



Full Funding for the Department of Homeland Security Signed Into Law. The record 75-day shutdown of the Department of Homeland Security ended on April 30 when President Trump signed the much-delayed funding bill into law. The measure's passage averted additional missed paychecks for frontline personnel at TSA, FEMA, CISA, and the Coast Guard. Both chambers advanced the measure by unanimous voice vote after months of back-and-forth negotiations. The enacted bill omits appropriations for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) after Democrats vowed to oppose any funding for enforcement activities at those agencies in response to the shooting of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis by federal agents in January. House Republican leaders eventually agreed to accept the Senate bill to reopen DHS without ICE and CBP funding in exchange for an agreement that both chambers would pursue a separate path to fund ICE and CBP. To do that, both the House and Senate adopted a budget reconciliation resolution to create a procedural route that would allow ICE/CBP funding to pass the Senate by a simple majority rather than the 60-vote threshold for a filibuster. Congressional leaders have signaled they will use the budget reconciliation process to draft narrow legislation that would provide three years of funding for those agencies to avoid future shutdowns during the Trump Administration over immigration policies. The President has set a target for the House and Senate to approve the reconciliation measure no later than June 1, and both chambers are expected to spend the two weeks they are in session in May taking up the measure.

FY 27 Appropriations Process Underway. The FY27 appropriations cycle has entered an intense House “markup” phase following the President’s early-April budget submission, with House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK) pushing an accelerated timeline to advance all 12 spending bills through committee by the end of June. As of May 1, several major subcommittees—such as Military Construction/VA, State/Foreign Operations, and Legislative Branch—have already completed full committee markups, with reductions of roughly 6 percent compared with FY26 funding. The Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) and Legislative Branch bills are scheduled for early-May action, with mid-to-late-May consideration of Energy and Water (May 20) and Interior/Environment and Transportation-HUD (May 21), early-June markups for Labor-HHS-Education and Homeland Security (June 9–10), and a late-June conclusion with the Defense bill (June 24). Community Project Funding requests closed in late March and April, and while all submissions must be publicly posted under House transparency rules, committee staff are still reviewing eligibility and financial disclosures for most projects. The House has been releasing the list of projects included after the bills have been approved by the Subcommittee. The Speaker has indicated he intends to bring the first appropriations bills to the House floor in June and July, but Republicans’ narrow majority and disagreements over appropriate funding levels and policy

riders could complicate passage in the House. Even if the House advances several bills before the August recess, they likely will have no bipartisan support, making the final outcome uncertain. While the Senate has not laid out a schedule to consider spending bills in the Committee, it is expected that Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) and Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA) will craft bipartisan measures with higher spending levels, setting up the end-of-year negotiations and the need for a Continuing Resolution as the October 1 fiscal deadline approaches.

Farm Bill Approved in the House. The House passed the Farm, Food, and National Security Act, commonly known as “the Farm Bill,” on April 30 by a vote of 224–200, with 14 Democrats joining the Republican majority. Because the 2018 Farm Bill expired in September 2023, USDA programs have operated under a series of short-term extensions, and this legislation would provide a full five-year reauthorization through 2031. The bill continues major programs such as SNAP, farm commodity support, crop insurance, conservation, and rural development, while expanding or modernizing initiatives, including the Conservation Reserve Program, the Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Rural Energy for America Program, Volunteer Fire Assistance, ReConnect broadband grants, Distance Learning and Telemedicine, Community Facilities, and multiple rural water and waste programs. It also creates new efforts, such as the Rural Hospital Technical Assistance Program and the Forest Conservation Easement Program, and includes language preventing states and localities from imposing animal-housing requirements outside their jurisdiction. Before final passage, lawmakers adopted several amendments, including a bipartisan provision from Michigan Representative McDonald-Rivet allowing SNAP benefits to be used for rotisserie chicken. The House also removed language that would have barred local governments from regulating the sale, labeling, or use of EPA-approved pesticides and stripped provisions expanding access to a 15 percent ethanol fuel blend. As the bill moves to the Senate, these issues are expected to resurface, and any final agreement will require support from at least seven Senate Democrats to clear the 60-vote threshold.

Reauthorization of Workforce Programs Passes House Committee. On April 21, the House Education and Workforce Committee, under Chairman Tim Walberg (R-MI), approved the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)—renamed the A Stronger Workforce for America Act of 2026 (H.R. 8210) in a party-line vote. Chairman Walberg and Congresswoman Lisa McClain (R-MI) supported the measure, while Congresswoman Haley Stevens (D-MI) opposed it. The bill preserves several provisions from the bipartisan measure that nearly became law at the end of 2024, such as the 50 percent training expenditure requirement for adult and dislocated worker programs and increased state asides from the current 15% to 25%. However, the new legislation also includes more controversial changes, such as shifting Title II Adult Education from the Department of Education to the Department of Labor, expanding the “Make America Skilled Again” pilot to allow more states to consolidate multiple funding streams into flexible block grants, and lowering authorization levels across several programs. Although H.R. 8210 is expected to pass the full House in the coming weeks, the bill is strongly opposed by Senate Democrats over increased block-grant authority, the consolidation of education and labor functions, and funding cuts. Since legislation that enjoyed strong bipartisan support in both the House and Senate failed to become law in 2024, it appears unlikely that this new partisan bill will

become law. Instead, Democrats and Republicans will eventually need to go back to the negotiating table if they are to reauthorize WIOA in this Congress.

Senate Committee Holds Hearing on Great Lakes Restoration. On April 15, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing to discuss restoration efforts in the Great Lakes and the demonstrated successes of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in advancing environmental and economic development priorities across the region. The hearing occurred amid congressional efforts to reauthorize the program, which expires September 30. In late March, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 6422, the American Water Stewardship Act. This bipartisan package includes the GLRI Act of 2025, introduced earlier this year by the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force. The House bill reauthorizes the GLRI for another five years, from FY 2027 through FY 2031, and proposes raising the annual authorization level to \$500 million by FY 2027, up from the current \$475 million. Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) has introduced legislation in the Senate to reauthorize the GLRI. The GLRI is a key federal program dedicated to preserving and enhancing the health of the Great Lakes by bringing together federal and state leadership, scientific expertise, and local voices to deliver measurable results for the region's environmental, public health, and economic development objectives. The GLRI addresses five priorities: toxic substances and areas of concern (AOCs), invasive species, non-point source pollution, wildlife habitat, and capacity building for future restoration efforts. Witnesses touted the program's benefits and achievements for both the environment and the regional economy. Common themes in witnesses' testimony included the GLRI's ability to leverage non-federal dollars to support restoration efforts and the program's collaborative nature. The GLRI coordinates strategies and projects across sixteen federal agencies, eight Great Lakes states, 35 Great Lakes tribes, regional bodies, universities, local communities, Canadian federal and provincial partners, and other nonfederal project implementers to advance long-term management and restoration. Congress appropriated \$369 million for the GLRI in FY 2026. Supporters are urging Congress to fund the program at \$500 million for FY 2027.