**Congress** – Both the House and Senate have returned to Washington to address outstanding legislative issues, and of course really get into campaign mode for the elections next November.

At the top of the list is FY20 appropriation bills. Other than a continuing resolution till November 21, 2019 not a single appropriation bill has been signed into law. Despite an agreement between Congress and the White House on the top-line funding numbers for defense and non-defense spending, negotiations continue on how those amounts are divided among the individual bills. Republican leaders in the Senate want to move defense spending first even though there seems to be some bipartisan agreement on other spending bills like transportation. Additionally, there are still outstanding disagreements on “poison pill” riders that both Congress and the White House agreed were not to be in any appropriation bills. And, there is the matter of spending on the southern border wall that shut the federal government down last year. The President is asking for additional amounts to build more of the wall, but Congress is not in agreement on how much and for what elements to direct funding towards - new construction on a wall or rebuilding existing parts of border infrastructure and operations. Additionally, the Democrats continued impeachment investigations will likely add to an already unpleasant working environment on Capitol Hill.

Other bills that Congress will look to address this year include gun legislation to expand background checks, a defense authorization bill, trade agreement between the US, Mexico, and Canada, and federal higher education policy. There is also a good chance that Congress will need to pass another continuing resolution to keep parts of the federal government open beyond November 21.