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## THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON:

### 100 Days

News this week in DC focused on the address provided by the President to the joint session of Congress, but there was no shortage of other rumors brewing.

Utilizing a series of tax increases, the President outlined priorities such as:

- \$400 billion to extend the child tax credit (That’s an estimate because a White House fact sheet conspicuously did not provide the cost);
- \$225 billion to subsidize and improve childcare and boost pay for childcare workers;
- \$225 billion for a national paid family and medical leave program;
- \$200 billion for free universal preschool;
- \$200 billion to reduce Obamacare premiums;
- \$109 billion for free community college;
- \$85 billion to boost Pell Grants, and;
- \$45 billion for childhood and school nutrition programs.

While the speech was hailed in some circles and panned in others (we’ll let you guess who was on which side), work quietly continued behind the scenes on discussions about a possible infrastructure package and Stafford reforms.

A lot of details remain foggy about how exactly the infrastructure package will proceed, but early indications tell us that if reconciliation is used again, we could see massive investments in programs such as flood mapping, BRIC, and other mitigation-based programs. Having said that, Senate Appropriations Chairman, Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) outlined concerns with the previous supplemental process since reconciliation essentially gives non-Appropriators the authority to spend federal funds. This disagreement could cause issues with how such an infrastructure package proceeds.

The final tennis match back-and-forth being watched in D.C. these days is the earmark discussion. Several month ago, House Democrats released their guidance on specific requirements for earmarks in each of their bills. Slowly, the Senate Democrats have come around and indicated they’re willing to entertain earmarks again this year as well but will not limit the number which Senators can request (unlike the cap on 10 in the House guidance). This could leave Senate Republicans scrambling to determine how best to play along or fight these specific line items, but they may save that decision for closer to passage of the FY22 spending bills. But given the tardiness of the administration’s budget and lagging Appropriations process, that could be well into this summer.

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

#### House Homeland Security Committee Holds Hearing on DHS Preparedness Grant Programs

The House Homeland Security Committee’s Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response & Recovery held a hearing to understand state and local perspectives on changes to the suite of DHS preparedness grants, particularly in FY20 and FY21. Hearing witnesses were Hawai’i Governor David Ige (on behalf of the National Governors Association); Jared Maples, Director, New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness; Orlando Rolon, Chief of Police, Orlando, Florida (on behalf of the Major Cities Chiefs Association); and Robert Altman, Battalion Chief, Ocala Fire Rescue.

Witnesses highlighted concerns around the amount of time provided to grantees and subgrantees to adapt their projects and priorities to grant program changes; the adverse financial impacts of COVID-19 on all types of state and local funding; the challenges around FEMA’s Public Assistance program eligibility and cost-share, as well as rulemaking changes for PA thresholds; the impacts of disinformation around COVID-19; domestic violent extremism; encouraging DHS to manage program priorities through a focus on transparent risk-based decision making; and the impact of changing the Urban Area Security Initiative to be entirely competitively awarded. Witnesses also recommended that cybersecurity spending not be carved out of already existing grants, but to instead develop a cybersecurity grant program to allow for better risk mitigation.

[View the hearing and read the witness testimonies here.](#)

#### FEMA RFI Related to Recent Executive Orders

FEMA announced a Request for Information in the Federal Register requesting input for the agency to consider when developing, modifying, streamlining, expanding, or repealing various programs, regulations, and policies (how many commas can we fit in a sentence?) related to recent Executive Orders. These EOs were related to climate change, improving public health and protecting the environment, and improving regulation and regulatory reviews.

The RFI seeks to identify to what extent current programs, regulations, and policies perpetuate systemic barriers to opportunities and benefits for people of color and other underserved groups; bolster resilience to climate change; and address the disproportionately high and adverse climate-related impacts on disadvantaged communities.

Additional information is [available here](#). Comments are due on or before **June 21, 2021**.

#### DHS to Conduct Internal Domestic Violent Extremism Review

DHS Secretary Mayorkas announced that an internal review will be conducted to ensure that the department is able to prevent, detect, and respond to threats related to domestic violent extremism in the agency effectively. This includes racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism. A cross-departmental working group comprised of senior officials will develop recommendations for the Secretary’s consideration.

Additional information is [available here](#).

*Other News from DC and Around the Country:*

GovTech: [NGA’s Cybersecurity Policy Academy Gets Rolling with 5 States](#)  
The Weather Channel: [The Stunning Toll of a Terrible U.S. Hurricane Stretch Over the Past 5 Years](#)  
Capitol Ideas Magazine: [Emergency Management Edition](#)

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