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**WASHINGTON UPDATE
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NEGOTIATIONS TO AVOID GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN STUCK IN MUD

With just seven days remaining before the end of FY 2016, Congress has yet to agree on a short-term spending bill to keep the federal government afloat beyond September 30. Earlier this week, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell unveiled a continuing resolution (CR) through December 9. The Democratic response was a quick, resounding “NO.” The White House and Minority Leader Harry Reid object to GOP policy riders advanced in the bill. Senate Democrats, for instance, have voiced their opposition to include emergency flood assistance for Louisiana without pairing it with aid for the Flint water crisis. Another contentious item is a Republican provision in the stopgap measure that overturns a Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rule requiring corporations to list their campaign contributions.

If there is a silver lining in this political morass, it’s an agreement between the two parties to include \$1.1 billion in anti-Zika funding without restrictive language or poison pills. Harry Reid has conveyed to his GOP counterpart that a deal can be had today based on a “clean CR” with Zika funding. Negotiations are still ongoing. The Senate is scheduled to be back in session next Tuesday, leaving Congress with a mere 72 hours to reach an agreement that avoids a government shutdown. In light of the election dynamics hanging over Capitol Hill, the pressure is mounting by the day on Senate leaders to reach a deal so that members can go home to campaign for reelection.

NEW AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM TO OPEN TO THE PUBLIC THIS WEEKEND

Opening ceremonies for the National Museum of African American History and Culture is set for tomorrow. In one of the most anticipated events to hit Washington, DC in years, all 28,500 tickets for the Sept. 24 opening day were sold in less than an hour after being made available on Aug. 27. Museum tickets for weekday passes are currently booked through November and through the end of the year for weekend passes. The National Museum of African American History and Culture will be the 20th facility operated by the Smithsonian Institution, and the first to open since the National Museum of the American Indian over a decade ago.

Passes are free and may be reserved online at nmaahc.si.edu/visit/opening or by telephone (919-653-0443 or 800-514-3849), with a maximum of six tickets per order. Some same-day passes will be available at the museum after 9:15 a.m. each day, with a maximum of four per group.

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