



TIA ON THE HILL

The Latest News and Updates from TIA's Government Affairs Department



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Chairman of T&I Committee Announces Retirement

Congress Peter DeFazio (D-4th/OR) who has been serving in Congress since 1987 for 35 years and is the Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee has announced that he will not be seeking re-election in the 2022 mid-term elections. Many DC insiders view this as more bad news for the Democrat party in the 2022 election in terms of foreshadowing which political party will have control over the House of Representatives, not to mention the institutional knowledge that Chairman DeFazio brings to the Congress.

This move comes on the heels of a very frustrating few years for DeFazio as the Chairman of the T&I Committee, a post that he has been eyeing more several years. Chairman DeFazio had large dreams of passing an ambitious, environmental focused overhaul of the nation's highway and transit programs, but never came to fruition and only as far as the Senate could agree on. Additionally, many people predict that it will be a massive swing in terms of seats in the House in 2022 that will ultimately give Republicans majority in the chamber. This could have played into the decision of the Chairman who would likely not want to serve in the minority again. To date 11 Democrat Members of Congress have announced they would not be running for election.

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The next likely candidate to be the lead Democrat on the Committee would be Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC). After that Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-30th/TX) who has also announced retirement and Congressman Rick Larsen (D-2nd/WA) who TIA has a good relationship with.

TIA has already begun the process of meeting with several of the key senior Democratic Members of the T&I Committee to ensure that the Association is well positioned for the next leader of the Committee on the Democrat side of the political aisle.

Congress Strikes Deal on Short-Term Funding Deal as Shutdown Looms

Late last week, the House and Senate passed a short-term extension stopgap spending bill that prevented a potential government shutdown that would have begun at midnight on Friday, December 3rd. There was a lot of discussion from several Senate Republicans who were threatening to shut the government down because of the "outrageous" spending levels and the COVID-19 vaccine mandate. The short-term extension will extend funding levels to February 18, 2022 and the funding levels remain the same as when President Trump was in office.

The House passed the stop gap measure first with a vote of 221 to 212 with all Democrats and 1 Republican voting Yes and no Democrats voting No. Later that day, the Senate passed it 69-28 with a lot of bipartisan support. Senate Republicans agreed to pass the bill quickly if a vote was allowed on defunding the President's vaccine mandate sponsored by Senator Mike Lee (R-UT). The vote was allowed and was defeated 48-50 with Senators Thune (R-SD) and Hagerty (R-TN) missing the vote, but would not have mattered since Vice President Harris would have the tie breaking vote.

Democratic leaders in the House and the Senate hope this 11-week patch will give them enough time to strike a deal with Republicans to fund the military and non-defense agencies at updated levels.

TIA Supports TRANSPORT Act

TIA has formally supported H.R. 5846, the "Truckers Responding At National Shipping Ports Overcoming Retail Turmoil" or TRANSPORT Act. The legislation would mitigate complex and pressing issues during national crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The TRANSPORT Act, which is sponsored by Kansas Republican, Tracey Mann would use previous unallocated CARES Act funds to support motor carriers via grant programs. This legislation bypasses the over-complicated and backward laws of California and other states to allow trucking companies to meet a single federal standard for entry during times of emergency.

Congress needs to get creative to combat a bottle-necked supply chain. TIA applauds Congressman Mann in this introduction. Unfortunately, no Democrat co-sponsored the bill so passage is unlikely. TIA will continue to work on this legislation and keep members abreast of updates.

C-TPAT Voter Voice Campaign LIVE!

TIA currently has its Voter Voice campaign tool active for our key C-TPAT legislation, S. 2322. The bill has generated two additional co-sponsors due to TIA members getting directly involved, Senators Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire and James Lankford of Oklahoma. This is the easiest way of supporting our efforts. The link will auto-generate a message that you can edit and once completed it will be sent to your Senator's office asking they support S.2322.

This action comes at a time when we are inching closer to a House bill to double our chances of final passage and the creation of the pilot program so many members have asked us about. As a reminder: TIA cannot guarantee a spot inside the pilot program. That being said we are taking meetings between TIA members interested in the program and their respective Members of Congress to sell their company as part of the pilot program.

If you are interested in helping support our advocacy effort, please simply ask for the VoterVoice link and we will support your effort in getting S.2322 across the finish lines to President Biden's desk.

Meet the Newest Member of the TIA Team

Hi, my name is Trevor Blietz. I was recently hired as the new Member Engagement Specialist at TIA. Earlier in my career, I worked as a membership specialist for a few different nonprofit organizations. I plan to use my prior experience to provide members with the best help possible! I also graduated from the University of Maryland Baltimore County, with a B.A. in History. This will aid me in my position, as I will spend 50% of my time assisting the Government Affairs team! I am excited for the opportunity to meet and assist as many of you as I can. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions for me. My email is blietz@tianet.org.