

Tea Party Patriots Citizens Fund Weekly Report from Washington for 12/10/18

CALENDAR:

The House and Senate will both return Monday, and stay in session through Thursday.

LAST WEEK ON THE HOUSE FLOOR:

The House canceled its votes last week following the passing of former President George H.W. Bush. On Thursday afternoon, by voice vote, the House passed a two-week Continuing Resolution to avert a temporary partial government shutdown.

THIS WEEK ON THE HOUSE FLOOR:

The House will return Monday, with first votes set for 6:30 PM. At that time, the House is scheduled to take up 11 bills under Suspension of the Rules.

On Tuesday, the House is scheduled to take up another 12 bills under Suspension of the Rules.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House may take up the Conference Report to accompany H.R. 2, the Farm Bill.

LAST WEEK ON THE SENATE FLOOR:

The Senate returned to work on Wednesday, and voted to invoke cloture on the nomination of Bernard McNamee to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. On Thursday, the Senate voted to confirm him to that position. Both votes were 50-49.

Later on Thursday, the Senate voted to confirm Kathleen Laura Kraninger to be Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, so Mick Mulvaney no longer has to split time between running the BCFP and the Office of Management and Budget. The vote to confirm was 50-49.

In case you're wondering, the missing Senator was Thom Tillis, Republican of North Carolina, who missed all three votes last week.

THIS WEEK ON THE SENATE FLOOR:

The Senate will return on Monday, with the first vote set for 5:30 PM. That will be a vote to invoke cloture on the nomination of Justin George Muzinich to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

For the rest of the week, the Senate will deal with nominations, the Farm Bill conference report, and possibly passing a bill to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program.

AGENDA:

There are two upcoming legislative efforts I want to discuss briefly – one in the Senate, and one in the House.

In the Senate, we've heard that Senate Democrats are planning to try to bring to the floor this week a Congressional Review Act resolution to overturn changes the IRS announced earlier this year to protect donor privacy to nonprofits by terminating the requirement that nonprofits file a Schedule B

with their 990. In layman's terms, the Schedule B is a list of every donor to the nonprofit that contributes more than \$5,000 in any one year, and the 990 is the tax return that most nonprofits file.

Those donors lists are required by law to be kept confidential, for obvious reasons – donors could be harassed, for one thing, as they were during the Obama administration, when, somehow, the Schedule B for the National Organization for Marriage was leaked to a left-wing group and its donors were harassed publicly.

Earlier this year, the IRS announced that nonprofits would no longer have to file the Schedule B with their 990s. That was a good day for free speech – if the IRS doesn't have the lists in the first place, it will make it impossible for the lists to be leaked.

But now Senate Democrats – who are part of a long-term effort to make public the names of all donors to conservative organizations, so they can be intimidated into withdrawing their support and conservative voices can be shut down – are trying to overturn that, via the Congressional Review Act. Because it's a Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval, it is not subject to filibuster. And that means that if they can find 51 votes in the Senate, they can pass this measure rescinding the new rules that relieve nonprofits of the obligation of filing their major donor lists with the IRS.

All of which is another way of saying if all 49 Democrats vote together, they would just need to pick off two Republicans to pass this resolution with 51 votes.

Democrat Sens. Jon Tester of MT and Ron Wyden of OR are leading this effort. The legislative vehicle will be S.J.Res. 64, the Tester/Wyden resolution of disapproval nullifying the Internal Revenue Service Revenue Procedure 2018-38 that protects donor privacy to certain non-exempt organizations.

Targets for action are moderate Republican Senators – Lindsey Graham, Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski, Jeff Flake, and Bob Corker.

Again, we expect them to try to move it to the floor this week.

The second measure I want to discuss won't be introduced in the current Congress; it will be the first legislative priority of House Democrats in the next Congress, the one where Nancy Pelosi will be the Speaker and Democrats will be in the majority. Speaker-to-be Pelosi has announced that Democrats will offer a so-called "reform" package as H.R. 1, meaning it's the highest priority legislative agenda item for House Democrats in the next Congress.

We won't know for sure until the next House is inaugurated and the bill is officially dropped in the hopper, but for now what she has said is that H.R. 1 will include the following items:

- Automatic national voter registration, while expanding access to early and online registration
- Increased federal funding for state voter systems, including paper ballots to deter fraud
- Donor disclosure by political groups
- Members of Congress would be prohibited from serving on corporate boards
- Presidents of the United States of America would be required to release their tax returns
- A new ethics code for the Supreme Court of the United States

Other items may also make it into the package, including:

- Requiring all states to use an independent redistricting commission to draw the lines for future congressional district maps.
- Public financing of congressional campaigns on a 6-to-1 match system, wherein small contributions to campaigns, up to \$200 per donor, would be matched with taxpayer funds at a 6-to-1 ratio. In return, candidates who take the match would be bound by a significantly lower contribution limit.

So, the Democrats want to make it easier for their allies to stifle voices with which they disagree, and use taxpayer funds to ease the fundraising burden for way-out candidates whose campaigns cannot find support on their own in the marketplace of ideas, otherwise known as Welfare for Politicians. In other words, par for the course. I'll keep you updated.

COURTS:

Two weeks ago, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley canceled a scheduled committee meeting at which the committee was going to vote on 21 Trump judicial nominees. He rescheduled that meeting for last week, but had to cancel it again when it became clear that Sen. Flake would continue his practice of voting against all Trump judicial nominees until he gets a commitment for a floor vote on his legislation to protect the Mueller investigation.

FBI/DOJ:

Former FBI Director James Comey testified behind closed doors to the House Judiciary and Oversight and Government Reform Committees on Friday. He will return for a second round of questioning on December 17.

The transcript of the interview runs 235 pages. It was released Saturday night, and I haven't yet had time to read through it all, so I've posted a link to the full transcript in the Suggested Reading.

SPENDING:

Congressional negotiators punted for two weeks, passing a Continuing Resolution that will fund the unfunded portions of the federal government through Friday, December 21. Their hope is that having that Christmas weekend backstop will serve as an inducement to get Members to vote for whatever piece of crap spending package the negotiators agree to.

Nancy Pelosi suggested last week that since they've pretty much wrapped up the negotiations on six of the seven outstanding appropriations bills, and the only one left that's causing a problem is the funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security – because that's where the border wall funding is to be found – the House and Senate should pass a full-year omnibus wrapping up the six bills together and then pass a rest-of-the-fiscal-year Continuing Resolution for DHS, which would keep funding DHS at this year's levels. Sounds fair, except it isn't, because that would mean that the President would only get \$1.3 billion for the border wall in FY 2019, which is less even than the \$1.6 billion the Senate Democrats have already agreed to. So that's a non-starter for the GOP negotiators.

They've got until Friday, December 21 to come to some sort of agreement. President Trump continues to hold firm on his demand for \$5 billion in funding, and he knows that he'll have a much harder time getting wall funding after January, when Democrats take control of the House.

We'll keep you posted.

STAFFING:

More changes on the staffing side of the Trump Administration. The President made several personnel announcements last week.

On Friday, President Trump announced he would nominate current State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert to replace Nikki Haley as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. He also announced Bill Barr would replace Jeff Sessions as Attorney General. Barr served in that position from 1991-93, under former President George H.W. Bush.

On Saturday morning, the President revealed that he would nominate current Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley to become the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He will replace current JCS Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford when Dunford's term expires next summer.

Later on Saturday, the President announced that White House Chief of Staff Gen. John Kelly would be leaving the White House at year's end. President Trump announced he would reveal his choice to replace Kelly in a few days. For months now, it had been expected that he would replace Kelly with Nick Ayers, who currently serves as Vice President Mike Pence's chief of staff. But The Wall Street Journal broke the news on Sunday afternoon that Ayers and President Trump could not come to agreement over the duration of the job assignment – Ayers would not commit to anything longer than three months, and the President wanted a commitment to a full two years – so it turns out that Nick Ayers will NOT be taking Kelly's job as White House Chief of Staff, after all. And, having turned down a job offer from the President, it's clear Ayers could no longer serve as the Vice President's chief of staff, either, so he made the announcement on Sunday that he would be leaving the Vice President's office to join the Super PAC supporting the President.

So who will be the next White House Chief of Staff? No one knows right now. But others whose names have been floated include Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, and OMB Director Mick Mulvaney. And a late entry into the field, as of Sunday afternoon, is Congressman Mark Meadows, chairman of the House Freedom Caucus. Stay tuned.

SUGGESTED READING:

JENNY BETH MARTIN/TEA PARTY PATRIOTS:

[DC: Jenny Beth Martin: President Trump Needs To Hold Firm and Build the Wall](#)

AGENDA:

[Hill: House Cancels Week's Votes After George H.W. Bush Death](#)

[Hill: Schumer Gets Ready To Go on the Offensive](#)

[NBC: House Democrats and Nancy Pelosi Waste No Time, Announce Bill Tackling America's Corrupt Campaign Finance System](#)

[AP: House Democrats' 1st Bill Aims for Sweeping Reforms](#)

COURTS:

[Hill: Senate Panel Delays Trump's Judicial Picks Amid Mueller Standoff](#)

[Hill: Debate Over Term Limits for Supreme Court Gains New Life](#)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE:

[Politico: Trump's Criminal Reform Nears Demise](#)

[WaPo: McConnell Tells White House Little Chance of Senate Vote on Criminal Justice Bill](#)

ELECTIONS:

[Politico: Hoyer: House Could Refuse to Seat NC Republican Until Fraud Probe Is Settled](#)

[CNO: Understanding the Election Fraud Allegations in North Carolina's 9th District](#)

[Hill: GOP, Dems Locked in Fight over North Carolina Fraud Probe](#)

[Politico: North Carolina GOP 'Fully' Supports New Election if Inquiry Shows Fraud](#)

[WSOCTV: Disputed NC House Race Puts Spotlight on 'Ballot Harvesting'](#)

[Politico: Emails of Top NRCC Officials Stolen in Major 2018 Hack](#)

[Politico: Sessions Hints He's Done with Politics](#)

FBI/DOJ:

[Politico: Comey Slated To Testify on Capitol Hill on Friday](#)

[Politico: Republicans Tight-Lipped after Day-Long Comey Interview](#)

[FOX: Lawyers Stopping Comey from Answering Questions in Hill Testimony, Issa Says](#)

[FOX: Rep. Andy Biggs: Comey Is the Heart of the Anti-Trump, Mueller Investigation](#)

[Hill: Comey Reveals New Details on Russia Probe During House Testimony](#)

[House Oversight and Government Reform Committee: Transcript of Hearing with James Comey](#)

[FOX: Grassley Wants Answers About FBI Raid on Whistleblower with Information on Clinton Foundation, Uranium One](#)

[FOX: Clinton Foundation Whistleblowers Have Come Forward with Hundreds of Pages of Evidence, Meadows Says](#)

[Hill: Solomon: Feds Received Whistleblower Evidence in 2017 Alleging Clinton Foundation Wrongdoing](#)

[Hill: Solomon: FBI Email Chain May Provide Most Damning Evidence of FISA Abuses Yet](#)

[DC: Report: FBI Emails Show Intelligence Community Had Concerns about Steele Dossier](#)

[Politico: Judge Orders More Fact-Finding in Clinton Email Case](#)

IMMIGRATION:

[FOX: Non-Citizens Nearly Twice as Likely To Be on Welfare, Conservative Think Tank Finds](#)

[Politico: Senators Bicker over Definition of Trump's Wall](#)

[Hill: GOP Senators Introduce Bill to Give Trump \\$25 Billion for Border Wall](#)

[WT: Trump Cuts Price Tag of Border Wall to \\$15 Billion](#)

LEADERSHIP:

[RC: Meet the New House Republican Committee Leaders](#)

[Politico: Pelosi 'Sympathetic' to Term Limits Despite CBC Opposition](#)

OBAMACARE:

[WT: 'Stunning': 80% Using ObamaCare's Medicaid Expansion Ineligible, Louisiana Report Finds](#)

[Hill: Manchin Pitched Trump on Reviving Bipartisan ObamaCare Fix](#)

RUSSIA HOAX:

[NYT: Michael Flynn Was a Key Cooperator and Should Serve Little Prison Time, Mueller Says](#)

[Hill: Five Takeaways from Mueller's Memo](#)

[VF: Is This It? A Trump-Hater's Guide to Mueller Skepticism](#)

SPENDING:

[Hill: Lawmakers Buy More Time for Spending Deal](#)

[Politico: Congress Moves To Delay Shutdown Fight](#)

[RC: Pelosi: Pass Other Spending Bills but Punt Homeland Security Funding](#)

[Hill: House Approves Two-Week Spending Measure To Avert Shutdown](#)

[Hill: Senate Sends Two-Week Funding Measure to Trump](#)

[Politico: Congress Averts Shutdown, Postponing Fight over Trump's Wall](#)

STAFFING:

[Hill: Trump To Nominate Nauert as United Nations Ambassador](#)

[Hill: Trump Picks William Barr as New Attorney General](#)

[NRO: McCarthy \(on Barr\): A Home Run by Trump](#)

[Politico: White House Chief of Staff Kelly Expected To Leave Imminently](#)

[Hill: Trump To Nominate Mark Milley as Next Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman](#)

[Hill: John Kelly To Leave White House at Year's End](#)

[WSJ: Pence Chief of Staff Nick Ayers Won't Be Next White House Chief of Staff](#)

[Hill: Pence Aide Ayers Will Not Be White House Chief of Staff](#)

2020:

[Politico: Deval Patrick Bows Out of 2020 Presidential Run](#)

[USAT: Michael Avenatti, Lawyer for Stormy Daniels, Says He Will Not Run for President in 2020](#)

[Politico: Hill Veteran Poling Tapped as NRCC Executive Director](#)

[Politico: Democratic Convulsions Shake 2020 Lineup](#)

[Politico: Trump Advisers Fear 2020 Nightmare: A Recession](#)

[Politico: Kelly Exit Helps Position Trump for 2020](#)