



Weekly Legislative Update Week of February 22, 2016

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Week of February 22nd

The NATaT Board of Directors will be in Washington, D.C. this week for a board meeting and advocacy day on Capitol Hill. Board members will present to Members of Congress NATaT's 2016 Federal Platform, and discuss in detail some of the priorities included in that platform. These meetings will set the stage for the annual fly-in in April.

The House and Senate are both in session this week. The House will vote on [13 bills](#) under suspension of the rules on Tuesday and Wednesday, including the "Directing Dollars to Disaster Relief Act of 2015" ([S. 2109](#)), which would require FEMA to develop a cost-reduction plan for administrative expenses related to major disaster assistance. For the remainder of the week, the House will vote on (1) the "Fraudulent Joinder Prevention Act of 2015" ([H.R. 3624](#)), which would amend certain procedures governing the relationship between state and federal courts; and (2) the "Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act of 2015" ([H.R. 2406](#)), which would make revisions to a number of hunting, fishing, and recreation shooting programs. The Senate could consider the "Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2015" ([S. 2012](#)) and the "Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2015" ([S. 524](#)), which would authorize \$250 million for combating drug addiction and treating overdoses.

The Supreme Court nomination fight will likely dominate the Senate's first week back since the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Most Senate Republicans are backing Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's (R-KY) approach to hold off on filling the vacancy until the next president takes office. President Obama has told congressional leaders he plans to pick a successor soon. Reid predicts that McConnell "will have to cave in" to public demand and have the Senate hold a confirmation hearing and floor vote. Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley (R-IA), who hasn't ruled out hearings, plans to discuss strategy this week with Republican committee members and McConnell. The standoff has the potential to shut down the Senate's regular operations, although leadership aides from both parties have demurred when asked if their caucuses would resort to parliamentary warfare in the form of constant filibusters.

House lawmakers will continue to deliberate on passing a budget. House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) has told fiscal hawks that they will have to swallow the increased spending levels reached in last fall's budget deal, which more than two-thirds of House Republicans [voted against](#). But some Republicans, who are upset with this year's budget process, are demanding offsets on mandatory spending in exchange for codifying last fall's budget deal. Speaker Ryan told members before the most recent recess that he saw no path forward on a budget that would allow appropriations bills to move forward other than to stick to elevated funding levels set by the budget agreement. House Republicans will have to move briskly to keep to their budget timetable. House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price (R-GA) [presented](#) a draft FY 2017 budget to House Republicans on Monday, and will hold a markup of the budget during the first week of March. The draft budget would maintain spending levels from last fall's budget deal, while the Budget Committee and the full House are promising to hold votes on deficit-reducing measures sometime this year.

This week will be busy for federal agencies, with many federal officials scheduled to testify before House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on President Obama's FY 2017 budget request and appropriations. Several of Obama's Cabinet members, including Secretary of State John Kerry, Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, Attorney General Loretta Lynch, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson, Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell, and Office of Management and Budget Director Shaun Donovan, will testify on Capitol Hill about their agencies' fiscal 2017 budget requests.

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Supreme Court Vacancy Could Potentially Change Future of Clean Power Plan

Following news of the death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, Senate Majority Leader McConnell swiftly said the vacancy left by Scalia should not be filled until a new President has taken office. President Obama, however, said he plans to name a nominee. That could set up a protracted battle in the Senate, possibly slowing down unrelated legislation. Scalia's unexpected death could potentially change the future of the Clean Power Plan. The Supreme Court ruled 5-4 earlier in the month to stay the rule, with Scalia joining the majority. Now that the high court has just four justices in opposition to the plan, a deadlocked vote could mean that a lower court's ruling, expected to be in the Obama Administration's favor later this year, would be upheld.

Meanwhile, the U.S. will sign the Paris climate agreement despite the Supreme Court's decision to stay the Clean Power Plan, Todd Stern, the special envoy for climate change at the U.S. State Department, said in an [interview](#) with Reuters. Despite the Obama administration's positive outlook on the rule's future, the Michigan Agency for Energy announced the state will suspend action to comply with the Clean Power Plan. After a legal review of the Supreme Court's stay on the regulation designed to limit carbon emissions, the state will wait for the rule to go through the legal process before moving forward on compliance. Stern said a Republican successor would have a difficult time going back on the deal because doing so would negatively impact diplomatic relations. [Read more...](#)

President Obama Signs Three Bills Into Law

On February 18, President Obama [signed](#) the following three bills into law:

- ε [H.R. 757](#), the "North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act of 2016," which strengthens and expands statutory sanctions on North Korea;
- ε [H.R. 907](#), the "United States-Jordan Defense Cooperation Act of 2015," which expedites the sale of defense articles and services to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for a period of three-years; and
- ε [H.R. 3033](#), the "Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia (READ) Act," which requires the National Science Foundation to: (1) include in its annual congressional budget justification the amount requested for its Research in Disabilities Education program; and (2) support research on the science of specific learning disability, including dyslexia, and devote specified funding for such purposes.

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Tuesday, February 23

- ε House Rules Committee meets to formulate a rule on the "Fraudulent Joinder Prevention Act of 2015" (H.R. 3624) and the "Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Act of 2015" (H.R. 2406).
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government budget hearing for Office of Management and Budget.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies budget hearing for the Department of Commerce.
- ε Full House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee joint hearing "to receive the Legislative Presentation of the Disabled American Veterans."
- ε Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Surface Transportation and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety and Security hearing entitled "Passenger Rail: Opportunities and Challenges for the National Network."
- ε Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard hearing entitled "Magnuson-Stevens Act at 40: Successes, Challenges, and the Path Forward."
- ε Full Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing "to examine the Department of the Interior's budget request for Fiscal Year 2017."
- ε Full Senate Finance Committee hearing entitled "Examining the Opioid Epidemic; Challenges and Opportunities."
- ε Full Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee hearing entitled "ESSA Implementation in States and School Districts: Perspectives from Education Leaders."
- ε Full Senate Judiciary Committee hearing entitled "The Unaccompanied Children Crisis: Does the Administration Have a Plan to Stop the Border Surge and Adequately Monitor the Children?"
- ε Full Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing entitled "Fiscal Year 2017 Budget for Veterans' Programs and Fiscal Year 2018 Advance Appropriations Request."

Wednesday, February 24

- ε Full House Agriculture Committee hearing entitled "State of the Rural Economy."
- ε House Appropriations Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee budget

- hearing for United States Forest Service.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs budget hearing for Department of State and Foreign Assistance.
 - ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies budget hearing for Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.
 - ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies budget hearing for the Department of Justice.
 - ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies budget hearing for the Department of Transportation.
 - ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies budget hearing for Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service.
 - ε Full House Education and the Workforce Committee hearing entitled "Examining the Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Education."
 - ε House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health hearing entitled "The Fiscal Year 2017 HHS Budget."
 - ε House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hearing entitled "DOE for the 21st Century: Science, Environment, and National Security Missions."
 - ε House Financial Services Subcommittee on Capital Markets and Government Sponsored Enterprises hearing entitled "The Impact of the Dodd-Frank Act and Basel III on the Fixed Income Market and Securitizations."
 - ε Full House Judiciary Committee markup of H.R. 3892, the "Muslim Brotherhood Terrorist Designation Act of 2015."
 - ε House Judiciary Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law hearing entitled "Triple Threat to Workers and Households: Impacts of Federal Regulations on Jobs, Wages and Startups."
 - ε House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans hearing entitled "The 2016 California Water Supply Outlook During the El Niño and Three Years of Restricted Water Deliveries."
 - ε House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hearing entitled "The President's Imposition of New Environmental Mitigation Regulations."
 - ε House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs legislative hearing on H.R. 3477, the "Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience Act"; and H.R. 3599, the "Eastern band Cherokee Historic Lands Reacquisition Act."
 - ε Full House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing entitled "OPM Data Breach: Part III."
 - ε Full House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing entitled "The Zika Virus: Coordination of a Multi-Agency Response."
 - ε Full House Science, Space, and Technology Committee hearing entitled "Unlocking the Secrets of the Universe: Gravitational Waves."
 - ε Full House Small Business Committee hearing entitled "SBA Management and Performance Challenges: The Inspector General's Perspective."
 - ε House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment hearing entitled "A Review of United States Army Corps of Engineers Reports to Congress on Future Water Resources Development and Chief's Reports."
 - ε Full House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee joint hearing "to receive the

- Legislative Presentation of The American Legion."
- ε Full House Ways and Means Committee hearing on the "Global Tax Environment in 2016 and Implications for International Tax Reform."
 - ε Full Senate Special Aging Committee hearing entitled "Opioid Use Among Seniors-Issues and Emerging Trends."
 - ε Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense hearing to "review the Fiscal Year 2017 budget request and funding justification for the U.S. Army."
 - ε Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies hearing to "review the Fiscal Year 2017 budget request and funding justification for the U.S. Department of State."
 - ε Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security hearing to "review the Fiscal Year 2017 budget request and funding justification for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security."
 - ε Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development hearing to "review the Fiscal Year 2017 budget request and funding justification for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission."
 - ε Full Senate Environment and Public Works Committee hearing entitled "Oversight of the Renewable Fuel Standard."
 - ε Full Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee hearing entitled "Zika Virus: Addressing the Growing Public Health Threat."
 - ε Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management hearing entitled "The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act: Opportunities for Improvements to Support State and Local Governments."

Thursday, February 25

- ε House Agriculture Subcommittee on Commodity Exchanges, Energy, and Credit hearing entitled "To review the G-20 swap data reporting goals."
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies budget hearing for Indian Health Service.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies oversight hearing for the Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense budget hearing for the Department of Defense.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies budget hearing for Department of Health and Human Services.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies budget hearing for Food and Drug Administration.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies budget hearing for Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies budget hearing for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government budget hearing for Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- ε Full House Education and the Workforce Committee hearing entitled "Next Steps for K-12 Education: Upholding the Letter and Intent of the Every Student Succeeds Act."
- ε House Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hearing entitled "Puerto Rico's Debt Crisis and Its Impact on the Bond Markets."
- ε House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing and Insurance hearing entitled "The

Impact of International Regulatory Standards on the Competitiveness of U.S. Insurers: Part II."

- ε House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency hearing entitled "Probing DHS's Botched Management of the Human Resources Information Technology Program."
- ε House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies hearing entitled "Emerging Cyber Threats to the United States."
- ε Full House Intelligence Committee open hearing entitled "World Wide Threats."
- ε Full House Judiciary Committee hearing entitled "International Conflicts of Law Concerning Cross Border Data Flow and Law Enforcement Requests."
- ε Full House Natural Resources Committee hearing entitled "The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Analysis of the Situation in Puerto Rico."
- ε House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands legislative hearing on H.R. 2316, the "Self-Sufficient Community Lands Act"; H.R. 3650, the "State National Forest Management Act of 2015"; H.R. 3826, the "Mount Hood Cooper Spur Land Exchange Clarification Act"; H.R. 4510, the "Bolts Ditch Access and Use Act"; and H.R. 4579, the "Utah Test and Training Range Encroachment Prevention and Temporary Closure Act."
- ε Full House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing entitled "Security Clearance Reform: The Performance Accountability Council's Path Forward."
- ε Full House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing entitled "Review of Obamacare Consumer Operated and Oriented Plans (CO-Ops)."
- ε Full House Science, Space, and Technology Committee hearing entitled "The Space Leadership Preservation Act and the Need for Stability at NASA."
- ε House Small Business Subcommittee on Contracting and the Workforce hearing entitled "Hotline Truths: Issues Raised by Recent Audits of Defense Contracting."
- ε House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials hearing entitled "Reauthorization of DOT's Pipeline Safety Program."
- ε Full Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee business meeting to "consider the Chairman's Mark on Biotechnology Labeling Solutions."
- ε Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies hearing to "review the Fiscal Year 2017 budget request and funding justification for the U.S. Department of Justice."
- ε Full Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee nomination hearing for Dr. John King to serve as U.S. Secretary of Education.
- ε Full Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing entitled "Connecting Patients to New and Potential Life Saving Treatments."
- ε Full Senate Indian Affairs Committee roundtable entitled "The Tribal Law and Order Act 5 Years Later; Next Steps to Improving Justice Systems in Indian Communities."
- ε Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest hearing entitled "The Impact of High-Skilled Immigration on U.S. Workers."
- ε Full Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee hearing entitled "An Examination of Changes to the U.S. Patent System & Impacts on America's Small Businesses."

Friday, February 26

- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies hearing for Army Corps of Engineers.
- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies oversight hearing entitled "Quality of Live in the Military."

- ε House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies budget hearing for Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment.
- ε House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade hearing entitled "Disrupter Series: 3D Printing."
- ε House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications hearing entitled "Food for Thought: Efforts to Defend the Nation's Agriculture and Food."
- ε House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on Transportation and Public Assets hearing entitled "Oversight of Federal Vehicles."

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