision was that after 28 years of spending 4 days a week in Washington, D.C., it is time to end the weekly commute and be home in Seaford." Rep. King is the 19th Republican to announce his or her intent to retire from the House or Senate after this Congress.

House Impeachment Inquiry Holds First Open Hearings

The House Intelligence Committee convened on Wednesday and heard from the following witnesses: William B. Taylor, Jr., the acting U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine, and George Kent, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs. Both are long-time employees of the State Department. The hearing offered congressional Democrats their first opportunity to present their case for President Trump's impeachment to the American people, while Republicans will have a chance to lay out their defense of the President. House Intelligence Committee chairman Schiff (D-CA) and ranking member Nunes (R-CA) will each have up to 45 minutes to question the witnesses, although they are expected to yield their time to the panel's staff attorneys. Rank-and-file members of the

committee had then five minutes each for questioning. On Friday, the committee heard from ex-Ukraine Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch.

More open hearings are scheduled for next week. The committee is set to hear from numerous individuals, including Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman (a National Security Council staffer), Kurt Volker (the former U.S. special representative to Ukraine) and Gordon Sondland (the U.S. Ambassador to the European Union).

DOL Misuses Funding to Finance IRAP Program

The Department of Labor (DOL) misused more than \$1 million to finance a White House-directed apprenticeship program after repeatedly telling Congress that existing funding would not be spent on the initiative (which Congress has not yet authorized funding for). The DOL acknowledged that their review of three outside contracts totaling \$32 million found that \$1.1 million in contracted work was drawn from funding Congress had allocated for a different job-training program and used to advance President Trump's proposal, which would give private sector companies greater freedom to set apprenticeship standards.

The IRAP system is meant to encourage greater business participation by giving companies more say in training workers in skills needed in their respective industries. Critics contend that, by replacing government oversight with industry-run accreditation groups, the untested program will lack the wage, safety and civil rights protections of the registered apprenticeship system, which has been in place for more than 80 years.