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Happy New Year!

The presidential transition continues, with Inauguration Day just 2 weeks away. The 115th Congress convened on Tuesday and new members were sworn in. Despite losing seats in the House and Senate, Republicans retain control of both chambers. The Senate announced its committee assignments, while the House has not completed its selection process. Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Tim Kaine (D-VA), and Todd Young (R-IN) were added to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee.

Earlier this week, Senate Budget Committee Chair Mike Enzi (R-WY) introduced a budget resolution for FY 2017 that includes budget reconciliation instructions to facilitate the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. By January 27, the Senate HELP Committee and Senate Finance Committee are instructed to report legislation to reduce the deficit by at least \$1 billion over the next decade. Budget reconciliation bills seek changes in mandatory (versus discretionary) programs. Senate debate on this budget bill is expected to conclude next week; the House will then consider this resolution. The federal government is currently funded under a continuing resolution for FY 2017 through April 28.

The spotlight next week will be on Senate confirmation hearings with several cabinet nominees lined up for January 11 appearances. These include Rex Tillerson for the State Department, Elaine Chao for Transportation, Gen. John Kelly for Homeland Security, Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-KS) for CIA Director, and Betsy DeVos for Education.