

Inter-Office Memo

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January 17, 2026

TO: International Executive Board
FROM: Legislative Department
SUBJECT: Weekly Legislative Update on the Trump Administration

1) TRADE & MANUFACTURING

Canada [reached a trade deal with China](#) to lower tariffs on Canadian agricultural exports in exchange for cutting tariffs on Chinese EVs from 100% to 6%. In 2024, Canada matched the Biden administration's 100% tariff on EV imports from China. Now, Canada will lower the tariff for the first 49,000 EV imports from China, but this cap will increase every year. Mark Carney, the Canadian Prime Minister, seemed to frame the deal as gaining leverage in advance of negotiations with the U.S. over review of the USMCA, saying "the multilateral system has been eroded and it remains to be seen what gets built in its place."

In a [disturbing development](#) today, Trump announced his intention to apply an additional 10% tariff on Denmark and several other EU countries on Feb 1, to be increased to 25% on June 1, "until such time as a Deal is reached for the Complete and Total purchase of Greenland." The move sparked widespread outrage and further heightens anticipation for the Supreme Court's upcoming ruling, which could come next week, on the Trump administration's use of emergency authorities (IEEPA) for tariffs.

The U.S. and Taiwan this week [announced](#) a trade agreement that will lower tariffs on imports from Taiwan to 15% (down from 20%) in exchange for Taiwanese semiconductor companies committing to increase financing for their U.S. operations by \$500 billion, which includes \$250 billion in direct investment to expand chipmaking, energy, and AI operations.

Relatedly, the Commerce Department [concluded](#) its section 232 investigation on semiconductor imports, finding that the import of chips and chipmaking equipment poses a threat to national security. To address this, the President imposed an immediate 25% tariff on a narrow category of advanced semiconductors, with an exception for chips that are imported "to support the buildout of the United States technology supply chain." If trade negotiations with foreign jurisdictions fail to address the risk of these imports, the President may consider raising and expanding the tariff on semiconductors and chipmaking equipment within 180 days.

Lourenco Goncalves, the CEO of Cleveland-Cliffs, [testified](#) before the Congressional Steel Caucus this week, saying that "[he is] glad that there's a good chance that the USMCA will not survive the 2026 review", adding "we need manufacturing in the United States, not in Canada, not in Mexico."

2) IMMIGRATION

The State Department [announced](#) an indefinite suspension of issuing visas to immigrants from 75 countries who are seeking to live and work in the US permanently, citing concerns that they will need public assistance in the US. The announcement does not apply to non-immigrant student visas, and existing visas are not being revoked as part of the pause.

3) EDUCATION

The Trump administration had announced at the end of 2025 that it would soon begin to garnish the wages of individuals in default on their student loans, but this week said they would delay implementation of the change. The Education Department also [opened](#) 18 investigations for allowing transgender athletes in women's sports, including at three colleges. The administration's argument is that allowing transgender athletes to compete violates Title IX.

An appeals court reversed a decision that could [allow](#) the Trump administration to re-arrest, and ultimately deport, Mahmoud Khalil, a former graduate student at Columbia University and former UAW member.

4) CONGRESS

The Legislative Department sent vote recommendations to the House this week urging members of Congress to vote no on a trio of anti-worker bills. H.R. 2262, the Flexibility for Workers Education Act, would have allowed employers to not pay workers who participate in certain education and training programs if they classified the programs as "voluntary." Six Republicans – Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick, Riley Moore, Rob Bresnahan, Nick LaLota, Chris Smith, and Jeff Van Drew – all voted against the bill, and it failed 209-215. The sudden break from these Republicans caused House leadership to pull the votes for the remaining two anti-worker bills, H.R. 2270, the Empowering Employer Child and Elder Care Solutions Act, and H.R. 2312, the Tipped Employee Protection Act.

Later in the week, the House [passed](#) H.R. 2988, Protecting Prudent Investment of Retirement Savings Act, by a vote of 213-205 with 3 Democrats voting in favor, Reps. Andre Carson, Henry Cuellar, and Adam Gray. H.R. 2988 would limit retirement plan fiduciaries' ability to consider certain factors, such as environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors, in investment decisions and discourage plan fiduciaries from proxy voting. The Legislative Department sent a vote recommendation to the House urging members of Congress to vote no on this bill as well.

On the appropriations front, the House has four funding bills left to pass: Defense, Transportation-HUD, Labor-HHS-Education and Homeland Security. Bipartisan bill text is likely to be released this weekend for the remaining bills except for DHS, which remains in flux over disagreements related to ICE.

On the other side of Congress, the Senate [passed](#) the House's bipartisan package of 3 appropriations bills: Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment.

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