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Congressional Update

Congress Kicks Off 2024

Summary of Facts

Congress faced a challenging year in 2023, marked by limited legislative accomplishments.

Notably, Congress failed to establish a long-term funding solution, leaving the government at risk of a shutdown. As 2024 kicks off, lawmakers must swiftly address this priority to ensure government continuity.

The continuing resolution (CR) Congress passed in November extends funding until Jan. 19 for certain government sectors and until Feb. 2 for others. To avert a partial government shutdown in the Departments of Transportation, Housing, Energy, Agriculture, and Veterans Affairs, Congress must reach agreement by midnight Jan. 19—just nine legislative days away.

Although CRs offer a temporary solution to avoid shutdowns, they maintain previous funding levels, posing long-term challenges for federal operations. And because of inflation, a CR may prove insufficient to cover the escalating costs of existing programs or address new funding demands.

In addition, the FAA's authority, initially extended to Dec. 31, was continued until Mar. 8. This extension allows the FAA to collect taxes and fees on passengers, cargo, and fuel, and to use the revenue until March. The House passed its FAA reauthorization bill in June, but the Senate has been unable to advance its version of the bill because of disagreements over pilot training requirements. Senate Commerce Committee Chair Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) recently expressed optimism that an agreement will be reached and a bill will advance before the Mar. 8 deadline.

HAI Position and Actions

HAI emphasizes the importance of Congress passing the full FAA authorization and a long-term spending resolution. These actions are crucial for ensuring safety, stability, and growth in the general aviation industry. They provide the essential framework and resources needed for the FAA to effectively regulate and support diverse activities in the aviation community. The HAI Government Affairs team remains actively engaged in advocating for the advancement of long-term FAA reauthorization legislation that supports the vertical aviation industry.

State and Local Updates

States Begin Legislative Sessions

Summary of Facts

State legislators nationwide are convening in January to initiate their legislative sessions.

During these sessions, elected representatives will gather to discuss, draft, and vote on legislation to shape state policies on such issues as taxation, education, and government spending. The legislative output may include resolutions, amendments, and bills that eventually become law.

In 2024, all but four state legislatures will hold regular sessions—Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, and Texas convene only in odd-numbered years. Session lengths vary among the 46 states. Some, like New York, have already begun their legislative activities, introducing five bills that (if passed) could adversely affect the vertical flight industry.

HAI Position and Actions

HAI prioritizes tracking and engaging in state legislation to protect the interests of our members. By closely monitoring legislative activities, we can proactively address proposed laws that may negatively impact the industry and work to avoid unfavorable outcomes by contributing to informed policies and ensuring a favorable regulatory environment for industry growth.

As the new year begins, we advise our members to keep an eye out for our newsletters, where we will provide updates on legislative developments. We will share introduced bills and seek your feedback on how these proposals may affect your business and operations. Stay informed with our updates for a comprehensive understanding of legislative impacts.

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