

Washington Update

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

February 1, 2017

115TH CONGRESS

Early Congressional action in the 115th Congress has been upstaged by President Trump's Executive Actions, and as is typical of a new Administration, much time is being consumed in the Senate by the vetting process for Cabinet nominees. However, several pieces of legislation from the 114th Congress of significance to the County have been re-introduced, and Congressional leadership is considering how to address completion of the FY 2017 appropriations process while beginning the process for FY 2018.

FY 2017 & FY 2018 FEDERAL FUNDING

Following the unanticipated results of the November elections, Congress abandoned its plan to complete work on FY 2017 appropriations bills during the post-election lame duck session, instead passing a Continuing Resolution funding all Federal agencies and programs at FY 2016 levels through April 28, 2017. So far, decisions have not been made in the 115th Congress regarding how the FY 2017 appropriations process will be resolved. There have been some discussions about first taking up and completing the Department of Defense Appropriations measure, and then rolling all domestic programs into a single, omnibus bill.

The annual appropriations process typically begins with the release of the President's Budget Request in the first week of February. However, the Administration has indicated that President Trump's first budget proposal will not be released until late in February, which is not untypical for the first year of a new administration.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Chairman Buchanan (R-FL) of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee has re-introduced his *Family First Prevention Services Act* from the 114th Congress as H.R. 253. H.R. 253 is intended to invest in funding prevention and family services to help

keep children safe and supported at home, and to ensure that children in foster care are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like, and appropriate settings. Last year's version, H.R. 5456, had broad bipartisan and bicameral support, as well as the backing of national advocacy groups. That measure was approved unanimously by the House, even though concerns have been raised by CWDA, CSAC and the California Department of Social Services over provisions regarding congregate care that would have conflicted with efforts under way in California. Other States also raised objections, and the measure died in the Senate. Chairman Buchanan has not yet scheduled action on H.R. 253, but it could be taken directly to the floor for consideration based on last year's passage by the full House.

ADULT SERVICES

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Grassley (R-IA) has re-introduced his *Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act* from last year as S.178. The bill is intended to address elder abuse and exploitation, and to improve the justice system's response to victims in elder abuse and exploitation cases. It has bipartisan support, including Senator Feinstein, who is now the Ranking Minority Member of the Judiciary Committee. Supervisor Wolf met with Judiciary Committee staff last fall on last year's version of the legislation to discuss elder abuse issues in Santa Barbara County. Chairman Grassley has not yet scheduled committee consideration of S. 178.

INMATE HEALTH CARE COSTS

Congressman Hastings (D-FL) has re-introduced his legislation from the 114th Congress, the *Restoring the Partnership for County Health Care Costs Act*, as H.R. 165. H.R. 165 would remove the so-called "inmate exception" that prevents individuals in the County's jail awaiting trial from being eligible for a variety of Federal benefits, including Medicaid, Medi-

care, SSI and CHIP. It was once again introduced in conjunction with NACo's efforts on this issue, and has NACo's strong support. Estimates of the number of non-adjudicated inmates who would otherwise be eligible for these benefits vary, but reinstatement of their eligibility would have a significant impact on the County's costs for inmate health care. The bill has been referred jointly to the House Committees on Energy and Commerce and on Ways and Means, neither of which has of yet scheduled hearings on the proposal.

OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

The first piece of legislation introduced by freshman Congressman Salud Carbajal was H.R. 731, the *California Clean Coast Act*, which would permanently prohibit oil and gas leasing off the coast of the State of California. H.R. 731 has been referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources but has not yet been assigned to a subcommittee.

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