



Congress Update

February off to a fast start: The shortest month of the year kicks off with rapid-fire key moments. The 2020 election begins in earnest with the Iowa and New Hampshire caucuses - and the results could have big implications for business depending on who builds on the momentum to win the nomination.

President Donald Trump outlined his policy agenda in a State of the Union speech, one day before Senate Republicans voted to acquit him in the impeachment trial. Trump then unveiled his budget on Feb. 10.

The Democratic primaries are in full swing and Bernie Sanders is the frontrunner with Mayor Pete hot on his heels. The month ends with two more debates: Feb. 19 in Nevada and Feb. 25 in South Carolina.

Trump's funding wish list: Trump released his budget request on Feb. 10, kicking off spending negotiations with Congress for the fiscal year that starts Oct. 1. Once that fiscal 2021 wish list is bound into a big blue book, appropriators on Capitol Hill will start scheduling hearings to question top Trump administration officials about the funding needs of federal agencies.

Looking to the next trade deals: President Donald Trump is looking to land another trade deal, and India is next. He is expected to travel to the South Asian nation the week of Feb. 23 to sign off on a limited pact that could provide more market access for U.S.-made medical devices and agricultural products. The administration could also soon announce its desire to negotiate a trade deal with Kenya, the first with a sub-Saharan African country. Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta will give public speeches in Washington on Feb. 5 and 6 and is likely to meet with Trump during his visit. In addition, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is widely expected to meet with Trump in Washington this month possibly to launch trade talks. And European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Jan. 22 she is looking to reach a deal with the U.S. "in a few weeks."

Ambitious labor rights bill to reach House floor: The House passed a far-reaching labor bill, H.R. 2474 (116), that would make it easier for workers to create and maintain labor unions. The legislation would, among other things, allow Uber and Lyft drivers to join unions, and enable the NLRB - which now can collect only back pay - to levy punitive fines on employers. The bill would also permit unionization in some circumstances through "card check" - the informal collection by union organizers of authorization forms signed by workers. The bill will likely die in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Advocacy Activities

During the months of December and January, the Lobbyit team continued to build relationships with key staff on the Hill and gain insights into what are the congressional priorities for 2020. We met with the lead staff on the Education Committee on workforce development issues and learned that apprenticeships and WIOA reauthorization are their priorities for this year. Both of these issues offer opportunities for NCD A to provide input about the importance of career development in order for these goals to be successful.

We also met with GT Thompson and expressed our thanks to him and his staff for his work in reintroducing the career counseling bill with our recommended changes. We had a lengthy meeting with his staff later in the month to discuss what the office's upcoming priorities are and how we can assist with them. Our team was in attendance at the CCD Summit and participated in the sessions.

We also presented during an NCD A webinar, providing updates on our work and how NCD A members can get involved at the state and federal level. Our team also assisted with the nominating process for a legislative award, recommending Congressmen Langevin and Thompson for a joint award for their work on workforce development and shining a light on the importance of career development.

Until next month,
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