



Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Omicron Phi Zeta Chapter

Issues in Action!

Legislative Issues Concerning Women

109th Congress At-A-Glance[✉]

Congress completed action on the FY2006 spending bills before adjourning for the year on December 22, 2005. Major accomplishments for the year included the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. Final approval of the FY2006 spending reconciliation and tax bills was put on hold until next year.

WPI published an *FY2006 Appropriations Summary* on December 22. This *At-A-Glance* summary contains all other legislative action affecting women and families that occurred during the first session of the 109th Congress. At press time, public law numbers were not available for those bills most recently passed by Congress; therefore, bill numbers are provided.

The Senate will reconvene the second session of the 109th Congress on January 18, 2006. The House will return on January 31.

Actions Completed

Breast Cancer Stamp: Congress approved legislation (P.L. 109-100) to reauthorize the breast cancer stamp through December 31, 2007 (November 2005).

Cord Blood Stem Cell Inventory: Congress approved legislation (P.L. 109-129) to authorize a cord blood stem cell inventory to collect and maintain 150,000 units of blood obtained from umbilical cords (December 2005).

Health Disparities: Congress approved legislation (P.L. 109-18) to improve the prevention, early detection, and treatment of chronic diseases among health disparity populations (June 2005).

Mental Health Parity: Congress approved legislation (P.L. 109-151) to extend for one year a law requiring insurers to impose equitable lifetime limits for mental and physical health benefits (December 2005).

Safe Water: Congress approved legislation (P.L. 109-121) to authorize assistance to provide safe water and sanitation to people in developing countries (November 2005).

Violence Against Women Act (VAWA): Congress approved legislation (P.L. 109-162) to reauthorize VAWA through FY2011. The provision was included in the Department of Justice reauthorization bill (January 2006).

Welfare Extension: Congress approved legislation (P.L. 109-161) to temporarily extend the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193) through March 31, 2006 (December 2005).

Outstanding Issues

Association Health Plans (AHPs): The House approved a bill (H.R. 525) designed to make health care more affordable for small businesses by establishing AHPs (July 2005). The Senate did not consider similar legislation.

Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG): The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee approved a bill (S. 525) that would reauthorize the CCDBG through FY2010 (March 2005). The House did not consider similar legislation.

Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act: The House approved a bill (H.R. 748) that would make it a federal crime to transport a minor across state lines to obtain an abortion, thereby evading parental consent and notification laws (April 2005). The Senate did not consider similar legislation.

Child Protection: The House approved a legislative package (H.R. 3132) that would include a number of proposals aimed at protecting children from sexual predators (September 2005). The Senate Judiciary Committee approved a similar bill (S. 1086) in October.

Embryonic Stem Cell Research: The House approved a bill (H.R. 810) that would allow the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct and support human embryonic stem cell research (May 2005). The Senate did not consider similar legislation.

FY2006 Spending Reconciliation: The House approved the conference report for the FY2006 spending reconciliation bill (S. 1932), which establishes \$39.7 billion in savings over five years (December 2005). The measure includes a provision to reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program through FY2010, and extends the Transitional Medicaid Assistance and abstinence education programs. The Senate approved the conference report with minor amendments in December. The House did not consider the Senate amendments before adjourning for the year.

Medical Liability: The House approved a bill (H.R. 5) that would limit noneconomic medical malpractice awards and attorneys' fees (July 2005). The Senate did not consider similar legislation.

Newborn Care: The Senate approved a bill (S. 1182) that would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish 14 days' care for newborns of women veterans if the child was born in a VA facility or a facility under contract to the VA (December 2005). The provision was included in a bill to expand health care services for veterans. The House did not consider similar legislation.

Stillborn Children: The Senate approved a bill (S. 1235) that would define a veteran's stillborn child as an insurable dependent for the purpose of receiving \$10,000 to cover burial costs (September 2005). The provision was included in a bill to enhance veterans' benefits. The House did not consider similar legislation.

Welfare Reform: The House approved the conference report for a bill (H.R. 4241) that would reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program through FY2010 (December 2005). The provision was included in the FY2006 budget reconciliation bill. The Senate approved amendments to the conference report in December. At press time, the House was expected to consider the amended bill on December 22.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

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www.house.gov and www.senate.gov

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