

THE BDO GOVCON WEEK AHEAD - SEPTEMBER 2020

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September 21, 2020

State Watchdogs Plan to Monitor Data Accuracy of COVID-19 Reporting: In many states, COVID-19 data presented to the public has been conflicting and confusing. Concerned about the accuracy and uniformity of COVID-19 data, a bipartisan coalition of fiscal watchdogs have banded together to help ensure states are consistently compiling and tracking information.

The state auditors will take a close look at how state health officials are collecting, reporting and monitoring data. The goal is to ensure that information presented to the public is consistent and accurate, allow apples-to-apples comparisons among states, and help officials get a better handle on the issue if the pandemic gets worse in the coming months or in the event of a future disaster. Auditors from the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 11 states have joined the effort. The auditors plan to release the findings from their states to the public as soon as their work is completed.

House Passes Bipartisan Bill to Boost Budget Transparency: The House voted 402-1 to clear the “Congressional Budget Justification Transparency Act,” which would amend a 2006 law to increase the public’s access to federal agencies’ congressional budget requests by putting them on various federal websites (Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz., was the only lawmaker to vote against the bill). There is a companion version in the Senate, which the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee reported favorably to the full chamber on March 2, 2020.

Supply Chain Integrity Gaps Exposed – How Will the Defense Department Course Correct? On Thursday, October 1, 2020, The Honorable Ellen M. Lord, Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition & Sustainment, will testify before the Senate Armed

Services Committee. She will likely dive further into her July 16, 2020, Reagan Foundation “fireside chat” interview wherein she disclosed significant supply chain limitations exposed by COVID-19. In the interim, the Defense Department has course corrected by increasing the use of Defense Production Act Authority (DPA), higher simplifying acquisition thresholds, and expediting the use of technologies that had been backlogged in a modernization cue for too long.

September 14, 2020

September is National Preparedness Month: Disasters don’t wait. Make your plan today. September is National Preparedness Month (NPM) and a great time to plan for and practice safety with your family, co-workers, school, and neighbors. Consider taking the following steps this month to strengthen your knowledge of preparedness:

- **Make A Plan:** Talk with your family and create an emergency plan.
- **Build A Kit:** Identify and set aside emergency supplies to keep at home. Don’t forget to pack supplies in case you need to leave your home or evacuate.
- **Prepare for Disasters:** Know what disasters and hazards could affect your area and take steps to prepare for them.
- **Teach Youth About Preparedness:** Share preparedness advice with your kids and their friends. These tips about staying safe can be fun and easy!

Visit www.ready.gov/september to learn more about NPM and find tools, tips, and resources to help you stay safe and participate. To learn more about personal and community preparedness, please visit this link.

Congressional Watchdog Finds Customs Deploying Biometric Tech at Ports Without Fully Addressing Privacy

Requirements: A new audit shows Customs and Border Protection (CBP) isn’t providing enough transparency to travelers regarding facial recognition technology at ports. CBP failed to provide complete and accurate privacy notices and conduct appropriate audits to ensure the agency’s facial recognition technology used for identity checks complied with privacy standards.

A Government Accountability Office audit published on September 2, 2020, describes shoddy communication practices relating to how CBP informs the public of its facial recognition program, such as the use of signs with inaccurate information or signs that are hard to see at ports of entry, including land border crossings, international airports, and seaports. CBP has also audited just one of its 27 airline partners involved in deploying facial recognition technology to determine whether they are complying with privacy policies.

OMB Starts Clock on Agencies Implementing Policies to Welcome Public Security Research: Federal agencies now have 180 days to publish and operationalize coordinated vulnerability disclosure policies (VDP) aimed at encouraging ethical hackers to submit reports of weaknesses they find in government systems. The VDP initiative represents a big cultural change for the government. It is meant to open communication channels between agencies and security researchers who might otherwise be reluctant to share vulnerabilities they find due to fear of prosecution under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act or are demoralized by a lack of responsiveness when they do.

The OMB memo lays out a timetable for actions federal agencies and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency need to take over in the next year in order to fully implement policies that would promise researchers that agencies will not pursue legal action if they act within certain parameters, as well as establishing when researchers can expect their reports to be resolved.