



*Week Ending 1-9-26
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This Week in Congress!

Congress returned this week to start the second session of the 119th Congress. The House considered two bills that would limit the Energy Department's ability to issue household energy efficiency standards: the SHOWER Act (H.R. 4593) would redefine a showerhead relevant to federal water pressure requirements, and the Affordable HOMES Act (H.R. 5184) would prohibit the Department from enforcing energy efficiency standards applicable to manufactured housing. Also, the House considered H.R. 1834 to extend expired Affordable Care Act (ACA) enhanced premium tax credits and two measures that would override President Trump's vetoes of bills related to a Colorado pipeline project (H.R. 131, sponsored by Rep. Bobert (R-CO)) and a reservation expansion in Everglades National Park (H.R. 504, sponsored by Rep. Gimenez (R-FL)). Finally, the House considered a three-bill appropriations minibus.

The Senate voted on the confirmation of administration nominees and considered Sen. Kaine (D-VA)'s bipartisan War Powers resolution (S. J. Res. 98) to restrain President Trump from engaging in military action in Venezuela. A similar resolution failed to pass the Senate in November.

The House is scheduled to be in session for the next three weeks and out of session the week of January 26. The Senate is scheduled to be in session for the next two weeks, out of session the week of January 19, and then back in session for the last week of the month.

FY26 Appropriations Bills

The legislation that ended the government shutdown in November included three FY26 appropriations bills: Agriculture, Legislative Branch, and Military Construction-Veterans Affairs. Congress has until January 30 to pass the remaining nine appropriations bills or a continuing resolution (CR) that would fund those agencies and programs at FY 2025 spending levels.

The weekend before Christmas, Senate and House Appropriations Committee Chairs announced that they reached an agreement on overall totals for each of the nine remaining spending bills. The amounts were not made public, but the Chairs say they fall below overall levels under the current CR that expires at the end of January. The totals are likely to be closer to bipartisan Senate-proposed topline numbers than the amounts set in appropriations bills that passed the House on party-line votes, and that will invite opposition from far-right members of the Republican Party, but this agreement allows the parties to start negotiating the details of the remaining spending bills.

There does not appear to be much appetite for another government shutdown, but Congress still has a lot left to do. Democrats have not yet decided what they will demand in exchange for votes, and it remains to be seen how intervening events, including developments in Venezuela, might impact legislative priorities and the chances for bipartisan agreement.

Just before leaving for the holiday recess, Republican Senate leaders were able to clear all Republican objections to a minibus that includes five appropriations bills: Defense, Commerce-Justice-Science (C-J-S), Interior, Transportation-Housing and Urban Development, and Labor-Health and Human

Services. Majority Leader Thune (R-SD) hoped to start the floor process for that package in December, but Sens. Bennet (D-CO) and Hickenlooper (D-CO) subsequently blocked action on the package in response to the administration's announcement that it will dismantle the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder. The Senators say they will not lift their holds until NCAR funding is restored.

Healthcare Votes Continue

Before the recess, the House passed the Republican healthcare bill by a vote of 216-211 (Rep. Massie (R-KY) was the only Republican to vote against it; no Democrat voted for it. The measure is not expected to move in the Senate. Speaker Johnson (R-LA) did not allow Republican moderates to offer an amendment to that bill to extend the now-expired ACA enhanced premium tax credits. In response, Reps. Bresnahan (R-PA), Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Lawler (R-NY), and Mackenzie (R-PA) provided the required number of signatures on a discharge petition organized by Democrats that will force a vote in the House on a bill to extend the credits for three years without implementing any reforms to the program. Although he signed the discharge petition, Rep. Lawler indicated that he does not really support the Democratic solution but rather views it as a vehicle that the Senate can amend with a bipartisan compromise that will return to the House for another vote. The House vote could boost the efforts of Sens. Collins (R-ME) and Moreno (R-OH) to build bipartisan consensus around a new framework for an extension.

Congressional Balance of Power

On January 5, 2026, Rep. Greene (R-GA) resigned from office and Rep. LaMalfa (R-CA) died suddenly leaving the Republicans with 218 seats and the Democrats with 213 seats. As of now, 25 Republicans and 20 Democrats have announced that they will not be seeking re-election. Additionally, nine incumbent Senators, comprising five Republicans and four Democrats, are also not seeking re-election. This marks the highest number of members not seeking re-election since 2011.

State of the Union Address

House Speaker Mike Johnson announced that the State of the Union Address will be given by President Trump on February 24 - a Tuesday night.