

Shimkus highlights 2017 Congressional accomplishments

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MARYVILLE, IL – Congressman John Shimkus (R, Illinois-15) says the U.S. House of Representatives is getting things done.

“The news media will spend days on their scandals and controversies, but they often can’t find the time to cover the important successes and compromises in Washington,” Shimkus said. “But when you look at more than 250 bills passed by the House this year, including 42 bills President Trump signed into law, there’s no question Congress and the Administration are making good on our promises to our constituents.”



Shimkus highlighted a number of bills as examples of good public policy being made in Washington:

The VA Accountability First Act (Signed into law)

This landmark, bipartisan legislation makes it easier to remove, demote, or suspend any VA employee, including senior executives, for poor performance or misconduct on the job. It also provides better protections for whistleblowers, and bars the VA from using their new removal authority if an employee has an open whistleblower case.

Since Inauguration Day more than 500 VA employees have been terminated, and another 200 have been suspended, for misconduct.

The Forever G.I. Bill (Passed the House 405-0)

Since 1944, the G.I. Bill has provided veterans the opportunity to invest in themselves and their futures through access to education benefits. This major update to the G.I. Bill removes restrictions so eligible veterans can use their education benefits throughout their lives, instead of the current 15-year deadline.

Expanding and extending the G.I. Bill will not only help veterans transition from active duty to civilian life, but from one civilian job to another later in life.

The No Sanctuary for Criminals Act (Passed the House 228-195)

This legislation provides more tools to fight sanctuary city policies. It allows victims of certain crimes to sue those jurisdictions that refuse to comply with the law, and withholds certain federal grants from jurisdictions that prohibiting their officers from cooperating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The bill also includes Sarah and Grant's Law, which ensures unlawful immigrants convicted of drunk driving or are arrested for other dangerous crimes are detained during their removal proceedings.

Kate's Law (Passed the House 257-167)

Kate's Law increases both fines and jail time for deported felons who illegally return to the United States. The bill is named after Kate Steinle, who was murdered in San Francisco by an unlawful immigrant who had previously been deported five times and was convicted of multiple felonies.

Two dozen House Democrats joined the majority in supporting this bill.

The National Defense Authorization Act (Passed the House 344-81)

This legislation authorizes \$613.8 billion in funding, \$28.5 billion above President Trump's request, to rebuild our military. With this increased funding comes Pentagon reforms and accountability measures to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly and efficiently.

The bill also includes a well-deserved, 2.4% pay raise for our troops – their biggest raise in the past eight years – and blocks the president's ability to reduce troop pay in the future.

Protecting 2nd Amendment Rights (Signed into law)

With support from the disability community, National Rifle Association (NRA) and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), this bipartisan joint resolution protects the 2nd Amendment rights of people on Social Security who receive help managing their benefits.

By using the Congressional Review Act, this law also ensure that no substantially similar rule can be proposed by the Social Security Administration in the future.

Strengthening Career & Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Passed House by Voice Vote)

Since 1984, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act has provided federal support to state and local career and technical education, or CTE, programs. H. R. 2353 will improve alignment with in-demand jobs by supporting innovative learning opportunities, building better community partnerships, and encouraging stronger engagement with employers.

These programs offer students the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience necessary to compete for jobs in a broad range of fields, such as health care and technology.

FDA User Fee Reauthorization Act (Presented to the president)

FDA's review of drug and medical device applications is funded through a combination of annual appropriations from Congress and user fees collected from the pharmaceutical and medical device industry, which helps speed the development and review of medical products. H.R. 2430, the FDA Reauthorization Act would reauthorize FDA's critical user fee programs to ensure the agency has the resources it needs to make timely

evaluations. Moreover, this legislation would streamline FDA process for reviewing and approving new treatments and cures for patients, ultimately delivering new and innovative therapies, drugs, and devices to patients more quickly.

Committee Accomplishments Drive Fall Agenda



“When Congress returns in September, bills we’ve been working on in committees will be ready for debate and votes on the House floor,” Shimkus added. “Most of the bills I worked on at the Energy and Commerce Committee this Spring and Summer are fundamentally infrastructure bills. They can be passed on their own, or they could be included in a bigger infrastructure package along with other transportation, energy, and water infrastructure programs.”

Shimkus highlighted two examples from his Environment Subcommittee’s portfolio:

[Nuclear Waste Legislation](#) (Approved 49-4)

Bipartisan legislation sponsored by Shimkus would restart work on the Yucca Mountain project, a permanent underground repository in the Nevada desert for spent nuclear fuel from power plants and radioactive waste from nuclear weapons programs.

Electricity ratepayers have invested more than \$40 billion to study, site, construct and operate the repository. Because Yucca Mountain is not yet operational, spent fuel sits in temporary storage at 121 sites in 39 states, at a cost to taxpayers of \$2 million a day from an uncapped, off-budget judgement fund.

Illinois currently hosts more spent nuclear fuel, and Illinois ratepayers have contributed more to the advancement of this hundred-billion-dollar energy infrastructure project, than any other state.

Drinking Water System Improvement Act (Approved unanimously)

Bipartisan legislation championed by Shimkus would authorize \$8 billion over 5 years for state administered loans to drinking water system operators, and maintains requirements that American-made iron and steel are to be used in the projects funded by taxpayers.

Every day in the U.S., 42 billion gallons of treated drinking water are delivered to more than 299 million people by one million miles of pipes. While maintaining this water infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of state and local governments, the federal government provides invaluable assistance to help water systems finance capital improvements and comply with safety and environmental standards.