

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Plaskett Satisfied With Spending Bill Averting Government Shutdown; Expresses Concern With PR Health Care Funding

VIC News / **Published On May 02, 2017 08:49 PM /**

Staff **May 02, 2017**



Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett on Tuesday issued a statement relative to the recent spending bill that averted a shutdown of the U.S. government.

Congressional leaders on Sunday reached a bipartisan agreement to fund the government through September, ending any suspense about a possible government shutdown.

"This spending agreement avoids another disruptive government shutdown and illustrate Democrats' continued commitment to hardworking American families. The bill continues funding for critical health research, for programs that ensure women's' right to reproductive health and to restoring year-round Pell Grants for low-income students, as well as others," Ms. Plaskett said.

The delegate to Congress also highlighted her concerns with the \$295 million allocated to Puerto Rico to supplement the island's healthcare services.

"Because of Puerto Rico's massive debt problem, it has spent its initial supplemental Medicaid funding under the Affordable Care Act at a faster rate than the other territories. While the other territories will face the same problem due to the disparities in funding compared to states, when they reach the Medicaid "fiscal cliff" in September of 2019, this legislation only allocates Puerto Rico enough funds to be able to operate their Medicaid program until that date," Ms. Plaskett said.

The bill includes increased funding for the military and for border security. But it does not include funding for the wall that President Donald Trump wants to build along the border with Mexico, one of his major campaign promises.

The spending package would be the first significant bipartisan measure approved by Congress during the Trump presidency. Republicans, despite having control of both houses of Congress and the White House, were unable to pass any marquee legislation in the president's first 100 days.