SPECIAL REPORT: FY2018 Omnibus Appropriations Bill Update

Funding for critical programs on the table

Control of Congress & your future in play

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Overview: FY18 Omnibus Appropriations Bill Update

Finally, no more continuing resolutions for 2018. On March 23, 2018, after the House of Representatives passed the FY18 Omnibus Funding Bill, the Senate approved the bill and sent it to the White House for President Trump’s signature. After first threatening to veto the bill, the President signed the bill which funds the government until September 30, 2018. We currently are six months into fiscal year 2018, which ends on September 30, 2018.

The FY18 Omnibus Appropriations bills includes $1.3 trillion in discretionary funding. Of this amount, $692 billion is available in defense spending and $591 billion is provided for non-defense programs. This total represents the highest level of funding for the federal government since 2011. This bill clearly rejects the Trump Administration’s efforts to sharply cut back the reach and scope of the federal government. Many of the Administration’s priorities were included in the bill—increases in the military, school safety, border security (even though the wall and border security were only funded at $1.6 billion—far short of the $25 billion the President Trump requested) and combating the opioid crisis.

Many programs proposed for elimination by the Trump Administration for the last two years (programs such as the National Endowment for the Arts or the Community Development Block Grant Program) were spared any reductions and in fact saw slight increases (NY Times, March 22, 2018). On the non-defense discretionary side of the ledger, health care programs received one of the major boosts in federal spending. The bill includes a $3 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health and diverts nearly $4 billion more into the opioid addiction crisis.

What was missing from this bill? Nothing for the DREAMERS – There was no fix for the young immigrants who were brought to the country illegally as children and have been protected by Obama’s Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The bill also did not defund Planned Parenthood, Obamacare and sanctuary cities.

While some conservatives balked at the level of funding in the bill, most Members of Congress will have plenty of good news to report to their constituents during this holiday recess.

The spending bill is expected to be the last major piece of legislation that Congress will pass before the mid-term elections in November. Even so, deliberations and funding priority-setting are underway for FY19. Members of Congress are taking programmatic requests from constituents, and many offices have established deadlines for submission of those requests.

Below is a link to a summary of provisions in the bill put together by the Democratic Appropriations staff:

- Summary of the FY18 appropriations bill
Program Highlights

A National Journal table, published by the National Association of Counties, is one of the best comprehensive reports we have seen on the FY18 omnibus bill. The table provides a helpful visual that demonstrates funding increases for every category of program, excluding international and state department programs. Increases exceed both previous year spending levels and the president’s budget request. See the table and discussion below.

**OVERVIEW OF OMNIBUS FUNDING LEVELS**

![Graph showing funding levels across various categories]

Source: National Journal

**Criminal Justice**

- $275 million for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office, $54 million more than the FY2017 level
- 447 million for grant programs to address the opioid crisis, an increase of $300 million above the FY2017 enacted level
- $416 million for the Byrne-JAG program, $5 million more than FY2017 levels
- $492 million for Violence Against Women Prevention and Prosecution grant programs, an increase of $10.5 million above the FY2017 level
- $240 million for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, representing a $30 million increase above FY2017 levels
- $282 for the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act, an increase of $35 million above FY 2107 levels

A link to the full Justice Department portion of the bill:
- Division B PDF (CJS)
Higher Education

- $1 billion for TRIO, which is $60 million more than the FY2017 enacted level
- $350 for GEAR UP, which is $10 million more than the FY2017 enacted level
- Sufficient funding to increase the maximum Pell Grant award by $175 for a total of $6,095
- $680 million for Aid for Institutional Development and Minority-Serving Institutions, which is $85 million more than the FY2017 enacted level
- Strengthening HBCUs Title III, funded at $279.6 million, a $34.93 million increase over 2017 enacted level
- Strengthening Historical Black Graduate Institutions increased by $9 million for a total of $72 million
- $8.5 million for Strengthening HBCUs Master’s Program, an increase of $1 million over 2017 funding
- Strengthening Predominately Black Institutions received $11.3 million, an increase of $1.4 million over 2017 levels
- Includes new funding ($10 million) and provisions related to the deferment of outstanding loans for private HBCUs under the HBCU Capital Financing Program
- Under the Department of Defense section, $40 million was included for Historically Black Colleges and Universities/Minority Serving Institutions Basic Research Programs, $14.1 million above the President’s request.

Here is a link to the full Department of Education portion of the bill:
  - Division H PDF (Labor, HHS, Education)

Medical Research

- $37.1 billion for the National Institutes of Health which is $3 billion more than FY2017
- $3.7 billion for programs to respond to the opioid crisis, including prevention, treatment, surveillance & research, among other things
- $7.8 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF), which is $295 million more than the FY 2017 level
- $20.7 billion for NASA, which is $1.08 billion higher than the FY2017 level

A link to the full Health and Human Services portion and the Science portion:
  - Division H PDF (Labor, HHS, Education)
  - Division B PDF (CJS)
Transportation

- The Omnibus provides $70.3 billion for the U.S. Department of Transportation, a $12.65 billion increase above FY2017
- $2.52 billion in new funding for highway grants
- $2.64 billion for Capital Investment Grants used to build or expand subway, light rail, and commuter rail transit systems, which is $232 million more than the FY 2017 enacted level
- $1.5 billion for National Infrastructure Investments (TIGER) grants program, which is $1 billion more than the FY2017 enacted level
- $200 million for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, an increase of $20.5 million over FY2017

A link to the Transportation portion of the bill:
  - Division L PDF (Transportation, Housing and Urban Development)

Miscellaneous

- Army Corps of Engineers--$6.8 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers, which is $789 million more than FY2017 level
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)--$12.3 billion, $899.5 million more than FY2017
- Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)--$3.3 billion, a $300 million increase over FY2017
- Economic Development Agency--$301 million, a $25.5 million increase over FY2017. President Trump has zeroed out the agency that helps communities achieve economic growth for the past two years.