

September 10, 2021

Washington Update

This Week In Congress

Senate – The Senate was in recess and met in pro forma session.

House – The House was in recess and met in pro forma session. Several committees, including the House Ways and Means Committee, began markups of their portions of the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation package.

Next Week In Congress

Senate – The Senate is scheduled to reconvene on September 13. The Senate may consider the For the People Act ([S. 2093](#)), as well continue its consideration of pending nominations.

House – The House will hold a committee work week. House committees will continue markups of the reconciliation package. The House is scheduled to reconvene on September 20. The House is expected to consider the National Defense Authorization Act ([H.R. 4350](#)) for Fiscal Year 2022 during the week of September 20.

TAX

Department of Treasury Secretary Yellen Sent Letter to Congressional Leadership on the Debt Limit

Key Point

- *Secretary Yellen has issued a letter to Congressional Leadership concerning the need to raise the debt ceiling.*

Earlier this week Secretary Yellen sent a [letter](#) to Congressional leadership concerning the need to raise the debt limit. The letter itself was addressed to Speaker Pelosi (D-CA), Senate Majority Leader Schumer (D-NY), Senate Minority Leader McConnell (R-KY), House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Neal (D-MA), House Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member Brady (R-TX), Senate Finance Committee Chairman Wyden (D-OR), and Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Crapo (R-ID). According to the letter Secretary Yellen explained: “Given this uncertainty, the Treasury Department is not able to provide a specific estimate of how long the extraordinary measures will last. However, based on our best and most recent information, the most likely outcome is that cash and extraordinary measures will be exhausted during the month of October. We will continue to update Congress as more information becomes available.” How Congress will move forward with raising the debt limit remains unclear but leading Congressional Democrats have expressed support for including the debt increase in the coming continuing resolution at the end of September. However, Congressional Republicans have

signaled they will not support the plan to raise the debt ceiling, especially as Democrats are continuing to move forward their \$3.5 trillion budget resolution.

House Ways and Means Committee Begins Markup of the Their Portion of Budget Resolution

On Thursday the House Ways and Means Committee began their first day of an expected four-day markup of the \$3.5 trillion budget resolution also known as the Build Back Better Act. A number of the subtitles in the Committee's text include tax provisions. Specifically, the Committee noticed the following proposals:

Legislative proposals to comply with the reconciliation directive included in section 2002 of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022, S. Con. Res. 14:

- Subtitle A. Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Universal Paid Family and Medical Leave
- Subtitle B. Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Retirement
- Subtitle C. Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Childcare Access and Equity
- Subtitle D. Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Part 1 of Subtitle E: Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Health Profession Opportunity Grants
- Part 2 of Subtitle E: Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Elder Justice
- Part 3 of Subtitle E: Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Part 4 of Subtitle E: Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Medicare Dental, Hearing, and Vision Coverage

A few of the subtitles under consideration this week have tax implications including subtitle D on TAA, and a number of retirement subtitles which include mandated automatic contribution defined contribution plans (with an excise tax for enforcement) as well as an Employer Startup Credit. It is expected that additional tax measures such as corporate tax increases, high-income taxpayer tax increases, SALT relief, clean energy tax incentives and Child Tax Credits will be considered next week as the Ways and Means Committee continues their markup on Monday and Tuesday. The release of those proposals could come over the weekend or on Monday.

Democratic Senators Release Partnership and Stock Buyback Revenue Offsets, Possibly to Be Included for Reconciliation

Key Point

- *Key Democratic Senators have released a proposal to levy a fee on stock buybacks which could be included in the upcoming reconciliation package.*

Today, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Wyden (D-OR), and Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Development Committee Chairman Brown (D-OR), released a [proposal](#) to levy a two percent tax on the funds companies use for stock buybacks. Authors of the proposal estimate that the tax will raise \$270 billion over the next ten years and experts familiar with the issue have speculated this plan could be incorporated into the Senate version of the \$3.5 trillion reconciliation package. Senators Brown and Wyden are hoping this proposal compel large companies to invest further into their workforce rather than buying back their stock, a practice Democrats have been critical of since the enactment of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).

In a related step, Chairman Wyden also released a draft of a series of reforms to partnership (Subchapter K) taxation. It is suggested the partnership reforms would raise about \$172 billion over ten years. Both the partnership and stock buyback proposals are possible additions to the tax reconciliation package in the Senate.

Upcoming Hearings and Events

September 13 and 14

Markup: Although not formally announced the House Ways and Means Committee is expected to reconvene Monday and Tuesday at 10:00AM EST to continue their markup of the Build Back Better Act, focusing on tax proposals.

For more information about tax issues, you may [email](#) or call Christopher Hatcher at 202-659-8201. Josh Hansma contributed to this section.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

FERC Nominee Announced

Key Points:

- *On September 9, President Biden announced that District of Columbia Public Service Committee Chairman Willie Phillips will be the nominee to fill a vacancy on the five-member Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.*
- *Brown's nomination is subject to confirmation by the Senate, with the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee expected to hold a hearing in the coming weeks.*
- *Since Commissioner Neil Chatterjee's resignation on August 30, the Commission has been split between two Democratic and two Republican commissioners.*

On Thursday, President Biden announced his intent to nominate Willie Phillips, Chairman of the Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia, as a Commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). If confirmed by the Senate, Phillips would fill the Commission seat vacated by Commissioner Neil Chatterjee's resignation on August 30. The White House [press release](#) announcing the intent to nominate notes that Phillips "served as Assistant General Counsel for the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), a not-for-profit international regulatory authority charged with ensuring the security and reliability of the bulk power system...[and] worked for two law firms, where he advised clients on regulatory compliance, litigation, and policy matters."

Williams & Jensen, PLLC
1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20004
Telephone: (202) 659-8201 Fax: (202) 659-5249
www.williamsandjensen.com

In a [statement](#), Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Joe Manchin (D-WV) welcomed the announcement. Manchin said he looks “forward to meeting with Willie Phillips and having him appear before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.”

House Natural Resources Committee Completes Work on Reconciliation Package

Key Points:

- *On September 9, the House Natural Resources Committee advanced its piece of the sprawling \$3.5 trillion reconciliation package.*
- *The Committee’s work product would fund Department of the Interior and other programs while raising revenues through increased and expanded charges on oil and gas leasing and production on federally-owned lands.*

Late on Thursday, the House Natural Resources Committee voted to report the [Committee Print](#) “Providing for reconciliation pursuant to S. Con. Res. 14, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022”.

As described the Committee [press release](#), the legislation would fund:

- “\$9.5 billion for coastal and Great Lakes restoration and climate resiliency projects”;
- “\$3 billion to support the Civilian Climate Corps through the Department of the Interior”;
- “\$2.5 billion to clean up abandoned hardrock mines”;
- “\$2 billion for Indian water rights settlements over the next decade and \$3.7 billion each decade thereafter”;
- “\$2 billion for Indian Health Service health facility construction, maintenance, and improvement”;
- “\$1.15 billion for emergency drought relief”;
- “\$1 billion for tribal climate resilience and adaptation”;
- “\$993 million for health infrastructure in U.S. territories”;
- “\$900 million for wildfire management”;
- “\$500 million for tribal housing improvements”;
- “\$500 million for a Tribal Civilian Climate Corps”;
- “\$250 million for Salton Sea projects”;
- “\$200 million for tribal public safety and justice”;
- “\$225 million for climate resilience and restoration”;
- “\$100 million for mitigating climate-induced weather events”;
- “\$100 million for tribal wildfire management”;
- “\$100 million for large-scale water recycling”; and
- “Hundreds of millions more for urban parks and increasing childhood outdoor access”.

The legislation would implement an array of revenue raising measures, including a series of increases in fees and royalties imposed on oil and natural gas activity on federal lands. As detailed in the press release, these revenue raisers include:

- “Establishing a hardrock mineral royalty, which could raise around \$2 billion over 10 years”;
- “Establishing a hardrock mineral reclamation fee, which could raise around \$200 million over 10 years”;
- “Increasing the annual hardrock mining claim maintenance fee, which could raise nearly \$800 million over 10 years”;
- “Directing the Department of the Interior (DOI) to hold offshore wind lease sales in federal waters around American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands”;
- “Restoring DOI’s authority to hold offshore wind lease sales in federal waters in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and off the coasts of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida”;
- “Increasing outdated fossil fuel royalty rates and extending royalties to methane emissions”;
- “Ending noncompetitive leasing and charging annual fees for the extraction of fossil fuel public resources”;
- “Strengthening bonding standards and charging fees on offshore fossil fuel pipelines and idled oil and gas wells; and”;
- “Increasing civil and criminal penalties, ending so-called fossil fuel royalty relief and requiring companies to pay for annual inspection costs.”

Upcoming Hearings Events

September 13

Reconciliation Markup: The House Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a [markup](#) of its legislative recommendations for budget reconciliation. The Committee released the text of the legislation by title, including: “[Subtitle A](#): Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Air Pollution”; “[Subtitle B](#): Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Hazardous Materials”; “[Subtitle C](#): Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Drinking Water”; and “[Subtitle D](#): Budget Reconciliation Legislative Recommendations Relating to Energy”. A [Committee Memorandum](#) provides a summary of the legislation.

September 14

Energy and Ancillary Services: The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will hold a [technical conference](#) on “energy and ancillary services markets administered by Regional Transmission Organizations and Independent System Operators”.

September 15

Pending Legislation and Nominations: The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will hold a business meeting to consider pending legislation and nominations, followed by a hearing on the

nominations of Amanda Howe, to be an Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), David Uhlmann, to be an Assistant Administrator of the EPA, and Carlton Waterhouse to be Assistant Administrator, Office of Solid Waste of the EPA.

September 20-25

National Clean Energy Week: National Clean Energy Week will hold its annual [Public Policy Symposium](#). The event will focus on “the world’s most pressing challenges in nuclear, solar, wind, wave, hydropower, geothermal, natural gas, biomass, carbon capture, storage, and waste-to-energy technologies.”

September 23

FERC Open Meeting: FERC will hold its monthly [open meeting](#).

September 30

Bulk Power System Reliability: FERC will hold a [technical conference](#) “to discuss policy issues related to the reliability of the Bulk-Power System.”

For more information about energy and environment issues you may [email](#) or call Frank Vlossak at 202-659-8201. Jackson Notes contributed to this report. Updates on energy and environment issues are also available on [twitter](#).

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Treasury Requests Comment on the Insurance Sector and Climate-Related Financial Risks

Key Points:

- *The Federal Insurance Office is seeking to assess the potential for major disruptions in the private insurance market resulting from climate change impacts.*
- *The request comes in response to a May 2021 executive order.*

On August 31, the Treasury Department’s Federal Insurance Office (FIO) issued a request for information (RFI) on the insurance sector and climate-related financial risks. The RFI comes in response to President Biden’s May 20, 2021 [Executive Order on Climate-Related Financial Risk](#).

A Treasury Department [press release](#) notes:

FIO’s efforts will focus on three initial climate-related priorities: (1) assessing climate-related issues or gaps in the supervision and regulation of insurers, including their potential impacts on U.S. financial stability; (2) assessing the potential for major disruptions of private insurance coverage in U.S. markets that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, as well as facilitating mitigation and resilience for disasters; and (3) increasing FIO’s engagement on climate-related issues and leveraging the insurance sector’s ability to help achieve climate-related goals.

The comment period on the RFI will remain open until November 15, 2021.

Biden Administration Announces Steps to Increase Affordable Housing Supply

Key Points:

On September 1, the Biden Administration announced it was taking steps to increase the supply of affordable housing in America. The Administration announced a goal to “create, preserve, and sell to homeowners and non-profits nearly 100,000 additional affordable homes for homeowners and renters over the next three years, with an emphasis on the lower and middle segments of the market.”

A White House [fact sheet](#) announced that federal agencies will take the following actions:

- Boost the supply of quality, affordable rental units by relaunching the partnership between the Department of Treasury’s (Treasury) Federal Financing Bank and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Risk Sharing Program in order to enable eligible state housing finance agencies (HFAs) to provide low-cost capital for affordable housing development; raising Fannie Mae’s and Freddie Mac’s (the Enterprises) equity cap for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), the largest federal program for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable rental housing; and making more funding available to Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) and non-profit housing groups for affordable housing production under the Capital Magnet Fund.
- Boost the supply of manufactured housing and 2-4 unit properties by expanding financing through Freddie Mac. Along with Fannie Mae’s and the Federal Housing Administration’s (FHA) existing policies, these steps will enable more Americans to purchase homes, and increase the availability of rental units throughout the country.
- Make more single-family homes available to individuals, families, and non-profit organizations – rather than large investors – by prioritizing homeownership and limiting the sale to large investors of certain FHA-insured and HUD-owned properties, in addition to expanding and creating exclusivity periods in which only governmental entities, owner occupants, and qualified non-profit organizations are able to bid on certain FHA-insured and government-owned properties.
- Work with state and local governments to boost housing supply by leveraging existing federal funds to spur local action, exploring federal levers to help states and local governments reduce exclusionary zoning, and launching learning and listening sessions with local leaders.

Federal House Finance Agency (FHFA) Acting Director Sandra Thompson released regarding the agency’s role in this initiative:

The severe shortage of affordable housing in America requires coordinated government action. As part of the federal government's response, FHFA is instructing Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to boost the housing supply in communities across the country by significantly increasing their Low-Income Housing Tax Credit investments and by expanding opportunities for local families to access affordable

homeownership and rental housing. In addition, FHFA will begin to study the interaction between exclusionary zoning and our regulated entities.

FSOC Meets to Discuss the Debt Limit, Climate-Related Financial Risk

Key Points:

- *The Council members received updates on the debt limit, the report on climate-related financial risk, commercial real estate, and the Council's 2021 annual report.*

On September 9, the Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC) met in closed session. The Treasury Department released the following [summary](#) of the meeting:

At the meeting, the Secretary briefed the Council on the potential financial stability implications of a failure to increase the debt limit in a timely manner.

The Council then received an update from Treasury Department staff regarding ongoing interagency efforts to develop the Council report to be issued under the Executive Order on Climate-Related Financial Risk.

The Council also heard a presentation from staff of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York on commercial real estate, including market trends, current market conditions, the exposures of various financial sectors to commercial real estate, and potential risks.

The Council also heard an initial update on the development of the Council's 2021 annual report.

In addition, the Council voted to approve its fiscal year 2022 budget and the minutes of its previous meeting on July 16, 2021.

CFTC Commissioner Dan Berkovitz Announces He Will Step Down in October

Key Points:

- *CFTC Commissioner Dan Berkovitz announced he will step down on October 15. Commissioner Brian Quintenz stepped down at the end of August.*
- *Berkovitz's resignation will leave the Commission with only two members.*

On September 9, Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) Commissioner Dan Berkovitz [announced](#) that he intends to step down from the Commission on October 15. Commissioner Brian Quintenz stepped down from the Commission on August 31 and former Chairman Heath Tarbert resigned in January.

Berkovitz and Quintenz's resignations will leave the five-member Commission with only two members: Acting Chairman Rostin Behnam and Commissioner Dawn DeBerry Stump. In August, multiple media sources reported that President Biden intends to nominate Acting Chairman Behnam to serve as Chairman on a permanent basis.

Berkovitz's resignation will leave President Biden with three seats to fill on the Commission: two Democrats and one Republican. Bloomberg has reported that the Biden Administration intends to nominate Emory University School of Law Professor Kristin Johnson to fill one of the open seats, but this has not been confirmed by the White House.

Upcoming Hearings and Meetings

September 13

Markup: The House Financial Services Committee will hold a markup. The Committee will mark up its [portion of the reconciliation package](#), as well as the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act ([H.R. 5195](#)), and the Expediting Assistance to Renters and Landlords Act ([H.R. 5196](#)).

September 14

SEC Oversight: The Senate Banking Committee will hold a hearing entitled "Oversight of the U.S. Securities Exchange Commission." SEC Chairman Gary Gensler is scheduled to testify at the hearing.

September 15

Energy and Environmental Markets Advisory Committee: The CFTC will hold a meeting of its Energy and Environmental Markets Advisory Committee (EEMAC). The Advisory Committee will discuss and vote on a proposal to form an EEMAC subcommittee to provide a report to the EEMAC on guiding principles for the design of the derivatives and underlying cash markets for environmental products, such as carbon allowances and offsets, which are used to address greenhouse gas emissions.

Markup: The Senate Banking Committee will hold a markup on the nominations of Nominations Markup: Mr. Brian Eddie Nelson, of California, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, Department of the Treasury; Ms. Elizabeth Rosenberg, of Vermont, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, Department of the Treasury; Julia Ruth Gordon, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; David Uejio, of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; and Solomon Jeffrey Greene, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

September 21

Personal Data: The House Financial Services Committee's Task Force on Financial Technology will hold a hearing entitled "Preserving the Right of Consumers to Access Personal Financial Data."

Nominations: The Senate Banking Committee will hold a nominations hearing.

September 22

China: The House Financial Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Investor Protection, Entrepreneurship and Capital Markets will hold a hearing entitled “Taking Stock of “China, Inc.”: Examining Risks to Individual Investors and the U.S. Posed by Foreign Issuers in U.S. Markets.”

September 23

Emergency Lending Powers: The House Financial Services Committee’s Subcommittee on National Security, International Development and Monetary Policy will hold a hearing entitled “Lending in a Crisis: Reviewing the Federal Reserve’s Emergency Lending Powers During the Pandemic and Examining Proposals to Address Future Economic Crises.”

September 27

Small Business Capital Formation Advisory Committee: The SEC will hold a meeting of its Small Business Capital Formation Advisory Committee. The agenda “includes matters relating to rules and regulations affecting small and emerging companies and their investors under the federal securities laws.”

September 28

Financial Access: The House Financial Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion will hold a hearing entitled, “Access Denied: Eliminating Barriers and Increasing Economic Opportunity for Justice-Involved Individuals.”

CARES Act Oversight: The Senate Banking Committee will hold a hearing entitled, “CARES Act Oversight of the Treasury and Federal Reserve: Supporting an Equitable Pandemic Recovery.”

September 29

The Future of Banking: The House Financial Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Financial Institutions will hold a hearing entitled, “The Future of Banking: How Consolidation, Nonbank Competition, and Technology are Reshaping the Banking System.”

September 30

Pandemic Response: The House Financial Services Committee will hold a hearing entitled, “Oversight of the Treasury Department’s and Federal Reserve’s Pandemic Response.”

Nominations: The Senate Banking Committee will hold a nominations hearing.

For more information about financial services issues you may email [Joel Oswald](mailto:Joel.Oswald@williamsandjensen.com), [Mablet Makonnen](mailto:Mablet.Makonnen@williamsandjensen.com), or [Alex Barcham](mailto:Alex.Barcham@williamsandjensen.com).

HEALTH**Biden Issues New Directives on Vaccines**

Key Points:

Williams & Jensen, PLLC
1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20004
Telephone: (202) 659-8201 Fax: (202) 659-5249
www.williamsandjensen.com

- *President Biden outlined plans for the Department of Labor and the Department of Health and Human Services to issue rules in the coming week mandating vaccines for certain workers.*
- *The President also signed to Executive Orders on vaccines for federal employees and federal contractors.*

On Thursday, President Joe Biden announced measures federal agencies will take to put additional vaccine mandates in place. In his speech, Biden specified the following new actions: (1) a new emergency rule at the Department of Labor (DOL) to require all employers with 100 or more employees to ensure their respective workforces are fully vaccinated or show a negative test at least once a week; (2) a new rule from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) implementing a vaccine requirement for all those serving Medicare or Medicaid patients; (3) an [Executive Order](#) requiring all Executive Branch federal employees to be vaccinated; (4) an [Executive Order](#) requiring all federal contractors to be vaccinated; and (5) a requirement for employers with 100 or more workers to offer paid time off for employees to get vaccinated.

DOL and CMS will need to issue formal rules on the implementation of the new mandates. In a [press release](#) CMS indicated the new requirement will apply to staff in Medicare and Medicaid-certified facilities. The list of [facilities](#) includes hospitals, dialysis facilities, ambulatory surgical settings, and home health agencies. According to the release, the interim final rule implementing the requirement will be issued in October. DOL has not yet provided more information on the release.

Find more details on the White House's COVID-19 plan [here](#).

HHS Releases Proposal on Drug Pricing

Key Points:

- *On Thursday, the Department of Health and Human Services published its proposal to lower prescription drug costs.*
- *The plan lays out the department's guiding principles for drug policy and outlines potential legislation and regulatory actions.*

On Thursday, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released “The Drug Pricing Plan,” a policy proposal completed in response to President Biden’s executive order on “Promoting Competition in the American Economy. The plan outlines three guiding principles for drug pricing reform:

- Making drugs affordable and equitable;
- Improving and promoting competition; and
- Fostering scientific innovation. With these principles in mind, the plan outlines both legislative and regulatory actions that could be taken to address prescription drug prices.

The report outlines several legislative policies that are closely aligned with the H.R. 3. The proposals include allowing negotiation for Medicare Parts B and D drugs and making those negotiated prices available to commercial plans; reforming Medicare Part D to lower out-of-pocket costs for beneficiaries; slowing price increases for existing drugs; speeding the entry to new biosimilars and generics by addressing exclusivity and prescribing policies; prohibiting pay-for-delay agreements; and investing in basic and translational research.

The report also includes several administrative actions that HHS could undertake to both promote competition and reduce prices. Some of these measures include testing models in Part B that use value-based payments; testing models in Part D to lower cost-sharing for Low-Income Subsidy beneficiaries; implementing Food and Drug Administration policies to improve the approval process for generics; and working with states to develop drug importation programs.

Read the full report [here](#) and a fact sheet [here](#).

Upcoming Hearings and Meetings

September 13

Health Care Reform: The House Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a full committee markup of its portion of the reconciliation package including items on Medicare benefit expansion and prescription drug pricing.

For more information about health care issues you may [email](#) or call Nicole Ruzinski Bertsch or George Olsen at 202-659-8201.

TRADE

Mexico and U.S. Trade Official Meet in Washington for High-Level Economic Dialogue (HLED)

Key Point

- *The meeting amongst U.S. and Mexican trade officials covered stronger supply chains, data privacy, economic prosperity initiatives, and strong trade relationships.*

In an effort to move away from the Trump Administration's unilateralism in trade and economic relations, Mexican and U.S. trade officials met in Washington, D.C. this week. The [meeting](#) was attended by Mexico's Foreign Secretary Marcelo Elbrard, Economy Minister Tatiana Clouthier, Mexican Ambassador to the U.S. Esteban Moctezuma, and Under Secretary of Finance and Public Credit Gabriel Yorio. From the U.S., Vice President Kamala Harris, Secretary of State Anthony

Blinken, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, and U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ken Salazar attended.

Topics discussed during the meeting were: Building Back Better provisions, promoting sustainable economic and social development in southern Mexico and Central America, tools for future prosperity, investing in people, cross-border data privacy rules, stronger continental integration, and improving trade facilitation and data flows. Both countries agreed on establishing a “Bilateral Supply Chain Working Group,” to address previous Executive Order priorities (“[A Sustainable Public Health Supply Chain](#),” and “[Securing America’s Critical Supply Chains](#)”)

Separate from these talks, Clouthier met with leadership from Intel, the Information Technology Council, and the Semiconductor Industry Association to discuss supply chain issues.

Democrats Include Extension and Expansion of Trade Adjustment Assistance Program in Reconciliation Measure

Key Point

- *House Democrats proposed including an extension and expansion of the TAA program, which expired on July 1st, in the budget reconciliation package currently progressing through the House.*
- *It is expanded to include certain students at community colleges, farmers, provide childcare, and cover firms with foreign competition.*

House Ways and Means Democrats introduced a [provision](#) to include an extension and expansion of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (TAA) in the budget reconciliation package. The proposal aims to help workers and others who become unemployed due to global trade, and related initiatives for community college students/career training, paying for childcare and farmers. The proposal would allocate money and expand eligibility for a program for firms with foreign competition and bolster agriculture producers benefit initiatives.

For more information about trade issues, you may [email](#) or call Christopher Hatcher at 202-659-8201. Abbey Schroeder contributed to this section.

This Week in Congress was written by Alex Barcham.