



The Daily Dish

# Congress Gets Back to Business

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On Wednesday the Pentagon announced the U.S. will be sending 600 more U.S. troops to Iraq as part of a strategy designed to recapture Mosul from ISIS. Currently there are 4,565 troops in Iraq. The Pentagon's announcement will result in the authorized level of U.S. troops deployed to be raised to 5,200. According to defense officials, the U.S. troops will deploy within weeks and will provide logistics support to Iraqi forces.

The American Action Forum (@AAF) released a new #Eakinomics video focused on President Obama's economic legacy. In the video, AAF President Douglas Holtz-Eakin examines some of the key economic factors during the administration, including the unemployment rate, labor force participation, and GDP growth.

## *Eakinomics: Congress Gets Back to Business*

Of getting re-elected, that is.

Yesterday the House and Senate passed a short-term funding bill to keep the government operating until December 9. The legislation, technically known as a continuing resolution (or CR, that "continues" the current level funding for government activities) had been caught in a dispute over which "extra" provisions the bill would include. There was (finally) agreement that \$1.1 billion would be provided to fight the Zika virus, and that relief would be provided for the flooding in Louisiana and elsewhere.

But there was a fight over \$170 million for Flint, Michigan which has experienced a tragic contamination of its municipal water system. Democrats wanted it in the CR, but instead agreed to a two-step approach in which the House would amend its Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) to include the money for Flint, which would be merged with a Senate version of the WRDA (which contains Flint money) when Congress returns after the election.

The Flint funding fight (which featured the slogan, "No Flint, no floods") is a classic head scratcher for those who approach funding decisions from first principles. Those principles would say that drinking water is a local public good that should be the responsibility of the municipality, or perhaps county and state. But it is hard to see why it is an issue for a taxpayer in, say, Honolulu. Obviously, Flint is more than an infrastructure issue; it is a public health tragedy and a governmental failure and that has elevated its stature to the point that it became the focal point of government shutdown discussion.

The good news is: crisis averted. Now Congress is off to the races (literally).