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This update reflects facts as of Monday morning, March 23, 2026. The situation is fluid and may change.

The Senate was in session through the weekend debating election law legislation with little chance of passage, as the scheduled two-week recess approaches at the end of the week. More urgent is the pending legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as the effects of the five-week shutdown are beginning to be felt at airports. A bipartisan housing bill passed by the Senate has encountered resistance in the House. And talk has begun of a supplemental defense appropriation bill to fund the military action in Iran, including the possible use of budget reconciliation.

Election law. The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE America) Act would impose new rules for voting and voter eligibility for federal elections, overriding state laws. The House passed it on a mostly partisan basis, only four Democrats voting for it. The Senate opened debate, which has continued through the weekend, with virtually no prospect of passage. Sixty votes would be required without a change in the Senate rules, and thus far no Democratic senator has indicated support. There does not seem to be sufficient support among the majority Republicans to change the filibuster rules to permit passage by simple majority.

Homeland Security funding. The shutdown of DHS is now in its sixth week. Late last week face-to-face negotiations finally began, although with little sign of progress. The parties remain far apart on regulations proposed by Democrats on the operations of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Democrats have proposed funding the other agencies under DHS, such as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), but that was rejected by Republicans.

The growing TSA work slowdowns at airports nationwide may have provided the impetus for the first real talks, however unproductive thus far. So, too, have concerns about cybersecurity, which is also within the purview of DHS. The scheduled two-week recess on Friday should provide an additional incentive for the parties to close the gap, as the Senate Majority Leader has threatened to keep the Senate in session if it has not passed funding legislation.

Housing legislation. The Senate passed a housing bill—the 21st Century Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act—on March 12 by a large 89-10

bipartisan majority. The bill includes a host of lending, permitting, and other regulatory provisions designed to make housing more affordable and available. One somewhat more controversial provision would limit the acquisition of single-family residences by investment funds.

The House passed a different version of the legislation last year. The Senate removed some of the House provisions, changed others, and added a few of its own. The House has not accepted the Senate changes, and it appears a House-Senate conference may be convened to resolve differences. The timing is uncertain, given the press of other business and the looming recess.

Supplemental defense appropriation. The Pentagon, in view of the cost and depletion of military equipment and munitions, has sent a request to the White House for \$200 billion in additional funding. The White House has not yet sent a supplemental funding request to Congress, but discussion of another funding bill has already begun.

Democrats, who generally did not support the Iran action, have indicated resistance to additional defense spending. Questions have also been raised by some Republican members about the size of the request and details of proposed spending. That has also led to some discussion of the possibility of budget reconciliation to expedite funding legislation and permit passage by a simple majority in the Senate.

It is too early to know whether resort might be made to the budget reconciliation process, but many of the same questions about reconciliation that have previously been raised would be encountered again. Chief among these is whether deficit offsets in the form of difficult spending cuts or tax increases might be needed. But the prospect of budget reconciliation could also attract other revenue and spending proposals from members, which might further complicate passage, including pending tax extenders and other tax proposals.

In any event, the military action in Iran and defense funding seem likely to be issues that will consume much of the attention of Congress in the coming weeks.

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