Science Societies

Government shutdown looms

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As part of the agreement to end the longest-ever government shutdown back in November, Congress approved 3 of the 12 government funding bills and provided short-term funding for nine remaining bills. That short-term funding expires on January 30 giving Congress more than two months to come to agreement on the final spending bills. Congress made significant progress in January, approving three more bills by January 15. The final six bills were approved by the House last week and appeared to be on a glide path for approval by the Senate. The final funding package included six funding bills—Homeland Security, Defense, Labor–HHS–Education, Transportation–HUD, and State.

However, the shooting over the weekend by Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers in Minnesota, triggered significant congressional pushback on moving forward with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) bill, which includes funding for ICE, with many Members of Congress demanding to renegotiate the DHS bill to include restrictions on immigration enforcement.

Although Senate leaders and the White House have discussed a short-term fix that would separate DHS funding from the broader package, procedural delays and the House being out of session make it difficult to finalize legislation before the deadline,

raising the likelihood of at least a brief, partial shutdown affecting unfunded agencies starting January 31. Once again, this would only be a partial government shutdown since half of the funding bills have been approved, including the bills that fund major research programs like USDA, National Science Foundation, Department of Energy–Office of Science, NASA, USEPA, and USGS.

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