



Advocating for the Signatory Finishing Industry

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Week Ending 1-30-26

Volume 26 | Issue 4

This Week in Congress!

This week, the House is in recess, and the Senate was in session despite postponed votes to accommodate weather-related travel delays. The last major snowstorm in Washington, D.C. was 2016's "Snowzilla," which dropped around 20 inches in D.C. and even more in its suburbs.

The Senate considered votes on a pregnancy-related bill (S. 3627) (the House passed a similar bill last week), along with a bill (S. 2806) that aims to eliminate government shutdowns by providing for automatic 14-day continuing appropriations when Congress fails to enact a spending bill before the beginning of a new fiscal year and the House-passed appropriations minibuss.

Government Shutdown Looms

Most federal government funding runs out at midnight on Friday. Although Congress had been close to passing the remaining six spending bills, a partial government shutdown now looks likely. Last week, members of Congress released a bipartisan package of four spending bills covering Defense, Homeland Security, Health and Labor programs, and Transportation and Housing. Some members of Congress from farm states said they would not support the bill unless it allowed expanded sales of E15 ethanol fuel. Members of Congress from oil and gas states opposed this, saying it could force some U.S. refineries to close. Leaders reached a compromise by creating a rural energy council that will propose a solution for a House vote by February 25.

The House had to vote separately on the Homeland Security portion and the rest of the bill. After both passed, the four-bill package was combined with a two-bill package the House had already passed in January and sent to the Senate as one large bill. During debate, the House unanimously voted to remove a Senate provision that would have allowed Senators to sue the federal government for up to \$500,000 if their phone records were seized without their knowledge during the investigation into efforts to overturn the 2020 election. The House passed the Homeland Security portion of the bill by a vote of 220–207. Only seven Democrats supported it, and one Republican voted against it.

Both Republican and Democratic leaders were seen as successful in passing the package despite a difficult political environment. Speaker Mike Johnson kept his promise to return to the normal budget process. Democrats reduced the overall spending levels proposed by Republicans and kept Congress in

control of spending decisions. Members of Congress also protected funding authority and secured projects for their home districts.

However, the bill now faces serious trouble in the Senate. After a man was killed by ICE in Minnesota, many Democrats said they will not support the bill unless the Homeland Security section is removed and rewritten to limit ICE enforcement powers. Opposition includes not only progressive Democrats but also moderate Senators who have supported past budget bills and efforts to avoid shutdowns. Republicans need 7 to 10 Democratic votes to reach the 60 votes required to begin debate in the Senate.

If the Senate changes the bill, it must go back to the House for another vote. But the House is currently in recess, and the Speaker does not plan to bring members back early. This makes a shutdown even more likely.

As of Thursday, January 29, Senate Democrats and a few Republicans blocked the package, signaling that negotiations between President Trump and Senate Democrats still have a way to go before reaching a deal. The motion to advance the bill failed by a vote of 45-55. Eight Republicans joined all Democrats in voting against it, including Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.). Thune was a late “no” vote and immediately entered a motion to reconsider the package to give him flexibility to bring it back to the floor soon.

Bipartisan Healthcare Negotiations Come Up Short

Senate bipartisan negotiations on an extension of the expired enhanced premium tax credits did not produce a deal. The group is not planning further meetings.