



Capitol News!

December 14, 2016 National Association of State Head Injury Administrators Vol. 11, Issue 4

Welcome to *Capitol News*, published by the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA), highlighting the work of Congress with regard to issues associated with brain injury. The 114th Congress is winding down and the new 115th Congress will begin Jan. 3, 2017. The Congressional Brain Injury Task Force will hold its annual Brain Injury Awareness Day on March 22, 2017. Watch for more information as the plans are made.

Bills Signed

President Signed the Continuing Resolution Funding Government

Last Saturday, President Barack Obama signed into law a continuing resolution (CR) to extend government funding until April 28. The CR maintains the current budget cap of \$1.07 trillion. To meet the Budget Control Act's post-sequester discretionary cap for 2017, the CR includes an across-the-board cut of 0.19% from FY 2016. Summaries are available from House Appropriations Committee [Republicans](#) and [Democrats](#).

President Signed 21st Century Cures Act

Yesterday, President Obama signed the 21st Century Cures Act, which focuses on medical research; the approval process for new drugs and medical devices; health IT provisions; and electronic health information exchange. Also included in the bill is funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for the Precision Medicine Initiative (\$1.4 billion); \$1.8 billion for Vice President Biden's Cancer Moonshot; and \$1.6 billion for the President's BRAIN initiative.



Other Legislation

Senators Introduce Higher Education Bill for Students with Disabilities

On Dec. 8, Sens. Robert Casey (D-PA), Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) introduced the "Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower Act of 2016", or the RISE Act of 2016, to ensure students with disabilities have access to higher education and are eligible for student disability support services. The bill also calls for increased training of university personnel regarding accommodations and supports for students with disabilities and the collection of data regarding disability support services to ensure the services needed are getting to students to increase their opportunities for success.

The proposed legislation clarifies that a past individualized education program (IEP), among other types of documentation commonly held by students with disabilities in their K-12 education, will be sufficient to establish a student has a disability in college. Decisions about accommodations for students with disabilities will continue to be made by the institution of higher education and the student. It is expected that bill sponsors will re-introduce the legislation in the new Congress.

115th Congress

Voters Elect New Members to the Next Congress

Seven new faces will be in the U.S. Senate next year: Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL); Kamala Harris (D-CA); Maggie Hassan (D-NH); John Neely Kennedy (R-LA); Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV); Chris Van Hollen (D-MD); and Todd Young (R-IN). Republicans lost two Senate seats, but will still control the Senate. Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL) lost his seat to Rep. Tammy Duckworth and New Hampshire Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) lost her seat to Governor Maggie Hassan. Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) will continue as Senate Majority Leader and Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) will replace Senator Harry Reid (D-NV), who is retiring from the Senate, as Minority Leader.



115th Congress Freshman Class

Senate Ranking Members of committees for the upcoming session include: Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT), who will replace retiring Ranking Member Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD) on the Senate Appropriations Committee; Senator Jon Tester (D-MT), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, replacing Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and Senator Robert (Bob) Casey (D-PA), replacing Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) as Ranking Member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging.

Republicans lost six seats in the House, but will still control the House when the 115th Congress takes office on January 3, 2017. The House Republicans elected Rep. Paul Ryan to continue as the Speaker of the House. Several House Committees will have new chairs in the 115th Congress: Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) will chair the House Appropriations Committee; Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC) will chair the House Education and Workforce Committee, replacing Rep. John Kline (R-MN), whose term as chair ended; Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR) will replace Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI) as chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee; and Rep. Phil Roe (R-TN), will chair the Committee on Veterans' Affairs. House Democrats re-elected Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) to continue as the House Minority Leader in the upcoming Congress.

CBITF Schedules March Awareness Month

The Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBITF) Co-chairs, Reps. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ) and Tom Rooney (R-FL) have scheduled Brain Injury Awareness Day for March 22, 2017. The day's events will start with a Fair, featuring information from national, federal and State agency exhibitors, to be held in the Rayburn House Office Building First Floor Foyer; then a Briefing followed by a Reception, both of which will be held in the Gold Room (Rayburn 2168).

Rebecca (Becky) Wolfkiel, NASHIA Government Relations, is working with the CBITF, BIAA, NDRN and other stakeholders to plan the day's events. Stay tuned for further information! Meanwhile, please consider asking your Congressional Member to serve on the Task Force. You may contact Becky for assistance. Email her at: rwolfkiel@ridgepolicygroup.com.

Administration

Trump Announces Cabinet Positions

President-elect Donald Trump has announced the following cabinet appointments: Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL), U.S. Attorney General; Rep. Tom Price (R-GA), Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS); Seema Verma, Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); Betsy DeVos, Secretary, Department of Education; Ben Carson, Secretary, Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Elaine Chao, Secretary, Department of Transportation; and Andy Puzder, Secretary, Department of Labor.

Rep. Price, a former orthopedic surgeon, has been a leading opponent of the Affordable Care Act. Verma has consulted with States to develop Medicaid waiver proposals, including Iowa, Ohio, Michigan, and Tennessee. She supports requiring Medicaid beneficiaries to pay premiums and has supported beneficiaries who aren't primary caregivers to work or get job training. Chao is married to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and served previously as Labor secretary under President George W. Bush. DeVos is an avid supporter of charter schools, school choice and school voucher programs. All of these positions are subject to Senate confirmation.

NASHIA Adopts Public Policy Priorities

During the Sept. Membership Meeting, NASHIA members adopted priorities for the upcoming Congress in keeping with NASHIA's mission:

1. Enhance and expand State capacity to provide services and supports;
2. Expand public and professional awareness about TBI and service delivery;
3. Maintain and expand access to health care, rehabilitation, and community-based long-term services and supports and community integration for individuals with brain injury;
4. Expand research to promote best practices with regard to TBI treatment, care, rehabilitation, and community services and supports;
5. Expand primary and secondary prevention related initiatives to reduce the number of TBI-related injuries and to minimize affects; and
6. Maintain safety net programs for individuals with brain injury.

These priorities will be further explained listing proposed legislation, funding, and policies in the NASHIA Public Policy Platform, which will be published after the President submits his budget recommendations.



The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with brain injuries and their families.

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www.nashia.org

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