



# PAACC FEDERAL UPDATE

DECEMBER 15, 2018

## Major Washington News

### Death of President George H.W. Bush

George H. W. Bush passed away on November 30, 2018, at the age of 94. The 41st President of the United States, President Bush served from 1989 to 1993. He also served as Vice President under President Ronald Reagan from 1981 to 1989. President Bush laid in state in the Capitol Rotunda on December 3 and was lain in repose at St. Martin's Episcopal Church from the evening of December 5 to December 6. Following the funeral for Bush at St. Martin's on December 6, his coffin was brought by train to the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas where he was buried next to his wife Barbara.

### House Speaker Nomination and Leadership Elections

After securing control of the House in the mid-term elections, the Democrats held their vote to nominate a speaker on November 28. Nancy Pelosi from California was nominated as speaker by House Democrats in a closed door meeting by a 203-32 vote. The House will hold a floor vote for Speaker in January. Rep. Steny Hoyer was elected majority leader in the new Congress, winning the vote by acclamation, meaning he won unanimously and they didn't do a roll call. Rep. James Clyburn won the spot of majority whip, also by acclamation. New Mexico Rep. Ben Ray Lujan was elected to serve in the role of assistant Democratic leader in the new Congress. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York was elected Democratic caucus chair, making him the No. 5-ranked Democrat next Congress.

On the Republican side, Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) was elected the minority leader. The No. 2 spot of House minority whip was claimed by Rep. Steve Scalise (R-La.). Rep. Liz Cheney (Wyo.) was chosen by her Republican colleagues to serve as House Republican conference chair, the No. 3 GOP spot in the House.

In the Senate, both Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) won the votes to keep their posts next year. Senate Republicans voted Sen. John Thune of South Dakota as Majority Whip. Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo. Was named conference chairman. Missouri Republican Sen. Roy Blunt was voted to Policy Committee chairman; Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, will be the next

Republican conference vice-chair. Sen. Todd Young, R-Ind., will be the chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Senate Democrats voted to keep the rest of their leadership team in place. That includes Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-Ill.) as minority whip and Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) as assistant minority leader. Others retaining leadership positions included Sens. Debbie Stabenow (Mich.), Mark R. Warner (Va.), Elizabeth Warren (Mass.), Amy Klobuchar (Minn.), Bernie Sanders (Vt.), Joe Manchin III (W.Va.) and Tammy Baldwin (Wis.).

The 2019-2020 session will convene on January 3, 2019.

### Administrative Changes

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke will leave his role as Interior Secretary at the end of the year, President Trump announced in a tweet. Secretary Zinke served nearly two years and faced allegations of ethics violations. David Bernhardt, the deputy Interior secretary, could take over as acting secretary in the interim.

In addition, General John Kelly will step down as President Trump's Chief of Staff at the end of the year. President Trump has named Mick Mulvaney, the director of the office of management and budget, as acting White House chief of staff.

### Farm Bill Passed

The Farm Bill passed the House by a vote of 369-47 on December 12, 2018. President Trump is expected to sign the bill into law the week of December 17. The bill will cost \$867 billion over ten years and is largely used to help stabilize the farming industry and reauthorizes farm and food programs. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a part of this bill. There had been some discussions about adding work requirements to SNAP, but the final bill did not include any changes to the program. The farm bill also legalizes industrial hemp and provides an increase in funding for rural high-speed internet access from \$25 million to \$350 million annually. Finally, the bill provides new help for dairy farmers who were hit especially hard by tariff retaliation.

### Appropriations Update

As previously reported, President Trump signed the Labor-HHS-Ed bill into law on Sept. 28 and the mini-bus into law on Sept. 21. The seven remaining bills are funded with a Continuing Resolution (CR) through December 21st: Agriculture; Commerce, Justice, Science; Financial Services & General Government; Homeland Security; Interior, Environment; State, Foreign Operations; and Transportation, HUD. This CR is an extension of the previous CR that had expired on December 7. If Congress does not pass the remaining bills or another CR by December 21, the federal government will shut down. This shut down would amount to about 25% of the government since the largest spending bills were passed earlier this fall.

### ObamaCare Ruling

On Friday, December 14, a Texas federal judge struck down the Affordable Care Act (ACA). U.S. District Court Judge Reed O'Connor ruled that the individual mandate is unconstitutional and because the mandate cannot be separated from the entire law,

he stated that the full law is invalid. December 15 is the deadline to sign up for coverage for the new plan and the ACA remains in effect while appeals are filed. It is widely believed that the Texas judge's ruling will be reversed in the appeals process.

## Business & Industry

### Spurring Business in Communities Act

On December 6, the Senate passed H.R. 4111, known as the Spurring Business in Communities Act of 2017. This bill amends the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 to:

- require the Small Business Administration (SBA), in reviewing and processing a small business investment company's (SBIC's) application, to give first priority to an SBIC applicant located in an underlicensed state (i.e., a state in which the number of licensees per capita is less than the median number of licensees per capita for all states) with below median financing; and
- exempt applicants in underlicensed states from certain SBA capital requirements.

The bill was presented to the President on December 13.

## Congressional Schedule

### December

While Congress was scheduled to adjourn on December 14, Senate Leader McConnell has called for the Senate to convene and resume consideration of the House message to accompany S.756, the legislative vehicle for the criminal justice bill. Congress will also need to convene the week of December 17 to vote the remaining funding bills, which expire December 21.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Senate in Session	4 House & Senate in Session	5 House & Senate in Session	6 House & Senate in Session	7 House & Senate in Session	8
9	10 House & Senate in Session	11 House & Senate in Session	12 House & Senate in Session	13 House & Senate in Session	14 Senate in Session – Target Adjournment	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	26	28	29
30	31					