

Congress set to avert shutdown, punt spending decisions to after elections

September 28, 2020 at 11:20 PM

Congressional Democrats and the Trump administration came to agreement last week on a two-month continuing resolution (CR) that will extend funding for EPA and other federal departments and agencies beyond the onset of the new fiscal year. The [extension](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/8337/text) (<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/8337/text>), which the House approved last week and is expected to win Senate passage in the coming days, continues most federal programs at FY20 funding levels through December 11.

Congress had to act on a CR to avoid a federal government shutdown when the calendar flips to the new fiscal year on October 1. The House and Senate have not finalized any of the 12 individual appropriations bills necessary to fund the government next year, so the CR effectively punts those decisions to the post-election lame duck session.

With work on the CR nearly complete most lawmakers will depart Washington for the campaign trail after this week. Democratic House leaders have indicated that they may offer a new scaled-down COVID relief package as soon as this week, but the proposal is not certain to get a vote and would have little prospect of near-term action in the Senate in any case. Meanwhile, the Senate will be back on Capitol Hill later in October as the chamber is expected to consider President Trump's nomination to fill the Supreme Court seat vacated by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

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