



AJA Monthly Report - January 2022

Last Updated: January 20, 2022

WASHINGTON UPDATE

Happy New Year! Coming back from the holidays, the major end-of-the-year priority for the Biden Administration, the Build Back Better reconciliation spending package, appears to be on indefinite hold after failing to garner 60 votes in the Senate before the New Year. Congressional leaders appear to be pivoting towards other priorities.

Leading members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees are meeting this week to resolve long-running disagreements over funding for FY22 spending programs. The federal government is currently funded until February 18th. These members are quietly trying to settle disagreements over funding increases for defense spending and certain controversial policy riders. Once the FY22 spending is resolved, Congress will likely begin the budgeting cycle for FY2023.

Other current priorities for Congressional Democrats and the Administration currently include voting rights legislation, continuing to deal with the COVID pandemic, and a possible additional COVID relief package for restaurants and other industries.

NEXT-OF-KIN NOTIFICATION LEGISLATION

Following AJA's meeting with Rep. Karen Bass' (D-CA) office regarding next-of-kin notification legislation, Rep. Bass introduced her bill, H.R. 6296, on December 16th. Because the bill was introduced right before the House of Representatives adjourned for the holidays, official text of the legislation was not made publicly available for last month's report. Lobbyit has acquired the bill text and attached it to this report for AJA's review. As of this report, H.R. 6296 has been co-sponsored by 14 representatives (12 Democrats and 2 Republicans).

Sen. John Ossoff (D-GA) is planning to introduce the companion bill in the Senate, but that legislation has not yet been introduced. Once AJA has had an opportunity to review the House text, Lobbyit plans to reach out to Sen. Ossoff's office for a meeting so AJA can give them comments on the text.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Senate Finance Committee has given some more insight into its process for its anticipated development of mental health legislation. It is anticipated that the Committee will consider and markup a bill in late May/early June. Working backwards, any input or comments that entities would like to share with the Committee should be delivered by the end of April.

The Committee has also named bipartisan working groups from among its membership to examine particular aspects of behavioral health. Those working groups will be led by the following Senators:

- Strengthening the Workforce: Sen. Stabenow (D-MI) and Sen. Daines (R-MT)
- Increasing Integration, Coordination, and Access to Care: Sen. Cortez-Masto (D-NV) and Sen. Cornyn (R-TX)
- Ensuring Parity Between Behavioral and Physical Health Care: Sen. Bennet (D-CO) and Sen. Portman (R-OH)
- Furthering the Use of Telehealth: Sen. Cardin (D-MD) and Sen. Thune (R-SD)
- Improving Access to Behavioral Health Care for Children and Young People: Sen. Carper (D-DE) and Sen. Cassidy (R-LA)

Lobbyit is working with AJA to identify the most relevant working group and Senate leads so that we can begin detailed outreach regarding AJA's priorities.

INMATE CALL RATE LEGISLATION

Following our early winter conversation with Sen. Duckworth's (D-IL) office regarding modifications to her inmate call rate legislation, Sen. Duckworth's office experienced some staff turnover. Lobbyit has re-inquired with the Senator's office about who is now handling the issue for her and is scheduling a conversation to discuss any updates from the Senator's office and staff on the modifications and plans to move forward with the legislation.

IN-PERSON MEETINGS AND SHERIFF'S FLY-IN

In early January, the Office of the Attending Physician of the House of Representatives sent a guidance letter to House offices urging a "maximal telework posture" to reduce in-person meetings and in-office activities to the maximum extent possible. Anecdotally, the majority of offices that Lobbyit has worked with over the last several weeks have been conducting completely virtual meetings.

Because the National Sheriffs Association is holding its Winter Conference in early February, Lobbyit reached out to a NSA government affairs contact. The contact noted that the conference will go forward in accordance with Washington, DC guidelines for vaccine mandates and mask use. She noted that they have "several" in-person meetings scheduled on Capitol Hill, but didn't specify with who or how many "several" encompasses. Lobbyit contacted several relevant offices that are working on legislation impactful to AJA: Sen. Duckworth's office, Sen. Ossoff's office, and Rep. Bass' office. None of those offices are taking in-person meetings at the moment due to the pandemic. Lobbyit is still happy to work to schedule in-person meetings with those offices that are willing should AJA decide to move forward and come to Washington, DC during the NSA's Winter Conference.

Bills by Issue

American Jail Association (12)

Bill Number	Last Action	Status
HR 120	Referred To The Subcommittee On Crime Terrorism And Homeland Security 2021 03 01	In House
Title SIMARRA Act	Introduction Date: 2021-01-04	
Description Stop Infant Mortality And Recidivism Reduction Act of 2021 or the SIMARRA Act This bill directs the Bureau of Prisons to establish a pilot program for incarcerated women and their children born during incarceration to reside together in a separate prison housing unit. It sets forth inmate eligibility criteria and program participation requirements.		
Primary Sponsors Sheila Jackson Lee		
Bill Number	Last Action	Status
HR 176	Referred To The Subcommittee On Crime Terrorism And Homeland Security 2021 03 04	In House
Title Restricting the Use of Solitary Confinement Act	Bill Summary: Last edited by Jason Ortega at Feb 5, 2021, 7:32 PM This bill restricts the use of solitary confinement for inmates in federal custody, including by requiring hearings and other procedures for an inmate to contest placement in solitary confinement.	
Description Restricting the Use of Solitary Confinement Act This bill imposes restrictions on the use of solitary confinement for inmates in federal custody. Among the restrictions, the bill prohibits placement in solitary confinement for nondisciplinary reasons; it limits the duration of such placement; and it provides an administrative review process for inmates to contest such placement.	Introduction Date: 2021-01-04	
Primary Sponsors Bonnie Watson Coleman		

Bill Number

HR 955

Last Action

Referred To The Subcommittee On Health
2021 02 09

Status

In House

Title

Medicaid Reentry Act of 2021

Introduction Date: 2021-02-08

Description

Medicaid Reentry Act of 2021 This bill allows Medicaid payment for medical services furnished to an incarcerated individual during the 30-day period preceding the individual's release. The Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Payment and Access Commission must report on specified information relating to the accessibility and quality of health care for incarcerated individuals, including the impact of the bill's changes.

Primary Sponsors

Paul Tonko

Bill Number

HR 994

Last Action

Referred To The Subcommittee On Crime
Terrorism And Homeland Security 2021 04 23

Status

In House

Title

Justice is Not For Sale Act of 2021

Introduction Date: 2021-02-11

Description

Justice is Not For Sale Act of 2021 This bill prohibits private for-profit entities from operating confinement facilities (e.g., prisons) or providing electronic monitoring of released persons at the federal, state, and local levels. The bill also establishes various requirements related to the standards of detention and availability of services at confinement facilities. The bill provides for the establishment of * limits on the fees and charges for financial services (e.g., money transfer services), * caps on the rates charged for communications services, * detention standards and oversight requirements related to the detention of noncitizens, and * community-based alternatives to the detention or separation of family units apprehended under immigration authorities.

Primary Sponsors

Raul Grijalva

Bill Number

HR 1480

Last Action

Received In The Senate And Read Twice And
Referred To The Committee On Health
Education Labor And Pensions 2021 05 13

Status

In Senate

Title

HERO Act

Introduction Date: 2021-03-02

Description

Helping Emergency Responders Overcome Act or the HERO Act
This bill establishes a series of programs relating to the behavioral health of law enforcement officers, first responders, 9-1-1 operators, and other public safety officers and health care providers. The programs include * a public safety officer suicide-reporting system at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, * a grant program for peer-support behavioral health and wellness programs within fire departments and emergency medical services agencies, and * a grant program for behavioral health and wellness programs for health care providers.

Primary Sponsors

Ami Bera

Bill Number

HR 1686

Last Action

Referred To The Subcommittee For Indigenous
Peoples Of The United States 2021 05 07

Status

In House

Title

Examining Opioid Treatment Infrastructure Act of 2021

Introduction Date: 2021-03-09

Description

Examining Opioid Treatment Infrastructure Act of 2021 This bill requires the Government Accountability Office to report on the availability of and unmet need for substance use disorder treatment and recovery services, including for specified populations. The report must also address barriers to real-time reporting of drug overdoses at the federal, state, and local levels.

Primary Sponsors

Bill Foster

Bill Number

HR 2489

Last Action

Referred To The Subcommittee On
Communications And Technology 2021 04 14

Status

In House

Title

Martha Wright Prison Phone Justice Act

Introduction Date: 2021-04-13

Description

Martha Wright Prison Phone Justice Act This bill establishes requirements related to certain charges, practices, classifications, or regulations in connection with confinement facility (i.e., jail or prison) communications services. Specifically, the bill requires the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to establish maximum rates and charges that a provider of prison communications services may charge for such services. The bill provides interim rate caps until the FCC establishes such rates and charges. The bill requires a provider of prison communications services to assess all charges for communications on a per-minute basis for the actual duration of the communication, and it prohibits a provider from charging a per-communication or per-connection charge. A provider also may not charge an ancillary service charge except in certain circumstances. Further, the bill prohibits a provider from assessing a site commission, which is a payment or donation made to certain entities that operate or oversee a confinement facility.

Primary Sponsors

Bobby Rush

Bill Number

HR 3172

Last Action

Referred To The House Committee On
Financial Services 2021 05 13

Status

In House

Title

HELPER Act of 2021

Introduction Date: 2021-05-13

Description

Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder Act of 2021 or the HELPER Act of 2021 This bill establishes a program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to provide mortgage assistance to law enforcement officers, elementary and secondary school teachers, firefighters, or other first responders. Specifically, these individuals may be eligible for a one-time mortgage on a primary family residence with no down payment and no monthly mortgage insurance premium.

Primary Sponsors

John Rutherford

Bill Number

S 285

Last Action

Read Twice And Referred To The Committee
On Finance 2021 02 08

Status

In Senate

Title

Medicaid Reentry Act of 2021

Introduction Date: 2021-02-08

Description

Medicaid Reentry Act of 2021 This bill allows Medicaid payment for medical services furnished to an incarcerated individual during the 30-day period preceding the individual's release. The Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Payment and Access Commission must report on specified information relating to the accessibility and quality of health care for incarcerated individuals, including the impact of the bill's changes.

Primary Sponsors

Tammy Baldwin

Bill Number

S 1046

Last Action

Held At The Desk 2021 08 03

Status

In House

Title

Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Act of 2021

Introduction Date: 2021-03-25

Description

Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Act of 2021 This bill revises and reauthorizes through FY2026 grants for residential substance use disorder treatment programs at state and local correctional and detention facilities. Among the revisions, the bill * replaces statutory references to substance abuse with substance use disorder, * specifies that the term residential substance use disorder treatment program includes a medication-assisted treatment program, * requires the chief medical officer or other staff overseeing a program to complete training on the science of addiction and the latest research and clinical guidance on treating substance use disorders in criminal justice settings, and * allows people who are awaiting trial or in pretrial detention to participate in the programs.

Primary Sponsors

John Cornyn

Bill Number

S 1821

Last Action

Read Twice And Referred To The Committee
On Finance 2021 05 25

Status

In Senate

Title

Humane Correctional Health Care Act

Introduction Date: 2021-05-25

Description

Humane Correctional Health Care Act This bill allows states to cover inmates of public institutions under Medicaid. The Government Accountability Office must report on specified information relating to the health of inmates and the effects of Medicaid coverage.

Primary Sponsors

Cory Booker

Bill Number

S 2592

Last Action

Read Twice And Referred To The Committee
On The Judiciary 2021 08 03

Status

In Senate

Title

Correctional Facility Disaster Preparedness Act of 2021

Introduction Date: 2021-08-03

Primary Sponsors

Tammy Duckworth

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