



National Association
OF
State Head Injury Administrators

Action Alert!

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November 21, 2006

FY 2007 Appropriations

On November 15, Congress passed a continuing resolution (CR) to continue funding Federal government at Fiscal Year 2006 levels until December 8. (Congress had passed a CR on September 30 to extend funding for Federal government programs until November 17, except for two appropriation bills which were passed by the end of the fiscal year – defense and homeland security.)

Congress has recessed for Thanksgiving and plans to reconvene on December 5. Once they return, it is anticipated that they will try to pass an omnibus spending bill lumping most of the appropriations bills into one package. While there is some speculation that the Labor-Health and Human Service--Education Appropriations bill may be held over for consideration in January when the new Congress convenes, Congressional staffers assert that their goal is to complete all bills before the 109th Congress adjourns on December 15.

Prior to the elections held in November, Congress shifted \$5.3 billion to the defense and homeland security appropriations bills that Senate appropriators had planned to use to fund domestic programs. This means that there is \$5.3 billion less than Senate appropriators had anticipated for the remaining appropriations bills that Congress must pass when it returns.

Earlier in the year the Republican leaders in Congress passed a requirement that overall appropriations for 2007 not exceed the President's request. To meet this requirement, the \$5.3 billion just added to the defense and homeland security bills will have to be cut from the other appropriations bills, which largely fund domestic programs, in order not to exceed his budget recommendations.

In the past four years, Congress has instituted an across-the board cut in appropriated programs in order to stay within the ceiling of overall spending set by Congress through the reconciliation process. If the \$5.3 billion in savings is obtained through a similar across-the-board cut in the nine remaining appropriations bills, the levels provided in those bills would be cut by 1.1 percent below what Senate appropriators had proposed. These remaining appropriation bills fund a broad range of government services, including housing, disability services, education, veterans' health care, environmental protection and health research.

What Does This Mean for TBI Act Funding?

This means that **supporters still must contact their congressmen/women (incoming, as well as outgoing)** conveying the importance and urgency of funding for the TBI Act programs (HRSA TBI State Grant and P&A Grant Programs, CDC and NIH funding for surveillance, prevention and research.) **Talking points are available on the NASHIA website at <http://www.nashia.org> or <http://www.nashia.org/pdf/appropstalkingpnts.pdf>**

Legislation

With the change in majorities in both houses of Congress it appears that the current Congress will not deal with any other issues in the lame duck except for a few "must pass" bills. That means that it is very unlikely that Congress will consider the TBI Act reauthorization, NIH reauthorization, the Lifespan Respite Care Act, or other disability bills of interest to NASHIA members. These bills will have to be reintroduced in the new Congress.

Press Conference on TBI

The National Brain Injury Research Treatment and Training Foundation sponsored a press conference and roundtable discussion in cooperation with the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force on November 15 in the Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. The purpose of the event was to review the findings of two international conferences which produced reports to Congress. The first, the Conemaugh Report, calls for \$100 million in new funding to improve outcomes of brain injury. The second, the Mohonk Report, calls for greater funding for research on the incidence and prevalence, as well as outcomes of persons in states of minimal consciousness and the "vegetative state." Panelists urged Congress to address these issues and support a total of \$125 million in new federal funding for brain injury, mostly through NIH and CDC.

Six Congressmen spoke during the press conference: Rep. Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-RI), Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA), Rep. Virgil Goode (R-VA), Rep. Bill Jenkins (R-TN), Rep. Robin Hayes (R-NC). Testimony focused on the traumatic brain injury rehabilitation, research and disability issues, as well as the need to reauthorize the TBI Act. Staff members from both house and senate who work on appropriations and TBI Act reauthorization were also in attendance.

*This **Action Alert** was prepared for NASHIA members by Susan L. Vaughn, Director of Public Policy, on behalf of the NASHIA Public Policy Committee, chaired by Debra Kamen. To see NASHIA's Public Policy Platform click on www.nashia.org/pdocfiles/PublicPolicyPlatform.pdf.*

NASHIA is assisting State government in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs of individuals with traumatic brain injury and their families.