



*Week of 9-19-16  
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### **Congressional Overview**

Congress spent most of the week drafting a budget deal that would avert a government shutdown on Oct. 1 and combat the Zika virus. Officially, the House and Senate are scheduled to be in session next week, but members in both parties are eager to depart Capitol Hill as soon as possible so they can return to the campaign trail.

### **Senate Committee Passes Miners Protection Act**

The legislative wheels are in motion. The Senate Finance Committee passed the Miners Protection Act of 2016 (Coalminers' Bill), which follows the House Ways and Means Committee vote on the bill last week. FCA expects the House and Senate will vote on the overall bill before they recess on Sept. 30. Once done, this will allow Congress to consider Rep. John Kline's (R-MN) Discussion Draft on Composite Plan Design during the "lame duck" session following the election.

### **Negotiations Continue for Continuing Resolution to Keep the Federal Government Funded Past September**

House and Senate negotiators are aiming to have a deal on a continuing resolution (CR) that will expire on Dec. 9 but negotiations are ongoing. Negotiators are still separated by several key topics:

**ZIKA:** Offsets for fighting the mosquito-borne virus is the biggest remaining budget obstacle after weekend talks. The Republican-crafted Zika conference agreement that Democrats rejected would have provided \$1.1 billion in funds, with \$750 million offset. The offsets were \$543 million in funding provided under the Affordable Care Act to assist territories establish health exchanges and provide cost-sharing assistance to residents, left over Ebola funding and unobligated balances from previous years.

**FLINT:** Senators from Louisiana, West Virginia and Texas have been pushing for disaster aid to be included in the CR. Conversely, Democrats have countered that they want Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act money for Flint, Michigan and other cities to decontaminate their water.

**EXPORT-IMPORT:** The Obama administration has asked appropriators to include language to jump start the Export-Import Bank, over the objection of Senate Banking Chairman Richard Shelby (R-AL). The requested language would allow the bank to approve loan guarantees to foreign buyers for U.S. exports in excess of \$10 million even if the board lacks the three of five members needed for a quorum.

**REFUGEES:** House conservatives have intensified their push to insert a ban on refugees from Syria and Iraq in the CR. Last week, 37 lawmakers wrote Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) asking for the provision. This week's attacks in three states, along with the Homeland Security inspector general's report finding large scale errors in granting citizenship could motivate negotiators to find some compromise language on this issue. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), seizing on the latest bombings, issued a press release urging Congress to, "Prevent Americans who have traveled abroad for training from returning here, and to stop the flow of refugees from hotbeds of terrorism in the Middle East."

### **Reauthorization of Perkins Career and Technical Education Act Hits Snag in Senate**

Legislation to reauthorize a career and technical education program for students is hitting a snag in the Senate after a similar House bill won easy passage last week by a vote of 405-5 with no Democratic opposition. After months of bipartisan negotiations, the Senate Republicans' draft version of the bill considered on Wednesday in the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee included provisions that Democrats say they cannot support.

The legislation would update a federal initiative, called the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (PL 109-270), that provides funds to state and local programs that prepare students for manufacturing or technical careers. For the Democrats, the main point of contention is provisions that limit the oversight of Education Secretary John King, or his successor, for the program. Currently, the secretary has to approve state programs before awarding funding. While the bipartisan House bill also limits the secretary's authority, the Senate draft version goes further and states that the secretary is not permitted to prescribe "specific approaches...to ensure equal or equitable access, including for special populations, to career and technical education programs."

### **U.S. Crude Oil Imports Strengthen**

Oversupply concerns continue to weigh on oil markets, but crude oil imports into the U.S. remain strong. A good portion is due to the increased flows from Northwest Europe, as imports of grades from the region have increased by almost 80 percent through August over last year.

### **NY Regulators Require New Environmental Review of Oil Hub**

New York regulators are requiring Global Partners to restart the environmental review process of its crude oil hub in Albany. The NY Environmental Protection Agency said Global violated air pollution standards at the Port of Albany, but the company maintains it was in compliance.

### **Congress Intervenes on Dakota Access Pipeline Delay**

Members of Congress are expressing frustration regarding Dakota Access Pipeline delays from the Obama administration. Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY) stated, "The courts have ruled, the permits were there, the permission was given, and then the president comes in and intervenes in something that his own department had won the court case on."