

Hicks-Ray Associates

Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success



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TO: WESTCAS Membership
FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates
SUBJECT: Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas

Seven days till Christmas with all the traditional sights and sounds of the season. Last minute shopping. Getting ready for the arrival of friends and family. Preparing special food. Christmas concerts and pageants. And last but not least, the annual theatrics of, “will Congress and the Administration allow the government to shut down two days before Christmas?”

Perhaps the best thing with regard to a government shutdown is that we don’t have to wait until Christmas morning to find out what is inside the wrapped package. That is because the current Continuing Resolution [CR] keeping the government open expires at midnight on Friday, December 22nd. Also, any great play needs an opening act and this week that will be provided by House and Senate debate and passage of the tax reform legislation on Tuesday and Wednesday. But when this task is completed and the bill signed into law by President Trump, Congress must still resolve the issue of how to keep the government open and remain on track to adjourn before Christmas.

Last week House Appropriators unveiled a CR that extends to January 19, 2018. There are almost certainly enough votes in the House to pass this version but not in the Senate where 60 votes are required to bring legislation to the House floor for debate. So, something’s got to give.

Republicans are insisting on additional FY18 funding for Defense over and above Congressional spending caps that were established in 2015. Democrats pledge to stall any CR until an equal increase is provided for non-defense discretionary spending. Other issues Democrats wish to see addressed include but are not limited to assuring the legal status of “Dreamers,” and extension of the Child Health Insurance Program.

With the first part of this week taken up with passage of the tax bill, there will be at best only about 2-3 days for the Congress to resolve the CR issue. If they can’t pass a CR that extends into next year, then everybody will be stuck in Washington over Christmas. While public opinion might find such a turn of events to be acceptable there is much to be said for a brief break to allow tempers to cool before the Congress reconvenes for its 2018 session on January 3.

WESTCAS is hard at work on the agenda and the topics that will be addressed during the Federal Issues Workshop in Phoenix scheduled for February 22. What is about to happen in DC this week will set the table for those issues and for our discussion in Phoenix. We hope to see you there!

So, enjoy the show this week in Washington. The curtain goes up today.

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