



# SCWA Legislative & Regulatory Update

**April 20, 2026**

## **Congressional Gridlock, Tight Timelines - Expanding Policy Pressures**

Congress returns this week facing a crowded agenda, internal divisions, and mounting deadlines across several major policy areas, including surveillance authorities, appropriations, and budget reconciliation.

## **House Dynamics and Narrow Margins**

Recent developments have further tightened the balance of power in the House. Two members—one from each party—resigned amid ethics investigations that were expected to lead to expulsion votes. Additional ethics-related cases remain pending and could result in further action.

Once a newly elected member from New Jersey is sworn in, the chamber is expected to stand at 218 Republicans to 214 Democrats, restoring a one-vote majority for Republicans. This narrow margin is already influencing legislative outcomes, as seen in recent floor votes.

Last week, the House narrowly rejected a War Powers resolution related to U.S. military involvement in Iran by a 213–214 vote, reflecting cross-party divisions. The chamber also failed to advance longer-term extensions of surveillance authorities under Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), with opposition from both parties.

## **FISA Deadline and Congressional Disagreement**

FISA Section 702 authorities were set to expire but have been temporarily extended through April 30 under a short-term agreement.

Efforts to pass either a five-year or 18-month extension were unsuccessful due to disagreements over privacy protections and oversight provisions.

A proposed compromise included:

- Enhanced penalties for misuse of surveillance authorities
- Additional warrant-related provisions for U.S. persons
- Expanded congressional access to FISA court proceedings

However, the measure failed to gain sufficient support. The Senate has since taken the lead on pursuing a longer-term solution, with further debate and amendments expected.

## **Senate Agenda and Reconciliation Timeline**

The Senate is preparing for an intensive legislative period, beginning with consideration of a budget resolution that will initiate the reconciliation process.

The current timeline includes:

- Week of April 20: Senate vote-a-rama and budget resolution adoption
- Week of April 27: House vote on the Senate-passed resolution
- Week of May 11: Senate consideration and passage of the reconciliation bill
- Week of May 18: House vote on final passage

If delays occur, leadership may adjust the congressional calendar, including potential changes to the Memorial Day recess. The reconciliation package is expected to address funding for immigration enforcement agencies, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

## **Department of Homeland Security Funding**

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has now been without full appropriations for over two months. The administration has relied on executive authority to maintain payroll, but current projections indicate that this authority may expire at the end of the current pay period.

A Senate-passed funding measure would provide appropriations for most DHS operations through fiscal year 2026, excluding ICE and CBP, which are expected to be addressed through the reconciliation process. House action on this measure is required before the end of the month to avoid further disruption.

## **Appropriations Activity**

In parallel, the House has begun work on FY 2027 appropriations bills, starting with smaller funding measures while overall spending levels remain unresolved. This process is expected to proceed largely along party lines.

The House Appropriations Committee is also marking up FY 2026 spending bills this week covering:

- Financial Services and General Government
- State Department
- Department of Agriculture

Cabinet officials are appearing before congressional committees to present budget requests, including hearings with the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Energy, Interior, and Commerce.

### **Legislative Activity in the House**

The House is scheduled to consider a range of bills this week, including:

- Permitting reforms related to broadband, geothermal energy, and federal land use
- Repeal of federal building energy efficiency standards
- Measures affecting wildfire mitigation and environmental regulation
- Reauthorization of rural health and telehealth grant programs

Additional bills under expedited procedures address infrastructure permitting, communications deployment, and public health research.

### **Iran Conflict and War Powers Debate**

Congress continues to debate U.S. involvement in the ongoing conflict involving Iran. Both chambers considered War Powers resolutions last week, but neither advanced.

Under existing law, unauthorized military operations must be terminated after 60 days, placing a key deadline near the end of April, with a possible extension into late May. Some senators are working on a potential authorization for the use of military force (AUMF) ahead of that deadline.

Developments in the region remain fluid, with shifting conditions affecting global energy markets and prompting continued diplomatic engagement by U.S. officials.

### **Outlook**

With multiple deadlines converging—including FISA reauthorization, DHS funding, and the reconciliation process—Congress faces a compressed timeline and complex legislative environment. Narrow majorities, procedural hurdles, and policy disagreements are expected to shape outcomes in the coming weeks.



Chuck Space, SCWA Executive Director  
Southwest Car Wash Association