

Hicks-Ray Associates

Implementing Strategies, Achieving Success



July 25, 2017

TO: WESTCAS Membership

FROM: Hicks-Ray Associates

SUBJECT: Should They Stay Or Should They Go?

Many of you will recall the hit song from the early 1980's recorded by "The Clash" titled, "Should I stay or should I go?" Both Houses of Congress, and particularly the Senate this week, are trying to answer much the same question but this time the issue is whether to begin the five + week Congressional recess on schedule beginning Friday or to continue in session for all or part of the month of August.

The Senate will hold votes today concerning the process of repealing the Affordable Care Act. Based on the results we'll have a much better idea of the potential for the Senate to stay in session and for the House to remain as well. If the votes to proceed to debate on the repeal and replace issue succeed then the potential for an August session greatly increases for both Houses of the Congress. If the vote fails, then the question will be how much can be accomplished by forgoing the traditional summer recess.

Some have pointed out that even without the Affordable Care Act many items remain on the Congressional plate including the still huge backlog on Trump nominees for Federal Executive Branch positions and Federal judgeships, as well as tax reform and the long-awaited infrastructure bill. The correct balance of a summer of discontent with Members cooped up together on Capitol Hill versus a month spent back in States and Congressional Districts with restive voters is something that Speaker Ryan and Leader McConnell will have to figure out.

One interesting development this week is the emergence of a House "minibus Appropriations" bill that packages five Appropriations Subcommittee bills into a single bill: FY18 Defense, Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, Legislative Branch, and Energy and Water Appropriations. The bill is titled H.R. 3219, the "Make America Secure Act." The House Rules Committee meets this afternoon to finalize a Rule for House floor debate with Wednesday and Thursday.

Packaging these five FY18 Appropriations Subcommittee bills into a single package and bringing them to the House floor the day before the beginning of the summer recess is one strategy to encourage Members to limit debate and to reduce the appetite for offering amendments during consideration. Stay tuned. It's going to be an interesting week.

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