

Washington Insight



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Politics Drives the Agenda in Run-Up to the Midterms

Thomas J. Spulak, Lauren M. Donoghue

With the 2014 Midterm Elections less than seven months away, the issues driving the remaining days of the 113th Congress must be viewed in their political context. Many political observers are calling the Senate a toss-up and just one or two races could decide who holds power in the upper chamber in 2015. Close races and few legislative days (around 50) mean Members will be very cautious about what policy issues they focus on, and even more cautious about what they vote on. [More »](#)

An Insider's View: President Obama's Foreign Policy

Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich

Each president brings his own unique preconceptions to the job. Post-depression, FDR believed the American people deserved a "New Deal." John Kennedy felt Americans would willingly "pay any price" to spread freedom and democracy throughout the world. Ronald Reagan thought a strong national defense would bring the "evil empire" to its knees. A post-9/11 George W. Bush saw radical Islam as the single greatest threat to western style democracy. [More »](#)

The Anti-Energy Tax Incentives Caucus of the GOP

Michael A. Andrews

A growing number of Republican members of Congress, fueled by the Tea Party and conservative groups like the Club for Growth, are renouncing energy tax incentives for the fossil fuel and the renewable energy industries. Last year, Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-KS) introduced legislation that would eliminate all of the energy tax incentives from the Tax Code. Thirty-four members of the House are listed as co-sponsors. Last week, Senator Mike Lee (R-ID) introduced the identical bill in the Senate. If enacted, the legislation will dramatically change the nature of American energy policy, and could have a dramatic impact on domestic energy production. [More »](#)

Trade Agenda Stagnant, For Now

Thomas J. Spulak, Bonnie B. Byers

The Administration continues to push trade issues on several fronts, but Congressional Democrats continue to show little interest in participating. During his recent trip to Asia, President Obama pushed Japanese President

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For Further Reading

The Hill: Spulak, Crawford -
2015 Appropriations Bills:
Are More Policy Riders
Inevitable?

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Shinzo Abe to conclude negotiations on a bilateral deal with the U.S. that would pave the way to concluding the Trans-Pacific Partnership ("TPP"), the 12 nation regional free trade agreement that also includes Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Vietnam. Many TPP issues are settled or close to being settled. However, negotiations with Japan continue to be problematic over issues such as agriculture and automobiles. [More »](#)

The Skinny on the White House Big Data Report

J.C. Boggs

While the public debate on privacy has largely focused on how government, particularly the intelligence community, collects, stores, and uses data, President Obama earlier this year announced a comprehensive review of the impact big data technologies are having, and will have, on a range of economic, social, and government activities. The White House wrapped up its big data review last week, examining how big data has redefined the way Americans live and work, and how this new technology will likely transform the relationships between government, citizens, businesses, and consumers. [More »](#)

Appropriations Off to a Quick Start

George C. Crawford

One of the keys to last year's appropriations deal was setting the discretionary appropriations caps for the upcoming fiscal year (FY2015). The Senate has said that it will not consider a budget resolution this year as the spending limits set forth in the Omnibus bill set those caps. The House passed a budget resolution that kept to the overall spending total of \$1.014 trillion. The \$1.014 trillion in discretionary spending will be divided between defense (\$521 billion) and nondefense (\$492 billion). [More »](#)

Accelerating Biomedical Innovation, Cures to Patients, and "Out of the Box" Thinking at 21st Century Cures Roundtable

Allison F. Kassir

A bipartisan group of Members, led by Energy & Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton (R-MI) and Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee Ranking Member Diana DeGette (D-CO), launched the [21st Century Cures Initiative](#), an effort to accelerate the pace of cures and medical breakthroughs in the United States. Over the next several months or more, Chairman Upton and Congresswoman DeGette have committed to lead a comprehensive review of the entire spectrum of discovery, development, and delivery to determine what steps need to be taken to ensure that the United States maintains its edge in leading worldwide innovation as well as translates this innovation to patient care and improved health outcomes. [More »](#)

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