Businesses fret as Congress flirts with debt default

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deadline, Congress also must renew funding for the government to avoid a shutdown. Lawmakers have 12 work days scheduled in September once they get back after Labor Day, making for a potential nail-biter in the second half of the

"We are very concerned," said Anthony Cimino, senior vice president and head of government affairs at the Financial Services Roundtable, which represents financial services companies. While previous rounds of debt-ceiling standoffs have been resolved and disaster avoided right at deadline, "I don't believe we should be taking anything for granted."

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"Failure to raise the debt ceiling would be a major unforced error which could have terrible consequences for US financial markets and the economy," said J.D. Foster, senior vice president of the economic policy division and chief economist of the US Chamber of Commerce, the biggest business lobby in town, which has been among the most active pressing the issue with key lawmakers. "The fact is nobody can say with confidence what would happen, but the risk and danger is such that no one can responsibly suggest a justification for not raising the debt ceiling on a timely basis."

the debt ceiling has become one of Washington's most politically fraught exercises, a perennial flash point in the ideological government spending and debt

During Barack Obama's

Mnuchin has pushed Congress to pass a so-called "clean" debtlimit increase, free of other policy changes, and unsuccessfully tried to prod lawmakers to do it before the August recess. But the message has been mixed from elsewhere in the White House: Trump's budget chief, Mick Mulvaney, made comments supporting a debt ceiling increase with riders designed to spur "spending reforms." Earlier this month, he reversed course and said he, too, supports Congress passing "the simplest debt ceiling increase we can get."

that the political standoff could be more intense than ever this year, some observers say. Members of the conservative House

Once a routine vote, raising

White House tenure, conservatives started using the need to raise the spending cap as leverage to press for spending cuts to rein in the country's ever-growing debt. In 2011, the standoff led Standard & Poor's to downgrade the country's credit rating from its coveted AAA status. Treasury Secretary Steven

But there is reason to worry

Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell, who exchanged criticisms with President Trump last week, said "there is zero chance - no chance - we will not raise the debt ceiling."

Freedom Caucus are making noise about demanding various policy priorities as a condition for voting on an increase. Among those demands are making as much as \$250 billion in spending cuts and including a complicated set of changes that would require Treasury to prioritize spending on debt payments over everything else as the debt ceiling nears, while authorizing the president to sell assets to keep the debt under

Yet those are unlikely to fly with Democrats, who will very likely be needed to raise the ceiling in the Senate since it will require 60 votes, unless GOP leaders decide to use a complex procedure known as reconcilia-

On top of that, the players are different than in debt ceiling negotiations in the recent past. With a Republican in the White House, Democrats have

less incentive to play nice and get this done. Some Democrats have signaled they want their own policy concessions — such as funding payments to insurance companies that provide plans on the Affordable Care Act's exchanges to cover the at one another in the press," he added, nodding to the criticisms exchanged last week between McConnell and Trump. McConnell sparked the in-

traparty drama when he chided

Trump for having "excessive ex-

pectations" about how quickly

You are lacking a lot of the so-called adults in the room this time.

CHRIS KRUEGER, a Washington analyst at the Cowen Washington Research Group

costs of deductibles and co-pays for low-income policyholders.

"You are lacking a lot of the so-called adults in the room this time," said Chris Krueger, a Washington analyst at the Cowen Washington Research Group. And in certain cases, "the actors who are on the same team are throwing haymakers

Congress can move legislation, which he credited to Trump's status as a political neophyte. Trump did not take the criticism well: He launched days of Twitter insults at McConnell over his failure to move Trump's agenda, especially repealing the Affordable Care Act.

Trump, in particular, injects

an added element of uncertainty, lobbyists say. He could prove to be an asset in prodding reluctant conservative Republicans to vote to lift the cap. But he also could just as easily shoot off a tweet or off-the-cut comment that undermines deal-making on the Hill, as happened during the health care debate.

Given the stakes and Democrats' past criticism of their GOP colleagues for trying to hold the debt ceiling hostage, Isaac Boltansky, an analyst with Compass Point Research & Trading, figures the debt ceiling will get raised, cleanly, with the help of Democrats in September. But he thinks the odds are pretty good that Congress won't reach a funding deal in time to keep the government from shutting down.

A shutdown carries its own economic consequences: For instance, the 16-day shutdown in 2013 cost the US economy \$24 billion in lost economic output, according to an S&P estimate.

But Boltansky says a shutdown this fall could have an additional "psychological impact" that could, among other things, stall that strong stock market performance Trump enjoys bragging about.

"If Congress can't keep the lights on, how are they going to pass tax reform and infrastructure and all of the other things?" said Boltansky.

On the debt ceiling, some in the business community are more sanguine than others. One financial industry executive said he felt confident that White House economic adviser Gary Cohn, Mnuchin, House Speaker Paul Ryan, and McConnell all understand the stakes and will figure out how to raise the debt ceiling.

"Maybe it gets done later than we would like . . . [but] this gets done," the executive said.

 $Victoria\ McGrane$ can be reached at victoria.mcgrane@globe.com. Follow her on

Twitter @vgmac.

BOSTON HARBOR HOTEL

Public Announcement Concerning a Proposed Health Care Project Lahey Health System, Inc., located at 41 Mall Road, Burlington, MA 01805 (the parent of Lahey Clinic Hospital, Inc., 41 Mall Road, Burlington, MA 01805, Northeast Hospital Corp., 85 Herrick Street, Beverly MA 01915, and Winchester Hospital, 41 Highland Avenue, Winchester, MA 01890), CareGroup, Inc. located at 109 Brookline Avenue, Boston, MA 02215 (the parent of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Inc., 330 Brookline Avenue, Boston, MA 02215 (which in turn includes Beth Israel Deaconess Hospi tal-Milton, Inc., 199 Reedsdale Road, Milton, MA 02186, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital – Needhan Inc., 148 Chestnut Street, Needham, MA 02492, and Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital – Plymouth, Inc 275 Sandwich Street, Plymouth, MA 02360), New England Baptist Hospital, 125 Parker Hill Road, Bostor MA 02120, and Mount Auburn Hospital, 330 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138), and Seacoas Regional Health Systems, Inc., located at 25 Highland Avenue, Newburyport, MA 01950 (the parent o Anna Jaques Hospital, 25 Highland Avenue, Newburyport, MA 01950)(collectively the "Applicant"), inten to file an Application for Determination of Need ("Application") relative to a proposed affiliation involving the Applicant (the "Project"). The Applicant is submitting its Application as it intends to affiliate to creat a new comprehensive, distributed, high quality and high-value non-profit healthcare delivery system t serve patients throughout Eastern Massachusetts. To facilitate the level of economic and clinical integra tion required to better manage the health of a broad population and meaningfully impact care deliver in the state, the Project would establish a new parent company that will function as the sole corporati member of each hospital, and will also include the participation of the organizations' accountable car organizations. The Total Value of the Project is estimated to be approximately \$5,323,154,000. There i not expected to be any anticipated price or service impacts on the Applicant's existing Patient Panel. Any ten Taxpayers of Massachusetts may register in connection with the intended Application or amendmen by no later than October 16, 2017, by contacting the Department of Public Health Determination of Neer Program, 250 Washington Street, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02108.

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