



May 15, 2020



## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

### The Boys are Back in Town

Now that the boys are back in town (members of the House returned to DC this week for the first time in more than a month) and the nights are getting warmer, it finally feels like it [won't be long til summer comes](#).

House members returned to vote on the latest version of a stimulus package that we covered in detail earlier this week. The package is estimated at over \$3 trillion, with \$916 billion in aid to state and local governments. However, this remains a bill focused on sending a message from House Democrats. The bill is poised for a lukewarm at best reception by Republicans in the House, Senate, and White House. Opposition ranges from letting previous supplementals have more time to take hold, overall spending levels, expecting states and locals to take more responsibility, and the overall need for a "pause" button while monitoring efforts to reopen the economy.

The House is also expected to pass a historic rules change resolution that will allow lawmakers to hold committee hearings and vote remotely amid the ongoing pandemic. Assuming this passes, it may be the last time the boys are back in town for quite a while.

A little ways down the National Mall, the President also acted this week to extend federal support for the governors' use of the National Guard for COVID-19 response and economic recovery through June 24, 2020, and authorized the 100 percent federal cost share for states' and territories' use of these forces, particularly in the context of economic recovery. The extension runs out mid-week and is only a few weeks away, so this may not be the last we hear of this process.

*More News from the Nation's Capital...*

### **Selection of Recently Released Federal COVID-19 Resources**

Understanding that it is a challenge to quickly review all the available grant programs for COVID-19, we are creating and updating a list of links for information on programs from FEMA, HHS, CDC, HUD, and others. While it is not comprehensive, it can be quickly consulted for resources on topics that have recently been of interest across the federal interagency (e.g. childcare for essential personnel).

This is updated weekly.

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### **How States Pay for Disasters in an Era of Rising Costs**

The Pew Charitable Trusts released a nationwide assessment of state budgetary strategies and practices to cover the costs of natural disasters.

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### **FEMA Preliminary Damage Assessment Guide Updated**

FEMA's updated PDA guidance will take effect June 8, 2020. Any joint PDA's conducted with the agency after that date will need to follow the new guidelines.

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### **DHS OIG on FEMA's Surge Capacity Force**

DHS' Office of the Inspector General audited the program, which allows federal staff to volunteer to provide surge capacity during and after significant disasters. The report noted significant challenges and provided a number of recommendations.

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*Other News from DC and Around the Country:*

Federal News Network: [FEMA Looks to Build Trust in Data Sharing After IG Found it 'Overshared' Records](#)

Brink News: [Are Contact Tracing Apps the Answer? Lessons the US Can Learn from Other Countries](#)

The Atlantic: [What Happens if a 'Big One' Strikes During the Pandemic?](#)

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