

Federal Update - June 3, 2020

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Congress:

Last Thursday, May 28th, the House passed bipartisan legislation, H.R. 7010, the "Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act," that would reform the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), the forgivable loan program for small businesses authorized in the CARES Act. A bipartisan consensus has emerged over the last several weeks that some of the program's requirements are making it difficult for small businesses to fully utilize the funding. The bill would make several changes to the existing program, including extending the expense forgiveness period from eight (8) weeks to twenty-four (24), reducing the required percentage of funds that must be applied to payroll to be forgiven from 75 percent to 60 percent, and extending the June 30th hiring deadline, among others. A copy of the bill can be found here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7010/text>. The vote in the House was virtually unanimous, passing [417-1](#).

There was an open question late last week as to whether the Senate would take and pass the bill as-is, or pass their own bill, which would require it to go back to the House (which is currently not in session). However, it appears now that the Senate is attempting to pass the House bill under unanimous consent (UC) this week. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has reportedly expressed his support for doing so. The understanding is that they are working to address concerns with the bill among some senators, but still hope to resolve those and pass it by UC this week.

In addition, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer released an updated House [calendar](#) last week, which has the House out of session most of the month of June in what they are calling designated as "committee work days," in which presumably the committees will be expected to continue their oversight work virtually. Members were told they will be given at least 72-hours' notice of any Floor action relating to COVID-19 response legislation.

Administration:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - The CDC released a [summary](#) of advice for health care providers, laboratory professionals, and public health professionals using antibody tests for COVID-19. The CDC's interim guidance for COVID-19 antibody testing, which will be updated as information becomes available, is located [here](#).

CDC - On May 29th, the CDC issued updated [recommendations](#) for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in assisted living facilities.

CDC - The CDC also released [information](#) on how to protect yourself from COVID-19 when using transportation, including rideshares, taxis, and public transit.

CDC - The CDC's considerations for restaurants and bars during COVID-19 were updated on May 27th. The updated information is located [here](#).

Treasury/IRS - Last week, the IRS issued a [release](#) reminding people that some Economic Impact Payments authorized by the CARES Act are being sent by prepaid debit cards and will arrive in a plain envelope. The IRS also regularly updates the [Economic Impact Payment](#) and the [Get My Payment](#) frequently asked questions pages (FAQs) on [IRS.gov](#) as more information becomes available. Taxpayers are encouraged to check the FAQs often for the latest additions.

Department of Labor (DOL) - DOL released a comprehensive [list](#) of actions taken to date by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to protect workers during COVID-19

DOL - On May 28th, DOL issued an [alert](#) on social distancing to keep employees safe at work during the pandemic. OSHA has also published [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#), a document aimed at helping workers and employers learn about ways to protect themselves and their workplaces during the ongoing pandemic.