

Despite the partisan headwinds, 2019 has produced several notable bipartisan wins: from increased investments in clean energy innovation and childcare to greater access to retirement plans for Americans and continued congressional modernization efforts. Get up-to-speed on the latest Hill happenings and what we expect to see next year from Congress.

Happy Holidays,
Michele Stockwell
Executive Director, BPC Action



Budget Deal Highlights: Bipartisan Wins

BPC Action is pleased to see bicameral, bipartisan passage on the following provisions:

- **Critical Funding Increases:** early childhood programs, energy innovation including direct air capture, and election security and administration;
- **Health:** 10-year reauthorization of the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), which is key to promoting patient access to evidence-based treatments and high-value care; and
- **Retirement Security:** Authorization of the Setting Every Community up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act of 2019, which is based on BPC recommendations and fundamental to ensuring millions of Americans have a more financially secure retirement.

Other Recent Accomplishments

A Win for Working Families

Congress has made huge progress across party lines and chambers to support working families. The House and Senate passed the **FY20 National Defense Authorization Act** (NDAA), which included language providing 12 weeks of paid parental leave for all federal and defense workers.

Progress on the House Modernization Committee

It was a busy fall for the Modernization Committee, and its recent extension through the 116th Congress will give its members more time to continue finding bipartisan solutions to make the body more efficient and effective. In addition to playing a key role in the committee's

Separately, **Sens. Cassidy (R-LA) and Sinema (D-AZ)** and **Reps. Allred (D-TX) and Stefanik (R-NY)** joined forces to introduce legislation to give families flexibility to take more of their allowed benefit under the **Child Tax Credit** in the first year following the birth or adoption of a child.

Win: NDAA provides paid parental leave for over two million workers.

What's Next: In 2020, BPC Action will be working closely with key members to build on this momentum. Check out our recent [survey](#) of small business views on paid family leave.

extension, BPC President Jason Grumet, SVP Bill Hoagland, and Senior Fellow Don Wolfensberger provided testimony at three separate hearings which focused on civility, the budget process, and past reform efforts, respectively.

Win: The House Modernization Committee is extended through the 116th Congress.

What's Next: The committee introduced a resolution based on its 29 recommendations to make the body more transparent, effective, and efficient for members, staff, and constituents. Look to authorizing committees to move these recommendations forward.

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A Look Ahead: What's Next for Congress

New Focus on Rural Health

BPC [announced](#) a new Honorary **Congressional Task Force on Rural Health**, which includes **Sens. Grassley (R-IA), Cassidy (R-LA), King (I-ME), and Smith (D-MN)** and **Reps. Arrington (R-TX) and Torres-Small (D-NM)**. BPC will work with these members to better understand the complex challenges rural communities face in accessing quality health care and bring greater awareness of these needs to this debate.

What's Next: BPC Action will work with these members to build a strong bipartisan effort to address the health care challenges faced by millions of Americans in rural communities.

Drug Pricing: Hot Topic on Capitol Hill

BPC Action has advised key committees on several drug pricing provisions, which we're continuing to track. What does that entail? We began with a focus on reference pricing, which the Administration has been pushing through its International Price Index Model and which has piqued bipartisan interest on the Hill. Next we will review the patent reform with an eye on increasing competition in the prescription drug market in order to bring down prices, which is a top focus of key committees.

The Takeaway: Look for Congress to take action on drug pricing in 2020.

Artificial Intelligence: New Initiative to Guide Legislative Branch

Reps. Will Hurd (R-TX) and Robin Kelly (D-IL) have announced the formation of a [new initiative](#) in conjunction with BPC focused on artificial intelligence (AI) to guide the executive and legislative branches' strategy on this crucial, evolving issue.

What's Next: BPC will work with Reps. Hurd and Kelly to convene a wide spectrum of public and private sector leaders, policy experts, and consumer advocates to discuss the challenges and opportunities around AI. These discussions will shine a light on this complex issue and will inform a new national framework to guide policy solutions.

Congress Continues to Move the Dial on Energy Innovation

Despite the headlines, bipartisanship is gaining momentum on a key issue this Congress: energy innovation. So far, three bills have passed the House or Senate floor and nearly 40 have passed House or Senate authorizing committees.

The Takeaway: It's time to get these bipartisan bills over the finish line, and BPC Action is committed to ensuring their passage. Stay tuned for updates.

Enhancing Congress's Science and Tech Capabilities

Congress has recently taken notable steps this year towards identifying and enhancing its science and technology (S&T) capabilities, including recently introduced bipartisan legislation and a recommendation from the Modernization Committee calling for the reinstatement of a restructured Office of Technology Assessment (OTA). Additionally, there were modest funding increases for the Government Accountability Office and Congress Research Service, which support the S&T mission in Congress.

What This Means: Congress increasingly lacks the necessary grounding and resources to address critical and complex technological issues such as cybersecurity, data privacy, and artificial intelligence, among other issues. BPC Action will continue to push for more resources and dedicated capacity in Congress to give lawmakers the objective expertise they need to make more informed decisions on these rapidly evolving issues for our economy and society.
