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From: TRP Tip Sheet
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2026 8:55 AM
To: Emlyn Struthers
Subject: The Latest on Government Funding

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The TRP Tip Sheet

August 18, 2026

Editor's note: 'The TRP Tip Sheet' will publish on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout August until the House returns on Monday, Aug. 31.

QUICK TAKES

- **THE LATEST ON GOVERNMENT FUNDING.** Negotiations on key legislative items are ongoing even as lawmakers remain on August recess.
- **WHAT TO WATCH IN TONIGHT'S PRIMARIES.** Voters in Alaska, Florida, and Wyoming head to the polls today to shape more of November's general election races.
- **TRP CONGRESSIONAL RETIREMENT TRACKER.** Click [here](#) to view TRP's retirement tracker.
- **FDA CONSIDERS ASSESSING AI DEVICES LIKE DOCTORS.** The FDA is considering evaluating generative AI-enabled medical devices through a "competency-based approach."

CAPITOL HILL UPDATE

- **THE LATEST ON GOVERNMENT FUNDING.** Lawmakers and congressional staff are continuing the process of ironing out some key priorities over the August recess. In a sign of potential progress on government funding negotiations, House Rules Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-NC) has indicated she is supportive of a Senate-passed continuing resolution (CR) ([H.R. 6500](#)) to extend government funding to Dec. 11, believing it may pass under expedited consideration with bipartisan support. Given the lack of momentum from Congress

on passing fiscal year (FY) 2027 government funding bills, enactment of a CR would avert a government shutdown on Oct. 1, allowing lawmakers to return to the campaign trail in their districts during the scheduled October recess rather than work through a government funding fight.

Once they return, lawmakers will also be looking to make progress on a number of legislative priorities, including the FY 2027 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the Farm Bill, and crypto market structure legislation. Republicans will also be pushing for progress on a potential "reconciliation 3.0" package that would contain a number of Trump-supported priorities, including defense spending and election-related measures.

— **WHAT TO WATCH IN TONIGHT'S PRIMARIES.** In today's installment of midterm primary contests, voters in three states will be selecting nominees ahead of November's elections. Here's a look at some of the races we'll be watching tonight:

- **AK Senate.** Alaska's Senate race has attracted significant attention as Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK) seeks a third term in office. Tonight's "jungle primary" will pit all candidates vying for the Senate seat against each other, regardless of party, with the top four candidates advancing to November's general election. Sen. Sullivan is facing a serious challenge from former Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AK), the most recent Democrat to win statewide and the first elected to represent the state in the House in over 50 years. The race became significantly more competitive following Rep. Peltola's entry, with Democrats hoping dissatisfaction with President Trump is enough to unseat Sen. Sullivan, who won the state in 2020 by a sizable margin. Recent polling aggregations indicate the general election remains a dead heat, with tonight's primary set to determine the dynamics moving forward.
- **FL-07.** In Florida's 7th congressional district, former news anchor Ryan Elijah is challenging incumbent Rep. Cory Mills (R-FL), who faces allegations of misconduct. Elijah has emerged as a serious threat to Mills, having seen strong fundraising numbers and endorsements from Reps. Anna Paulina Luna (R-FL) and Mike Haridopolos (R-FL). Mr. Elijah has cited the allegations against the incumbent and argued he is better suited to contest the general election, even as Rep. Mills — who touts an endorsement from President Trump from earlier this year — remains ahead in the polls. On the Democratic side, Rep. Alan Grayson (D-FL), former NASA official Bale Dalton, and Navy Veteran Marialana Kinter are competing for the party's nomination. The congressional seat, which was redrawn earlier this year, is considered slightly favorable to Republicans in the general election.
- **FL Governor.** Trump-endorsed Rep. Byron Donalds (R-FL) currently leads in the polls in the race for the Republican nomination to replace Gov. Ron DeSantis (R-FL). Rep. Donalds leads a crowded race against 10 other Republican hopefuls, including Lt. Gov. Jay Collins and activist James Fishback. Republican turned Democrat, former Rep. David Jolly, leads the race for the Democratic nomination.
- **WY Senate.** In the Equality State, Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WY) is looking to succeed Sen. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), who is retiring from the Senate after one term. Rep. Hageman is considered the leading candidate in the GOP primary and would be the favorite in the general election when she faces likely Democratic nominee, former state Rep. James Byrd (D).

WHAT WE'RE TRACKING

NEW TODAY...

— **TREASURY REQUESTS INPUT ON GENIUS ACT RULEMAKING.** The U.S. Department of the Treasury released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ([NPRM](#)) requesting public comment on its framework for implementing the Guiding and Establishing National Innovation for U.S. Stablecoins (GENIUS) Act.

— **TRP SPECIAL REPORT: 340B SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON.** TRP's [special report](#) details the major policies contained within key 340B Drug Pricing Program-related bills and compares how each piece of legislation would reform the 340B program.

— **WH ORDERS GREATER U.S. NAVAL, SHIPBUILDING INVESTMENTS.** The White House issued a national security [memorandum](#) directing more investments in the U.S. shipbuilding industrial base, including the establishment of a fifth naval shipyard and a component repair center.

— **TRUMP IMPOSES DRONE IMPORT TARIFFS.** President Trump signed [orders](#) imposing tariff rates on imports of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) and their components of up to 100 percent depending on the size of drone and country of origin.

— **U.S. - IRAN MOU EXPIRES.** The memorandum of understanding (MOU) establishing a 60-day ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran expired Monday without a longer resolution to the conflict. President Donald Trump has stated that there are currently no ongoing or scheduled talks with Iran to attempt to strike a deal.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS...

— **TRP SPECIAL REPORT: THE CONGRESSIONAL OUTLOOK FOR THE REST OF 2026.** TRP's [special report](#) provides a forward-looking assessment of the legislative, political, and personnel dynamics shaping the remainder of the 119th Congress and the transition to the 120th.

— **TRP RURAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION FUND STATE ROADMAP: KEY UPDATES.** To help clients navigate OBBBA's Rural Health Transformation Fund (RHTF), TRP provides a state-by-state "roadmap" translates each state's RHTF plan into a standardized profile of proposed initiatives, priority activity areas, use-of-funds categories, and implementation progress. TRP's [RHTF State Roadmap](#), recently updated with new details from 8 states, is designed to remain a live resource and will be updated with the latest implementation developments, including funding and procurement opportunities, webinars, key deadlines, and other state-specific announcements.

— **WH ISSUES CYBER DEFENSE ORDER.** The Trump administration issued a national security [memorandum](#) allowing federal law enforcement agencies to partner with the private sector to conduct cybersecurity and surveillance operations against designated foreign terrorist organizations (FTO).

— **TRUMP ORDERS OVERHAUL OF CHILDHOOD VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS.** President Trump issued an executive order ([EO](#)) amending federal childhood vaccine recommendations and advising federal agencies and state health authorities to implement them.

- The order also directs the Justice Department to pursue legal action against states whose laws conflict with federal paternal rights protections and religious freedom exemptions from vaccine mandates.

— **IRS PROPOSES TRUMP ACCOUNT EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION RULES.** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued an [NPRM](#) that would provide guidance on employer contributions to Trump Accounts. Employers will be able to make tax-free contributions of up to \$2,500 per year to an employee or their dependent's Trump Account.

— **CMS, FDA ISSUE RAPID COVERAGE PATHWAY NOTICE.** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a [notice](#) for the Regulatory Alignment for Predictable and Immediate Device (RAPID) coverage pathway. The agencies intend for RAPID to accelerate Medicare beneficiary access to certain FDA-designated breakthrough devices. Click [here](#) to read TRP's summary of the proposed procedural notice.

WHAT WE'RE READING

Axios: FDA considers assessing AI devices like doctors

The Food and Drug Administration is considering evaluating generative AI-enabled medical devices through a "competency-based approach," similar to how doctors are evaluated, the agency writes in a [discussion paper first](#) shared with Axios. **Why it matters:** Emerging medical technologies are challenging the existing framework for overseeing medical devices, prompting calls for new approaches. **Driving the news:** The FDA's discussion paper raises considerations for both preapproval and postmarket regulation of AI-enabled devices and solicits stakeholder feedback. The document isn't intended to serve as guidance for device makers and notes that the agency is still in the preliminary phase of its effort. "We are launching a transparent process to inform the development of an approach that safeguards patients and consumers, advances innovation and serves as a potential model for regulators around the world," Michelle Tarver, director of the FDA Center for Devices and Radiological Health, said in a statement. The agency's "ultimate goal is to enable a nimble regulatory approach that employs least burdensome principles and allows patients timely access to safe and effective medical devices," the paper states.

Roll Call: Kennedy looks for new members for revamped vaccine committee

The Trump administration has begun searching for new members for a vaccine advisory committee it is quietly reshaping to look at alternatives to vaccinations, a move that has drawn worries from outside groups. The National Vaccine Advisory Committee, created in 1987, has worked across agencies to advise the Health and Human Services assistant secretary for health on strategies to prevent infectious disease through immunization. It previously focused on recommendations on vaccine equity and access issues, including anything from COVID-19 vaccine research during the pandemic to funding for vaccination clinics at elementary schools. But in July HHS revised the committee's charter to include consideration of "non-immunization strategies" for individuals who cannot or do not want to be vaccinated. This could include "healthy lifestyle and disease prevention initiatives, off label repurposed use of existing FDA approved drugs and the use of dietary supplements known to support healthy immune function." Earlier this week, the administration published a solicitation for nominations for panel members in the Federal Register.

Inside Health Policy: Providers Raise Concerns As CMS Moves To Expand Exclusion Authority (\$)

Provider groups are worried by CMS' moves to take on new authority to exclude providers from its programs and to categorically target fraud through HHS announcements and

rulemakings over the past few months. In addition to its high-profile work with the Justice Department and HHS Inspector General, CMS just sent a major fraud-fighting rule to the White House for review, recently said it has authority to start excluding providers on its own, and used Medicare pay rules to preview a major expansion of the types of fraud it will target and a new claims-based tool to target bad actors -- all seemingly backed up by artificial intelligence. CMS sent its highly anticipated proposed CRUSH rule to the Office of Management and Budget last Friday (Aug. 7), according to the White House website. The rule, based on the agency's Comprehensive Regulations to Uncover Suspicious Healthcare (CRUSH) initiative, includes "provisions related to provider enrollment, medical review, investigations, and other program integrity oversight provisions that would greatly strengthen CMS's ability to crush fraud, enhance program integrity efforts across Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and maximize legislative authorities to address inappropriate payments," a summary of the rule says.

Inside Health Policy: CDRH To Hold Public Meeting On Breakthrough Device Development (\$)

FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) announced a public meeting slated for late September to advance regulatory science for breakthrough devices, aiming to foster multi-stakeholder conversations and boost strategic planning for the office. The "Regulatory Science Innovations Catalyzing Medical Device Development," meeting is scheduled for Sept. 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The meeting aims to "gather stakeholder perspectives on emerging device technologies, evolving clinical scenarios, and their anticipated regulatory science needs," and "Identify critical regulatory science gaps that could potentially impede the development of safe and effective novel devices and disruptive medical device technologies," according to FDA.

Inside Health Policy: Providers Push For Public Review Of Rural Health Fund Reporting (\$)

CMS needs to make states' annual reporting on the use of Rural Health Transformation Program funds available for public viewing, the Federation of American Hospitals and National Rural Health Association say while raising concerns the agency has walked back its previous plans to do so. Lawmakers included the RHTP in H.R. 1 last year in an effort to avert some of H.R. 1's negative impacts on rural communities. The program grants \$50 billion in two distributions to support state rural health over five years. States must submit annual and quarterly reporting to CMS detailing program milestones, performance metrics, and expenditures. CMS will use this reporting to conduct annual recalculations of each state's "technical score," which impacts workload-based funding. In March, CMS outlined plans in a Paperwork Reduction Act notice to collect annual and quarterly reporting data from states. FAH [responded to the notice by recommending CMS](#) standardize reporting categories, create a public-facing transparency portal and require states to disclose downstream subrecipients receiving federal funds. CMS adopted some of FAH's recommendations, including standardized reporting and the subrecipient reporting structure.

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