



National Association of State  
Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers

# WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## Federal Government Re-Opens/ Budget Conferees Named

Although the federal government shutdown is over, the agreement only bought Congress a few months to settle their overall budget dispute. Under the recent agreement, the federal government will be funded through January 15 at sequester-reduced fiscal 2013 levels in effect at the end of September. It also extends until January 15 the general pay freeze for federal employees and specifically prohibits a pay increase for members of Congress for fiscal 2014, although those federal workers that were furloughed as a result of the government shutdown will receive retroactive pay. The agreement also increases the debt ceiling through February 7.

One of the caveats included in the re-opening of the government is the creation of a “budget conference committee,” made up of select members of the House and Senate. This budget committee is expected to hold its first public meeting this Wednesday, and it has until December 13 to negotiate a fiscal 2014 budget resolution. Members of the conference committee are as follows:

**House:** Paul Ryan (R-WI), Diane Black (R-TN), Tom Cole (R-OK), Tom Price (R-GA), Chris Van Hollen, (D-MD), James Clyburn (D-SC), and Nita Lowey (D-NY).

**Senate:** Patty Murray (D-WA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Mark Warner (D-VA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chris Coons (D-DE), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Angus King (I-ME), Jeff Sessions (R-AL), Charles Grassley (R-IA), Michael Enzi (R-WY), Michael Crapo (R-ID), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Rob Portman (R-OH),

Patrick Toomey (R-PA), Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), and Roger Wicker (R-MS).

## Federal Health Care Exchange Under Fire in House

As Congress got back into action last week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a combative hearing on the website implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Although some states such as Oregon and Washington were cited during the hearing as having operational successes in the early weeks of the health care exchanges, most of the vitriol was aimed at the federal website healthcare.gov and its information technology vendors. The nearly-five hour hearing, which required the committee to take a break at one point, featured intense questioning and very contentious interrogation of the vendors as to why the website was not working, and what they planned to do to fix it so that it would operate correctly.

Full hearing video and testimony from the four vendor panelists can be found at

<http://energycommerce.house.gov/hearing/ppaca-implementation-failures-didn%E2%80%99t-know-or-didn%E2%80%99t-disclose>.