



Week of 4-5-21
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Congressional Overview

Both Representatives and Senators were in their home districts last week following the Easter holiday.

Senate Parliamentarian Rules Favorably on “American Jobs” Plan

On Monday, the Senate Parliamentarian Elizabeth MacDonough ruled that Democrats could enact another reconciliation package such as President Biden’s recent \$2.25 trillion infrastructure and tax proposal, which would bypass the 60-vote rule required to pass most legislation in the Senate.

However, this effort could be stymied if Sen. Joe Manchin (D-WV) does not support raising the corporate tax rate from 21 to 28 percent as President Biden proposed to pay for increased infrastructure spending. Sen. Manchin said he would be in favor of closing tax “loopholes” that benefit the wealthy and could support an increase in the corporate rate to 25 percent, which he said is the global average.

Senate Republicans May Support a Much Smaller Infrastructure Plan

Senate Republicans may be ready to support limited infrastructure funding in President Biden’s spending proposal, which would require scaling back the \$2.25 trillion plan by more than two thirds. Republicans are focusing their opposition on a corporate tax rate increase they say will hold back job creation. Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO) said he could envision bipartisan support on improving facilities like roads and airports, and possibly water systems and expanding broadband access, if the administration pared the package to a number around \$615 billion.

House Committee Considering Allowing Federal Funding for Registered Apprenticeship Programs

The U.S. House Appropriations Education Subcommittee is considering FY 22 appropriations language that would allow for federal Perkins funding to be allocated to the 25 accredited registered apprenticeship programs throughout the country. The language is as follows: *A registered apprenticeship that is currently accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education is an “eligible institution” as described in The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 and The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act of 2018.*

The Carl Perkins Grant provides federal funding to states to improve both secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs. Funds must be used to support programs and materials that provide career and technical education to students.

White House’s Infrastructure Plan and the PRO Act

President Biden's \$2.25 trillion infrastructure plan released last week includes new workplace protections, along with \$100 billion to train American workers. The plan also calls on Congress to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act), which would boost workers’ ability to organize unions and collectively bargain.

OSHA Puts a “Hold” on Emergency Temporary Standard for COVID-19

OSHA has yet to determine if an emergency temporary standard (ETS) is needed and has not announced a timeframe for releasing the standard if one is justified. On April 6, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh placed a hold on the

implementation of a potential ETS. Per Secretary Walsh, any ETS “needs to reflect the latest scientific analysis and state of the disease.”

President Biden issued an Executive order on Jan. 21 saying he expected a decision from the agency by March 15, which did not occur. If enacted, ETS would address worker conditions during COVID-19, and public health officials warn of a fourth wave of COVID-19, but as of April 1st, 16.9 percent of the U.S. population was fully vaccinated and 30 percent of the population was at least partially vaccinated. The U.S. is averaging about 2.9 million vaccine shots per day and at that rate the nation would reach a 75 percent vaccination level in July.