

FY 2015 Appropriations Plan is on the Horizon...Hopefully

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On December 9, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees released their Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 bill, 2 days shy of the expiration of the Continuing Resolution (CR). While the \$1.1trillion dollar discretionary budget appropriations package is good news, there are still a few steps in the process before it becomes law, which means that there is likely to be another short-term CR passed in the next 24 hours to give Congress enough time to push the bill through.

The omnibus currently sits at the committee level in both the [House](#) and [Senate](#). Now, the full House and Senate must pass each version, followed by the House-Senate conference committee hammering out any differences to agree on a final version that goes to President Obama for his signature.

The good news is that there is informal agreement about funding levels for each appropriation bill, including a plan for a CR to only fund the Department of Homeland Security through February 27, 2015. The omnibus funding levels are compared to the President's Budget Request below:

Appropriation	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 President's Request	FY 2015 Omnibus	
			Proposal	% Diff vs. Request
Agriculture	20.9	20.4	20.6	1%
Commerce, Justice & Science	51.6	50.2	50.1	-0.2%
Defense	486.9	490.7	490.2	-0.1%
OCO Funding	91.9	85.4	64.0	-25.1%
Energy & Water	34.1	33.7	34.2	1.5%
Financial Services	21.9	22.9	21.8	-4.8%
Homeland Security	39.3	38.3	CR until 2/27/15	N/A
Interior and Environment	30.1	29.5	30.4	3.1%
Labor, HHS, Education	156.8	158.0	156.8	-0.8%
Legislative Branch	4.3	4.5	4.3	-4.4%
Military Construction & VA	73.3	71.9	71.8	-0.1%
State-Foreign Operations*	42.5	42.7	49.0	14.8%
Transportation, HUD	50.9	59.8	53.8	-10.0%

Source: House and Senate appropriations committee omnibus summaries, Deltek

*Omnibus totals include Department of State Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funding and \$2.5B in emergency funding to respond to the Ebola outbreak.

The House and Senate versions of the omnibus also show agreement on funding (or lack thereof) and oversight in several high-profile areas, including:

- No additional funding for Obamacare
- Increased funding to address backlog in VA's disability claims processing (+\$69M compared to FY 2014)
- Increased oversight of VA construction expenditures and audits of hospital scheduling and patient care
- No DHS funding allocated to addressing "the humanitarian crisis of children and families with children"

- crossing our Southwest border”
- No DHS funding allocated to addressing lapses in White House security
- IRS-specific policy provisions:
 - Funding prohibition for inappropriate videos and conferences
 - Funding prohibition on target organizations for regulatory scrutiny based on their ideological beliefs or for exercising their First Amendment rights
 - Funding prohibition for improperly disclosing confidential taxpayer information
 - Funding prohibition for the White House to order the IRS to determine the tax-exempt status of an organization
 - A requirement that the agency report on spending and activities, official time and document retention.

The bad news is that, while there is a general consensus that another government shutdown is off the table, the broad scope of the bill provides ample fodder for Congressional contingents to oppose various pieces of the bill.

According to this [Politico.com article](#), some lawmakers are opposed to the bill because it does little to block President Obama’s plans on immigration reform, others because it doesn’t cut enough spending, and others because they simply haven’t had time to examine its contents.

Budget uncertainty is the monkey wrench of the procurement process, so the sooner agency leadership has clarity around their fiscal circumstances for the remainder of the fiscal year, the better.