

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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Strengthening Cities Through
Workforce Development



THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

April 14, 2025



Appropriations/Budget

On Thursday, April 10, the House narrowly approved a budget resolution by a 216–214 vote, with two Republicans — Representatives Thomas Massie (KY) and Victoria Spartz (IN) — joining all Democrats in opposition. The vote clears the way for the reconciliation process, allowing Republicans to advance legislation aligned with President Donald Trump’s priorities without Democratic support. The budget instructs the House Education and Workforce Committee to identify \$330 billion in spending cuts through 2034, and the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee to find \$1 billion in reductions. Overall, the resolution allows for up to \$1.5 trillion in spending cuts — a threshold House conservatives pushed for before agreeing to support the measure.

Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (LA) stated that House and Senate Republicans are aligned and will work collaboratively over the two-week Easter recess. Conservative members received verbal commitments to pursue deeper cuts, and Johnson reportedly assured them they could hold him accountable if those promises aren’t fulfilled. The Senate had previously passed its own version of the resolution, which set a lower floor for spending cuts — around \$4 billion — but the final compromise accommodates more substantial reductions. Disagreements remain within the GOP over how to account for the cost of extending the 2017 tax cuts, with some Senate Republicans using a “current policy baseline” that assumes no additional cost.

Democrats criticized the resolution, warning it could lead to deep cuts to programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security.

Last week, Senate appropriations leaders released rules for lawmakers seeking earmarks and programmatic language in the FY26 funding bills, with the first deadline for submissions set for May 6. House Budget Chair Jodey Arrington (TX) said House Republicans are ahead of the Senate on reconciliation efforts and intend to finalize their package by Memorial Day. He warned that if Senate Republicans make significant changes to the House bill, it could delay the process and jeopardize key GOP priorities. House Republicans are relying on \$2.5 trillion in projected economic growth from tax cuts and will reject any attempt by the Senate to make the 2017 tax cuts permanent without offsets. Representative Lloyd Smucker (PA) continues to press for substantial spending cuts, demanding that the final reconciliation bill reduce spending by at least \$1.5 trillion. In February, he successfully added an amendment to the budget resolution allowing the GOP's tax plans to scale with the level of spending cuts achieved.

Department of Labor

On Thursday April 10, Senators Tim Kaine, Mark Warner, John Fetterman, and Bernie Sanders sent a letter to the Department of Labor (DOL) Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer raising concerns about potential major changes at her agency. The letter requested details on a reported plan to cancel leases for numerous Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) field offices. They warned that reducing MSHA's footprint could hinder its ability to conduct regular inspections and endanger worker safety. Nearly 40 House and Senate Democratic lawmakers also objected to reports that the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) could face up to a 90 percent staffing cut following the rescission of a Lyndon Johnson-era executive order. They urged the administration to abandon the plan and reaffirm the department's commitment to equal employment protections for federal contract workers.

[Click here](#) to access the full letter.

Raise the Wage Act

On Tuesday, April 8, House Education and Workforce Ranking Member Bobby Scott (VA) and Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Ranking Member Bernie Sanders (VT) introduced the bicameral Raise the Wage Act of 2025. The bill would gradually increase the federal minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$17 by 2030, benefiting approximately 22 million workers. It would also tie future increases to median wage growth to prevent erosion of value over time, phase out the subminimum wage for tipped and youth workers to ensure consistent pay, and eliminate subminimum wage certificates for workers with disabilities to promote competitive employment and fuller community participation. The legislation responds to the longest stretch in U.S. history without an increase to the federal minimum wage and is intended to adjust wages in line with current economic conditions. Supporters say the bill would help raise earnings for low-wage workers and contribute to economic activity. Scott noted that full-time workers should earn enough to meet basic needs, while Sanders described the current minimum wage as insufficient and called for congressional action.

[Click here](#) to access a fact sheet on the bill.

[Click here](#) to access a section-by-section summary of the bill.

[Click here](#) to access the full text of the bill.

Department of Labor Deferred Resignation Program

On Tuesday, April 8, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer sent an email to all agency staff encouraging eligible employees to consider voluntary exit options ahead of possible layoffs. Workers were offered the Deferred Resignation Program or the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority, with a Friday, April 18, deadline to respond. The DOL's inspector general office is excluded from this offer. Chavez-DeRemer noted that further announcements, including plans for potential Reductions in Force (RIFs), are expected in the coming weeks. This expands on an earlier offer made to select DOL offices, which had an April 14 deadline. Other federal agencies have similarly begun voluntary separation efforts, with some, like the Department of Health and Human Services, initiating layoffs.

House Ways and Means Committee Hearing

On Tuesday, April 8, the House Ways and Means Committee Work & Welfare Subcommittee held the hearing "TANF Program in Need of Reform, Better State Accountability, and Fraud Protection." Witnesses for the hearing included Director of Strategic Issues at the Government Accountability Office (GAO) Jeffrey Arkin; Director for Education, Workforce, and Income Security at GAO Kathryn Larin; Director for Financial Management and Assurance at GAO James Dalkin; Director of Forensic Audits and Investigative Services at GAO Seto Bagdoyan; and Marion County Department of Job and Family Services Roxane Somerlot.

During the hearing, lawmakers raised concerns about the lack of transparency and oversight in how states use Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds — particularly the 78% allocated to non-cash assistance. They emphasized that incomplete reporting makes it difficult to track spending, outcomes, and who is being served. Members highlighted the need for stronger reporting requirements and fraud prevention measures, especially around electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card misuse and diversion of funds for non-TANF purposes. Lawmakers called for improved accountability to ensure TANF dollars support job opportunities and reach those most in need.

[Click here](#) to read a press release on the hearing.

[Click here](#) to access the video of the hearing.

Jobs in the Woods Act

On Friday, April 11, Senators Angus King (ME) and Jim Risch (ID), co-chairs of the Senate Working Forests Caucus, introduced the bipartisan Jobs in the Woods Act, aimed at strengthening workforce development in the forestry and timber industries, particularly in rural and underserved communities. The legislation would create a grant program to support training and education for careers in forestry, logging, timber transport, and related sectors. Supporters of the bill emphasized the need to address workforce shortages in forest-based communities, modernize training, and ensure sustainable forest management. The initiative is intended to bolster economic resilience in rural areas while supporting a critical national industry that directly and indirectly sustains millions of jobs.

[Click here](#) to read the press release on the legislation.



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