



Will the 6th FY 2011 Continuing Resolution Be the Last?

Despite press reports to the contrary, it appears that much progress is being made behind the scenes in Congress on finalizing FY 2011 spending levels. In a series of meetings with House and Senate leaders as well as very key appropriators, all expressed a certain degree of confidence that negotiations would be completed in the next two weeks on the final FY 2011 spending package.

One very key House Republican appropriator told USA Works! that his prediction of the final 2011 spending would eventually be slightly above the FY 2008 levels advocated by many House Republicans.

A leader of the House Republican freshman class told USA Works! that a number of her colleagues are prepared to concede the FY 2011 spending fight and make the FY 2012 Budget Resolution the major focus of spending cuts.

House Republican Chair Hal Rogers (KY) told USA Works! that he felt a "preliminary" framework was coming together and that once the top overall spending line was agreed upon, the individual program funding could fall into place quickly.

Clearly, Congressional leadership is concerned over the amount of time that Congress has spent this year finalizing spending on a fiscal year budget that started last October. We understand that Congressional Republican leadership has told their respective conferences that it is "time to move on".

Bi-partisan members involved with the day to day negotiations have almost uniformly praised newly appointed OMB Director Jack Lew. One Republican House appropriator referred to Lew as "a class act who we trust." The fact that the Obama Administration supports WIA funding will be extremely helpful as the final negotiations heat up.

We expect most program spending levels to be negotiated at the full Appropriations Committee level. Senate Democrats remain committed to maintaining job training funding. USA Works! assumes that the workforce network has flooded Congress with data and support for WIA funding.

Finally, a small number of Senate Democrats have talked to USA Works! about putting together a small jobs package. WIA funding would be included. This concept is in the very early stages of discussion.

Expect House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wisconsin) to produce an FY 2012 Budget Resolution immediately following completion of the FY 2011 spending bills. Workforce funding will be a major source of contention. A workforce funding amendment to the Ryan budget proposal will most likely be necessary.