The Daily Dish

Just One Thing

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’Tis the season of lists. Lists of things that the House wants to do before the end of the fiscal year. Things the Senate wants to do before recess. Things that won’t get done before the elections. Wish lists of things that Congress promises to do in a lame duck session. List after list after list.

Eakinomics wants just one thing: Don’t shut down the government.

It is already a foregone conclusion that Congress will not pass appropriations bills to be sent for the president’s signature. But that is like the sun rising in the east these days. Instead, we are firmly into the territory of stopgap legislation before the end of the fiscal year on September 30.

The most familiar form of stopgap is a continuing resolution (CR), which is simply statutory authority for the agencies to continue doing what they are doing for a specified amount of time. Indeed, a “clean” CR allows no course corrections whatsoever—agencies do exactly what they are currently doing. Minor modifications of the levels of funding or the permitted activities are called anomalies.

As fate would have it, the House has passed a clean CR already, but it is dead on arrival in the Senate. The Senate wants a CR that includes a list of White House-endorsed anomalies. The path to “yes” in both chambers remains unclear and a shutdown remains a risk. Eakinomics is nervous.

The other kind of stopgap would be some sort of structural procedure that keeps the agencies funded. For example, there is the Prevent Government Shutdowns Act of 2026. According to the authors:

> *Upon a lapse in government funding, the bill would implement an automatic continuing resolution (CR) on rolling 14-day periods, based on the most current spending levels*

> *enacted in the previous fiscal year. This would prevent a shutdown and continue critical services and operations.*
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> *During the covered period of an automatic CR, the following restrictions are put in place. No taxpayer-funded travel allowances for official business (except one flight to return to Washington, DC) for the following individuals; White House OMB staff and leadership, members of the House and Senate, committee and personal staff of the House and Senate. There will be no official funds may be used for CODEL or STAFFDEL travel, no use of campaign funds by congressional offices to supplement official duties or travel expenses, and no motions to recess or adjourn in the House/Senate for a period of more than 23 hours*

This is not the only way to prevent shutdowns, and there are other legislative proposals. But none has come close to a floor vote and passage. Eakinomics remains nervous.

Another possibility is to simply fund "essential" activities. Given the psychic scars left by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) lines during the most recent shutdowns, air travel has been a focus of these efforts—especially the Federal Aviation Administration and the TSA. As Courthouse News (a great read between mug shots) summarized it:

> *The Aviation Funding Solvency Act. The Keep America Flying Act. The Keep Air Travel Safe Act. The Aviation Funding Stability Act.*
>
> *Again and again, members of Congress have dusted off the same idea: ensuring the federal employees who control air traffic and screen passengers and bags at U.S. airports get paid during government shutdowns.*
>
> *Bills to make it happen keep getting introduced in one form or another, sometimes with Democrats and Republicans as co-sponsors. Yet session after session, the result has been the same — agencies receive their annual appropriations, public outrage over long security lines and flight delays fades, legislation languishes and workers have no guarantees their paychecks won't stop coming again.*

Eakinomics wants just one thing. Eakinomics is nervous.