

Committee **Full Government Affairs Committee (GAC)**

Date/Time **Tuesday, 28 September 2021 / 3:00 pm eastern**

Loucas Tsakalacos, Damon Dozier, Jeff Aguiar, Josh Caldwell, Babu Chalamala, Jen DiStefano, Sean Langan, Juan Claudio Nino, Linda Olafsen, Dio Placencia, Erin Radcliff, Chris Schuck, Colleen Scott, Steve Smith, Margo Staruch, Cathy Tway, Kris Uher (recording secretary)

Participants

Next meeting	October 26, 2021 @ 3 pm ET	
Responsibility	Action Items	Due

Washington DC Update

Congress has two looming deadlines:

- In order to avoid a shutdown of some federal operations, the appropriations bill must be passed by midnight September 30th.
- In order to prevent a possible defaults on U.S. debt, the debt ceiling needs raised or suspended before October 18th.

There is optimism for a short-term continuing resolution (CR) that would fund the government into early December (Update – Congress approved a measure on September 30th to fund the government until December 3). Resolution of the debt ceiling is more difficult. The debt ceiling sets a legal limit on how much the Treasury Department can borrow and is important for both global and domestic economies. There is little incentive for Republicans to support Democrats because a failure to raise the debt ceiling can help Republicans in the April elections. If the debt ceiling isn't raised, the ability to issue new debt to pay its bills will be severely constrained. Even the threat of default can have financial consequences as it did in 2011 when the U.S. credit rating was downgraded from AA+ to AAA, days after a deal was reached.

Reconciliation Bill

Senate Democrats are working on a \$3.5 trillion economic plan that, if passed, would make federal investments in child care, immigration, climate change and agency improvements (NSF, NASA, NIST, etc.) Democrats lack a majority large enough to overcome the 60-vote threshold that has become required to pass major legislation through the Senate. So they plan to use a process known as budget reconciliation to pass the bill with just a majority vote. The outlook for the bill is up in the air and will depend on negotiations.

PCAST (President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology)

Last week President Biden named the members of President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. A link to the complete list will be sent to the committee. The following from that list are current/past members of MRS:

- Frances Arnold
- Dan Arvizu
- Laura Greene

Other

As the U.S. was evacuating Afghanistan, engineers, scientists and technical professionals, especially women were being targeted by the Taliban and having difficulty leaving the country. MRS was a signatory on a letter sent to the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) asking for assistance for these STEM professionals. There were several calls to figure out the best way to protect and re-settle them. There will be a repository where re-settlement issues will be held and OSTP will assist in these efforts.

Working Group Reports

Boris Dyatkin (Grass Roots Advocacy Working Group Chair) reported that four topics have been identified for Materials Voice. Materials Voice will be in-person at the Fall Meeting in Boston, with an option of sending letters prior to the meeting. Original draft letters are in the process of editing and then will be sent to GAC for review. Topics include Department of Defense budget, U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA), and nuclear technologies.

Josh Caldwell (Policy Outreach Working Group Chair) reported that Government Agency talks are being planned for the week of virtual programming (December 6-8). Invitation letters have been sent out and awaiting confirmation. Suggestions for backups are welcome and should be sent to Josh. Dates are being finalized for the Government Agency Summit (October) and CVD (November). Invitations will be forthcoming.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm ET