

Jan. 19, 2017

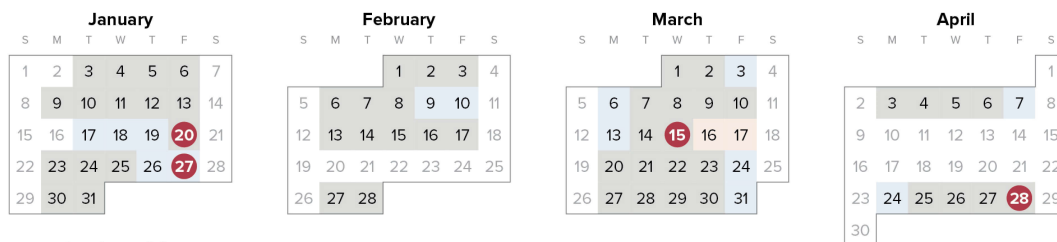
Key Budget Deadlines Will Drive Congressional Calendar

Having achieved unified control of the federal government for the first time in a decade, Republicans are crafting an ambitious policy agenda that includes major overhauls of the tax system and a repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Republicans only hold 52 Senate seats, however, so Democrats are able to filibuster most legislation unless Republicans win the votes of at least eight Democratic senators.

To overcome this obstacle, Republicans plan to attach their legislative initiatives to the budget — which can be passed with only fifty votes in a process called “reconciliation” — and to major programs with bipartisan support that need to be reauthorized this year. Both approaches, however, come with risks and limitations. Republicans can repeal the ACA's funding using reconciliation, but cannot use it to pass a complete replacement bill.

2017 Congressional Calendar

House in session Senate in session Both chambers in session Key deadline



Trump's First 100 Days

Inauguration

Jan. 20 President-elect Donald Trump takes office. Republicans can begin passing legislation that will not be vetoed by President Barack Obama. Trump is likely to issue several executive actions implementing policies favored by Republicans.

Deadlines for committees to report ACA repeal plans

Jan. 27 Republicans passed an FY 2017 budget resolution in early January that will give them their first chance to use reconciliation to pass a limited form of ACA repeal. The resolution instructs four committees in the House and Senate to submit recommendations to the Budget committee by Jan. 27.

Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) has said that GOP leadership sees the date as “a placeholder” rather than a hard deadline to write reconciliation legislation.

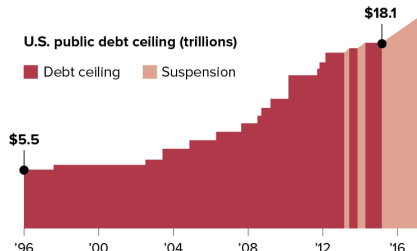
Suspension of debt limit expires

March 15 The current suspension of the debt limit, passed as part of an Oct. 2015 bipartisan budget deal, ends on March 15. Treasury can take “extraordinary measures” to maintain the government's obligations for several months, but could be forced into default if the limit is not eventually increased or suspended again.

Democrats are likely to use the increase as an opportunity to criticize GOP budget priorities, and some conservative lawmakers may demand further deficit reduction.

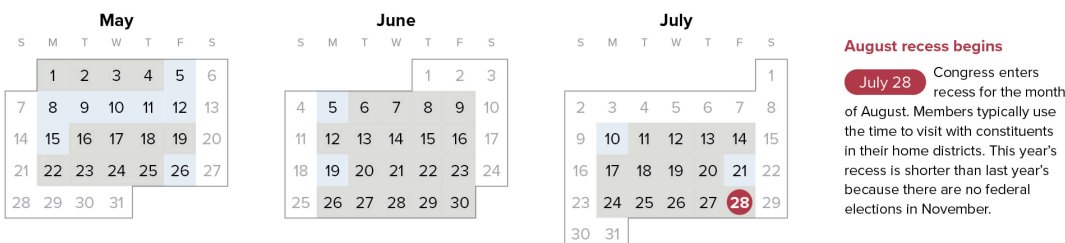
U.S. public debt ceiling (trillions)

Debt ceiling Suspension



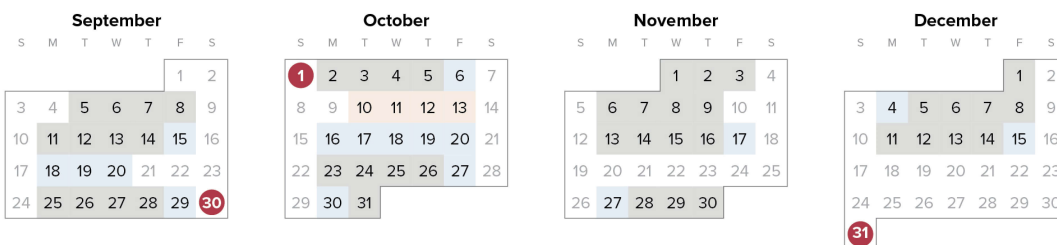
FY17 budget authority expires

April 28 To avoid a government shutdown for the remainder of the fiscal year (which ends Sept. 30), Congress must pass new legislation to fund the government. A shutdown is unlikely to occur because Republicans control all branches of government, but the deadline could complicate GOP plans to repeal the ACA using this year's budget reconciliation.



August recess begins

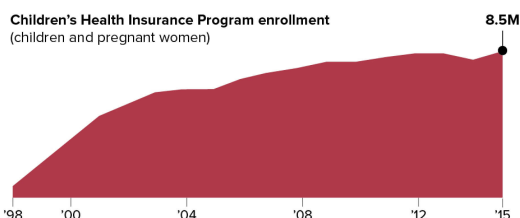
July 28 Congress enters recess for the month of August. Members typically use the time to visit with constituents in their home districts. This year's recess is shorter than last year's because there are no federal elections in November.



Several major programs expire**Sept. 30**

Popular programs, including the Children's Health Insurance Program, National Flood Insurance Program, FAA and Federal Perkins Loan program, expire at the end of the fiscal year. Republicans may attempt to tie desired reforms to the programs' reauthorizations, which are considered "must-pass." Republicans are considering using CHIP as a vehicle for ACA replacement.

Children's Health Insurance Program enrollment
(children and pregnant women)

**FY 2018 begins****Oct. 1**

Congress must pass legislation to fund the government for the fiscal year beginning on Oct. 1 to avoid a shutdown. If Republicans are not yet able to finish passing appropriations bills, they may pass short term legislation to maintain current spending levels for several months. Republicans also plan on passing an FY 2018 budget to grab a second chance this year to use reconciliation, which can only be used once per budget cycle. That reconciliation bill is expected to provide massive tax cuts to individuals and corporations that Democrats are unable to filibuster.

End-of-year deadlines**Dec. 31**

Several programs, including provisions of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, expire at the end of the year.

Sources: POLITICO staff reports; D. Andrew Austin, "The Debt Limit: History and Recent Increases," Congressional Research Service; CMS; Congressional Budget Office.

By Tucker Doherty, POLITICO Pro DataPoint

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