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Congress Passes Fiscal 2015 Spending Measure

Congress has passed a \$1.1 trillion legislation (HR 83) that funds 11 of 12 federal government agencies while freezing current spending levels for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) through February 27. Expectations are that new Congressional leadership in both chambers will address the funding needs of DHS with the President's executive actions on immigration in mind after they are sworn in in early January. Included in this legislation are the following items of particular note to the AAMVA membership:

- A temporary suspension of enforcement of the restart provisions in the FMCSA hours-of-service rule. The suspension lasts until September 30, 2015 at the soonest, pending delivery of a final report issued by the Secretary of Transportation researching the issue.
- None of the funds shall be used to enforce regulations prohibiting a State from issuing a commercial learner's permit to individuals under the age of 18 if the state had a law authorizing the issuance of a CLP to individuals under 18 years of age as of May 9, 2011.
- No recipient of the funds shall disseminate personal information. The bill cites the DPPA; 18 USC 2721-2725, but goes on to say "Notwithstanding subsection (a), the Secretary shall not withhold funds provided in this Act for any grantee if a State is in noncompliance with this provision." In other words, the bill reinforces States' obligation to follow the federal DPPA law, but any violation does not prevent the state from receiving federal funds in the bill.
- The bill includes a policy rider that blocks funds for any Justice

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Department effort to intervene in states that have legalized medical marijuana.

- The bill increases the funding for the Executive Office for Immigration Review from \$315 million to \$351 million, including funding for 35 new immigration judge teams allowing EOIR to adjudicate up to 39,000 more cases annually

Transportation: Appropriators provide \$53.8 billion in spending for Transportation-HUD programs for FY 2015, which aligns more closely to the \$54.5 billion requested by the Senate than the \$52 billion requested by the House of Representatives. While TIGER grant funds were initially jeopardized, the measure carries \$500 million for the program. The Federal-Aid Highways obligations limitations remain at \$40.256 billion, with expectations that true consideration of higher levels for transportation programs will be addressed by reauthorizing legislation.

Justice: The Justice Department gets \$27 billion in FY 2015, representing a decrease of \$706 million (or 2%) from 2014. The U.S. Marshal's Service receives a \$1 billion cut, but a majority of this reduction is offset by reallocating excess unobligated balances from the Assets Forfeiture Fund. Grants to state and local law enforcement is funded at \$2.3 billion which represents an increase of \$65 million. The bill increases the funding for the Executive Office for Immigration Review from \$315 million to \$351 million, including funding for 35 new immigration judge teams allowing EOIR to adjudicate up to 39,000 more cases annually. The bill includes a policy rider in section 538 that blocks funds for any Justice Department effort to intervene in states that have legalized medical marijuana.

District of Columbia: Section 809 of the bill stipulates that no federal funds may be used to legalize or otherwise reduce penalties associated with the possession, use, or distribution of any schedule I substance under the Controlled Substance Act or any tetrahydrocannabinols derivative. This language stands in opposition to the initiative approved by D.C. voters to allow possession and growth of small amounts of marijuana.

AAMVA reminds its members that a complete breakdown of the appropriations by program is available in its [legislative analysis](#).

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