

Congressional Partisanship Keeps Lawmakers Busy

Although it's still early in 2026, Congress is running out of time. While the appropriations process for fiscal year (FY) 2027 (October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027) is well underway, policymakers are still debating Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding for the remainder of FY2026. This funding impasse between Democrats and Republicans—and within the Republican caucus—has consumed Congressional bandwidth and created significant disruptions to airline travel. President Trump's executive orders to temporarily pay TSA workers gave Congress some more time to debate, but without a legislative solution, long airport security lines will return.

While Congress grapples with this high-profile funding debate, its to-do list grows longer and gathers dust. With the November midterm elections right around the corner, members will turn their attention more to campaigning and less to legislating. With few options left, Republicans will now try to pursue reconciliation—an expedited route for budget-related measures that can be passed along party lines—wherever they can. Republicans will seek to use this tactic to push through DHS funding for 2026 and to push through a bill that includes several of their wish-list items ahead of the midterms.

As partisanship continues to disrupt normal legislative processes, Democrats and Republicans will find some common ground in their opposition to the President's FY2027 request to cut nearly 30 percent of the NIH's budget and nearly 12 percent of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). As with the FY2026 appropriations process, where Congress largely ignored the Administration's requests to drastically cut and restructure HHS, lawmakers will either flat fund or modestly increase HHS funding for FY2027.



Partisan debate around HHS funding will instead likely center upon the Administration’s request to restructure and consolidate programs within HHS, MAHA initiatives, and healthcare affordability overall. Congressional committees will begin marking up the FY2027 Labor-HHS appropriations bill in early June. Unlike in 2026, both sides of the aisle are motivated to pass a budget ahead of the September 30 deadline to avoid a government shutdown during midterms. As a result, committee markups on HHS funding will see fewer fireworks than last year.

ASTCT’s Government Relations Committee and Advocacy team will continue to monitor FY2027 HHS funding debates and advocate for the programs and issues that affect ASTCT members and patient communities. Learn more about ASTCT Payer and Government Relations activities, and how you can get involved, on [ASTCT’s Advocacy webpage](#) or contact [Molly Ford](#), ASTCT’s Director of Government and Payer Relations

