



## **FEROX CLIENT UPDATE: IT'S APPROPRIATIONS SEASON! KEY DATES AND TERMS TO KNOW**

Another cycle of appropriations, Congress' mechanism for directing money to most of the federal government, has begun. Stakes are high: without appropriations, the federal government literally shuts down. Your Ferox team is here to help you understand the process, important dates, and how we work with our clients to make the most of the appropriations process.

Appropriators' work for the next fiscal year (FY) begins in February and should be completed by the beginning of a new FY on October 1. We are now five months into FY 2018, however, and Congress still has not developed a final plan to fund the government through September 30, 2018. Congress has instead relied on continuing resolutions (CRs), keeping FY 2017 funding levels in place in short spurts. The most recent CR will expire on March 23. **So, why does Congress take so long to fund the government?**

- Sequestration-related spending caps left appropriators uncertain of how much money they could plan to spend. In 2011, Congress passed a law to slash most federal spending each year to force itself to reduce the deficit. Sequestration cuts hit in 2013, gutting spending for defense and domestic priorities like education. Congress never found a smarter way to cut spending, instead opting to raise sequestration-related spending caps to avoid more cuts. Congress struck such a deal earlier this month, averting cuts planned for FY 2018 and 2019. Now that appropriators know how much money they must spend, appropriators hope to finally craft a final FY 2018 deal by March 23.
- Policy disputes also intrude into the appropriations process. Appropriators sometimes slip derailing policy changes, or "riders," into their funding bills. Members of Congress also leverage appropriations bills to extract policy concessions from leadership or the opposing party. We saw this in January, when Democrats blocked a CR to force the Republican majority to address the expiring Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The confrontation triggered a brief shutdown. Another confrontation over immigration, or still another policy dispute, could derail action once again in March.

Congress may take its time funding the government, but Ferox and its clients don't rest. FY 2019 appropriations season has begun, and the time is now to develop and submit FY 2019 appropriations requests to congressional offices. Here's key dates and estimates for appropriations our clients need to know for the remainder of the calendar year:

**Feb. 12:** The White House delivered its FY 2019 funding request to Congress, kicking off appropriations season. **Upon release, Ferox's team of budget and appropriations experts analyze how this request would impact our clients and their interests. We work with our clients to design and begin implementing a corresponding advocacy plan.**

**March- April:** Congressional offices set their own deadlines for appropriations requests, which vary widely. **Ferox assists our clients to develop, draft, submit, and advocate in support of appropriations**



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requests before individual members of Congress and appropriations committees. This work continues for the rest of the cycle.

March-April: The House and Senate Appropriations Committees will hold hearings to consider the White House's budget request. These hearings feature top Trump Administration officials. **Ferox often leverages these hearings to promote our clients and their interests. For example, Ferox collaborates with clients to submit written testimony and/or appear before committees. In another example, Ferox assists clients to recruit supportive committee members to ask about a client priority in these hearings, alerting the Administration that a client priority is shared by a member of Congress.**

April 15 – July 30: House and Senate Appropriations Committees introduce draft FY 2019 funding bills. The Committees then hold "markups," considering amendments to these draft funding bills. Once funding bills pass the full committees, they must pass into law in both the House and the Senate. The House and Senate may add more amendments in floor consideration. **These amendment processes are more opportunities for Ferox's advocates to educate targeted members and staff, and to seek favorable changes for our clients.**

July 30 – Sep. 3: Traditional "August recess." Staff and members will use this time to fold all unfinished appropriations bills into one package for consideration in September. **Ferox's close contacts with congressional staff allows us to continue analysis and advocacy in support of our clients' priorities, even as work goes behind closed doors.**

Sep. 30: FY 2018 ends. Congress must pass either a CR or FY 2019 funding package into law to avoid a federal shutdown on October 1. **Ferox predicts that Congress will pass a CR that will last into the "lame duck" work period after the November 6 mid-term elections.**

Nov. 13 – Dec. 14: Congress returns for post-election "lame duck" session. Congress is more likely to wrap FY 2019 appropriations in this period. However, if the election shifts control of the House or Senate to the Democrats as some predict, Democrats may refuse to complete a FY 2019 package until new leadership is seated in January. **Ferox's advocacy, education, and outreach will continue no matter how long the process takes. Preparation for the next cycle also begins, with Ferox experts encouraging Administration officials to request favorable provisions in the next cycle's White House request. Then, the cycle repeats.**

Curious how Ferox Strategies' appropriations experts can support you? Visit our website at [www.feroxstrategies.com](http://www.feroxstrategies.com), or email us at [lalonzo@feroxstrategies.com](mailto:lalonzo@feroxstrategies.com).