



SBLC REPORT

July 22, 2013

Volume XIV Issue 18

HEALTH CARE REFORM REFORM

The House passed two bills that would delay implementation of the health care reform law. One is the Fairness for American Families Act, H.R. 2668, introduced by Representative Todd Young (R-IN), which would provide a one-year delay in the imposition of the individual health insurance mandate penalties. Another is the Authority for Mandate Delay Act, H.R. 2667, introduced by Representative Tim Griffin (R-AZ), which would delay the application of the employer health insurance mandate for one year. We expected them to pass largely on party line votes but the interesting fact, as we suggested in the last Report, was how many Democrats would join the majority. Thirty-five voted to delay the employer mandate, twenty-two voted to delay the individual mandate.

To repeat our observation from the last Report, the Senate is not likely to consider those bills "as is" (at least initially.) The question is whether the Senate can be persuaded (think the Form 1099 scenario when the waves of pressure kept building) to take action. The first stage of activity will probably take the form of

amendments to other legislative vehicles. We will probably see riders attached to various appropriations bills but given the low probability for passage of appropriations bill this year (not much different from previous years) those are not likely candidates for success. Proponents will look for a solid logical legislative vehicle in the Senate as an amendment platform. The temperature of the Senate will be taken on those votes. Our guess is that by October it will be hot enough.

TAKING ANOTHER RUN AT IT

The players are beginning to lay the groundwork for a fall effort to fix the Postal Service's problems.

House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa (R-CA) has introduced a new bill in the House. His committee will mark up and presumably approve the bill this week. A new bipartisan bill is expected in the Senate. With two weeks until the summer vacation, nothing is going to happen soon.

There are a lot of constituencies with irons in this fire, so it is difficult to sort out a small business position.

Pension benefit responsibilities, rural post office closings and weekend delivery are the headline grabbers but there are a lot of "nitty-gritty" reform provisions that can shape the future of the Postal Service.

IT ALMOST GOES WITHOUT SAYING

But we will say it anyway, the Postal Service reform is just another addition to the legislative docket for the fall. Either this fall is going to be the miracle season, or we are going get tired of the same impasse meal served every day.

The big dog is the debt ceiling increase discussion. It pulls with it the fates of the tax reform and debt reduction efforts.

Remember the urgency of immigration reform? Fall.

Farm bill? Fall.

Oh yeah, and then there are those appropriations bills and the Congress' constitutional duty to fund the government for the fiscal year that begins in October? Winter.