



AAU WEEKLY WRAP-UP

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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE *NEW*

The Senate is out of session today and will return on Monday, June 15, with no roll call votes that day. The House was in session today and, by a vote of 307 to 97, approved the Senate-passed version of legislation to authorize the Food and Drug Administration to regulate tobacco (H.R. 1256), sending the bill to the President for signature.

When the House reconvenes next week, it is expected to begin consideration of the conference report on the FY09 war supplemental funding bill (H.R. 2346), as well as the first FY10 appropriations bills: Homeland Security and Commerce-Justice-Science (see discussion of CJS bill below).

The Senate next week will consider legislation to create a nonprofit corporation to promote U.S. tourism abroad (S. 1023), to be followed later in the week by consideration of the FY09 war supplemental. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) says he hopes to send the funding bill to the President for signature by the end of the week.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE APPROVES FY10 SUBCOMMITTEE ALLOCATIONS AND COMMERCE-JUSTICE-SCIENCE FUNDING BILL *UPDATED*

The House Appropriations Committee on June 9 approved FY10 spending allocations for its 12 subcommittees—also known as 302(b)'s—as well its first FY10 bill, Commerce-Justice-Science.

The Committee divided among its subcommittees a total \$1.086 trillion in non-emergency discretionary spending, which is \$8.9 billion less than the President requested.

Also on June 9, Committee Chairman David Obey (D-WI) released a tentative markup [schedule](#) for appropriations bills, which includes a July 8 subcommittee markup for the Labor-HHS-Education bill and July 13 for Defense.

CQToday reports that the Senate Appropriations Committee is expected to approve its allocations as early as June 18, after it begins subcommittee markups earlier in the week.

Commerce-Justice-Science Funding Bill:

The full House Appropriations Committee on June 9 approved the FY10 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill by voice vote. The measure provides 12 percent more funding than in FY09, and slightly less than the President requested.

Additional details about funding for the National Science Foundation and NASA are available in the AAU Weekly [Wrap-up](#) of June 5, 2009.

The Committee has posted a [list](#) of program terminations and reductions in the bill. Several reductions refer to “availability of prior year funds,” which presumably is a reference to funding provided through the Recovery Act.

National Science Foundation (NSF). As reported following the June 4 subcommittee markup, the panel approved \$6.9 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF). This is an increase of about \$459 million, or seven percent, above the FY09 level but \$108 million below the President’s FY10 request.

NASA. The bill provides \$18.2 billion for NASA. This is \$421 million above FY09 funding but \$483 million below the President’s FY10 request. The press [release](#) accompanying the markup says the bill holds funding for Human Space Flight at its FY09 level of \$3.3 billion, “with increases deferred pending the recommendations of the Augustine panel and the Administration’s plan to follow the retirement of the Space Shuttle.” A group headed by former Lockheed Martin CEO Norm Augustine is studying the future of manned space flight and is expected to issue its report in August.

HOUSE INTERIOR SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES INCREASE FOR NEH *UPDATED*

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies on June 10 [approved](#) an FY10 funding bill that would provide \$170 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), which is \$15 million above FY09 funding. The measure provides the same budget level and increase for the National Endowment for the Arts.

Subcommittee chairman Norm Dicks (D-WA) noted in the [summary](#) of the bill, “As our hearings demonstrated, the endowments are vital for preserving and encouraging America’s arts and cultural heritage.”

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATIONS RECOMMEND VISA IMPROVEMENTS

A group of 32 higher education, scientific, and engineering organizations, including AAU, on June 10 urged the federal government to take additional steps to improve the visa process for international students, scholars, and scientists, including creation of a high-level interagency panel to review all of the government's post-9/11 visa policies and procedures.

The [statement](#) thanks the Administration for its commitment to restoring America's good image abroad and to officials at the Departments of State and Homeland Security and other partner agencies for their efforts to work with the community to improve the visa process.

The organizations offer eight recommendations for addressing continued "lengthy and unnecessary delays" in visa processing. These include providing sufficient resources to eliminate the current backlog in visa applications, streamlining the visa process for credentialed short-term visitors in science and technology fields, and convening a high-level panel to review the full range of visa-related policies and procedures instituted since 9/11.

AAU AND AAMC SUBMIT COMMENTS TO NIH ON CONFLICTS OF INTEREST *UPDATED*

AAU and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) on June 10 submitted a joint [letter](#) to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) commenting on how to strengthen the regulatory framework governing conflicts of interest in federally funded research. The letter responds to an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued by NIH.

AAU universities have been encouraged to make use of the letter in developing their own comments. The deadline for submitting comments to NIH is July 7.

Among the letter's recommendations:

- Covered investigators should be required to report to institutions all of their external financial interests directly or indirectly related to their research responsibilities, regardless of amount.
- NIH should lower the threshold from \$10,000 to \$5,000 for requiring institutions to disclose to the awarding agency related external financial interests of investigators.
- The letter also supports requiring institutions to submit information on managed conflicts of interest that goes beyond current regulatory requirements, but it opposes routine disclosure to NIH of full management plans themselves, unless requested by NIH.

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