

September 15, 2017

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WP-09-15-17

WITH ONLY A FEW WEEKS TO GO, SENATORS PUSH NEW HEALTH CARE REFORM BILL

On Wednesday, Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Dean Heller (R-NV), and Ron Johnson (R-WI) introduced legislation to reform health care. Their 140-page bill, H.R. 1628, would repeal the structure of Obamacare and replace it with annual block grants given to states to help individuals pay for health care.

Specifically, the Graham-Cassidy-Heller-Johnson (GCHJ) bill: Repeals Obamacare individual and employer mandates; Repeals the Obamacare medical device tax; Strengthens the ability for states to waive Obamacare regulations; Returns power to the states and patients by equalizing the treatment between Medicaid expansion and non-expansion states through an equitable block grant distribution; Protects patients with pre-existing medical conditions; and Eliminates the inequity of three states receiving 37 percent of Obamacare funds and brings all states to funding parity by 2026.

Although former Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan supports the bill, the odds for passage face an uphill battle. Some Republicans do not support H.R. 1628 because it does not go far enough. Most significantly, senators plan to pass the health bill via the budget reconciliation process which would allow the bill to pass with a simple majority and avoid a Democratic filibuster; however, the clock runs out on the fast-track procedural process in 16 days.

HOUSE PASSES OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL

Yesterday, the House passed a \$1.2 trillion spending bill that combined eight appropriations bills that were passed earlier this year, and four new appropriations bills into one large omnibus bill. H.R. 3354, known as the "Make America Secure and Prosperous Appropriations Act," passed by a vote of 211-198. Although the Senate still must act, the government will continue to be funded through December 8 because of the package that passed last week and was signed by President Trump to keep the government open for three months.

Of significance for marketers, the bill includes trucking riders: federal preemption of state meal and rest break requirements, and a prohibition on FMCSA from writing a new safety fitness determination rule until the DOT inspector general makes certifications required under the FAST Act. Further, language that would shield EPA's effort to withdraw the Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) regulation from legal challenges is included in the bill, as is language that would delay implementation of the 2015 ozone standard until 2025.

Funding for the Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) Program is consistent with past years at \$92 million for FY 2018. In June, PMAA sent a joint letter to The House Committee on Appropriations Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) and Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) urging them to reject President Trump's FY 2018 budget request of \$47 million for the LUST Trust Fund Program because that funding amount is inadequate. That could be problematic because if states do not receive funding, then they will find other ways to cover their costs including increasing tank fees.

In previous years, Congress has appropriated between \$90 - \$100 million each year; an amount PMAA would like Congress to continue to appropriate. Finally, the bill includes \$3.39 billion for LIHEAP, equal to the fiscal 2017 amount. However, President Trump's proposed \$1.1 trillion FY 2018 budget blueprint eliminates LIHEAP. PMAA has urged Congress not to eliminate LIHEAP because it is vital in serving low income consumers of home heating fuel.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) said that "this is the next step in the process, but it is not the end. Funding these important federal responsibilities and keeping the government open is our constitutional duty to the people we serve, and I look forward to the final completion of all these critical bills."

FUEL RELIEF FUND PROVIDES FUEL TO FLORIDIANS

The following is a letter from a Fuel Relief Fund volunteer responding to Hurricane Irma in Florida. Please consider donating to the Fuel Relief Fund during this crucial time by clicking [here](https://fuelrelieffund.salsalabs.org/donations/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=627c5aa5-86c7-465e-8207-65ce8f6817c8).
(<https://fuelrelieffund.salsalabs.org/donations/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=627c5aa5-86c7-465e-8207-65ce8f6817c8>)

(Naples, FL)

"It goes without saying the need for fuel is staggering! When Fuel Relief Fund arrived last night, we were greeted with open arms by the Collier County Sheriff's department (Naples, FL). They were in dire need of diesel for their own generator, emergency vehicles, and fire trucks. I think as of today still 4.5 to 6 million people in FL are without power. It is hard to describe how bad it is here. It is very hot and without working generators, people are without lights, without air conditioning,

refrigerators cannot cool food and milk, and laundry machines are unable to clean clothes. The temperatures are ranging from warm to stifling!!

This morning at 7:30 am Fuel Relief Fund volunteers started giving away free fuel in five-gallon cans. After hours of fueling those first responders, we opened up to the public. The line was over a half mile long and the wait over 3 hours in this hot weather. People were so low on fuel they had to push their cars to make it to our tanker trucks. Even under these circumstances all recipients have been incredibly grateful.

I came across a woman sitting in her hot car with the windows down, and her 3-year-old son was in a car seat in the back. When I approached the car, I noticed she was pregnant. She had already been in line for two hours waiting patiently for five gallons of fuel. She told me she was due to deliver in 2 days. We immediately brought her to the front of the line. There are so many people in need in this area. Many are being told power could be out for weeks in some areas.

We finished the day here fueling as many people as possible. We have been asked by the President of the Fire Union here in Collier County, if we could do the same thing for them and the public at one of their other locations across town. Of course, we will head that way tonight. Another one of our tankers just arrived and we will send that one towards the Florida Keys. I cannot even image the situation there! I am going to try and send this message to all of you right now, and I hope it goes through. Internet service is hard to find and sporadic, so I'm not sure. All volunteers have had maybe 3 hours sleep last night, so I'm hitting an air mattress as fast as possible."

SEN. NELSON ASKS FOR FUEL SUPPLY RESERVE IN FLORIDA

Earlier this week, in the wake of Hurricane Irma, Sen Bill Nelson (D-FL) called on the Department of Energy (DOE) to create a fuel supply reserve for the state of Florida like the one created in the Northeast after Hurricane Sandy. After Hurricane Sandy caused widespread issues related to the availability of gasoline, DOE responded by establishing the U.S. Northeast Gasoline Supply Reserve (NGSR), the first federal regional refined petroleum product reserve containing gasoline.

In the letter to Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, Sen. Nelson stated that a "Florida Gasoline Supply Reserve would ensure that residents and first responders have access to an emergency supply of fuel, and help prevent the shortages that may have kept some from evacuating and may hinder recover efforts going forward." Nelson added that he believes the gasoline shortages have hampered the recovery and relief efforts in the areas of Florida affected by the storm.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION EXTENDS JONES ACT WAIVER

This week the Trump Administration extended the Jones Act waiver through September 22nd which, "will facilitate movement of refined petroleum products, including gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel, to be shipped from New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas to Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Puerto Rico." Click [here](#) to read the waiver.

Signed into law by President Woodrow Wilson in 1920, the Jones Act regulates maritime commerce in U.S. waters and between U.S. ports. This nearly 100 year-old law requires that all goods transported between U.S. ports be carried in U.S. owned ships, built and registered in the U.S., and manned by U.S. citizens. The Jones Act was temporarily waived from September 1 to September 19, 2005 following Hurricane Katrina's landfall which allowed foreign vessels to carry crude oil between U.S. ports. In the summer of 2011, President Barack Obama waived the Jones Act to accelerate crude oil and refined product shipments to the U.S. due to the Libyan uprising causing the loss of over two million barrels of crude oil supply.

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PLAN TO ATTEND THE 2018 WPMAEXPO

WPMAEXPO

Mark your calendars for February 20-22, 2018. Make plans now to attend the 2018 WPMAEXPO. It will be held once again at the Mirage in Las Vegas, Nevada.

#wpmaexpo18

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

October 5, 2017 – Hawaii (HPMA) Golf Tournament – The King Kamehameha GC, Wailuku, Hawaii

February 20-22, 2018 – WPMA Convention & Expo – Mirage Hotel– Las Vegas, Nevada

June 5-7, 2018 – MPMCSA Convention & Expo – Fairmont, MT

June 18-21, 2018 – Washington (WOMA) Convention – Suncadia Resort – Cle Elum, Washington

August 8-10, 2018 – Idaho (IPM&CSA) Convention – Coeur d'Alene Resort – Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

August 20-22, 2018 – New Mexico (NMPMA) Convention – Sandia Resort & Casino, Albuquerque, NM

September 12-14, 2018 – Utah (UPMRA) Convention – Doubletree by Hilton, Park City, UT

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Petro Pete: “Before I criticize a man, I like to walk a mile in his shoes. That way, when I do criticize him, I’m a mile away and I have his shoes.”

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