



Monthly Legislative Report – April 2026

Advocacy Meetings

Office of Senator Adam Schiff (D-CA) – In April, we met with the Senator’s staff to discuss funding opportunities in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 budget process, including transportation funding for the 2028 Summer Olympics and the Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request for the Orange County Maintenance Facility in Irvine, California.

Office of Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) – We followed up with staff in the office of Alex Padilla to discuss progress on the Senate’s surface transportation reauthorization legislation, as well as opportunities to advance transit funding priorities through the FY27 appropriations process.

Office of Representative Ken Calvert (R-CA) – In April, we followed up with staff to discuss a developing issue with potential impacts on regional tolling operations stemming from NextNav’s petition before the Federal Communications Commission to reallocate spectrum in the Lower 900 MHz Band. We also discussed upcoming Appropriations Committee markups, ongoing negotiations surrounding Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding, and updates on the status of surface transportation reauthorization efforts.

Office of Representative Mike Levin (D-CA) – We continued to work with staff in the office on a Community Project Funding (CPF) request for the Pacific Coast Highway Bridge Replacement Project, which has been submitted to the Appropriations Committee for consideration. We also discussed the upcoming Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations hearing with U.S. Transportation Secretary Duffy in May, including potential questions that could be submitted for the record related to grant funding opportunities.

Office of Representative Young Kim (R-CA) – In April, we met with transportation staff in the office of Young Kim to discuss a Community Project Funding request for the State Route 91 East Corridor Operations Project, which has been submitted to the Appropriations Committee for consideration. We also discussed updates on progress regarding surface transportation reauthorization and the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) *Freedom to Drive* initiative announced this month.

Office of Representative David Min (D-CA) – In April, we met with staff to discuss the Irvine Metrolink Rehabilitation Project and clarify key project details. This project has been submitted to the Appropriations Committee for consideration.

Office of Representative Derek Tran (D-CA) – We met with transportation staff in the office of Derek Tran to discuss transportation-related security funding for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, as well as ongoing funding needs for the 2028 Summer Olympics.

Office of Representative Linda Sanchez (D-CA) – In April, we followed up with staff in the office regarding the OC Loop Segment A Project, which has been submitted to the Appropriations Committee for consideration, and discussed additional project details.

Office of Representative Lou Correa (D-CA) – We continued to discuss updates with staff on key surface transportation reauthorization priorities, including the legislative language to restore local suballocation authority for Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds.

Office of Representative David Rouzer (R-NC) – In April, we met with staff to discuss the timing of surface transportation reauthorization, which is now expected to move toward a **mid-May markup** following earlier delays in the drafting process and ongoing negotiations between majority and minority committee staff.

House Appropriations Majority Staff – We continued to follow up with committee staff regarding the timing of FY27 appropriations markups and ongoing funding considerations for the Department of Homeland Security.

Federal Funding Update – DHS, Budget Reconciliation, and FY27 Appropriations

Congress made significant movement during the last week of April on resolving the ongoing FY26 funding lapse for the DHS, with the House advancing a budget resolution to unlock a second reconciliation package tied to immigration enforcement funding. Under the direction of Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA), the House adopted the resolution on a narrow, party-line vote, marking a critical procedural step toward advancing what leadership is describing as a “Reconciliation 2.0” package.

This approach reflects a broader strategy by House Republicans to pair resolution of the DHS funding with passage of a reconciliation bill that can move through the Senate with a simple majority. The reconciliation vehicle building off earlier frameworks such as the Republican Study Committee’s “Making the American Dream Affordable Again” agenda is expected to focus on immigration enforcement funding, while also serving as a potential platform for additional policy priorities depending on internal negotiations.

However, the path forward remains politically complex. House leadership faced significant internal resistance from conservative members, particularly over the scope of the reconciliation package and unrelated disputes tied to the farm bill and E15 ethanol provisions. While a deal was ultimately reached to move the budget resolution forward, divisions persist between those favoring a targeted (“skinny”) reconciliation bill focused on DHS and others pushing for a broader package that includes defense and healthcare provisions. Leadership has attempted to manage these tensions by signaling the potential for a third reconciliation bill later in the year, though timing and viability remain uncertain.

At the same time, the House passed a bipartisan, Senate-approved funding measure for the Department of Homeland Security at the end of April, effectively ending a 76-day partial

shutdown for some of the sub-agencies. The legislation, which had cleared the Senate in late March, was approved by the House and is expected to be signed by President Donald Trump. The bill provides funding through September 30 for key agencies including the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), U.S. Coast Guard, Secret Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. Notably, the measure excludes funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and portions of Customs and Border Protection (CBP), which remain subject to ongoing negotiations. House Republicans had previously resisted advancing the bipartisan bill, instead prioritizing immigration-related funding through reconciliation, contributing to a prolonged funding lapse of approximately 10 weeks before ultimately moving forward with this partial resolution.

Despite some unresolved FY26 immigration enforcement funding and the delayed release of the President's FY27 budget request, Congress has formally begun the FY27 appropriations process. Member requests for Community Project Funding (CPF) in the House and Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) in the Senate have been submitted and are now under review.

House appropriators have already initiated an aggressive markup schedule, signaling an intent to move FY27 bills forward on a traditional timeline. Key upcoming milestones include:

- May 13–14: Full Committee markup – Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) and Legislative Branch
- May 20: Full Committee markup – Energy & Water
- May 21: Subcommittee markup – Interior-Environment and Transportation-HUD (THUD)
- June 3–4: Full Committee markups – Interior-Environment and THUD
- June 5: Subcommittee markup – Labor-Health & Human Services and Homeland Security
- June 10: Full Committee markup – Homeland Security
- June 24: Full Committee markup – Defense

This schedule reflects continued momentum on FY27 spending bills, even as a complete FY26 DHS funding solution remains unresolved.

The convergence of a prolonged partial DHS funding lapse, an active reconciliation strategy, and a forward-moving FY27 appropriations cycle underscores the complexity of the current federal budget environment. While reconciliation offers a pathway to resolve long-term DHS related immigration enforcement funding outside the traditional appropriations process, political divisions within the House and between chambers create uncertainty around timing and scope.

At the same time, the continued advancement of FY27 appropriations suggests Congress is attempting to maintain regular order where possible, though the likelihood of a continuing resolution (CR) in September remains high, particularly if broader funding disputes persist.

In summary, Congress is pursuing a dual-track approach, using reconciliation to resolve DHS funding while advancing FY27 appropriations through regular order. However, internal House divisions, Senate pressure for a bipartisan solution, and looming funding deadlines will shape whether DHS is resolved through reconciliation, or eventual FY27 compromise appropriations legislation.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Vought Testifies Before House Budget Committee

On April 15, Russ Vought testified before the House Budget Committee on the Fiscal Year 2027 Presidential Budget Request, outlining a proposal to significantly increase defense spending while reducing non-defense discretionary funding. While the hearing primarily focused on topline fiscal policy, several exchanges touched on transportation-related economic pressures, particularly rising gas prices and energy costs, which Members linked to broader affordability concerns and federal policy decisions.

Although transportation programs were not a central focus of the testimony, Director Vought reinforced the Administration's position that many federal programs including infrastructure-related investments should be streamlined, reduced, or shifted toward state and local responsibility. This approach raised concerns among Members about the potential downstream impacts on federal transportation funding, discretionary grant programs, and long-term infrastructure investment, particularly as Congress moves forward with FY27 appropriations and surface transportation reauthorization.

Members also highlighted the broader economic context influencing transportation systems, including fuel price volatility and cost-of-living pressures, which directly affect system users and project delivery costs. In response, Vought emphasized deficit reduction, spending restraint, and revenue generation strategies (including tariffs) as part of the Administration's approach to stabilizing the fiscal environment.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization Update

Behind the scenes bipartisan House negotiations on the next surface transportation reauthorization bill continued in late April, with House Transportation & Infrastructure Chairman Sam Graves indicating that a committee markup could occur as soon as the week of May 11, following the congressional recess. While a formal date has not been set, negotiations on legislative text are ongoing, with committee leadership continuing to work through key policy and funding issues.

The upcoming reauthorization is expected to set federal policy for highways, transit, and rail programs for the next five years, though, unlike the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the bill is not anticipated to include significant new funding, signaling a more constrained fiscal environment.

A central issue under discussion is the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund, which has faced structural deficits for nearly two decades. Committee leaders are evaluating potential revenue solutions, including electric vehicle (EV) user fees and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) mechanisms, though these proposals remain politically sensitive and are generating stakeholder debate.

US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Unveils the “Freedom to Drive” Initiative

In April, the USDOT formally launched the “Freedom to Drive” initiative in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration, signaling a national push to address congestion through targeted, high-impact roadway investments. The initiative directs Governors to identify two to five of their most significant congestion bottlenecks and outline actionable strategies to advance solutions, with a focus on maximizing roadway capacity, accelerating project delivery, and leveraging private-sector partnerships and innovative financing tools. While specific funding mechanisms and programmatic pathways are still being defined, the initiative reflects a broader policy shift toward performance-based, congestion relief outcomes and state-led project prioritization. We are continuing proactive outreach to USDOT to better understand implementation details and to ensure that priority Orange County projects, particularly those that deliver measurable congestion relief and corridor efficiency are well positioned for consideration under this initiative.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Rail Funding Opportunities – April Update

In April, the Federal Railroad Administration announced the availability of more than \$7.9 billion in federal rail funding to support infrastructure, safety, and system reliability improvements nationwide. Key programs include approximately \$1.1 billion through the Railroad Crossing Elimination Program, which supports grade separations and safety upgrades, and over \$2 billion through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) program, focused on enhancing passenger and freight rail performance. Applications are due June 8 (Railroad Crossing Elimination) and June 22 (CRISI). These programs present a significant opportunity to advance priority projects along key corridors, including safety improvements and state-of-good-repair investments.