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## Weekly Legislative Update Week of April 17, 2017

### Congressional Outlook

#### Week of April 17

The House and Senate are both in recess for the next week, returning to Washington the week of April 24. With current federal government funding set to expire at midnight on Friday, April 28, Congress will only have five days to pass a government funding bill in order to avoid a shutdown on April 29. The House and Senate will hold pro forma sessions on April 17 and April 20.

When the Senate returns on April 24, it will vote on the nomination of former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue to serve as the 31st U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and vote to advance the nomination of Rod J. Rosenstein to serve as Deputy Attorney General. The House and Senate may also vote on up to 20 pending Congressional Review Act (CRA) [disapproval resolutions](#) over the next two weeks to nullify Obama Administration rules finalized between June 13, 2016 and January 3, 2017. These include two House-passed CRA resolutions to nullify the Bureau of Land Management's November 2016 [rule](#) that requires that oil and gas producers implement measures and limits to intentional venting, flaring, and leakage of methane from new and existing oil and gas producers on federal lands and the Labor Department's August 2016 [rule](#) to support state efforts to establish retirement savings plans for workers who do not otherwise have access to a tax free long term savings plan. The deadline for both chambers to pass these pending resolutions is May 9.

On Tuesday, voters in Georgia's 6th Congressional District, which consists of the suburbs north of Atlanta, will head to the polls for a [special election](#) to fill the seat left vacant by Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price on February 10. If none of the 18 candidates (11 Republicans, 5 Democrats, and 2 Independents) receive more than 50% of the vote, a runoff election will take place on June 20 between the top two vote-getters, which will likely be Democrat Jon Ossoff, a former Congressional aide, and Republican Karen Handel, the former Georgia Secretary of State from 2007-2010.

### Trump Signs Two CRA Disapproval Resolutions Into Law

On April 13, President Donald J. Trump signed two Congressional Review Act disapproval resolutions into law, which nullify the following Obama Administration rules:

- the Department of Health and Human Services December 2016 [rule](#) which required that states pass along family-planning grants regardless of whether the groups they're passing them along to offer abortion services as well. The rule was intended to prevent states from withholding these grants from any organization "for reasons other than its ability to provide Title X services." The House passed this by a vote of [230-188](#) and the Senate by a vote of [51-50](#), with Vice President Mike Pence casting the tie-breaking vote; and
- the Department of Labor's December 2016 [rule](#) that allows cities and counties to establish retirement savings plans for private-sector workers who do not otherwise have access to a tax free long term retirement savings plan either through their place of employment or the state in which they reside. To have been eligible under this rule, the city or county was required to meet three requirements: (1) be larger than the least populous state, which is currently Wyoming at approximately 600,000 residents; (2) not be in a state that has already enacted a statewide payroll deduction savings plan; and (3) implement and administer the plan for its workers. The House passed this by a vote of [234-191](#) and the Senate by a vote of [50-49](#).

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

### White House OMB Lifts Federal Hiring Freeze - Calls for Personnel Cuts in FY 2018

On April 12, White House Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney replaced the federal hiring ban President Trump put in place in January with a [14-page memorandum](#) to all agency heads to develop a plan to reorganize and become more efficient. The memorandum requires all agencies to:

- Begin taking immediate actions to achieve near-term workforce reductions and cost savings, including planning for funding levels in President Trump's FY 2018 Budget Blueprint;
- Develop a plan to maximize employee performance by June 30, 2017; and
- Submit an Agency Reform Plan to OMB in September 2017 as part of the agency's FY 2019 Budget submission to OMB that includes long-term workforce reductions. An initial, high-level draft of the Agency Reform Plan is due to OMB by June 30, 2017.

The memorandum also outlines the steps that OMB will take to formulate a comprehensive Government-wide Reform Plan for publication in President Trump's FY 2019 Budget, including both legislative proposals and administrative actions. This plan will rely on three primary sources of input: Agency Reform Plans, OMB-coordinated crosscutting proposals, and public input. The White House also unveiled a [webpage](#) for the public to recommend, by June 13, 2017, "ideas and suggestions on how the government can be better organized to work for the American people." [Read more...](#)

## Trump Announces Intent to Nominate Personnel to Administration Posts

Last week, Trump announced his intent to nominate seven individuals to posts in his Administration:

- Donald M. Benton to serve as Director of the United States Selective Service System;
- Marshall Billingslea to serve as Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, Department of the Treasury;
- Gilbert B. Kaplan to serve as Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade;
- John Marshall Mitnick to serve as General Counsel at the Department of Homeland Security;
- John Sullivan to serve as Deputy Secretary of State for Management and Resources;
- Former Rep. Scott Garrett (R-NJ) to serve as President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term of four years expiring January 20, 2021; and
- Former Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL) to serve as a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term of two years expiring January 20, 2019.

Read more [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).