



washington dc update

Elections and Their Consequences

November 1, 2010

Please stay tuned for details on the WESTCAS post-election conference call, sponsored by the Legislative Committee. This call will discuss the implications of the vote and consider the range of options for how WESTCAS can be most effective during the lame duck session of Congress and the early days of the 112th Congress. Here are three interesting potential scenarios that have not received much attention in the mainstream press but which you need to be aware of:

- Three of the Senate elections tomorrow in Delaware, West Virginia, and Illinois will result in the winners being seated immediately during the lame duck session of Congress. This is because these three seats are to fill what is considered current “vacancies.” Current polling has the Democratic candidates ahead in Delaware and West Virginia with the Republican narrowly ahead in Illinois. You will recall that 60 votes are needed in the Senate for any legislation to advance. All three of the current seats are held by Democrats. Anything that moves the Dems further away from the 60 votes they need is significant.
- The current national debt limit of \$14.294 trillion will be reached by mid-year, 2011. It will be interesting to see what kind of fiscal restraint is required by Republicans before they will vote to expand this limit.
- Some Republicans are calling for a shut-down of the Federal government if Federal spending agreements can’t be reached. But other Republicans are calling for the use of ongoing Continuing Resolutions that would keep the government open but only at the previous year’s spending level. Some even suggest that these CR’s should be automatic in the event of a failure to reach agreement on spending and not have to be passed by the Congress at all.
- The “earmark moratorium” of House Republicans is virtually certain to be continued should they take over the majority in the 112th Congress. So far, House Democrats and both parties in the Senate have not agreed to join in such a moratorium. It isn’t clear to us how public works projects get done without some form of Congressional earmarking.

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