



# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** IEDA Board  
**FROM:** Ed Gerak  
**RE:** Federal Legislative Committee Report  
**DATE:** June 14, 2024

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## Hill Update

**HR 7776** – The Help Hoover Dam Act unanimously passed out of the House Natural Resources Committee mark-up. It is now eligible for unanimous consent (or the House Suspension Calendar). There is discussion of a year end omnibus bill for natural resources.

**S. 4016** – It was bittersweet that I received the hearing request letter on June 12<sup>th</sup>, as it was followed shortly after by an email that it was Chris Phalen’s last day in the Sinema Office. The letter was signed by all six senators representing AZ, CA & NV. No new yet on where Chris is going, but it looks like Sam(atha) Edwards will be taking up the cause. I need to reach out to Sam and try to keep the momentum going.

**HR 7872** – The Colorado River Salinity Control Fix Act moved out of markup with 7776. It looks to address a longstanding imbalance in the Lower Basin Fund which funds salinity control projects

**Must Pass Legislation** – With the House and Senate out for all of August and October, and given that it is an election year, we are running out of must pass legislation to glob onto. NDAA, WRDA & the Farm Bill all remain to be passed, but most are not relevant to our bill. There is discussion of an omnibus bill, especially one related to water and power issues that is our best path to getting the Help Hoover Dam bill passed. This may include HR 4045, which has a provision to make all hydropower renewable, which could help increase REC valuations.

**Annual Congressional Baseball Game** – Despite the R’s stomping the D’s 31-11, the winners (or losers) seemed to be the activists that stormed the field with shirts reading “End Fossil Fuels”.

**G7 Loan to Ukraine** – They agreed to loan Ukraine \$50B in frozen Russian assets to help with the war. Biden also signed a 10 year security pact with Ukraine.

**AG Contempt** – Merrick Garland was voted to be in contempt by House Republicans (216-207) over failure to release an audio file of President Biden. Ironically, they already had transcripts of the recording. Only possible outcome is a formal censor of the Attorney General. Speculation is that the recording was being sought after to reflect the President’s mental (cognitive) state.

### **Election Issues**

**Ron Brownstein (APPA)** – The US political system is closely, but deeply divided. From 1896-1968, 58 out of 72 years saw one party control. But recently, no party has controlled the Senate for more than 8 consecutive years since 1980. We are more sorted than any time in history. In 2000, Joe Biden won 91 or the largest 100 counties. Donald Trump won 2,500 of the other 3,000 counties. Of the counties Joe Biden won, they account for 70% of the GDP in the US.

Regarding the 2024 election, the Democratic coalition is fracturing more than the Republican. President Biden is holding white voters than 2020, but Trump is running better with blacks and Latinos. Minorities are blaming Biden for the economy and some are shifting towards Trump, despite some anti-immigration policies. While Republicans dominate in the older electorate, Biden is holding those votes better and losing younger voters. Younger men are moving towards Trump, while younger women are still in Biden’s camp (likely due to abortion issue). What might be a bump for Biden in the future, his administration will negotiate Medicare costs in September.

The voters in states have tended not to vary much, with 80% of the states voting the same way for some time. There are only seven principle swing states in play; Georgia, North Carolina, Nevada, Arizona, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Virginia and Minnesota are outside shots, in fact, recent polling in Virginia showed a virtual dead heat.

Brownstein predicts that a larger turnout will likely benefit Trump (with the most apathetic on voting favoring Trump). Biden will need to convince people that he is up for the job, which wasn't helped by the recent Washington Post article about his cognitive decline). Republicans seem to be most worried about RFK Jr., while the Democrats are worried about Stein and Cornell West. It is possible that 200K people from 5 or 6 states will decide the outcome of the election.

Down ballot, it is expected that the House & Senate will likely follow the Presidential vote and that the Senate could be flipped with Democrats losing 2 of 3 seats (OH, WV & MT). In the last 66 instances, only one senate victory was opposite of the presidential vote in that state. If this occurs, due to historical voting and the six-year cycle, the Republicans could lock in the Senate until 2030.

Moving forward, expect power will change hands frequently. Individual tax cuts end in 2025, so the election has consequences on your wallet. Trumps immigration policy plans to deport 11M people. Trump is skeptical on traditional alliances, and both are protectionists. It is unlikely that current regulatory policies will be the same for now until 2032.

**VP Pick** – Trump hinted that VP pick was selected but coyly mentioned that he would announce them at the Republican National Convention. The short list is reported to include; Senator J.D. Vance (OH), Senator Marco Rubio (FL), North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, Senator Tim Scott (SC), Ben Carson, Rep. Elise Stephanik (NY), Rep. Bryon Donalds (FL), and Senator Tom Cotton (AR).

**Convictions** – Both former President Trump (34) and Hunter Biden (3) received felony convictions recently. Response to the cases/trials have been mixed from the defendants and also from both sides of the aisle. Polling shows a decline in Trump support, but likely less than expected (1+ point swing towards Biden, but Trump support remained flat). How Joe Biden reacted to the conviction may give him a bump, but it is too early to tell. Expect both to be brought up in future debates.

**Abortion**– The Supreme Court unanimously ruled prosecutors lacked standing to sue over FDA regulations of mifepristone. Another abortion case is still pending, arguing over Idaho's strict abortion ban. How the timing and ruling of the decision impacts the election is unknown, but abortion as an election issue hasn't been as prominent as people expected.