

Window on Washington - July 12, 2021, Vol. 5, Issue 28

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Outlook for This Week in the Nation's Capital

Congress. The Senate is back in session this week, though the House is in a committee work period. It will be a busy July for both chambers, as they are expected to debate and vote on an FY22 budget resolution that includes reconciliation instructions, which is a necessary step in order to pass the Democratic only priorities from the American Jobs and Families Plans. Meanwhile, the Senate on a separate track plans to vote on the bipartisan infrastructure package. The Chamber this month will also confirm additional judicial nominees, will vote on either raising or suspending the debt ceiling, which is set to expire at the end of July, and will potentially hold another vote on voting rights and election reform legislation. On the defense front, the Senate Armed Services Committee plans to hold all of their markups for the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) next week, while the House Armed Services has spread their NDAA markups across late July and after the August recess.

FY22 Budget and Appropriations. The House Appropriations Committee (HAC) will resume its FY22 [markups](#) this week, which is set to include the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (LHHS), Energy and Water Development (EW), Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS), Transportation and Housing Development (THUD), Homeland Security (DHS), and Defense appropriations bills. The Senate Appropriations Committee (SAC) has not yet announced their FY22 markup schedule, though there is a chance they will markup a few bills before the August recess. For this week, the SAC will hold [hearings](#) on the FY22 budget request for the Department of Labor and the U.S. Postal Service.

Biden Administration. The White House will host German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Thursday, the third time a foreign leader will have met with President Joe Biden in Washington since he became president.

Last Week in the Nation's Capital

CONGRESS

Budget & Appropriations

GOP Unity on Spending Bills Holding, Despite Earmarks Galore: House Republicans are staying unified thus far in opposition to Democrat-drafted spending bills, despite racking up hundreds of millions of dollars in home-district earmarks after a selection process many in the GOP acknowledge has been fair and transparent. ([Roll Call](#))

GOP Bill for Capitol Security Cuts House Version by Two-Thirds: A Republican proposal to address security costs from the Jan. 6 insurrection would largely reimburse the National Guard and U.S. Capitol Police but cut roughly two-thirds from the House Democrats' \$1.9 billion version for other expenses. ([Roll Call](#))

Health

Labor & HHS Appropriations Bill Released: The House Appropriations Committee released its draft [FY 2022 funding bill](#) for the departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services yesterday. The bill provides a total of \$253.8 billion, which is a \$55.2 billion increase above 2021. The subcommittee will [hold its markup today at 11am EST](#).

Crypto & Blockchain

Warren Asks SEC to Take Closer Look at Cryptocurrency Exchanges: In a letter released last Thursday, Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) asked SEC Chairman Gary Gensler to explain if cryptocurrency exchanges operate in a safe and efficient way, and what regulatory action might be necessary to protect investors. ([The Hill](#))

Tax Reform

IRS Controversies of the Present, Past Haunt Lawmaker Talks: IRS controversies from the Obama era and much more recently that have left Republicans even more disillusioned with the nation's tax collecting army are emerging as a real problem for getting a \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure deal done. ([The Hill](#))

Transportation

THUD Appropriations Bill Released: The House Appropriations Committee released draft [bill text](#) for the departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Affairs, and Related Agencies FY 2022 funding bill yesterday. The bill provides funding a total of \$84 billion, an 11 percent increase from FY 2021 levels. It will be [considered by the subcommittee today at 5pm EST](#). ([Clark Hill Insight](#))

U.S. Industry Groups, Lawmakers Press White House to Lift Travel Restrictions: A coalition of 24 industry organizations urged the White House to lift coronavirus restrictions that bar much of the world from traveling to the United States but a White House official said reopening will need more discussion. Separately, 75 members of the U.S. House of Representatives are also seeking the easing of travel bans, in particular entry restrictions on travelers from Canada and Britain. ([Reuters](#))

Defense

Senate Sets NDAA Markups for Mid-July: The Senate Armed Services Committee will mark up its annual defense policy bill later this month, with most of the meetings closed to the public, the committee announced last Thursday. The series of markups, set for the week of July 19, means the Senate panel is poised to finish its work on the massive fiscal 2022 National Defense Authorization Act ahead of House Armed Services, which has set subcommittee markups later in July and a markup on the full bill after the August recess. ([Roll Call](#))

Homeland Security & Immigration

CBC Urges Biden to Reverse Unjust Deportations: More than 30 members of the Congressional Black Caucus [sent a letter](#) to President Biden and Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas calling on the administration to reverse deportations the letter called unjust. ([Clark Hill Insight](#))

Judiciary/Justice

CJS Appropriations Bill Released: The House Appropriations Committee released the draft [bill text](#) for the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies FY 2022 funding bill yesterday. The bill funds the departments of Justice and Commerce, as well as NASA and the NSF. The bill provides a total of \$81.3 billion, which is a 14 percent increase from FY 2021 levels. It will be [considered by the subcommittee today at 3pm EST](#). ([Clark Hill Insight](#))

Energy

Energy and Water Appropriations Bill Released: The House Appropriations Committee released the draft [appropriations bill](#) for energy and water development and related agencies yesterday. The bill provides a total of \$53.2 billion, which is an increase of \$1.45 billion above FY 2021 funding levels. The E&W Subcommittee is holding its [markup today at 1:00pm EST](#). (Clark Hill Insight)

Energy Infrastructure Act to be Considered by Committee: On Wednesday, July 14, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee will mark up Chairman Joe Manchin's (D-WV) [Energy Infrastructure Act](#). The legislation provides billions of dollars in funding for R&D, demonstration projects, and other initiatives to promote emerging energy technologies. ([AIP](#))

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Health/HHS/NIH

Pfizer to Brief U.S. Health Officials on Coronavirus Booster Shot: Pfizer is expected to brief U.S. health officials on the need for a COVID-19 booster shot as early as today. News of the reported briefing comes after government agencies pushed back on the vaccine manufacturer's announcement this week that it was seeking authorization for a third dose of its coronavirus vaccination. ([The Hill](#))

Banking & Housing/HUD

Housing to be Included in Reconciliation Bill: Last Thursday, according to House Financial Services Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA), President Biden committed to including housing in the reconciliation package currently being drafted. ([Clark Hill Insight](#))

Transportation/DOT

Biden's Competition Executive Order Targets Airport Slots: The Executive Order signed by President Biden last Friday directs the Department of Transportation to review the slot procedure at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, JFK International Airport, and LaGuardia International Airport. ([Reuters](#))

DOT Issues Refund Rule for Airlines: Shortly after President Biden signed his Executive Order last Friday, the Department of Transportation released a [proposed rule](#) mandating airlines provide refunds for delayed checked baggage and other fees not delivered such as malfunctioning wifi. (Clark Hill Insight)

Space/NASA & NOAA

Biden's OSTP Gets Commercial Input on Planetary Protection: The Biden White House is continuing to work on implementing the Trump Administration's National Strategy for Planetary Protection. Last week, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) held a day-long roundtable with representatives of companies and industry associations to get feedback on planetary protection issues. ([Space Policy Online](#))

Increasing Demands Putting Pressure on Deep Space Network: A growing number of spacecraft missions, as well as NASA's Artemis program, are putting new pressures on the agency's Deep Space Network of antennas that communicate with them, and making them look for innovation solutions. ([Space News](#))

Are We Ready for Space Tourism? The long and at-times bumpy journey of the space tourism industry is poised to reach a major milestone beginning Sunday when the first of two space flights are set to carry Virgin Galactic founder Richard Branson and Blue Origin founder Jeff Bezos above the Earth. ([Politico Space](#))

NOAA to Take First Step Toward a Small Satellite Constellation: Instead of flying satellites the size of pickup trucks like the current Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS), NOAA is exploring the benefits of feeding data supplied by a constellation of small satellites in low Earth orbit into weather forecast models. ([Space News](#))

Defense/DOD

Pentagon Cancels \$10 Billion JEDI Cloud Contract Delayed by Microsoft, Amazon Feud: The Department of Defense announced last Tuesday it canceled its contract with Microsoft for an enterprise cloud to bring decisive data to the battlefield, a nearly four-year-old project that never started because of a challenge by Amazon Web Services. ([C4ISR Net](#))

Can Defense Squeeze Onto Congress' Busy Agenda? On Congress' agenda when members return from the July 4 recess: late-arriving defense spending and policy bills as well as President Joe Biden's pick for Navy secretary, among other Pentagon nominees, which will compete for attention with a large infrastructure package and other administration priorities. ([Military Times](#))

Panetta Calls on Biden to Mandate COVID-19 Vaccines for Military: Former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said that President Biden should require all military members to get the COVID-19 vaccine, calling it a matter of "national security." ([The Hill](#))

DHS & Immigration

DHS, VA Joining Forces to Locate Deported Veterans: Last week, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis R. McDonough [announced a new initiative](#) to support our Nation's noncitizen service members, veterans, and the immediate family members of service members. (Clark Hill Insight)

Judiciary/DOJ

Biden Launches Assault on Monopolies: The White House announced a sweeping executive order last Friday to promote competition throughout the U.S. economy, in the most ambitious effort in generations to reduce the stranglehold of monopolies and concentrated markets in major industries. ([Politico](#))

Cyber

Cyber Command Lawyer Calls for Military Operations Against Hackers: The top lawyer for U.S. Cyber Command is calling for the United States to push back against transnational criminal hackers with military cyber operations, citing the "the broad and severe impacts criminals can inflict through cyberspace". ([The Hill](#))

CISA Releases Ransomware Readiness Assessment Tool for Assessing Organizations' Cybersecurity Posture: The federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released the Ransomware Readiness Assessment (RRA) tool to help organizations gauge their readiness and ability to defend and recover from a ransomware attack. ([CPO Magazine](#))

Biden Faces 'Moment of Reckoning' Over Sprawling Russian Cyberassault: Russian cybercriminals' latest massive ransomware attack is placing new pressure on President Joe Biden to follow through on his promise to make Moscow pay for turning a blind eye to digital assaults emanating from within its borders. ([Politico](#))

Agriculture/USDA

Biden Executive Order Targets Consolidation in Ag Sector: A wide-ranging executive order that President Joe Biden signed last Friday seeks to address consolidation throughout the economy and includes a special focus on actions the Department of Agriculture could take to address the meat industry and antitrust enforcement. ([Agri-Pulse](#))

Department of Energy

Swing Vote on FERC Likely to Step Down This Summer: FERC Commissioner Neil Chatterjee, whose term expired at the end of June, said last Thursday the July FERC meeting was likely to be his last. Though Chatterjee could continue to serve until the end of the year, [he hinted](#) he may not be on the Commission by September. (Clark Hill Insight)