



# *SBLC WEEKLY*

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## ***DEBT CEILING***

Unfortunately, nothing to report. We will see how the stock market handles the situation.

## ***OTHER BUSINESS***

I expected the House to complete work on a host of bills by now. From consumer protection safety law relief to tort reform to regulatory relief, I thought the House would load up the Senate queue. The House started the year with an ambition schedule of hearings.

While I have been under no illusion that the Senate was going to do anything, at least if the bills were through the House, we could focus our energies on convincing the Senate to pass one or some of them. Daunting task, but you never know, until you try.

This Congress, from its recess pattern to legislative rules, has broken with the traditional operations and habits of Washington. I had hoped it would bend to a classic Washington mindset – “Oh my gosh, the summer recess is two weeks away, we better move X initiative to the next level in the process.”

However, it looks like the debt ceiling debate has diverted their attention, even those Senators and Representatives not directly involved in the discussions.

At the moment, there is nothing in which we are interested on the House calendar for this week, except another embarrassing short-term extension of some Small Business Administration programs. Embarrassing because Congress struggles with simple renewals of SBA programs.

The Senate Majority Leader has indicated he is unlikely to tie up the Senate floor calendar with activity. (Somehow that sentence strikes me as an only in Washington statement.)

One of the few bills that has gotten to a point it might actually become law is patent system reform. Both chambers have passed versions and the differences are reconcilable.

## ***SMALL BUSINESS LENDING FUND***

Last fall, the President signed into law the Small Business Jobs Act. It included a provision to create a new \$30 *billion* fund to entice smaller

lenders to lend to small business. While of the mind we will take any help we can get, I was not bubbling over with enthusiasm that the fund was going to be a game changer.

There were a myriad of reasons for my skepticism, ranging from the conditions the lenders have to meet to be eligible to the nature of the credit needs of the small business community.

Ten months later – the Administration has announced 23 community banks have now received a total of \$337 *million* in SBLF funding. (A billion is 1000 million ☺) Cup half full: At least it is \$337 million more than nothing. Cup almost empty: Too late for many.