

This Week in Washington
July 31, 2015

Congress

Throughout the week, the Senate continued consideration of a bipartisan multi-year **highway bill**, despite assurances from House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) that the House would not take it up having passed a five-month extension earlier this month. Instead, House Republicans introduced a three-month patch, which passed Wednesday before the chamber left Washington for the August recess. The Senate voted 65-34 to pass its multi-year bill on Thursday before passing three-month patch, replenishing the Highway Trust Fund just one day before it was set to expire.

The White House

President Obama spent the weekend in Kenya before traveling on Monday to **Ethiopia**, where he participated in talks with Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn that focused on human rights and security issues, including the war in neighboring South Sudan. He also attended a state dinner in his honor and delivered an address to the African Union.

On Monday, Vice President Biden visited upstate New York to announce the new **American Institute for Manufacturing Photonics** in Rochester. The institute plans to hire about 100 scientists and experts to conduct research projects using \$110 million in federal funding and \$250 million from the state of New York, as well as additional funds from private companies.

On Wednesday, President Obama hosted a working reception with House Democrats primarily focused on building support for the **Iran** nuclear deal. On Thursday, he participated in a conference call with grassroots supporters to leverage existing support. Congress is in the midst of a 60 day review period and will vote in mid-September on whether or not to endorse the deal. President Obama has said he will veto any effort to negate the agreement.

The Cabinet and Agencies

On Tuesday, Secretary of **State** John Kerry and Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee in support of the Iran nuclear deal. On Wednesday, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey, and Moniz appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Looking Ahead

The House is in **recess** for the summer. The Senate will vote next week on a measure to defund **Planned Parenthood** and also potentially consider **cybersecurity** legislation before it adjourns for the summer. Both chambers will return to Washington after Labor Day.

The President will host King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia of **Spain** on September 15 before welcoming **Pope Francis** to Washington on September 23.