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PPC Update

February 12, 2026

CONGRESS FINALIZES MOST OF FY26 APPROPRIATIONS, SAVE FOR DHS BUDGET. On February 3, [Congress passed and President Trump signed into law](#) five more full-year Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 spending bills, completing 11 of the 12 appropriations bills providing funding through September. The [package of bills](#) also included a two-week continuing resolution for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) lasting through February 13.

The five-bill package included the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (LHHSE) appropriations bill. The package includes funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other federal research agencies. The bill provides \$48.7 billion for the NIH, a \$415 million increase from its FY25 level. The bill also increases the budget for the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) by \$10 million. Congress declined to adopt the proposal to restructure the NIH and reduce the number of Institutes and Centers (ICs) through the appropriations process, choosing instead to retain all 27 NIH ICs. The bill maintains language prohibiting the administration from altering NIH indirect cost policies, while encouraging congressional appropriators to work with the larger research community on the development of an alternative research cost model. The bill also includes provisions on multi-year funding for research grants, directing NIH not to exceed the number of grants it forward funded in FY25.

Beyond core NIH funding, the spending legislation provides level funding for the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) at \$1.5 billion. Additionally, the bill funds the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at \$345.38 million, a [\\$23.6 million decrease for the agency](#). It also includes language requiring HHS to support necessary minimum staffing levels at AHRQ to fulfill its statutory obligations, key language given the [significant challenges at AHRQ](#) over the last year. Despite being an overall funding cut, this is welcome news given that AHRQ has remained largely understaffed throughout 2025 and represents a clear rejection of the administration's staffing cuts at AHRQ that prevented the agency from carrying out its mission last year.

The bill also funds crucial pediatric workforce programs. This includes level funding of \$10 million for the Pediatric Specialty Loan Repayment Program (PSLRP) and \$395 million for the Children's Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME) program, an increase of \$5 million from last year.

Attention now shifts to negotiations over the DHS funding bill. After multiple January shootings by federal immigration officers in Minnesota sparked calls for stronger immigration enforcement guiderails, Senate Democrats and the administration [agreed](#) to separate DHS funding from the larger appropriations package to allow focused negotiations on such reforms. Democrats have called for [a](#)

[number of new guardrails](#), such as requiring immigration officers to wear body cameras, conduct operations unmasked, show identification, obtain judicial warrants, and avoid operations at sensitive locations like schools and churches. Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.) has dismissed most of these demands as “[unrealistic and unserious](#),” though some Republicans are open to certain provisions, including [body camera requirements](#). Still, with both sides very far apart, another short-term CR may be needed to prevent a partial DHS shutdown.

— **Advocacy Opportunity: Tell Your Lawmakers to Support the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.** As Congress considers funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and reforms to immigration enforcement, lawmakers should ensure places where children gather are safe by including the *Protecting Sensitive Locations Act* (H.R. 1061/S. 455) as part of the DHS funding bill.

The *Protecting Sensitive Locations Act* (H.R. 1061/S. 455) would codify protections limiting immigration enforcement occurring at or near locations where children get medical care, play, or go to school.

It is vital that children and families can access healthcare, education, nutrition, and other key services they are eligible for – without fear. Likewise, institutions that provide medical care should be safe places for patients and the medical providers who care for them, including for pediatric medical professionals who are immigrants.

Urge your lawmakers to pass the *Protecting Sensitive Locations Act* (H.R. 1061/S. 455) as part of the DHS funding bill.

Here’s how to contact your members of Congress:

- **By Phone:** You can call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to be connected to your representative's office and ask to speak with the health staff. You also can find your U.S. representative by going to [House.gov](https://www.house.gov) and using the "Find Your Representative" feature at the top right of the page. To find your U.S. senators, visit [Senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov) and use the "Find Your Senators" feature at the top left of the page. The contact information for their Washington, DC, office is available on their websites.
- **By Email:** You can also send emails to your members of Congress using the contact form on their websites.

Talking Points:

- As an academic pediatrician, I urge you to cosponsor and support passage of the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (H.R. 1061/S. 455) as Congress considers funding for the Department of Homeland Security and reforms to immigration enforcement.
- Out of fear of being detained or separated, families are afraid to access needed medical care for their children. This means children are missing essential newborn, preventive, or sick care.
- No family should be put in that position. When children go without medical care, the impacts ripple throughout our communities.
- Additionally, to ensure the health and safety of all our nation's children, institutions that provide medical care should be safe places for patients and the medical providers who care for them.

- The Protecting Sensitive Locations Act would codify protections limiting immigration enforcement occurring at or near locations where children get medical care, go to school, or play.
- This bill would help ensure families can feel safer taking their children to receive the medical care they need to grow up healthy and thrive.
- As Congress considers Fiscal Year 2026 DHS funding and reforms to immigration enforcement, I urge you to support and pass the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act.