

IMPORTANT LAWS ENACTED DURING THE 116TH CONGRESS OF 2019-2020

David R. Mayhew, 1/15/21

The sources are print and online journalism. Listed are enactments the journalists seem to have regarded as important. Listed in CAPITAL LETTERS are ones they saw as especially important. The capitalized items are listed first for each year.

Laws for calendar 2019:

OMNIBUS YEAR-ENDING APPROPRIATIONS PACKAGE. Actually two bills – “a giant potpourri of unrelated spending and policy measures stuffed full of priorities (NYT, 12,18/19.)” Funding for border barriers extended. Export-Import Bank reauthorized for 7 years. Policy changes include: \$25 million for gun violence research; tobacco-sales age raised to 21; \$425 million for election security; 3.1% pay raise for federal employees; private pension rules revised to ease retirement; underwrite of pensions and health care for 92,000 retired coal miners; flurry of new tax breaks; permanent repeal of key Obamacare taxes on high-cost plans (the Cadillac tax), medical devices, and health insurance companies; permanent funding for historically black colleges. December.

Public lands measure. “the largest public lands bill Congress has considered in a decade.” Five new national monuments; expansion of several national parks; new wild and scenic rivers, recreation and conservation areas, wilderness areas. February.

Disaster relief. \$19.1 billion to states and territories hit by flooding, wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes and other national disasters. Fires in the West, floods in the Midwest, hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the South. June.

Emergency \$4.6 billion humanitarian aid for border migrant crisis. June.

Summer budget deal. Permanent kill of spending caps (the sequester rule) created by the Budget Control Act of 2011. August.

National Defense Authorization Act. Creation of Space Force as sixth branch of the military; new paid parental leave for two million federal workers. December.

Laws for calendar 2020:

COVID 1. Quick first reaction to the coronavirus pandemic. \$8.3 billion for R&D, treatment, provision of vaccine, support of health agencies. March.

COVID 2. Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). \$100 billion for help to states, sick paid leave, free testing, unemployment benefits, food assistance. March

COVID 3. Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (the CARES Act). March. \$2 trillion stimulus package. Largest relief package in U.S. history. Direct payments to individuals, expanded unemployment insurance, loans and grants to businesses, aid to drained state coffers, help to health-care providers.

COVID 4. \$484 billion for small business, hospitals, testing. April.

COVID 5. \$900 billion for unemployment benefits, direct payments of \$600 to adults and children, coronavirus vaccine, aid to businesses and schools. For enactment, COVID package meshed with \$1.4 trillion mammoth end-of-year spending deal. December.

United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Remake of NAFTA trade pact. January.

Great American Outdoors Act. Guarantee of \$9.5 billion over five years to maintain national parks. June.

Ban of 'surprise' medical bills. Enacted as part of budget package. December.

Climate change funding. \$35 billion for wind, solar, and other clean power sources; to cut use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Enacted as part of budget package. Said to be "perhaps the most significant climate legislation Congress has ever passed." Said to be "something shocking: a huge package of energy reforms that will result in major greenhouse-gas reductions." Enacted as party of budget package. December.

Selected references for calendar 2019:

End-of-year wrapup

-- Sarah Binder, "Congress's 2019 looks startling in the rear-view mirror: Here are four takeaways," DCPPost, 12/31/19. "But despite the year's partisan bookends, Congress achieved quite a bit across party lines. It funded the parties' domestic and defense priorities, abolished key Obamacare taxes, and created paid parental leave for federal workers. Meanwhile, Pelosi (Calif.) and House Democrats extracted labor and environmental concessions from the Trump administration for a North American trade agreement, despite GOP objections." There was "a two-year deal that got rid of legal spending caps to significantly increase funding for domestic and defense programs." "The parties traded paid parental leave for federal workers for a down payment on the Space Force."

On appropriations mega-deal of December 2019:

--Emily Cochrane, "House Approves \$1.4 Trillion Spending Bills to Avert Federal Shutdown," NYT, 12/18/19. "a gigantic potpourri of unrelated spending and policy measures stuffed full of priorities with enough appeal to each political party to ensure their passage...." Repeal of three health care taxes; tobacco age raised; \$ for gun violence research; \$ for border barrier

construction; extend Export-Import Bank; restore pension program and health benefits for miners; extend tax benefits; \$ for historically black colleges.

--Emily Cochrane, "Tentative Deal Is Reached to Avert Government Shutdown" NYT, 12/13/19, A22

--Andrew Duehren & Andrew Restuccia, "Spending Agreement Reached by Top Lawmakers," WSJ, 12/13/19, A4

--Emily Cochrane, "Congress Approves Spending Measures, Clearing Them for the President," NYT, 12/20/19, A14. Includes pay raise for civilian federal employees.

--David M. Drucker, "'It hasn't stopped him': Trump racks up wins, even as impeachment grips Washington," DC Examiner, 12/24/19. New Space Force; funding for border wall; kill unpopular Obamacare taxes, funding for historically black colleges and universities.

--WSJ editorial: "The Bipartisan Spending Party: Congress ends its terms with a blowout for everyone but taxpayers," 12/23/19, A16

--Mary Williams Walsh, "Pension Fix for Coal Miners Is Sign of a Wider Problem," NYT, 12/25/19, p. B1

--Andrew Ackerman & Lindsay Wise, "Reversal by Trump Buys Ex-Im Bank," WSJ, 1/10/20

--Ann Tergersen, "Congress Approves Sweeping Overhaul of Retirement System," WSJ, 12/20/19, p. A1, A2. "Congress passed the most significant changes to the nation's retirement system in more than a decade, a move designed to help Americans save more."

--Michael T. Townsend, "Significant Retirement Savings Law Changes Are Coming in 2020," Schwab, 12/25/19

--Kimberly Leonard, "Trump chips away at Obamacare," DC Examiner, 12/22/19. Repeal of \$373 billion in taxes meant to pay for Obamacare.

--Bill Cassidy, "Let Congress Debate Spending Again," WSJ, 12/27/19, p. A13. "ObamaCare remains the law of the land, but the principal way to pay for it is repealed." Cadillac tax gone. Tax on insurance companies repealed.

--NBC News, "Congress finalizes bill restoring funding to black colleges," 12/11/19

"It will save a source of funding that expired at the end of September and now make it permanent, bringing relief to scores of schools that were bracing for the possibility of deep budget cuts."

On public lands measure:

--Coral Davenport, "Senate Passes Bill Creating Huge Tracts of Protected Lands," NYT, 2/13/19, A14. "a sweeping public lands conservation bill." "permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund." Designates 1.3 million acres in Utah, New Mexico, Oregon and California as "wilderness." Classifies many rivers as "wild, scenic, or recreational." Creates three new national monuments.

--Cassidy Randall, "'Uniquely American': Senate passes landmark bill to enlarge national parks: Bill sets aside more than 1m acres of new wilderness and conservation areas including rivers in California and Utah," Guardian, 2/13/19.

--Andrew Duehren, "Public Lands Will Expand Under New Funding Package," WSJ, 2/27/19, A5.

On disaster relief:

--Emily Cochrane, "As Congress Thrashes Out Disaster Relief, Puerto Rico Is a Sticking Point," NYT, 4/12/19, A17.

--Colby Itkowitz, "House passes Trump-opposed disaster-relief bill with more funding for Puerto Rico," DCP, 5/10/19.

--Emily Cochrane, "House Passes Disaster Aid Bill, Raising Pressure on Senate and President," NYT, 5/11/19, A14.

--Jeff Stein & Mike DeBonis, "Lawmakers reach deal on disaster aid, leave out border money Trump demanded, Senator says," DCP, 5/23/19. "a compromise measure, supported by congressional Democrats and Republicans, that would deliver \$19.1 billion in disaster relief for parts of the Southwest, Midwest, California and Puerto Rico." Wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods.

--Andrew Duehren, "Senate Approves Disaster Relief Package," WSJ, 5/24/19, A3

--Emily Cochrane, "Congress Signs Off on Disaster Aid Bill That Was Held Up for Months," NYT, 6/4/19, A19

--Emily Cochrane & Mark Walker, "House to Vote on Additional \$3.35 Billion in Aid to Puerto Rico," NYT, 1/17/20, p. A18.

On border immigration crisis:

--Andrew Duehren, "Senate Agrees on \$4.6 Billion Border-Aid Package," WSJ, 6/20/19, A4

--Associated Press, "US House passes \$4.5bn emergency aid package for migrants held at border: Bill to support families and children, passes along party lines, sets up clash with Senate as White House threatens veto," Guardian, 6/26/19

--Mike DeBonis & Erica Werner, "House passes \$4.5 billion emergency border aid bill with provisions for treatment of migrant children in U.S. custody," DCP, 6/26/19

--Erica Werner & Mike DeBonis, "Senate approves \$4.6 billion emergency spending bill for Southern border crisis," DCP, 6/26/19.

--Emily Cochrane & Julie Hirschfeld Davis, "Senate Sets Up Showdown on Aid Package for Border," NYT, 6/27/19, p. A18

--Erica Werner, Mike DeBonis & Rachael Bade, "House moves to pass Senate border bill as leaders cave to moderate Democrats and GOP," DCP, 6/27/19

--Heather Gayle, Sarah Ferris & Burgess Everett, "Pelosi bows to McConnell on border aid bill: The speaker faced a revolt by a group of more than 18 Democratic centrists, who vowed to tank the bill on the floor," Politico, 6/27/19

--Andrew Duerhen, Louise Radnofsky & Juan Montes, "Senate Backs Aid Bill for Border Crisis," WSJ, 6/27/19, p. A3

--Julie Hirschfeld Davis & Emily Cochrane, "House Passes Senate Border Bill in Rare and Striking Setback for Pelosi," NYT, 6/28/19, A16

--Mike DeBonis & Rachael Bade, "'A betrayal': Inside the bitter rift between Pelosi and Schumer over border wall," DCP, 6/29/19

--Paul Kane, "'It ain't going to be easy': Freshman House Democrats Learn the limits of Washington in border bill fight," DCP, 6/29/19

--Sarah Binder, "How did Congress pass humanitarian aid for migrant children so quickly? Here are three takeaways," DCP, 6/30/19

On summer budget deal killing spending caps:

--Andrew Duehren & Kate Davidson, "House Spending Bill Passes Amid GOP Dissent," WSJ, 7/26/19, p. A4. "The bill essentially ends much of the 2011 Budget Control Act, which set limits on spending for each fiscal year." "Members of both parties celebrated the end of the sequestration threat."

--Emily Cochrane, "A Two-Year Budget Deal to Raise Spending Passes a Divided House," NYT, 7/26/19, p. A17. "The success of the bill signals the sunset of the austere spending caps enforced by the Budget Control Act of 2011....." The measure "not only blows past those Budget Control Act caps by \$320 billion, but also allows the law to expire on schedule after 2021."

--Andrew Duehren, Kate Davidson & Catherine Lucey, "President, Congress Reach Budget Accord: Deal defuses debt-limit issue for two years and pushes debate past presidential election," WSJ, 7/28/19, p. A1, A2

--Paul Kane, "Congress is losing one of the only incentives it had to address the deficit," DCP, 7/28/19

--Erica Werner, "Senate passes 2-year budget, suspends debt ceiling: Bill reduces chances of future government shutdowns," BGlobe, 8/2/19, p. A2

--Emily Cochrane, "Spending Increase Gets Final Nod in Senate Despite Deficit Worries," NYT, 8/2/19, p. A16

On National Defense Authorization Act:

--Martin Pengelly, "Donald Trump may get his space force – in deal for federal paid parental leave: Military and civilian workers could get 12 weeks of paid leave; Ivanka Trump hails 'HUGE' step but deal not yet done," Guardian, 12/8/19

--Jeff Stein, "GOP opposition appears to fizzle as plan advances to create Space Force, parental leave for federal workers," DCP, 12/20/19

--Paul Sonne & Karoun Demirjian, "Trump signals intent to sign \$738 billion national defense policy bill," DCP, 12/11/19. Parental paid leave for over 2 million federal workers.

--Catie Edmondson, "Defense Measure, Setting Up Space Force and Giving Troops a Pay Raise, Clears the Senate," NYT, 12/18/19, p. A22.

--Jordain Carney, "Senate sends \$738B defense bill to Trump's desk," MSN, 12/18/19

--Lisa Rein, "A government shutdown and the biggest raise in a decade: How Trump gave federal workers a whiplash in 2019," DCP, 12/28/19

Selected references for calendar 2020:

End-of-year wrapup:

Emily Cochrane, "A Once-in-a-Generation Moment. Repeat," NYT, 1/3/21

On COVID 1:

--Andrew Roberts, "House Approves \$8.3 Bill to Battle Outbreak," WSJ, 3/5/20, A7.

--Ryan Lizza, "Congress strikes a deal on bipartisan \$8.3 billion coronavirus package," Politico, 3/4/20. \$3 billion for R&D of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics; \$2.2 billion for Centers

for Disease Control including \$950 million for state and local health agencies; \$836 million for National Institutes of Health.

On COVID 2. First Families Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA):

--Sheryl Gay Stolberg, Jim Tankersley & Alan Rappeport, "Leaders Race to Reach Deal on Relief Package," NYT, 3/12/20, p. A11.

--Erica Werner, "House passes coronavirus economic relief package with Trump's support," DCP, 3/14/20.

--Jim Tankersley & Emily Cochrane, "U.S. Emergency Declared; Aid Deal Is Reached: Tens of Billions in Help for States, Sick Pay, Food Assistance – and the Markets Rally ," NYT, 3/14/20, A1, A7.

--Paul Kane, "Analysis: Unlikely pair of Pelosi and Mnuchin join forces as Washington's crisis negotiators," DCP, 3/14/20. "a deal to extend unemployment benefits, increase sick leave for workers and provide free testing for the deadly virus."

--Sarah Binder, "Analysis: The House moved quickly on a covid-19 response bill. These 4 takeaways explain what's likely to happen next," Politico, 3/14/20

--Erica Werner, "Senate passes bill to ensure paid leave benefits to many Americans as coronavirus upends labor market. The bill now goes to Trump," DCP, 3/18/20

COVID 3. The Cares Act

--Erica Werner, "Trump administration seeks roughly \$850 billion in emergency stimulus to confront coronavirus fallout," DCP, 3/17/20

--Emily Cochrane & Nicholas Fandos, "\$2 Trillion Boost for U.S. May Be Just a Start: A Wide Range of Aid in a Bid to Salvage the Economy," 3/26/20, A1, A9.

--Erica Werner, "Senate passes \$2 trillion bill to blunt coronavirus pandemic's economic impact, as households and businesses gasp for relief," DCP, 3/26/20.

--Quint Forgy, "How the \$2 trillion deal came together and nearly fell apart," Politico, 3/26/20

--Lauren Gambino, "US Senate passes historic \$2tn relief package as coronavirus devastates economy," Guardian, 3/26/20. "The bill would provide up to \$1,200 in direct relief for American adults, create a \$500bn lending program for businesses, cities and states and \$367bn fund for small businesses. The plan also provides \$130bn to hospitals, and expands unemployment insurance."

--Carl Hulse & Emily Cochrane, "Passing the Stimulus: Nonstarter at 9 A.M. to 96-0 at Midnight: How the polarized Senate found a way to negotiate a plan to help an ailing nation," NYT, 3/27/20, A6

--Jennifer Shutt & Katherine Tully-McManus, "Massive coronavirus aid package clears House, awaits Trump signature," Roll Call, 3/27/20. "The largest fiscal relief measure in U.S. history." "a roughly \$2.3 billion package of direct aid to families, businesses, hospitals and states."

--Lauren Gambino, "House passes \$2.2tn coronavirus economic stimulus package for US," Guardian, 3/27/20

--Seung Mini Kim, "Inside the talks on the largest U.S. bailout: frantic negotiations, partisan tensions and a Trump tweet," DCP, 3/28/20

--Siobhan Hughes, Natalie Andrews & Lindsay Wise, "Trump Signs Record Stimulus Law," WSJ, 3/28-29/20, A1, A8.

--Carl Hulse, "A Unanimous Senate Vote That Nobody Seemed to Agree On," NYT, 3/29/20, p. 22

--Josh Barro, "The \$2.2 Trillion Coronavirus Relief Package Should Work – For Now," NYMag, 3/31/20

COVID 4:

--Jacob M. Schlesinger & Joshua Jamerson, "In Washington, \$2 Trillion in Aid Was Just a Start," WSJ, 3/3/20, A4

--Andrew Duehren, "Lawmakers Split on Emergency Aid," WSJ, 4/17/20, A4

--Emily Cochrane & Alan Rappoport, "G.O.P. Frets as Mnuchin Bargains With Democrats," NYT, 4/18/20, A9

--Sheryl Gay Stolberg & Alan Rappoport, "Deal Nears for \$450 Billion to Replenish Aid to Taxpayers and Small Businesses," NYT, 4/20/20, A8

--Emily Cochrane & Jim Tankersley, "Senate Approves More Aid to Fund Small Businesses: Democrats Win Concessions, Including on Testing, in \$484 Billion Plan," NYT, 4/22/20, A1, A11. "to revive a depleted loan program for distressed small businesses and provide funds for hospitals and coronavirus testing...."

--Kristina Peterson & Andrew Duehren, "Senate Approves Aid Deal For Small Business," WSJ, 4/22/20, A1, A4.

--Carl Hulse, "Democrats Dug In, and Won Big Republican Concessions on Stimulus," NYT, 4/24/20, A15.

--"US House passes \$484bn coronavirus relief bill to fund small businesses and hospitals," Guardian, 4/24/20.

--Jim Tankersley & Emily Cochrane, "Lawmakers Shovel Trillions in Aid, but With No Endgame in Sight," NYT, 4/25/20, A6

--Sarah Binder, "Analysis: Congress and Trump have produced four emergency pandemic bills. Don't expect a fifth anytime soon," DCP, 4/29/20.

COVID 5:

--Seung Min Kim & Jeff Stein, "Bipartisan group of senators prepares \$908 billion stimulus plan, aiming to break partisan logjam," DCP, 12/1/29

--Andrew Duehren & Harriet Torry, "Bipartisan Group Makes New Push on Aid," WSJ, 12/13/20, A3

--Emily Cochrane, "Lawmakers Near Deal to Speed \$900 Billion in Relief to Americans: Shift in Talks After Months of Gridlock – Economists Say Aid Falls Short," NYT, 12/17/20, A1, A9

--Jim Tankersley & Emily Cochrane, "Hurdle for Biden as Stimulus Bill Drops State Aid," NYT, 12/18/20, A1 A8.

--Emily Cochrane, "Congress Reaches Deal on Virus Aid, Ending an Impasse: Jobless Relief, Help for Small Businesses and Stimulus Checks Are Included," NYT, 12/21/20, A1, A9.

--Andrew Duehren & Kristina Peterson, "Lawmakers Reach Deal on Aid Package," WSJ, 12/21/20, A1, A4. "a fresh infusion of aid to households, small businesses and schools..." "The emerging agreement is expected to provide a \$600 direct check to many Americans,

\$300 a week enhanced federal unemployment benefits and aid for schools, vaccine distribution and small businesses.”

--Burgess Everett et al., “Congress strikes stimulus deal after days of frantic talks,” Politico, 12/21/20

--Jeff Stein & Mike DeBonis, “Senate majority leader announces approximately \$900 billion deal on emergency relief package,” DCP, 12/21/20

--Emily Cochrane, “Stimulus Passes; Some May Receive Checks in a Week: Late-Night Approval Sends \$900 Billion Deal to President,” NYT, 12/22/20, A1, A7. The big catchall package that this COVID deal is a part of “included the extension of routine tax provisions, a tax deduction for corporate meals, the establishment of two Smithsonian museums, a ban on surprise medical bills, and a restoration of Pell grants for incarcerated students....”

--Burgess Everett et al., “Feuds, Zoom and Italian food: How the stimulus got done,” Politico, 12/22/20

--Jeff Stein, “Senate approves huge spending package, sends economic relief measure to Trump for enactment,” DCP, 12/22/20. “The \$900 billion economic relief component of the legislation has received the most attention, but the bill would do many other things, including funding federal agencies through September 2010 and extending tax breaks for numerous businesses for at least the next year. The tax provisions alone would slash taxes by about \$150 billion....”

--Heather Long, “\$900 billion stimulus is second-biggest in U.S. history, but it won’t last long enough,” DCP, 12/22/20

--Kristina Peterson & Andrew Duehren, “House Votes for Urgent Virus Aid Package: Action quickly follows deal on roughly \$900 billion bill to offset harm from pandemic,” WSJ, 12/22/20, A1, A2, A4.

--Emily Cochrane et al., “President Signs Virus Relief Bill After Aid Lapses: Abruptly Ending Turmoil He Created—Jobless Programs Are Restored,” NYT, 12/28/20, A1, A5.

--Amanda Holpuch, “Covid vaccines and \$600 payments: key provisions in the US stimulus bill,” Guardian, 12/28/20

On US-Mexico-Canada trade agreement:

--Ana Swanson & Emily Cochrane, “Big Quandary for Democrats on Trade Deal: A Win for Progressives, but Also for Trump,” NYT, 12/2/19, p. A1, A20.

--Emily Cochrane, Ana Swanson & Jim Tankersley, “An Unlikely Trade Pact, Forged Through Snacks and Sparring: Democrats and White House Officials Spent Months on Deal,” NYT, 12/20/19, p A1, A14

--Natalie Andrews, William Mauldin & Anthony Harrup, “Trump, Democrats Reach Deal on North American Trade Pact,” WSJ, 12/11/19, A1, A6

--David J. Lynch, “House Democrats say they back Trump’s revised trade deal with Canada and Mexico, citing recent changes,” DCP, 12/10, 19

--Erica Werner & Rachel Siegel, “Senate approves new USMCA trade deal with Canada and Mexico: Bipartisan vote secures key piece of Trump agenda even as Senate prepares for partisan impeachment trial of Trump,” DCP, 1/16/20

--Emily Cochrane, “Senate Passes New Deal on Trade With Neighbors: Revised NAFTA Is Sent to Trump’s Desk,” NYT, 1/17/20, p. A7

- William Mauldin, "Senate Passes the USMCA in Rare Bipartisan Vote," WSJ, 1/17/20, A6
- Dominic Rushe, "Senate approves revamped North American trade deal: Trump is expected to sign the United States-Mexico-Canada pact (USMCA) next week," Guardian, 1/16/20
- William Mauldin & Alex Leary, "Trump Signs New North American Trade Pact," 1/30/20, A3

On public lands conservation:

- Carl Hulse, "Republicans Push a Bill to Protect Public Lands," NYT, 6/9/20, A13
- Carl Hulse, "Senate Votes to Guarantee Land Conservation Funds, Aiding Republicans at Risk," NYT, 6/18/20, A21
- Andrew Duehren, "Senate Passes Bill Directing Funds to Public Lands," WSJ, 6/18/20, A3. "a sweeping public-lands bill funding conservation and recreation efforts..." "guarantees \$900 million in annual funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund..."
- Carl Hulse, "House Passes a Conservation Bill That Guarantees Funds for Land Use," NYT, 7/23/20, A6. "up to \$9.5 billion over five years to begin clearing up a mounting maintenance backlog at national parks." "Conservation leaders hailed the measure as a landmark achievement." "Passing the Great American Outdoors Act is quite simply the most significant investment in conservation in decades," said the president of the National Wildlife Federation."
- Annie Karni, "Trump Signs Major Bill on Land Conservation, But Snubs Democrats," NYT, 8/5/20, A21
- Timothy Puko, "New Law Boosts National Parks Funding," WSJ, 8/5/20, A3

On surprise medical bills:

- Stephanie Armour, "Fix for Surprise Medical Charges Gains Support," WSJ, 4/3/19, A6
- Paige Winfield Cunningham, "The Health 202: Momentum is building in Congress to take on surprise medical bills," PowerPost, 5/24/19
- Margot Sanger-Katz, "Both Parties Take Action on Surprise Medical Bills," NYT, 5/25/19, A13
- Abby Goodnough, "Health Care Bills Advance in a Rare Show of Comity," NYT, 6/27/19, A16
- Margot Sanger-Katz, "Ban on Surprise Medical Bills May Pass Congress After All," NYT, 9/9/19, B2
- Kristina Peterson, "Pact Would End Surprise Medical Bills," WSJ, 12/18/20, A3. "expected to be included in a year-end legislative package...."
- Margot Sanger-Katz, "Legislation on Medical Bills Is Dropped," NYT, 12/18/20, A22
- Susannah Luthi, "'Surprise' billing fix to be included in spending package," Politico, 12/21/20 After some tinkering.
- Washington Post editorial: "A welcome addition to the legislative package is ban on one of the most obnoxious practices in the country's health-care system, so-called surprise medical bills, a long-overdue bipartisan reform that finally overcame intense industry lobbying," 12/22/20
- Liz Goodwin, "'Surprise' bills could be over: Neal drops objections, paving way for legislation to protect patients' wallets," BGlobe, 12/26/20, A1, A6.

On climate change:

--Coral Davenport, "Climate Change Legislation Included in Coronavirus Relief Deal," NYT, 12/22/20, p. A20. \$35 billion in funding.

--Sarah Kaplan & Dino Grandoni, "Stimulus deal includes raft of provisions to fight climate change," DCP, 12/22/20. "It will cut the use of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), chemicals used in air conditioners and refrigerators that are hundreds of times worse for the climate than carbon dioxide. It authorizes a sweeping set of new renewable energy measures, including tax credit extensions and new research and development programs for solar, wind, and energy storage; funding for energy efficiency projects; upgrades to the electric grid and a new commitment to research on removing carbon from the atmosphere. And it reauthorizes an Environmental Protection Agency program to curb emissions from diesel engines." "This is perhaps the most significant climate legislation Congress has ever passed," said Grant Carlisle, a senior policy adviser at the National Resources Defense Council.

--Jonathan Chait, "The Coronavirus Bill Contains 'The Most Significant Climate Legislation' Ever," MSN, 12/23/20. "The coronavirus-relief bill racing through Congress contains a fair amount of economic relief as well as a wide array of unrelated measures that were thrown into the bill with little or no public debate. Included in the latter category is something shocking: a huge package of energy reforms that will result in major greenhouse-gas reductions."