To expand communications between Washington and California, the California Institute provides periodic news bulletins regarding current activity on Capitol Hill and other information that directly impacts the state. Bulletins are published weekly during sessions of Congress, and occasionally during other periods.

**APPROPRIATIONS: HOUSE RELEASES STOPGAP FUNDING BILL; POSTPONES VOTE UNTIL NEXT WEEK**

The House Appropriations Committee on September 9, 2014 unveiled its Continuing Resolution (H.J.Res.124) to keep the government funded when the fiscal year ends September 30th. Although the House leadership had initially scheduled a vote on the measure for September 11th, it has now postponed the vote until next week. The primary reason, according to the leadership, was to give members time to consider the President’s request for authority to train and equip Syrian rebels to confront ISIS in the Mideast. That authority is not included in the CR released by the Appropriations Committee.

The legislation continues funding until December 11, 2014 for federal agencies and services at the current annual cap rate of $1.012 trillion, set in the budget agreement last year. The bill does include about $2.2 billion in additional non-defense discretionary spending, but in order to stay within the budget cap requires a 0.06 percent reduction in the spending rate.

Although the bill is “clean” and attempts to exclude any highly controversial policy changes, it does include some changes that concern some members. One is a provision to extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act through the period of the CR ending on December 11, 2014. That law bars federal, state and local governments from taxing Internet access and from imposing discriminatory Internet-only taxes such as bit taxes, bandwidth taxes, and email taxes. The law is set to expire November 1, 2014. The House on July 15th, passed H.R. 3086, making the ban on taxes permanent, but the Senate has not acted on the bill.

The CR also extends the Export-Import Bank through June 30, 2015. This provision has raised the ire of some conservatives in the House, who argue that the Bank is basically corporate welfare, and want to shut it down entirely. On the other hand, some Democrats are pushing for a longer extension, and could withhold support for the CR if that doesn’t happen. The Bank provides financing support for U.S. companies to expand exports abroad.

Other provisions in the bill include:

- allowing funding flexibility for Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement to maintain staffing levels, border security operations, detention space, and immigration enforcement activities.
- allowing the continuation of current funding for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program.
- allowing additional funds to offset food price increases in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to ensure that no current recipients are removed from the program.
- several changes to ensure appropriate treatment of veterans and continued oversight of the Department of Veterans Affairs, such as additional funds for disability claims processing, and funds for investigations into potential improper conduct including “waitlist” and “whistleblower” allegations.
- extending expiring Department of Defense activities, including counter-drug operations, support to the Office of Security Cooperation in Iraq, and rewards for assistance in combating terrorism.
- continuing a surge in funding for State Department programs to counter regional aggression toward Ukraine and other former Soviet Union countries.
- additional funding to accelerate HHS research on Ebola therapies, and additional funding for the Centers for Disease Control’s response to the growing outbreak in Africa.
- allowing funding flexibility to maintain weather satellite programs, ensuring the continuation of data for weather warnings and forecasts, including forecasts of severe weather events.


**RESOURCES: HOUSE PASSES BILL BLOCKING EPA CLEAN WATER REGULATION**

On September 9, 2014, the House passed H.R. 5078, The Waters of the United States Regulatory Overreach Protection Act. The vote was 262-152. In the California delegation, all Republican members supported the bill, as well as five Democrats: Reps. John Garamendi (Walnut Grove), Raul Ruiz (Palm Desert), Jim Costa (Fresno), Sam Farr (Carmel), and Gloria Negrete McLeod (Chino).

The bill prohibits the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers from implementing a rule that may have opened up many new waters and private property to federal regulation. Proponents of the bill argued that the rule would give EPA power to regulate everything from ditches to man-made ponds, as well as floodplains, riparian areas, and seasonally-wet areas. Opponents of the bill did not necessarily support the EPA rule, but were concerned that H.R. 5078 is too broadly written and will lead to other problems.

Action in the Senate is uncertain.


**HOMELAND SECURITY: RAND REPORTS ON BORDER SECURITY**

In testimony before the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Subcommittee on Research and Technology and Subcommittee on Oversight on July 31, 2014, K. Jack Riley of the
RAND Corporation stated that although resources for border control have increased considerably over
the last decade, the government still lacks the analytic capability to determine what works, what doesn't, and why.

He said the United States is still "virtually flying blind" when it comes to border and urged
ingvesting in the basic policy science of border security. He also called for a strategy and data and
technology infrastructure that accomplishes three things:
- Accurately and confidently measures and tracks the extent of relevant border activity,
  including illegal crossing activity and smuggling.
- Integrates that measurement and tracking data into frameworks that can be used to assess the
effectiveness of border control policies.
- Helps us understand the broader economic and social effects of border control, such as impacts
  on labor markets, cargo security inspections, or tourist travel.

He said this would allow researchers to use models to simulate various scenarios, helping inform better, more cost-effective border security policies. For instance, this could tell policymakers not only whether it'd be effective to deploy an additional "x" number of border agents, but, if so, where and how to deploy them to have the greatest effect.

While there is no single programmatic fix, Riley explained that border security can be achieved through a network of mutually reinforcing, and to some extent redundant, layers of defenses which will span the bounds of cabinet agencies in the federal government. As a consequence, policymakers need to consider not just the effects of individual programs, but also the interaction effects of multiple programs. It is important then to get an analytic framework in place soon so that more informed decisions about border control resources are possible.

For more information, go to:
http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT415/RAND_CT415.pdf

SURVEYS: FIELD RELEASES NEW CALIFORNIA POLLS

The Field Research Corporation has released new polls on a variety of California issues. One, Release #2484, shows that by nearly two-to-one Californians support Proposition 1, which authorizes $7.5 billion in bonds to improve the state’s water quality, supply and infrastructure. Among likely voters surveyed, 52% said they are inclined to support Prop 1, with 27% inclined to oppose it and 21% undecided.

The survey did show, however, that at the time the poll was conducted, awareness of the bond was quite low, with just 36% of likely voters saying they had seen or heard something about the measure. However, among voters with some prior awareness, support for Prop. 1 expands to thirty-two points (57% to 25%), Field reported. For more information on this poll, go to:

A poll, Release #2485, on two other health-related ballot measures, Propositions 45 and 46, however, shows that support is diminishing for them. Prop 45 is the Health Insurance Rate Changes initiative, and Prop 46 is the Drug Testing of Doctors/Medical Negligence Lawsuits initiative.

Currently, 41% of likely voters are inclined to vote Yes on Prop. 45, 26% are on the No side, and a growing proportion (33%) are undecided. The poll also finds Prop. 46 now trailing by a narrow margin, 37% to 34%, with 29% undecided. Both initiatives had held comfortable leads earlier this summer, according to Field. For more information on this poll, go to:

In another recent poll, Release #2481, Field found that incumbent Democratic Governor Jerry Brown was maintaining a large sixteen point lead (50% to 34%) over his Republican rival, businessman
Neel Kashkari, in this year’s election for Governor of California. Brown maintains a sizeable lead across most of the state's key voter constituencies, the Poll found. For example, among voters who identify themselves as middle-of-the-road in politics Brown bests Kashkari by 32 points. Among voters with no party preference the Governor holds an 18-point advantage. And, among permanent mail ballot registrants, who are likely to constitute a majority of voters in the November election, Brown leads by nineteen points.

More information on this poll can be found at: http://www.field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/Rls2481.pdf