



# ***NASCOE***

## ***Legislative Update***

### **NASCOE Legislative Update for November 26**

With the elections nearly complete, we are actively working to finalize both the 2018 Farm Bill and the 2019 Agriculture Appropriations bill. Let us know if you need additional information about the topics listed below.

Elections – Today’s Mississippi Senate race between Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith and former Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy will be the final federal election. If Hyde-Smith wins, the Senate Republicans will continue their control by a margin of 53 – 47. As previously noted, the House of Representatives will shift to Democratic control allowing Congressman Collin Peterson to chair the Agriculture Committee.

Farm Bill Reauthorization – The House and Senate Ag Committee leadership are working tirelessly to finalize Farm Bill negotiations. As of noon today, an agreement had not been reached regarding the conservation title and forestry related provisions. However, we still believe the process is wrapping up and the final details should be available soon. We have been able to address most all of our concerns and believe the final agreement will be an improvement for both FSA and production agriculture.

Appropriations – Five appropriations bills representing 75% of the Federal budget have been enacted and signed into law (DoD, LHHS, Energy & Water, Milcon/VA, Legislative Branch). Of the remaining seven bills, four (Agriculture, Financial Services/General Government, Interior, Transportation/HUD) are in a minibus which has largely been conferenced, and substantial work has been done between the House and the Senate on the other three bills (Commerce/Justice/Science, Homeland, and State/Foreign Operations).

The agencies covered by the seven outstanding bills are currently being funded by a continuing resolution (CR) that expires on December 7th.

Reportedly, there is agreement between the House and Senate Appropriations Committee Chairs and Ranking Members on a schedule to move the remaining seven bills in one package. The White House agrees with that approach. To complete action on a seven bill appropriations package and move it through both the House and the Senate before the CR runs out on December 7th, decisions on outstanding issues and funding



#### **NASCOE Legislative Co-Chairperson**

Donny Green, Tennessee

Cell: (615) 464-7176

[chief300@dtccom.net](mailto:chief300@dtccom.net)



#### **NASCOE Legislative Co-Chairperson**

Neil Burnette, North Carolina

Cell: (336) 496-7943

[neil.burnette@yahoo.com](mailto:neil.burnette@yahoo.com)

levels should be made by Sunday, December 2nd. The most difficult remaining issue is the funding level and conditions on funding for the Border Wall/Border Security -- the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations bill contains \$1.6b and the House version contains \$5b.

Over 100 House members who are retiring or who lost their seats are currently working out of cubicles (they've been kicked out of their offices so those spaces can be available for incoming members). Predictably, those 100 members are less than enthusiastic about dragging this Congress out any longer than necessary. There is likely to be some emergency funding included for recovery from this year's hurricanes and wildfires in the final appropriations vehicle moving through this congress, as well as some extraneous legislative items (Farm Bill, Flood Program extension, etc.).

Since the President can veto any spending bill that doesn't satisfy his desires on funding for the Border Wall/Border Security, the confrontation/negotiation on the issue could easily result in an impasse that precludes completion of a seven bill wrap-up appropriations package.

Should an agreement be unattainable by the 7th of December, another continuing resolution could be passed to prevent any government shutdown.

Everyone wants to complete action on the FY 2019 appropriations bills. Everyone wants to go home as early as possible. Everyone understands that everyone else wants to finish and go home and accordingly, the party who is willing to hold out the longest and inflict the most pain on themselves and everyone else may believe a willingness to stay and precipitate a partial government shutdown would give them leverage in the negotiations.

An orderly completion of the FY 2019 Appropriations process and timely passage of a seven-bill wrap-up package is possible but unlikely given the rhetoric, staked out positions, and likely posturing to both parties' bases on the Border Wall/Border Security Issue.

If an agreement is reached before or on December 7th, a two or three day continuing resolution could be passed to avoid any government shutdown while the final agreement moves through the Congress.

A number of Members of Congress met with President Trump this afternoon to continue budget negotiations. We will provide another update later this week regarding the chances of any government shutdown.

Hunter Moorhead  
NASCOE Legislative Consultant