
Monthly Briefing: July 2018

CIRT's Advocacy Center report on top issues for Congress and the White House

Major developments by issue area

■ Particularly important issues



Agriculture

House and Senate both pass versions of a Farm Bill and will now head to conference; retaliatory tariffs threaten farmers



Appropriations/budget

House and Senate are passing “mini”-bus packages (groups of 2-3 appropriations bills); only 14 legislative days until shutdown due to August and September recesses



Education

No movement on HEA reauthorization; many Democrats campaigning on “free” college nationwide



Energy & environment

EPA Administrator Pruitt resigned; DOE considers price supports for coal/nuclear; EPA moves to overturn California's independent emission standards



Finance

Dodd-Frank reform bill signed into law easing regulations on community banks



Health care

Trump administration studies multiple options for lowering drug prices; Department of Labor finalizes its rule expanding access to Association Health Plans



Immigration

Federal judge orders detained children to be reunited with families; no movement in Congress to finalize DACA



Infrastructure

House and Senate pass a “mini-bus” appropriations bill that will go to conference and includes increases for water projects



Tax, labor & economy

Retaliatory tariffs from the Canada, Mexico, China and the EU insert uncertainty into markets; Trump breaks with tradition and tweets his anger at the Fed's rate hikes



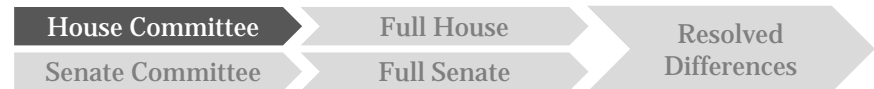
Technology

Trump administration appeals a federal judge's decision to green-light the Time Warner – AT&T merger; State department allows plans for 3D-printed guns to be shared online

Reauthorization of major government programs

Higher Education Act (HEA)

- Authorizes many major education programs, usually for four years



Dec. 1, 2017: H.R. 4508 passed House Education and the Workforce Committee

National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)

- Defines the next year's military strategy and funding levels, and usually includes reforms to other government entities



May 24, 2018: H.R. 5515 passed House (351-66)

June 18, 2018: Passed Senate with amendment (85-10)

Farm Bill

- Authorizes through 2023 most agricultural support and food assistance programs, including SNAP
- Also includes some rural infrastructure spending



June 21, 2018: H.R. 2 passed House (213-211)

June 28, 2018: Passed Senate with amendment (86-11)

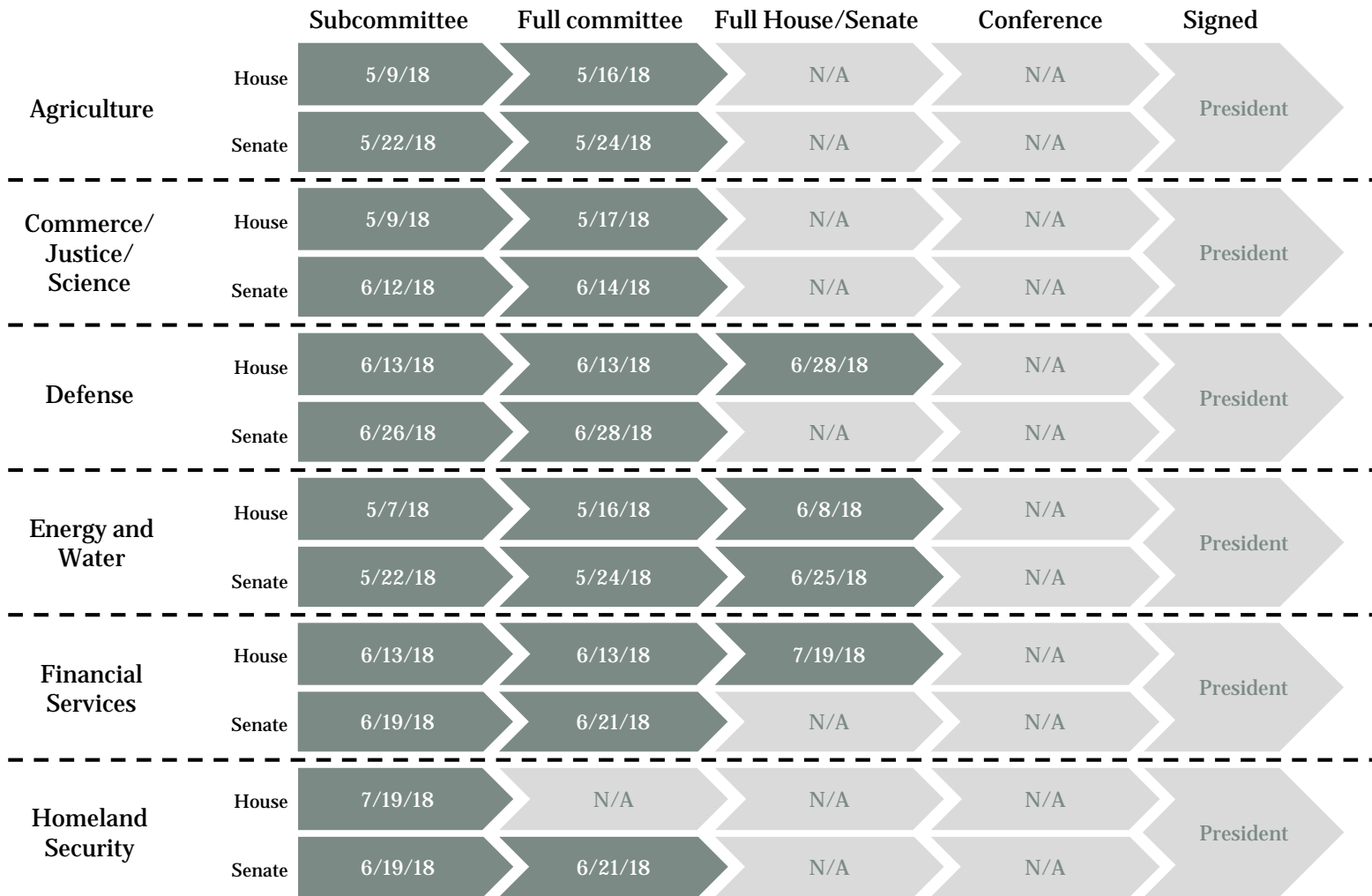
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)

- Approves five years of funding for the FAA in addition to other policy reforms including drones and funding for some infrastructure projects



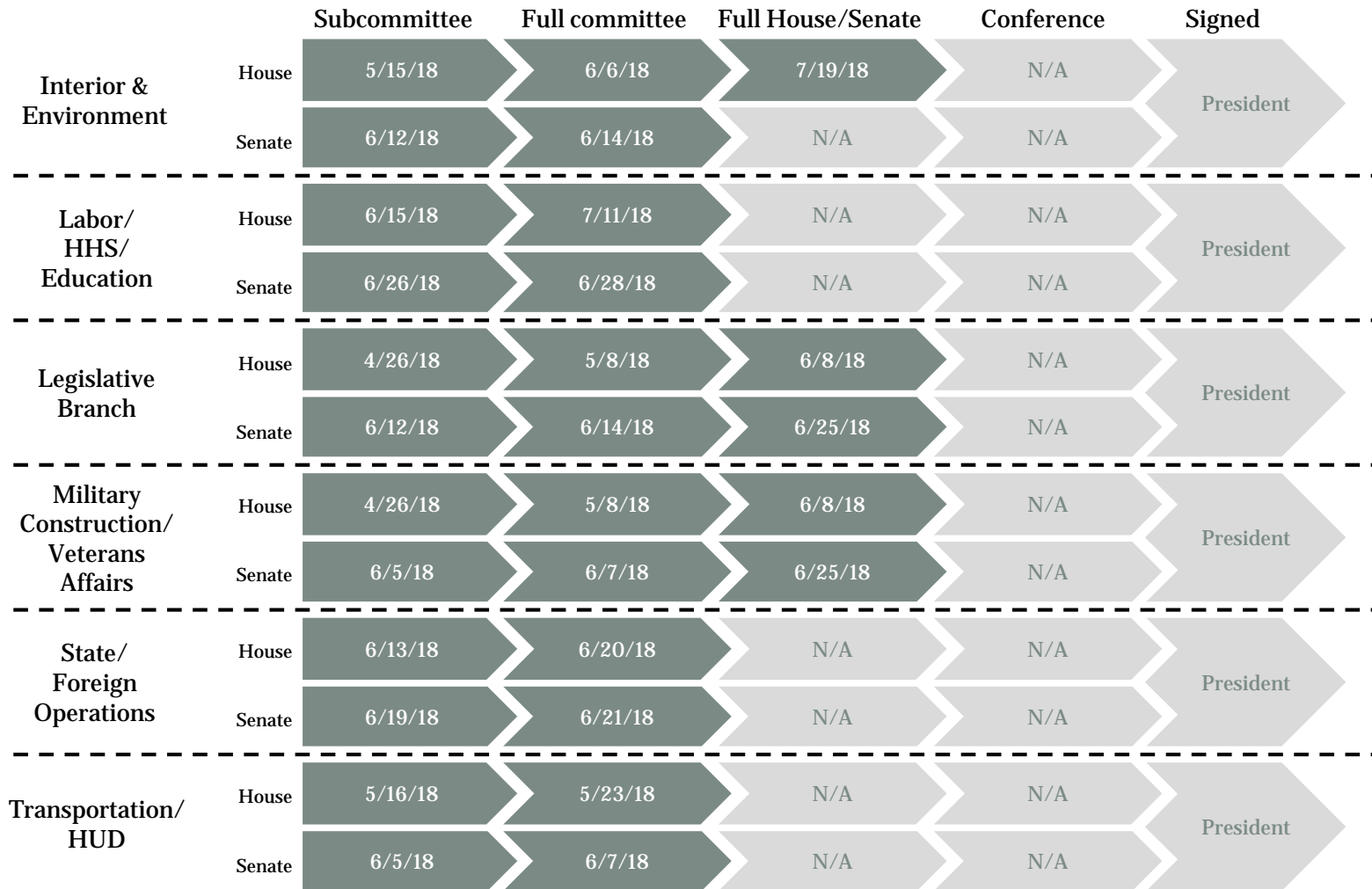
April 27, 2018: H.R. 4 passed House (393-13)

\$ Legislation to watch: FY2019 appropriations (1/2)



Sources: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)

\$ Legislation to watch: FY2019 appropriations (2/2)



Sources: [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)

Status of President Trump's major trade actions

■ Complete ■ In progress ■ Stalled

North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
Countries: Canada, Mexico



US-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS)
Countries: South Korea



Sect. 232 – nat’l security – steel & aluminum
Countries: All countries
Indefinite exemptions: Argentina, Brazil, Australia, South Korea



Sect. 232 – nat’l security – automobiles
Countries: All countries



Sect. 301 – unfair trade practices – intellectual property theft
Countries: China



**The first set of US and Chinese tariffs took effect on July 6*

Sect. 201 – harm to domestic industry – solar cells and washing machines
Countries: All countries



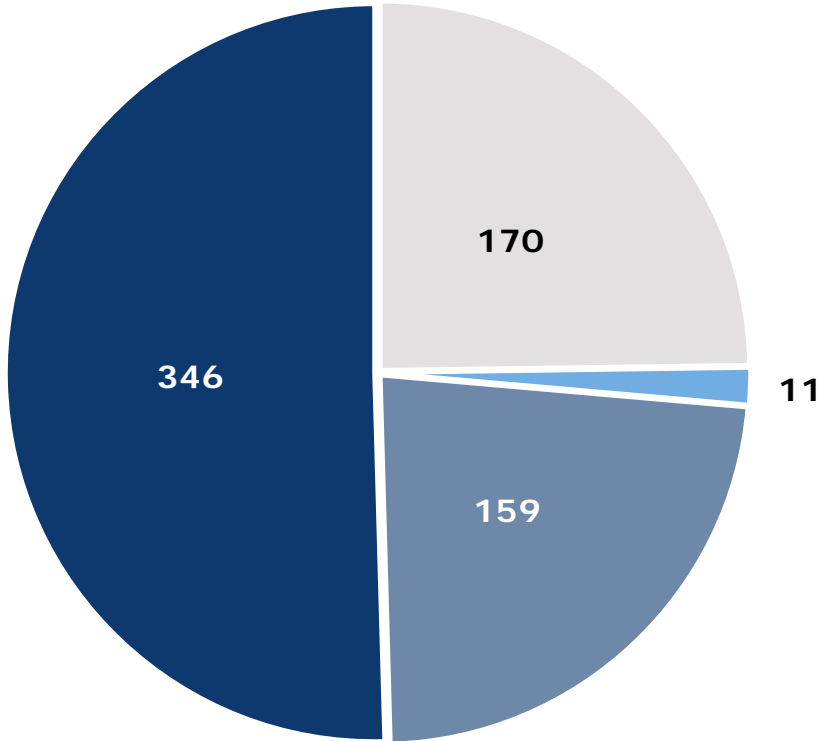
Sources: National Journal Research, 2018.

159 nominees to key positions are awaiting confirmation, 170 positions have no nominee

Status of key positions requiring Senate confirmation

AS OF JULY 30, 2018

■ No nominee ■ Awaiting nomination ■ Awaiting confirmation ■ Confirmed



Departments without a deputy secretary:

- Commerce (Karen Dunn Kelley nominated)
- Treasury (Muzinich nominated)
- Homeland Security (no nominee)
- Veterans Affairs (no nominee)

Sources: National Journal Research, 2018. Washington Post and Partnership for Public Service, 2018.

Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh



Biography

Current position: US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia

Assumed position: May 30, 2006

Date of birth: February 12, 1965 (age 53)

Home: Washington, D.C.

Education: B.A., J.D., Yale University

Family: Married (Ashley Estes), 2 children

Religion: Catholic

Biography

- Kavanaugh grew up in Bethesda, Maryland and attended Yale University for both his B.A. and J.D.
- In the late 1990s, he worked for Ken Starr during the special investigation that led to the impeachment trial of Bill Clinton.
- From 2001-2003, he was senior associate counsel and later staff secretary to President George W. Bush
- In 2006, Kavanaugh was confirmed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
- On July 9, 2018, President Trump nominated Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court

Notable decisions

- 2011: Wrote a dissent claiming the individual mandate in the Affordable Care Act could be considered a tax, and therefore should not be heard in court until a later date
- 2012: Ruled EPA's programs to regulate air pollution across state lines unlawful for reasons related to states' rights
- 2015: Found that the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB) could be sued by entities that it regulated
- *Meshal v. Higgenbotham* (2016): Concurred with throwing out a claim by an American that he had been disappeared by the FBI in a Kenyan black site

Sources: National Journal Research, 2018; Politico Staff: "Brett Kavanaugh's Track Record", *Politico*, July 9, 2018.