

Legislate[®]

Key Legislative Developments Affecting Your Human Resources US

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Changes (Not) on the Horizon

Congress has been quiet, so we're making some changes to *Legislate* going forward.

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Employee Benefits on Back Burner

It's an election year and Congress has been busy with many things — but employee benefits is not one of them. Bills of particular interest to employers may be attached to larger “must pass” legislation (e.g., budget bills, FAA reauthorization, tax reform), but some of these big-ticket items are already behind us. Between the upcoming summer recesses and the increasing focus on midterm elections in November, we anticipate less congressional activity in the coming months. While we will certainly still see legislative efforts on health and retirement issues, a key concern is the likelihood of such legislation passing.

New *Legislate* Schedule

Until this election cycle is over, we'll be publishing *Legislate* on a topical basis, rather than weekly. This allows us to hone in on legislative issues you care about as soon as they arise, so you can count on getting the same in-depth analysis and coverage when it matters.

Issues We're Watching

Updates on some issues we're keeping an eye on:

- Mental Health Parity – Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., expressed his intent to advance legislation addressing the opioid crisis, including [S. 2680](#) (Opioid Crisis Response Act of 2018), which was favorably reported out of committee last month. The committee voted down Sen. Chris Murphy's, D-Conn., amendment that would have given the DOL greater power over mental health parity compliance, including the ability to impose monetary penalties on employers for violations. As the bill moves to the floor, this amendment could return. For more information on mental health parity implementation, see our [April 24, 2018 FYI Alert](#).
- The [Choose Medicare Act](#), introduced on April 18, would create a new plan making Medicare available to people of all ages. The bill would open Medicare to all employers, allowing employees to choose between employer-provided coverage and the new Medicare plan. Without bipartisan support, the bill's chances of passage are weak.

- The Federal Jobs Guarantee Development Act ([S. 2746](#)), introduced by Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., on April 25, would establish a three-year pilot program in which the DOL would provide funding for up to 15 local areas to guarantee every adult resident a job paying at least \$15 an hour or the prevailing wage, whichever is higher, with paid family/sick leave and health benefits.
- Federal Labor Law – The House Education and the Workforce Committee’s Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions held a [hearing](#) on April 26, Worker-Management Relations: Examining the Need to Modernize Federal Labor Law. Lawmakers and witnesses agreed on the need to update the National Labor Relations Act to reflect the 21st century workforce, but not what should be done.
- Multiemployer Plans – The new multiemployer joint committee [held a hearing](#) on April 18 to take testimony on the history of multiemployer plans and the current crises. Committee members expressed interest in hearing options, but none were presented, leaving it to be addressed in future hearings.

Looking Ahead

Stay tuned — we’ll continue to monitor all issues of interest to HR departments, and we’ll be in touch as they progress.

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