
Window on Washington - This Week in the Nation's Capital - June 23, 2017 Vol. 1, Issue 14

Jun 23, 2017

CONGRESS

Budget

- **House Budget Writers Reach Tentative Agreement:** The House Budget Committee is planning to unveil a long-awaited budget resolution next week calling for a spending boost to the Pentagon alongside cuts to domestic programs, despite lingering disputes within the GOP conference ([Politico](#)).
 - **Armed Services Chairman Moves Forward With \$640B Defense Policy Bill:** The House Armed Services Committee is moving ahead with plans for a \$640 billion defense base budget in its annual policy bill, something the panel's chairman has advocated for months ([The Hill](#)).
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Debt Ceiling

- **Senate GOP Plans July Debt Ceiling Vote:** Senate Republicans are planning for a July vote to raise the debt ceiling, but House Republicans aren't prepared to show their hand yet, although they also hope to resolve the issue before the August recess begins ([Politico](#)).
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Defense

- **House Defense Panel Would Create Space Force:** A House Armed Services panel intends to create a new fighting force called Space Corps within the Air Force to improve the U.S. military's ability to address threats in space, according to a summary of the Strategic Forces panel's forthcoming fiscal 2018 mark ([Roll Call](#)).
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Dodd Frank

- **Volcker Rule Changes Likely as Focus Shifts to Regulators:** The Volcker Rule looks unlikely to survive in its present form, given an increased willingness from federal regulators to revisit the Dodd-Frank-imposed ban on proprietary trading ([Bloomberg](#)).
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Energy/Environment

- **Nuclear Tax Credit:** The House of Representatives passed a nuclear energy tax credit bill that would increase incentives for the construction of nuclear facilities ([The Hill](#)).
 - **Regulations:** The House passed legislation to speed the federal permitting process for water-storage projects. Democrats opposed the bill because they say it deregulates environmental rules ([The Hill](#)).
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Flood Insurance

- **Flood Insurance Overhaul is Progressing in House:** The House Financial Services Committee is close to advancing major legislation to revamp federal flood insurance, and might even do so on a bipartisan basis ([The Hill](#)).
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Healthcare

- **Senate GOP Unveils Health Care Bill:** The closely guarded Senate health care bill written entirely behind closed doors finally became public in a do-or-die moment for the Republican Party's winding efforts to repeal Obamacare ([CNN](#)).
 - **Senate Preps for Possible Health Bill Vote Next Week:** Senators may only have seven days to review draft language of a Republican bill to repeal and replace Obamacare before they cast a vote that could affect millions of Americans ([CBS News](#)).
 - **Democrats Stage a Senate Slowdown Over Health Care:** Democrats can grind the Senate to a virtual halt, and that is what they plan to do as they
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- protest the GOP secretive push to revamp the nation's health-care system ([The Atlantic](#)).
 - **Senate Obamacare Repeal Bill Would Slash Federal Healthcare Funding for Medicaid:** Senate Republicans unveiled a draft bill that would include drastic reduction in federal healthcare spending that threatens to leave millions more Americans uninsured, drive up costs for poor consumers and further destabilize the nation's health insurance markets ([LA Times](#)).
 - **Which GOP Senators Have Concerns with the Health-care Bill:** Senate Republicans have pretty much no room for error as they try to rush through a health-care bill in the next week. Assuming no Democrats vote for this bill, Senate leaders can afford to lose only two Republicans ([Washington Post](#)).
 - **CBO Aims For Estimate On Senate Repeal Bill 'Early Next Week':** The Congressional Budget Office said that it would aim to release an assessment of Senate Republicans' Obamacare repeal bill by "early next week" ([Talking Points Memo](#)).
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Immigration

- **Arizona Appeals Court Overturns In-State Tuition for 'Dreamers':** The Arizona Court of Appeals ruled that undocumented students are not eligible for lower in-state tuition ([AZ Central](#)).
 - **Battle Over Sanctuary Cities:** The White House has ordered the U.S. Justice Department to jump into Texas's battle to force its cities and elected local officials to comply with the state's tough sanctuary-city ban, which makes it a crime to shelter some undocumented immigrants from deportation ([Bloomberg](#)).
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Infrastructure/Transportation

- **House, Senate GOP Set to Unveil Competing FAA Plans:** House and Senate Republican leaders are working in tandem to start moving a reauthorization of federal aviation programs across the floors of both chambers in July ([Bloomberg](#)).
 - **Senate Panel to Reject Trump's Air Traffic Control Plan in Aviation Bill:** A Senate panel has declined to include President Trump's controversial proposal to separate air traffic control from the federal government in a must-pass aviation bill ([The Hill](#)).
 - **House, Senate FAA Bills Call for New Passenger Rights:** The flying public could have greater protections from being bumped from a flight after boarding and could receive higher compensation if involuntarily bumped under the provisions of the FAA reauthorization bills introduced in the Senate and House ([Bloomberg](#)).
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Nominations

- **Trump to Tap FLRA Chairman Pizzella for Number Two Post at Labor Department:** The Trump administration has named Patrick Pizzella, the acting chairman of the Federal Labor Relations Authority, for the number two post at the U.S. Labor Department ([Reuters](#)).
 - **Federal Student Aid:** U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced that Dr. Wayne Johnson will be the Chief Operating Officer of Federal Student Aid (FSA) ([News 9](#)).
 - **Senate Confirms Trump's Nominee to Lead FEMA:** The Senate on Tuesday confirmed Brock Long, President Trump's pick to lead the Federal Emergency Management Agency ([Washington Examiner](#)).
 - **EPA:** Sources said former George W. Bush administration official Jeff Holmstead will be considered for the No. 2 Environmental Protection Agency position, bringing a more moderate tilt to the agency ([Axios](#)).
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Supreme Court

- **Wisconsin Gerrymandering Will Get Supreme Court Scrutiny:** The Supreme Court of the United States announced that they will decide whether the drawing of electoral districts can be too political and whether judges can throw out legislative maps as being so partisan that they violate the Constitution ([Madison 365](#)).
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Tax Reform

- **House Speaker, Trump Aides Vow Tax Reform by End of 2017:** Top Republicans from Congress and the Trump administration vowed to complete tax reform by the end of 2017, despite party infighting and political distractions from investigations of alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 election ([Reuters](#)).
 - **Democrats Meet with Top Trump Aides on Tax Reform:** Democrats huddled with the leading members of President Trump's economic team in the Capitol, where the lawmakers pressed the administration to seek bipartisan reforms to the nation's tax code ([The Hill](#)).
 - **US Cannot Hit 3% Growth Without Tax Reform:** House Speaker Paul Ryan believes the United States cannot reach 3 percent gross domestic
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product growth — the Trump administration's goal — without overhauling the tax system ([CNBC](#)).

- **White House Plans to Negotiate Tax Overhaul Behind Closed Doors:** The White House plans to privately negotiate a massive overhaul of the tax system with Republican leaders in Congress, possibly giving rank-and-file members little if any say over the finished product, according to a top aide to President Donald Trump ([Fortune](#)).

Trade

- **NAFTA Renegotiation May Take Until Next Year:** Renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement could spill into next year, according to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross ([CNBC](#)).
- **Perdue Lauds NAFTA as Boon for Farmers as Renegotiation Looms:** U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue and his counterparts from Canada and Mexico lauded Nafta's benefits to farmers as they began to lay the foundation for broader negotiations to modify an accord that President Donald Trump once called a "disaster" ([Bloomberg](#)).

Training/Workforce Development

- **House Reauthorizes Technical Job Skills Training Program:** The House voted to reauthorize the Perkins Act, a law intended to bolster technical education for specialized job skills. The Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which aims to beef up training in technical career areas that require specific training for employment, was last overhauled in 2006 ([The Hill](#)).

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Department of Education

- **Secretary DeVos Issues Statement on Regulatory Reform Task Force Progress Report:** "The Regulatory Reform Task Force has been hard at work over the last few months cataloguing over 150 regulations and more than 1,700 pieces of policy guidance on the books at the Department of Education. As their work continues, they have been tasked with providing recommendations on which regulations to repeal, modify or keep in an effort to ensure those that remain adequately protect students while giving states, institutions, teachers, parents and students the flexibility needed to improve student achievement" ([Department of Education](#)).

Department of Energy

- **Climate Change:** Energy Secretary Rick Perry denied that carbon dioxide emissions from human activities are the main cause of climate change or that climate change is primarily caused by CO2, contrary to scientific opinions and the conclusions of government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency ([CNBC](#)).
- **Nuclear Waste Storage:** Energy Secretary Rick Perry said the government needs to prioritize nuclear waste storage and move forward on the Yucca Mountain waste depository project when he testified on the energy budget before a House budget subcommittee ([The Washington Times](#)).
- **Wind, Solar Energy Have Not Harmed U.S. Power Grid:** With the Trump administration expected to publish an analysis that could undermine the U.S. wind and solar industries, two renewable energy lobbying groups on Tuesday released their own study saying new energy sources pose no threat to the country's power grid ([Reuters](#)).
- **Rare Minerals:** The Department of Energy announced plans for a national program to mine for rare elements that have largely been imported from China ([Fox News Insider](#)).

EPA

- **EPA Could Offer 1,228 Employees Buyouts, Union Says:** As many as 1,228 EPA employees will be eligible for buyout offers, according to a proposed memorandum of understanding on the offers released by the agency's union ([Bloomberg](#)).
- **Special Access:** The Environmental Protection Agency dismissed implications that fossil fuel companies had any special access to Administrator Scott Pruitt after emails were released last week ([Washington Examiner](#)).
- **Chemical Testing:** The EPA released rules ordered by Congress last year on testing for chemicals used in commercial products ([The Wall Street Journal](#)).

Department of Interior

- **Budget:** Secretary Ryan Zinke defended proposed cuts to the Interior Department's budget and received praise from republican senators on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee for proposed energy exploration on public lands ([The Washington Post](#)).
 - **Staffing Levels:** Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke testified before Senate about his plans to cut 4,000 employees (about 8 percent of his department's workforce) through attrition, buyouts and reassignments ([The Washington Post](#)).
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Federal Reserve

- **Big Banks Make it Through Stress Tests:** U.S. banks made it through the latest round of stress testing relatively unscathed, setting investors up for news next week of payouts from the industry's biggest names ([CNBC](#)).
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NASA

- **Lack of Satellite Orders Triggers Layoffs at Space Systems Loral:** Citing a long-term drought in satellite orders, Space Systems Loral has laid off a number of employees at its California satellite manufacturing facility ([Space News](#)).
 - **Iridium Open to Reused Falcon 9s if it Means SpaceX Can Speed Up Schedule:** Mobile satellite services provider Iridium is willing to use pre-flown Falcon 9 first stage boosters for missions during the second half of its fleet replacement if SpaceX can show that reuse will shorten Iridium's wait for launches ([Space News](#)).
 - **ESA Aims to Privatize Space Rider Unmanned Spaceplane by 2025:** Although Europe's Space Rider reusable spaceplane is three years or so from its debut, the European Space Agency is already making plans to privatize the unmanned orbital vehicle. By 2025, ESA officials said, Space Rider could be operating commercially, flying science payloads and bringing them back to Earth for roughly \$9,200 per kilogram ([Space News](#)).
 - **FCC Approves OneWeb for US Market as It Considers Other Constellations:** The U.S. Federal Communications Commission voted to make OneWeb the first of what will likely be several new non-geosynchronous orbit (NGSO) satellite constellations granted regulatory approval to operate in the United States ([Space News](#)).
 - **OHB, Surrey Satellite Win Contract for Eight More Galileo Navigation Satellites:** OHB and Surrey Satellite have won a contract for another eight Galileo navigation satellites. The companies signed the contract Thursday with the European Space Agency, which procures the satellites on behalf of the EU ([Space News](#)).
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White House

- **Sean Spicer Might Be Leaving White House Podium:** The White House is mulling a new role for White House press secretary Sean Spicer that would take him away from the podium and into a different role inside the West Wing ([CNN](#)).
 - **Trump Denies Obstructing FBI Probe, Says Has No Tapes of Talks With Comey:** U.S. President Donald Trump said he had not obstructed the FBI's probe into alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election or recorded his conversations with former FBI chief James Comey ([Reuters](#)).
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