

President Vows to Veto Death Tax Elimination Bill

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The Construction Legislative Week in Review

Stating that it is "a budget busting bill that provides a huge tax cut for the most well-off Americans at the expense of working families," President Clinton has promised to veto H.R. 8, the Death Tax Elimination Act, when it comes to his desk for signature or veto. While his veto has been expected, it is disappointing in light of the fact that 65 House Democrats and 9 Senate Democrats voted for full elimination of the death tax. The bill is clearly bipartisan and also has public support. Majority Leader Dick Armey this week announced that the bill will be sent to the President in September. That leaves a chance, albeit slim, that the President will reconsider his position before actually vetoing the bill. A post-veto strategy has yet to gel, but several Republican leaders have announced their preference to wait until next year for full relief, rather than settling for a simple increase in the exemption amount this year.

FY 2001 Appropriations Update: With only one week left before Congress leaves for the Republican and Democratic National Conventions and the August recess, both the House and Senate are trying to pass as many appropriations bills as possible. At this time, the House has passed 11 of the 13 FY 2001 Appropriations bills, while the Senate has approved 7. Following is the funding that the House and Senate have provided major federal construction programs thus far, compared to current funding levels: Highways – House \$31 B, Senate \$31 B (increase of \$2 B); Wastewater SRF – House \$1.2 B (decrease of \$150 M); Drinking Water SRF – House \$825 M (increase of \$5 M); Military Construction – Signed by President \$4.2 billion (increase of \$200 M); Base Closure – Signed by President \$1.0 B (increase of \$328 M); Army Corps General Construction – House \$1.4 B (same as current funding); HUD Community Development Grants – House \$4.5 B (decrease of \$300 M); Federal Prisons -- \$836 M (increase of \$287 M); Security and Maintenance of U.S. Missions – House \$1.0 B (increase of \$258 M). AGC will send a detailed summary of all the appropriations bills to the AGC chapters and post it on www.agc.org in August.

AGC PAC Completes Regional Meeting Schedule: AGC PAC Co-chairmen Peter Wert and Howard Mock would like to thank all contractors and chapter executives who took time out to participate in the AGC PAC-hosted regional meetings (Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, and Dallas) that wrapped up last week. Thanks to the active participation of AGC members and staff, the meetings were a great success. The goal of the election-cycle meetings was to discuss congressional races within each region and allocate AGC PAC funds to meet the campaign needs of pro-business candidates and incumbents. AGC members allocated over \$470,000 as a result of the discussions. Our members are making a great impact and will no doubt help elect a pro-business majority to serve in the next Congress.

AGC Submits Comments on OSHA's Proposed Recordkeeping Rule: Today, AGC submitted testimony to Cass Ballenger's (R-NC) House Subcommittee on Workforce Protections. The statement outlines AGC's opposition to the proposed regulation for reporting and recording of accidents and injuries that occur in the workplace. The draft rule - released nearly four years ago - will require all contractors and other small businesses to spend more time filling out forms and following procedures, and less time focused on safety. The proposed new set of regulations for the gathering and dissemination of data about workplace injuries and illness can cause confusion and/or costly mistakes, and may ultimately undermine successful safety programs. Additionally, these proposed regulations may undermine the privacy right of all working Americans by requiring that private medical records be released to subsequent employers. For additional information about OSHA's proposed recordkeeping standard, please visit the legislative area at www.agc.org.

Blacklisting Amendment to be Considered: Reps. Davis (R-VA) and Moran (D-VA) have introduced an amendment to the Treasury Postal Appropriations bill to prevent the Administration from implementing the newly-proposed blacklisting regulation. The amendment would require the General Accounting Office to study the government's contracting to determine if there is a problem with the government contracting with "bad actors." AGC is key-voting this amendment.

TMDL Resolution of Disapproval Filed: Senator Crapo (R-ID), joined by 8 colleagues, sponsored a Congressional Review Act resolution of disapproval of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) total maximum daily load (TMDL) rule. Rep. Berry (D-AR) introduced a similar measure in the House. If passed, the resolution would overturn EPA's final rule requiring watershed inventories by the states. Construction offsets were not included in the final rule. However, the rule does not preclude states from

requiring offset provisions. AGC supports the resolution of disapproval.

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