

# Hicks-Ray Associates

*Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success*



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TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: Congress In August

In astronomical terms the “dog days of summer” occur during the period that Sirius the Dog Star rises the same time as the sun, which is July 3 through August 11. But in political terms “dog days” may be defined as just about any time in August and before Labor Day. This is almost always a period of hot, muggy weather in Washington and is a time Congress wants to be anywhere but D.C.

The House of Representatives adjourned for the summer on July 26 until the day after Labor Day. But the Senate is taking a different approach. From August 1 through August 14 the Senate has met or is scheduled to meet on August 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, and 14. However, it should be noted that five of those six days were “pro-forma” meetings. A good example of how this works was last Friday, August 3 when the Senate went into session at 10:30:31 AM and adjourned 33 seconds later at 10:31:04 AM.

All of this could change once the Senate returns to full daily sessions. A mid-August return to work was the decision of Senate Republican Leader McConnell who wishes to “encourage” his colleagues, particularly Democratic ones, to get down to the work of voting for Trump judicial nominees along with those nominated for Executive Branch jobs. A willingness to at least partially remove the logjam blocking these nominations might result in more days in recess for the last half of August. But perhaps not, particularly since Senators in Washington DC can’t personally campaign in their home states for re-election.

The concept of “pro-forma” sessions of the Congress is fascinating. Sort of like you showing up alone for work at your agency or firm for 31 seconds and the entire staff getting credit for a full day’s work. Regardless of meeting during the “dog days” Congress returns to work on the Tuesday after Labor Day.

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