

Sept. 9, 2019

Appropriations tracker: Congress returns with a tight deadline

BY TUCKER DOHERTY, POLITICO PRO DATAPOINT

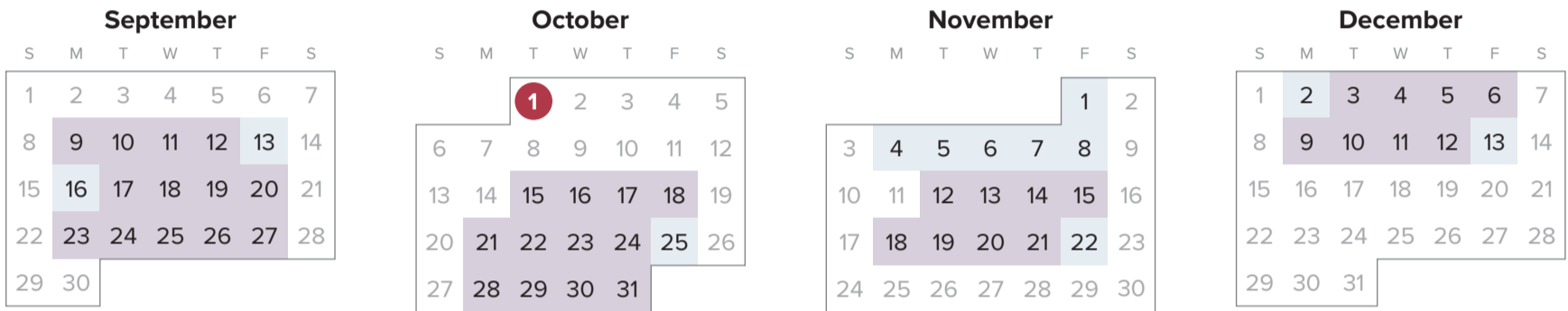
As congressional lawmakers return from an extended August recess, they will have only 15 work days to fund the government and avoid a potential shutdown at the beginning of the new fiscal year on Oct. 1.

Although Congress passed a budget deal that set overall spending levels before leaving for recess, the Senate has lagged behind the House in passing appropriations bills that spell out discretionary program-level funding details. Given the short timetable, House leadership is already preparing a short-term spending extension that would keep existing levels flat until late November or early December while negotiations continue. Leaders are not expected to pick a firm date for the new deadline until just days or even hours before the Sept. 30 deadline.

Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.) has said he hopes to have the two largest appropriations bills — Defense and Labor-HHS-Education — enacted before the end of the month. The committee will hold its first subcommittee markup on Sept. 10, and then hold its first full committee markup on Sept. 12.

2019 Congressional Calendar

Senate in session Both chambers in session New fiscal year begins



Budget deal will scramble topline funding levels

During the first half of the year, the Democratic-controlled House made significant progress enacting 10 of the 12 appropriations bills.

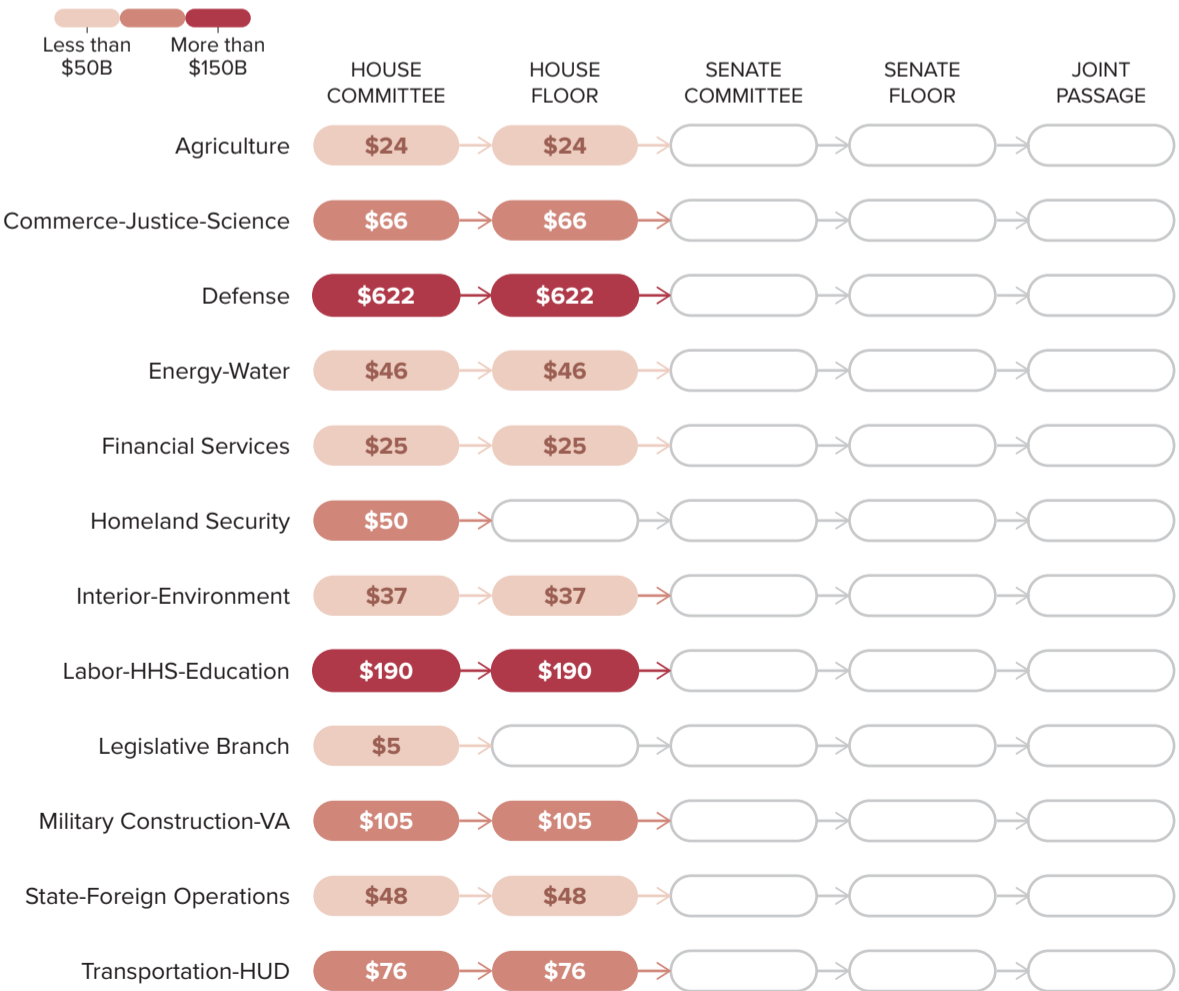
However, that progress was premised on assumptions about the overall shape of the eventual bipartisan budget agreement. Now that a deal has passed, lawmakers will need to make corresponding adjustments.

Relative to their earlier assumptions, House Democrats will need to cut \$15 billion from non-defense programs and add \$5 billion to defense programs.

In anticipation of the budget deal, Senate appropriators had not released the topline funding levels for their bills before recess. Shelby now says the funding levels will be released on the day of the first full committee markup on Sept. 12.

Despite Shelby's goal of passing two major bills before the end of the month, it remains unclear whether Senate leaders will try to pass any on the floor before entering negotiations with their House counterparts on the final versions that would be sent for the president's signature.

Legislative passage and funding levels (in billions) for FY 2020 appropriations bills



Sources: Congress.gov; Senate Appropriations Committee; Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, "Appropriations watch: FY 2020"

Click for more information about DataPoint, and your Account Manager will follow up shortly.