



City of San Antonio

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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: Intergovernmental Relations Council Committee

FROM: Jeff Coyle, Director of Government & Public Affairs

SUBJECT: Federal Legislative Update

DATE: August 16, 2019

This update will provide an update of key issues from the 116th Congress and the federal legislative advocacy efforts by the City. The 116th Congress is comprised of two one-year sessions running from January 3, 2019 to January 3, 2021. Congress is currently in its August recess and will return the week of September 9, giving the House and Senate three weeks to finalize passage of FY 2020 appropriations.

116th Congress - 1st Session

Federal Budget and Debt Ceiling: On August 1 the President signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019. The legislation approved by the House and Senate on July 25 and August 1, respectively, sets spending caps for FY 2020 and 2021 and lifts the debt ceiling for two years. The deal adds more than \$100 billion in new spending

compared with fiscal 2019 levels, where top-line defense spending was \$716 billion and nondefense was \$620 billion. The top-line for defense spending would be \$738 billion and \$740 billion for the 2020 and 2021 fiscal years, respectively. Nondefense spending would be \$632 billion for fiscal 2020 and \$634.5 billion for fiscal 2021. FY 2020 funding across all federal agencies will get a nearly 4 percent boost over FY 2019.

FY 2020 Appropriations: The Budget deal reached by the House and Senate significantly reduces the possibility of a government shutdown. However, Congress must still finalize and pass the necessary appropriations bills under the agreed-to spending caps. Prior to the budget agreement the House of Representatives had passed all 12 appropriations bills, primarily in two omnibus packages approved in mid-June. The Senate Appropriations Committee had not considered any appropriations bills prior to the budget agreement being reached, the first time in over thirty years that the committee has not debated appropriations prior to the August recess. Congress will have three working weeks to reach a final agreement and pass appropriations legislation upon their return to Washington on September 9, 2019.

FY 2019 Supplemental Appropriations Humanitarian Assistance: The Government and Public Affairs Department worked closely with Congressman Henry Cuellar and Senator John Cornyn to prepare the proposed legislative language in support of the reimbursements to communities to address the influx of migrants being released by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Ultimately, the proposed language was included in the House and Senate Supplemental Homeland Security Appropriations Bills and was passed by both the House and Senate. On July 1, 2019 the President signed the *Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Humanitarian Assistance and Security at the Southern Border Act, 2019* into law.

The act provides humanitarian aid to the southern border and it includes \$30 million for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP). The \$30 million funding is to assist local communities that have been helping the significant influx of migrants released from DHS custody. Specifically, funds will be used to reimburse eligible nonprofit and government agencies that have expended funds on or after January 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020.

Applications for reimbursement will be submitted to the EFSP Local Board (LB) and the LB will rank applications by need.

On August 1, the EFSP National Board released initial guidelines for the disbursement of funds. As of August 6, the EFSP Board is finalizing the application, application process, including deadlines, and additional guidance that will be available on their website soon. A specific date has not been provided.

Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization (VAWA): On April 4, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2019. The legislation would reauthorize VAWA for five -years and improve the program by expanding eligibility for assistance and increasing funding for grant programs utilized by state and local VAWA service providers. VAWA was most recently reauthorized in 2013 and expired in February after lawmakers were unable to reach agreement on changes to the program.

The VAWA Reauthorization of 2019 extends VAWA through 2024 and seeks to reform the program in a number of ways, including:

- Expanding Services, Training, Officers and Prosecutors (STOP) VAWA grants to include additional community resources for response to incidences of domestic violence
- Increasing SMART Prevention Grant funding to support youth violence prevention education programs from \$15 million to \$45 million, each year through 2024
- Increasing grants for combating violent crimes on campuses from \$12 million to \$16 million annually
- Supporting training in early childhood programs on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking
- Expanding gun buying restrictions to include individuals with a misdemeanor conviction of domestic abuse or stalking
- Preserving and expanding housing protections for survivors
- Enhancing law enforcement tools and safeguards for the Office on Violence Against Women within the U.S. Department of Justice

The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization bill awaits action from the Senate and currently a timeline for passage remains unclear. Despite the lack of reauthorization, programs under VAWA are expected to continue as long as Congress appropriates funds to those programs.

The Dream and Promise Act of 2019: On June 4 the House passed The Dream and Promise Act of 2019. This bill would establish a roadmap to U.S. citizenship for (1) immigrant youth and (2) current or potential holders of (a) temporary protected status (TPS) or (b) deferred enforced departure (DED). Additionally, it would provide conditional permanent resident (CPR) status and a roadmap to lawful permanent resident (LPR) status and, eventually, U.S. citizenship for immigrant youth who entered the United States before age 18, have four or more years of residency, and graduated from high school (or the equivalent). The bill also would provide an opportunity for people who currently have or who may be eligible for TPS or DED and have three or more years of residence in the U.S. to apply for LPR status and, eventually, U.S. citizenship.

Recent reports have indicated that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said the Senate is unlikely to vote on the House's version of the bill.

U.S. Department of Transportation BUILD Grant: On July 15 VIA Transit submitted an application to the U.S. DOT BUILD program. VIA is requesting \$25 million to leverage \$58 million for a proposed public-private partnership to transform the Robert Thompson Center into a daily station complementing a mixed-use development to become one of the first transit-oriented community developments in the San Antonio region.

Additionally, this project is an important component to the City's investment in the area with our allocation of resources to the adjacent Alamodome (\$55 Million), nearby Convention Center, Hemisfair Park, and surrounding streets (\$439 Million), and the EastPoint Promise Zone, a gateway to the historic African-American community, where \$54.37 Million has been invested by the Departments of Education, Housing and Urban Development, and Justice for education, housing, and public safety in the Promise Zone.

SA International Airport - Advanced Imaging Equipment: The San Antonio International Airport recently completed a new security lane for entrance into Terminal A. Upon completion of the new lane, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) failed to deliver several Advanced Imaging Technology (AIT) machines. GPA and Aviation coordinated a joint San Antonio House delegation letter to the TSA Administrator requesting information and action on the delivery of the AIT machines.