



THE CRD ASSOCIATES'

HEALTH POLICY REPORT

September 8, 2014

The Headlines:

- **Congress' To-Do List**

Congress' To-Do List

Congress returned from its five-week summer break September 8, only to face a truncated, but critical to-do list.

September is expected to be a short month of work on Capitol Hill: Essentially this week and next, after which Congress will leave town again until after the midterm elections in November. The two key items on this month's must-pass list are a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government once the current fiscal year ends on September 30, and an extension of the Export-Import Bank, which helps finance the sale of U.S.

goods abroad and whose charter also expires the same day.

The CR is expected to do little more than extend fiscal year 2014 spending levels and policy directives through December 11 or 12. Then, in December, lawmakers will have to decide whether to extend the stopgap measure for a few months, or perhaps for the whole fiscal year, depending upon the political dynamics in play at that time.

Alternatively, there is an outside chance that lawmakers could decide to vote on a handful of less controversial spending bills, like Defense, Veterans Affairs or others. One way or another, lawmakers also may decide to add some money to handle the crises in Iraq, Syria,

Ukraine and in various African countries.

There is also continuing pressure to allocate additional funds to Homeland Security and other agencies to address the child migrant influx (the Obama administration has asked Congress for \$3.7 billion to cover the cost of processing and sheltering the children), even though the flow of refugees on America's southern border has slowed in recent weeks.

While the short work calendar is part of the problem, election year politics is a factor as well. With control of both chambers of Congress within reach for the first time in years, GOP

leaders will try to clear the way for Republican candidates as they head into the final campaign stretch. They want to avoid another bruising government shutdown and minimize awkward votes that could disadvantage incumbents.

Democrats, in the meantime, want to avoid taking tough votes that could jeopardize their incumbents who are running in swing states.

In short, both sides are operating under the same game plan: No unforced errors.

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