



# TIA ON THE HILL

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



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## **\$1.9 Trillion COVID-19 Works Its Way Through Congress**

Debate of the Senate version of the COVID-19 relief package was delayed into early Friday morning in response to a procedural move from Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI), requesting that the entire bill be read on the Senate floor prior to beginning debate. This tactic was undertaken because the text of the legislation was released just a few hours prior to the debate beginning. The Senate is expected to work into the weekend to finish the consideration of this bill.

Here are a few highlights of the bill:

- *Provide \$1,400 in direct payments to individuals and dependents (salary thresholds in place);*
- *Extend pandemic unemployment programs;*
- *Expand tax credits for families and employers who offer paid leave;*
- *Fund state and local government aid, testing and vaccine activities, schools and mass transit systems, restaurants and other small businesses, child care, housing, nutrition, and more;*
- *Expand subsidies to purchase health insurance under the Affordable Care Act for two years; and*
- *Temporarily increase Medicaid funding to states that expand their programs.*

## Nomination Hearing Held for Deputy Secretary of DOT



Polly Trottenberg, a seasoned veteran of Capitol Hill, the Executive Branch, and local government, was nominated by President Biden to be the Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of Transportation. If confirmed, she will serve under Secretary Pete Buttigieg. Her nomination hearing was March 4th before the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

The nomination hearing was wide ranging, with a few common topics that included: funding the long-term surface infrastructure reauthorization, closing the connection gap between rural and city infrastructure, drones, electric and autonomous vehicle technology, and hours of service (HOS).

Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE), a friend of TIA, pressed the incoming Deputy Secretary on the consistency in the hours-of-service (HOS) rule making, and legislation specifically focusing on the livestock issue. Senator Fischer has been a champion of forcing FMCSA to act swiftly and hold the federal agency accountable to taxpayers by putting out timely rule-makings. Ms. Trottenberg said as it relates to a long-term surface transportation bill, "This is not a project we can fail to complete."

TIA fully supports the passage of a long-term, sustainable and substantive surface bill this year. If you have any questions about incoming personnel from the Biden Administration, please contact [advocacy@tianet.org](mailto:advocacy@tianet.org).

### The PRO Act: Disaster Looming?

In the coming days, the House of Representatives will be voting on the Protecting the Rights to Organization Act or "PRO Act," which has been called a "Christmas list for labor unions" by the business community. Specifically, the PRO Act would:

- Bolster remedies and punish violations of worker's rights;
- Strengthen worker's right to stand together and negotiate for better working conditions;
- Restore fairness to an economy that is rigged against workers:
- Repeal all right-to-work laws across the United States;
- Change franchise laws across the United States;
- Essentially eliminate independent contractors across the United States (CA AB5 nationally);
- Give unions the power to penalize workers for not paying union dues;
- Egregious infringement on an individual's privacy by allowing private information to be shared with unions with no safeguards in place; and
- Imposes card checks.

The political reality is that with the Democrats controlling the House of Representatives, the PRO Act is likely to be passed; with the Senate at a 50-50 split it will likely be decided by a few moderate Democrat Senators. As such, it is important for the pro-business community to speak up. Please consider having your voice heard in opposition to this radical proposal by supporting the TIAPAC to have our voice heard on Capitol Hill.

We are urging every Member of Congress to vote no on the PRO Act, and will be activating our full government affairs team to meet with key Senate allies to urge them to defeat the legislation.

## Transportation Meeting Held in the Oval Office



The Transportation Secretary, Pete Buttigieg was flanked by President Biden, Vice-President Kamala Harris and Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure, Peter DeFazio (D-OR-4) last Thursday. The discussion on the table was the long-term transportation bill. This comes at a time when there is a band-aid over gaping wound, our infrastructure is crumbling and statutes on the books are from 2015.

Chairman DeFazio said this about the meeting, “It is a critically important conversation to have, and timely as I intend to move a surface transportation reauthorization bill through the Committee this spring.”

TIA is ready to work with any organization, member of Congress or stakeholder in order to get this legislation across the finish line. It is critical to our membership, the supply-chain and our global economy.

## H.R. 844, Aviation Preparedness Bill

TIA is currently in the process of reviewing new legislation that affects our airfreight community. H.R. 884, the National Aviation Preparedness Plan Act of 2021, which has been introduced by Congressman Rick Larsen (D-WA-2). The legislation takes what we know about the COVID-19 pandemic and puts a plan in place to ensure our aviation industry is prepared with actionable tasks and road maps to guide them through another catastrophic event. The bill connects industry leaders and stakeholders to create the first-of-its-kind, industry-specific road map of what to do when another pandemic strikes.

Within a year of passage, the federal government will develop a national aviation preparedness plan in the event of a future pandemic. The plan must include: a framework for air carriers to utilize in case of another pandemic. The federal government must consult with cargo carriers and trade associations when developing this framework as well.

TIA is excited to work in a collaborative effort to ensure this bill is passed and sent to President Biden’s desk for signature.

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