

Hicks-Ray Associates

Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success



September 6, 2016

TO: WESTCAS MEMBERSHIP

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: Congress Returns

The House and the Senate return to session today after being in recess since mid-July. The only near certainty at the moment is that they will adjourn once again later this month until after the general election on November 8. Everything else is a huge question mark.

FY17 Continuing Resolution

The new Federal fiscal year begins on October 1. Since there is no way that the Congress can complete most if not all of the spending bills by then, a CR will be needed. This raises the question; “for how long.” Most House and Senate Republicans prefer a six-month CR that lasts into March of 2017. They argue that a shorter term CR will only ensure a lame duck omnibus bill in December that will be crammed full of special interests’ provisions and only add to the national debt. Democrats, on the other hand, insist on a shorter-term CR ending before the New Year and they have vowed to filibuster any longer term extension.

If this comes to pass, we will be back to the old question of “which party is responsible for the government shutting down?” That is a question that Republicans do not want asked during this election season when control of the Congress is at stake. Another wild card is the 40 Member House “Freedom Caucus” made up of deficit hawk Republicans. They are adamantly opposed to a short-term CR and may not support any shorter measure. You will recall that Speaker Ryan’s House majority becomes perilously thin if you subtract 40 votes from his total.

Stay tuned because we are going to be witnessing a real test of wills in the Congress.

Possible Movement of WRDA on the House Floor

Late last week, the Senate Republican Leadership teed up the Senate WRDA bill for possible floor debate this week. There are various hurdles that still have to be overcome for this to occur including debate on other issues such as Zika funding and Defense Authorization, plus a requirement by Majority Leader McConnell that 60 Senators vote to bring WRDA to the floor. Despite these procedural hurdles, this represents an important step because it gives Senate Leaders the ability to control issues like the number and nature of amendments offered during the debate.

A new “Managers Amendment” version of the Senate WRDA bill is in circulation and Hicks-Ray will be sending you an update on that specific piece of legislation and the implications for WESTCAS members in the Arid West. The exciting thing is that there is a real possibility that floor time will be found for a Senate debate on WRDA. That has the potential to move the bill one big step towards a House/Senate conference on the bill.

The only guarantee is that this won’t be boring.

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