



NCDA Monthly Report

Dear Paul,

In August, we continued our work to identify the remaining legislative priorities for the year and to determine which offices we need to build stronger relationships with to reach NCDA's policy goals.

Advocacy Updates

The month of August is traditionally a quiet one here in DC. Particularly in an election year, both chambers are eager to get back to their districts to successfully campaign for reelection. However, this year was different. The House left at the beginning of August, but the Senate was in session for a little more than half the month. The consensus being that it was a political calculation by Majority Leader McConnell to keep vulnerable Democrats in DC in order prevent them from spending too much time campaigning. His office asserts that it was because they had a lot on their plate that they wanted to get done. At the end of the day, the only real accomplishments have been around confirming nominees.

When Congress gets back there will be several pressing issues on their plate. Each of them with unique challenges that will strain that chances of bipartisan solutions. The biggest issue that will begin on the first day of work in September, is the confirmation of Supreme Court Nominee, Judge Kavanaugh. Democrats and their base are vehemently opposed to his nomination but for all their anger there is very little that they can do to stop him from being confirmed to sit on the court. The futility of their anger and efforts to block him will likely lead to very contentious confirmation hearings and may poison the well for future bipartisanship. This could prove very problematic given the other issues that must be tackled.

In September, the authorization for the FAA runs out. This means that they either need to pass the full authorization package or a short-term extension, there are opponents to both options. The funding for the government also runs out in September. At this rate, it does not look like all the funding bills will be passed by the end of the month, so likely a short-term extension will be required, providing leverage for disgruntled members of the GOP. There is also the farm bill that is working its way through Congress. There are key differences between the Senate and House versions, meaning that the conference to reconcile differences will be tricky. The Senate passed a more moderate version of the bill and remains to be seen whether the more conservative factions of the GOP will agree to it. At the drafting of this report, a trade deal is still in the works with Canada and Mexico. If there is a deal reached, it'll have to go to Congress, and the Administration is pushing for this to occur prior to the election. The election that is overshadowing all these policy decisions.

In the month of August, our team continued to work to identify which offices in the House we need to seek to build strong relationships with to secure policy wins on the issue of properly reforming the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). To that end, we met with the other half of the leadership on the House Subcommittee that oversees

personnel issues and met with Representative Mike Coffman's (R-CO) office. He indicated that the counseling language in the NDAA regarding TAP didn't come from his office but that any work regarding TAP would have his office's support. Based on our two meetings with staff this month and last month, the subcommittee does not seem to have plans to work on this issue before the year is over but both sides are receptive to recommendations for continued improvement, even if they themselves aren't driving the work on the issue. This is helpful and in the coming months we will look to secure a meeting with Representative Bacon's office, who seems to be driving the issue on the House side.

Until next month,

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