

CSAC: Congress Returns to Action After Two-Week Break

April 11, 2024

After a two-week recess, lawmakers returned to the nation's capital to face a full slate of politically fraught issues. Top of mind for House and Senate leaders is a military-aid package for Ukraine and Israel, as well as a foreign intelligence surveillance reauthorization package. Absent any sort of consensus in the House, all three are indefinitely delayed. House Republicans are also expected to present their impeachment articles against Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas next week. Senate Democrats, however, could bypass a trial entirely if the full caucus bands together in support of a motion to seek the immediate dismissal of the case against Mayorkas.

In the meantime, House lawmakers did manage to forge a bipartisan agreement on legislation ([H.R. 6655](#)) that would reauthorize the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA). WIOA is the nation's primary workforce development and training law and provides funding to state agencies to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services. If enacted, the WIOA reauthorization bill would fund the system through 2030 and provide billions of dollars to states to support training and career services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth.

The legislation, which overwhelmingly passed the House on April 9, also aims to make improvements to WIOA. For example, and among other proposed reforms, H.R. 6655 would dedicate 50 percent of adult and dislocated worker funding toward upskilling workers through "individual training accounts" (ITAs) and on-the-job learning. The bill also places a greater emphasis on work-based learning for youth and on workforce education programs at community colleges that align with in-demand jobs. The measure is now pending before the Senate, though it's unclear when – or if – it will be considered by the upper chamber.

While the path forward for WIOA in the Senate remains unclear, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) recently outlined his priorities for the coming weeks and months. According to Schumer, the upper chamber will take action on bipartisan bills that enhance national security, advance online safety for kids and promote innovation, expand the Child Tax Credit, combat the fentanyl crisis, address rail safety, ensure internet affordability, safeguard cannabis banking, and lower the cost of prescription drugs, among other bills.

Legislation Introduced to Increase Affordable Housing Supply

Representatives Adam Schiff (D-CA) and Jimmy Gomez (D-CA) recently introduced legislation – the *Government Facilities to Affordable Housing Conversion Act* ([H.R. 7826](#)) – that incentivizes the conversion of unused government buildings into affordable housing units. Specifically, H.R. 7826 would direct the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the General Services Administration (GSA), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to work in coordination to identify vacant and underutilized federal buildings that would be suitable for residential use development, maintain public list sale opportunities, and provide an annual report to Congress on these efforts. The legislation would create a new grant program to support states and local governments for housing conversion efforts also would provide

additional funding to study the effectiveness of office building to residential property conversions. The bill has been endorsed by CSAC.

Bipartisan Legislation Introduced to Help Harden Homes Against Disasters

Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA) and Doug LaMalfa (R-CA) recently introduced bipartisan legislation – the *Disaster Resiliency and Coverage Act of 2024* (H.R. 7849) – that would incentivize homeowners to mitigate disaster risks on their property. Specifically, H.R. 7849 would establish a new grant program through which individual households in designated disaster-prone regions would be eligible for up to \$10,000 for specified disaster resiliency work on their homes. The legislation stipulates that payments from State-run disaster resiliency programs and payments from various federal emergency agricultural programs would not be considered income for federal tax purposes. Finally, the bill would provide a 30 percent tax credit for qualified disaster risk mitigation activities conducted by individuals or businesses. The credit is meant to complement the grant program by providing meaningful assistance to larger property owners for whom mitigation activity costs would far exceed \$10,000. The text of the legislation can be accessed [here](#).

Treasury Department Releases New FAQs on ARPA SLFRF Funds

On March 29, the Treasury Department released new FAQs related to the Obligation Interim Final Rule (IFR) for the *American Rescue Plan Act* (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF). The updates will grant additional flexibilities for county SLFRF expenditures. Among other things, the new guidance will extend personnel costs coverage for any SLFRF-eligible position through December 31, 2026 that is established prior to the December 31, 2024 obligation deadline. In addition, sub-recipients will not be subject to the December 31, 2024, obligation deadline. It also will provide new flexibility to reclassify excess funds for SLFRF-eligible uses after the December 31, 2024 obligation deadline.

OMB Finalizes Guidance to Make Grants More Accessible and Transparent

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recently updated its Uniform Grants Guidance to help streamline and clarify requirements for Federal funding. Among other things, the changes aim to achieve goals such as eliminating several prior-approval requirements, revising Notices of Funding Opportunities requirements to make it easier for potential applicants to seek grants, and expanding grant accessibility by eliminating English language requirements on various grant documents. The guidance will also allow recipients to utilize grant funding to establish or bolster data infrastructure capabilities. OMB is also publishing an [implementation memorandum](#) that will direct agencies to put the revisions into effect by October 1, 2024, and provide additional tools to strengthen and streamline the administration of Federal financial assistance.