

The Capitol Insider for the Week of November 28

Action Alert

[We need you to keep standing up for CLASS!](#)

Major Events Last Week

Budget/Deficit Reduction - Super Committee could not reach agreement on a deficit reduction plan

The Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction announced that it could not reach agreement on a plan to cut the deficit by at least \$1.2 trillion over 10 years and authorization for its work expired on November 23. As required by the Budget Control Act, \$1.2 trillion in automatic, across the board spending cuts (known as sequestration) are now scheduled to take effect from Fiscal Years 2013 to 2021. Congress can develop other deficit reduction strategies to avoid the automatic cuts, however, it will have to follow the regular legislative process and will not have the advantage of the special legislative procedures authorized under the Budget Control Act for the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee.

Americans with Disabilities Act - Public Accommodations

Under its Project Civic Access, the Department of Justice reached an [agreement](#) with Upshur County, Texas to make programs and facilities accessible to people with disabilities. The agreement was reached under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act which prohibits discrimination by state and local governments against people with disabilities.

Major Events Ahead

Budget /Deficit Reduction - Congress grappling with effects of Super Committee not reaching a deal

Congress will return from the Thanksgiving holiday recess this week to grapple with issues resulting from the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction's inability to produce a deficit reduction plan ([click here](#) to read the Committee's November 21 statement). With the \$1.2 trillion in automatic, across the board spending cuts scheduled to take effect from Fiscal Years 2012 to 2021, some Members of Congress are already discussing ways to undo the cuts, half of which will be made to the Department of Defense budget. [Click here](#) to read The Arc's statement on the Committee not reaching a deal. As Congress works to wrap up FY 2012 appropriations, The Arc will continue to advocate for funding for critical disability programs in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The current Continuing Resolution will expire December 16th for those agencies that have not seen the passage of an appropriations bill.

Social Security - House hearings to examine Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

The House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security, chaired by

Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX), has announced a hearing series on Securing the Future of the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Program. The first hearing will be held on Friday December 2nd at 9:00 a.m. EST. The hearing will focus on the history of the SSDI program, the income security it provides, and its financing challenges. Visit the Committee web site to view the [hearing announcement](#) as well as streaming video on the day of the hearing.

Health Care - Critical Health Care Issue Part of Unfinished Congressional Business

Barring action from Congress, physicians, therapists and other health care providers who see Medicare patients will get hit with a 27.4 percent reduction in their reimbursement rates starting Jan. 1, when the current law expires. Physicians and others were hoping that a permanent solution to the problem would have been part of the work of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction. The root of the problem is that the rate of growth of provider costs keeps exceeding the growth rate of the economy. When that happens, a formula enacted in 1997 calls for automatic cuts in reimbursement rates, tying them to a formula called the "sustainable growth rate." A permanent fix for the problem would cost about \$300 billion over 10 years. The fear that providers would drop out of the Medicare program because of the big cuts has motivated Congress repeatedly to find funding to prevent the cuts.

Regulatory Reform on the House Agenda

The House of Representatives is expected later this week to consider two bills to radically reform the federal rule-making procedures to make them more complex and require additional analysis and justification for rules. Federal rules are developed to implement and explain federal legislation. Often major laws such as the recent Affordable Care Act leave important definitions and provisions to the regulatory process. The intent of this legislation (H.R. 3010 and H.R. 527) is to make it much harder to produce regulations, particularly those that protect public health, the environment, and workplace safety, areas that major businesses and industries feel are over regulated. The Arc is concerned that this legislation could make it difficult to produce critical regulations and would weigh too heavily in favor of special interests who oppose many regulations that we have supported.

Announcements

Civil Rights - Crimes against Persons with Disabilities

The Bureau of Justice Statistics in the Department of Justice released [data](#) from 2008-2010 about crimes against individuals with disabilities over the age of 12. In 2010, the rate of crimes against people with disabilities was almost twice the rate for people without disabilities (28 victimizations per 1,000 individuals with disabilities compared to 15 per 1,000 individuals without disabilities).

Children with Disabilities in US

The US Census Bureau released [data](#) gleaned from the American Community Survey concerning school-age children with disabilities. According to the Census Bureau, of the 53.9 million children aged 5-17 in the US civilian non-institutionalized population, 5.2% (2.8 million) were reported to have a disability in 2010.

The White House - "Champions of Change"

On Thursday, December 1st, eleven Native American Youth leaders will be honored at the White House as Champions of Change. These young people are Champions in their tribes and communities. They have each worked to improve the lives of those around them through innovative programs that help others.

One of the honorees, Morgan Fawcett, was diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) when he was 15 years old. Morgan decided that he wanted to educate individuals across the country about FASD. Morgan has organized concerts and benefits that allow to him to speak about FASD at school assemblies, colleges, community colleges, hospitals, churches and many more. Morgan hopes to begin college this year and show others that just because you are born with a disability, with help from friends, family, and the community you can succeed.

The Champions of Change program was created as a part of President Obama's Winning the Future initiative.