

# Hicks-Ray Associates

*Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success*



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November 17, 2016

TO: WESTCAS Membership  
FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates  
SUBJECT: What A Difference A Week Makes

This time last week the country was waking up to election results that most had not foreseen. Some professional prognosticators now claim that they knew what was going to happen all along. Others, with the benefit of hindsight now fully believe that they knew in advance what would happen. But most of us were quite frankly surprised as is often the case with politics.

But whether we are in the surprised or all-knowing group, the fact is that the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress that convenes the first week of January will have Republican majorities in both the House and the Senate and on January 20, 2017, Donald Trump will be sworn into office as our next President. There is some talk of Secretary Clinton winning the popular vote as opposed to President-Elect Trump winning the Electoral College. But for those who dislike our system of electing Presidents that can only be changed by a vote of two-thirds of the Congress and ratification of three-quarters of the States [38]. Take a look at the sea of red that is part of the election maps that are currently on display in the media and it's hard to see how you get to 38 states to ratify a Constitutional amendment to replace the Electoral College by a popular vote.

Before the Trump Administration and the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress get down to work the "end-game" of the Obama Administration and the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress must be played out. Before the elections many assumed that we could be headed for a Democratic President and a Democratic majority in the Senate. This was expected to play a large role in the negotiations that will determine the contents of the lame duck "Omnibus" legislation. That would have been an encouragement for Republicans to try to strike a deal while they remained the majority in both Houses of Congress.

But that wisdom has now been turned on its head with Republicans in the catbirds seat. If they dislike what Democrats are proposing for inclusion in the Omnibus they could simply put everything on a short-term Continuing Resolution into the New Year when they will hold both the Presidency and the majority in both the House and Senate. The only issue that has to be addressed is the expiration of the current CR on December 9<sup>th</sup>. At that point Congress will have to address the 10 unpassed FY17 Appropriations Subcommittee bills or go to a series of very short-term CR's to see if something can be worked out by the target adjournment date of December 16.

It is anybody's guess where this leaves issues such as a final version of WRDA that is currently being worked on by House and Senate Committee staff. There are only 13 legislative days left in the Congressional year and that is precious little time to get much done other than bringing the FY17 funding cycle to a conclusion. Now that Congress is back in session discussions on what might be accomplished over the next month are ongoing between House and Senate Leaders. We'll stay tuned and keep you updated.

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Fred Hicks - 703.866.4290  
P.O. Box 2115  
Springfield, VA 22152-0115  
[fred@hicks-ray.com](mailto:fred@hicks-ray.com)

Tom Ray - 254.855.0880  
P.O. Box 955  
Waco, TX 76703-0955  
[tom@hicks-ray.com](mailto:tom@hicks-ray.com)