

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 23
June 9, 2008

ACTION ALERTS



NONE:

[HTTP://WWW.UCP.ORG/UCP_GENERALSUB.CFM/1/8/11981](http://www.ucp.org/ucp_generalsub.cfm/1/8/11981)



MAJOR EVENTS LAST WEEK

U. S. Congress

The Congress returned from its Memorial Day recess facing a critical four week session prior to the Independence Day recess. June is usually the month during which the Congress begins work in earnest on the next year's appropriations bills. It is also a time when bills to reauthorize expiring laws begin moving through the legislative process or stall to await consideration in the next Congress.

FY 2009 Appropriations

Chairman David Obey (D-WI) of the House Appropriations Committee released a schedule for marking up the twelve appropriations bills for FY 2009. Rumors abound that the subcommittee markups may be the end of the road for many, if not all, of the appropriations bills. House and Senate Democrats have been threatening for weeks to delay consideration of FY 2009 spending until next year after a new Congress and a new President are elected. The Democratic leadership apparently is unwilling to provide President Bush the opportunity to veto appropriations bills as he did last year when the spending amounts were above the spending levels contained in the Administration's budget proposal. See the House Appropriations Committee's schedule at: <http://appropriations.house.gov/calendar.aspx>

Budget Resolution

The Senate and House narrowly approved a \$3.1 trillion FY 2009 Budget Resolution (S. Con. Res. 70). The Senate vote was 48-45 and the House vote was 214-210. The

Budget Resolution includes large increases in funds for domestic programs and excludes reductions in Medicare and Medicaid spending proposed by President Bush. The Budget Resolution is a blueprint for Congressional appropriators, not legislation that must be signed by the President. The resolution would increase funds for domestic federal agencies by almost 5%, or \$24 billion. The resolution would provide approximately \$21 billion more in discretionary spending than the President requested. It does not contain [reconciliation instructions](#) requiring adjustments to entitlement programs.

<http://www.google.com/calendar/render?hl=en&tab=wc/>

ADA Restoration Act

The ADA Restoration Act (ADARA), a bill designed to restore workplace protections eroded by Supreme and lower courts, is gearing up. House Majority Leader Hoyer (D-MD) has named ADARA a legislative priority this summer, and the disability community has shown its own enthusiasm with 27 organizations signed on to the negotiated language with several organizations from the business community. Given the small number of legislative work days left in this Congress and the need for bipartisan support - including the business community - momentum at this stage will be critical to give ADARA a chance at being signed into law this year.

Social Security

The House and Senate passed the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2009 that provides \$10.7 billion for the Social Security Administration's administrative expenses. This amount is \$240 million above the President's request. The additional resources are provided "to address the serious backlog of disability claims and hearings, as well as other backlog workloads for which additional resources are needed." The conference agreement also rejects the President's private account proposal for Social Security. The additional amount can be realized only if the Congress actually appropriates the funds through the FY 2009 L-HHS-Ed appropriations bill or a FY 2009 Continuing Resolution.

On June 6, fifty-two Senators signed a letter to Senators Harkin (D-IA) and Specter (R-PA), Chairman and Ranking Member, respectively, of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, supporting an appropriation of \$240 million more than the President requested for the Social Security Administration's administrative expenses. The letter cited the major delays in holding hearings on disability claims and SSA's inability to process other important workloads.

DD Act

In addition to submitting our own comments, United Cerebral Palsy and The Arc signed on to the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities letter responding to proposed regulations issued by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD). These regulations were targeted at entities which received funding through the Developmental Disabilities Act (DD Act) - the Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&A), Developmental Disability Councils, and University Centers of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs). In support of these agencies and their work with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, UCP and The Arc recommended that Protection and Advocacy (P&A) systems' authority to protect the safety of individuals living in care facilities remain unweakened, and that these agencies have the flexibility to collaborate in

useful and realistic ways. The importance of these agencies' abilities to educate lawmakers as experts in the field was also stressed. See the DPC's comments at: <http://www.thearc.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?&id=1123>

Accessibility/Residential Ramps

United Cerebral Palsy submitted comments to the International Code Council (ICC) in opposition to the proposal regarding the slope of residential ramps. The ICC sought comments regarding a proposed change making residential ramps steeper than currently allowed (proposed slope of 8:1 versus 12:1). Safety is key for people with disabilities, and allowing a steeper ramp can lead to injury, decreased maneuverability, and may decrease independence of people with disabilities. See the comments at: <http://www.thearc.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?&id=1122>

MAJOR EVENTS AHEAD

Emergency War Supplemental Appropriations/Medicaid

The House may vote this week on the FY 2008 Emergency War Supplemental Appropriations bill. The contents of the bill's domestic package are not currently clear. Because of fears of a Presidential veto, certain provisions, including the moratorium on the Medicaid targeted case management rule, may be dropped – although no final decisions have been made. The moratoria on the rehabilitation option and the school based administration/transportation rules are reportedly still included in the bill.

The House and Senate Democratic leadership is struggling to refine the significant differences between their versions to entice the White House to sign the measure into law while appeasing those Members who want to expand funding for critical domestic issues such as unemployment insurance. One major complication has fiscally conservative House Democrats wanting increased spending to be offset and numerous Senators opposing any offsets.

FY 2009 Appropriations

The House Appropriations Subcommittee and full Committee markups are scheduled to begin on June 11 and end on July 23. The disability community is always vitally concerned about two of the twelve appropriations bills: Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (L-HHS-ED) and Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (T-HUD). The L-HHS-ED bill will be marked up in Subcommittee on June 19 followed by full Committee action on June 25. The T-HUD Subcommittee mark up is scheduled on June 20 with June 26 slated for full Committee action.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to release its schedule.

Health Care

On Tuesday, the Senate Finance Committee, chaired by Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT), will hold a hearing on “47 Million & Counting: Why the Health Care Marketplace is

Broken". For more information, see:
<http://www.senate.gov/~finance/sitepages/hearing061008.htm>

Also on Tuesday, the House Ways & Means Committee's Subcommittee on Health, chaired by Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA), will hold a hearing on "Addressing Disparities in Health and Healthcare: Issues for Reform". For more information, see:
<http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=detail&hearing=635&comm=1>

Transportation

The House of Representatives is expected to begin consideration of H.R. 6003, a bill to reauthorize Amtrak. Included in the bill is an authorization for funding to improve rail station accessibility. Amtrak is also required to report to Congress on how it plans to meet its 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act deadline for rail station accessibility.
<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.06003/>

Early Childhood

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by Rep. George Miller (D-CA), will hold a hearing on H.R. 2343. This bill will expand quality programs of early childhood home visitation that increase school readiness, child abuse and neglect prevention, and early identification of developmental and health delays, including potential mental health concerns. For more information on the hearing, see:
<http://edlabor.house.gov/committee/hearings.shtml>
<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:h.r.02343/>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee Membership

The House Democratic Steering Committee voted to appoint Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) to fill a vacancy on the Energy and Commerce Committee. This committee has jurisdiction over Medicaid, the Developmental Disabilities Act and several other disability related laws.

Grants for Families

The United Health Care Children's Foundation is providing grants to families who have children ages 16 or younger with medical needs not covered or not fully covered by their commercial health benefit plan. Individuals who receive care via Medicaid, Medicare or other state or federally subsidized health insurance programs are not eligible. The amount awarded to an individual within a 12-month period is limited to either \$5,000 or 85% of the fund balance, whichever amount is less. Awards to any one individual are limited to a lifetime maximum of \$7,500. See: http://www.uhccf.org/apply_applicant.html

Public Policy Fellowships

The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation is seeking candidates for one year fellowships in Washington, D.C. Information on the professional fellowship program can be found at: http://www.jpkf.org/Fellowship_guidelines/Professional_Fellow_app.html.

Information on the parents/family fellowship program can be found at:
http://www.jpkf.org/Fellowship_guidelines/Parent_Fellow_app.html