



## Capitol News!

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National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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Dear NASHIA Member,

Welcome to this issue of *Capitol News*, which you receive as a NASHIA member. Since the last issue, the U.S. House of Representatives elected new leadership, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI), who was elected as Speaker of the House on October 30, replacing Rep. John Boehner (R-OH). Congress also passed a two-year budget resolution to increase the debt limit, set to reach its limit on November 3; to reallocate Social Security trust funds to prevent cuts to SSDI beneficiaries; and to allow additional spending for defense and nondefense programs. Congress is now addressing the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 appropriations as the current Continuing Resolution funding federal government expires December 11.

Meanwhile, NASHIA continues to work on its public policy priorities as outlined in the [NASHIA Public Policy Platform for the 114th Congress](#). Rebecca Wolfkiel, Governmental Relations Consultant, is also working with congressional staff and key partners on the preliminary plans for the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force Awareness Day, which has been scheduled for **March 16, 2016**. Mark your calendar for this important day, which brings advocates and professionals to the Hill to discuss critical issues pertaining to brain injury!

### This Week in Congress

The House of Representatives is out for Veterans Day recess this week. The Senate, however, was in session, but will also adjourn for Veterans Day. Both Houses plan to return November 16.



### Budget and Appropriations

#### President Signs Budget Agreement

Prior to Rep. John Boehner's resignation as the Speaker of the House (and as a member of Congress), he ushered the budget bill through the House in order to address the debt ceiling, among other important measures. The budget bill provides a blueprint for spending and for revenues to which congressional appropriations and other pertinent committees are to adhere to as they consider appropriation bills and legislation relating to taxes and other revenue sources. The budget agreement, which passed October 28, lifted some of the limits on spending called for under

sequestration, which will allow increased spending for defense and nondefense programs. In addition, it addressed several other concerns including, increasing the debt ceiling and addressing the short falls in the Social Security disability program. President Obama signed the bill on November 2, 2015. The next step is for the House and Senate Budget Committees to provide new allocations to the appropriations subcommittees.

### **FY 2016 Appropriations**

Today, the Senate passed the FY 2016 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, H.R. 2029. The Senate's FY 2016 MilCon-VA measure provides a total of \$79.7 billion in discretionary funding, more than \$2.1 billion increase over the committee-reported bill. This amount is \$7.9 billion above the FY 2015 funding level and \$1.0 billion over the President's FY2016 budget request. On October 22, the President vetoed H.R. 1735, the FY 2016 Defense Authorization bill. Reasons cited is that the legislation kept across-the-board budget cuts in place, which have since been addressed by the budget agreement; blocked military reforms and prohibited him from closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Congress is now addressing areas of contention.

It is has been anticipated that an omnibus bill will combine the remaining spending bills and pass before the current Continuing Resolution expires on Dec. 11. Advocates are supporting the highest possible allocation for the Labor, HHS, Education bill that provides most of the funding for TBI and disability programs.

Injury and violence prevention advocates are urging appropriators to restore the line-item for injury prevention activities (IPD) and increase the amount by \$24 million for the programs administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (CDC Injury Center). The House FY 2016 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill consolidates the Injury Control Research Centers (ICRCs), formerly funded by their own line item, into the IPA line-item without providing sufficient funds to maintain all activities at their current funding level. This gap in funding would require that the CDC Injury Center cut currently funded initiatives by \$11M, decimating CDC's support for critically needed State and Tribal programs to save lives from preventable injuries and violence. The IPA line-item funds many important programs including the Core Violence and Injury Prevention Program (VIPP), suicide prevention and motor vehicle injury prevention efforts. Twenty States currently receive Core VIPP funding and an increase of just \$13M would provide Core VIPP funding to all States, Territories and the District of Columbia.

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### **Other Legislation**

#### **House Members Introduce the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act**

On November 3, House Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus co-chairs Rep. Jim Langevin (D-RI) and Rep. Gregg Harper (R-MS) introduced the Lifespan Care Reauthorization Act of 2015. The bill reauthorizes the Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2006 through 2020. The proposed bill authorizes \$75 million (\$15 million each year through 2020) to start new or develop existing respite programs (the current law is funding at only \$2.5 million per year). The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

#### **Senate Passes Legislation Addressing Homeless Veterans**

Sponsored by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), the Senate has passed S. 1731, the Homeless Veterans Service Protection Act of 2015. The legislation addresses homeless veterans through outreach, rehabilitative services, vocational counseling and training, transitional housing assistance, supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing, and health care for homeless veterans with special needs. The bill has been referred to the House Subcommittee on Health.

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### **Congressional Committees**

### **Leadership Names New Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee**

Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX) is succeeding former Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) as the next chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Rep. Brady has announced that his highest priority will be on tax reform. The Committee also has jurisdiction over Social Security and health care.

### **House Energy and Commerce Committee Chair Forms Medicaid Task Force**

Last Thursday, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) announced plans to form a Medicaid Task Force to develop policy proposals to strengthen and sustain the program. Rep. Upton announced that Health Subcommittee Vice Chairman Brett Guthrie (R-KY) will chair the Republican task force. Click [here](#) for more information.



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*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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