

Americans Want Congress to Act on Critical Issues

With only fourteen legislative days remaining before the House is scheduled to adjourn, there are a number of pressing issues that need to be addressed. The American people have made it clear that they want to see Congress work together to get things done, and these issues provide an opportunity to meet that responsibility. Here's a look at the issues that should be addressed before Congress adjourns for the year, all of which could have bipartisan support.

Funding the Government

Congress passed a continuing resolution that funds the government through December 11. With less than a month until that CR expires, both parties need to come together to pass legislation to responsibly prevent another shutdown. There's bipartisan agreement that we should work to pass an omnibus appropriations bill that would provide stability and certainty to the economy:

“Republican leaders have made it clear to their rank-and-file that they do not want another government shutdown after the continuing resolution expires...” [Federal News Radio, [11/12/14](#)]

“Lawmakers of both parties say they do not want a repeat of the government shutdown of 2013 and will not let the funding lapse.” [USA Today, [11/11/14](#)]

Representative Tom Cole (R-OK): “I think a short-term extension in my view is a mistake. I actually agree very much we should have a long-term bill. We should pass an omnibus spending bill similar to what the president's requested that will give us stability through at least September 30th of next year. I think that's an important thing.” [The Hill, [11/12/14](#)]

National Defense Authorization Act

On May 22, 2014, the House passed H.R. 4435, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015. There is still more work to be done to reach agreement before the end of the year on a defense authorization bill that reflects the hard choices needed to strengthen our national security in a fiscally responsible way.

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon (R-CA): “I'm hopeful that we wrap it up today. I think that's what we're shooting for.” [The Hill, [11/13/14](#)]

“Leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services panels aim to wrap up talks on a joint 2015 defense policy bill on Thursday so that they can approve the must-pass legislation this year.” [The Hill, [11/13/14](#)]

“The [House and Senate Armed Services] committees' goal is to push the legislation through Congress during the lame duck, keeping alive their track record of sending a military authorization bill to the president's desk every year for more than half a century.” [Roll Call, [11/11/14](#)]

Terrorism Risk Insurance Act

On July 17, 2014, the Senate passed a reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 93-4. Almost four months later, the House has failed to act. Without action, TRIA will expire on December 31, 2014. The Terrorism Risk Insurance Act has helped sustain a viable market for terrorism insurance coverage of a wide range of building and infrastructure projects critical to the U.S. economy. Delaying action on this issue is only fueling uncertainty for our economy and delaying job-creating investments:

Jimi Grande, Senior Vice President at the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies:

“This reauthorization has been on the table for more than a year and there is no reason why it needs to be held to the last minute ... Nobody wants to start all over again next year and any short-term options would be a disaster for policyholders, lenders, developers, insurers and the economy.” [The Hill, [11/11/14](#)]

The American Insurance Association: “For a dozen years, TRIA has successfully facilitated a stable and competitive terrorism risk insurance market. Since it was first enacted in the wake of the attack on September 11, 2001, the program has become essential for more than 60 percent of U.S. businesses because the threat of a terrorist attack remains high. Those businesses need the certainty provided by a long-term reauthorization of TRIA. TRIA's extension will help pave the way for the creation of thousands of jobs and the continued growth of the U.S. economy. That's why TRIA has strong bipartisan support and congressional leaders have made extending the program a ‘must-do’ during the lame duck session.” [Release, [11/5/14](#)]

Representative Stephen Fincher (R-TN): “Businesses with terrorism coverage are being told that their coverage will end if Congress fails to act, causing the sort of uncertainty that hurt economic growth... A short-term extension of TRIA would only prolong this problem.” [The Hill, [10/31/14](#)]

Tax Extenders

A number of tax provisions expired at the end of last year, making it harder for individuals, families, and small businesses to plan and invest. The provisions included credits for research and development, mortgage interest deductions for homeowners, and credits that assist the U.S. wind energy industry.

The IRS has warned that failure to deal with this list of expired tax provisions in a timely manner will result in a delay in the tax filing season and could cause economic harm for millions of taxpayers in 2015. We need to work on a bipartisan basis to address these tax extenders, but the House has instead voted only on irresponsible legislation to extend only a few individual tax provisions, while adding hundreds of billions to the deficit and perpetuating uncertainty in the tax code:

John Koskinen, IRS Commissioner: “[If debate on tax extenders] persists into December or later, [it] could force the IRS to postpone the opening of the 2015 filing season and delay the processing of tax refunds for millions of taxpayers.” [Letter, [10/6/14](#)]

Tim Steffen, Director of Financial Planning at Robert W. Baird & Co.: “It's frustrating not being able to give a client the right advice because we don't know what the rules are going to be. Nobody wants to wait until the end of the year to do their tax planning.” [Investment News, [9/11/14](#)]

Office of Democratic Whip Steny H. Hoyer, 11/13/14