

The Eleventh Hour for Congress and the Nation

The Congress really wants to go home and they don't want to come back until November – after the elections.

But, as I write this, they are tied up in knots on some important issues and cannot leave until at least some of them are brought to closure:

- They must **pass a bill** that will authorize spending levels for government agencies at least until they return in November. Otherwise much of the government will shut down on October 1. But the Democrats and Republicans do not agree on appropriate spending levels and other fiscal matters.
- Both parties want to include in the budget a provision that would provide some **funding to combat the Zika virus**. However, Democrats want the funding to be available for use by *Planned Parenthood* clinics, which most Republicans object to.
- Both parties have said that they want to **overturn President Obama's veto** of the bill they passed that would allow victims of the 9/11 attacks to sue foreign governments (like Saudi Arabia) if they are found complicit in the 9/11 attack. This would be the first Obama veto overturned by the Congress in his eight years as President.
- Many Republicans want to **impeach IRS Commissioner John Koskinen** for being in charge of the agency that blocked some conservative political organizations from receiving tax exempt status based solely on the names of their organizations, and then destroyed e-mail evidence about the matter.
- Republicans want to find a way to **prevent the US Department of Education from implementing regulations** on Title I funding distribution that they believe contradict language in *Every Child Succeeds Act* that gave local districts the power to determine their own method for equitably distributing Title I dollars. But Democrats see the bill in a different light.
- Some Republicans, led by Senator Cruz from Texas, want to block President Obama's intention to **move oversight over the internet** from the United States Government to an international conglomerate, the *International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)*.

While at first glance it might seem that the Congress is guilty of inexcusable procrastination, that is only partially true. For the most part the leaders of both parties are intent on getting what they believe is best for the country, and they know that the longer they hold out for what they believe in, the more chance there is that the other side will cave in. It is a long held principle of negotiations that deals don't get made until the eleventh hour and the first person to move often leaves something important behind on the negotiations table. For the most part the Congress is composed of men and

women of deeply held beliefs, and many of the core issues they are grappling with are matters of fundamental principles deeply held by many Americans.

The fundamental questions at stake include:

- What is the appropriate size of the federal government?
- Should the power of the IRS to impact the electoral process with impunity be held in check?
- School governance – should it be controlled at the local and state level or from the US Department of Education?
- Are we willing to cede more of our country's autonomy and sovereignty to globalism?
- Should nations be held accountable for supporting international terrorism?
- Is it appropriate for the federal government to support planned parenthood?

It is beginning to appear that this boiling pot of fundamental issues will not be resolved by this Congress. They are too divided and the issues at stake too profound in terms of their long term impact on our nation to be compromised on – at least not yet.

When the Congress returns in November so much will be clearer. We will know then, depending on who is elected President and who controls the Senate and House, the direction that all of these issues will slide. The upcoming election will matter. It will shape the governance of our nation for many years to come.

Our nation is a unique experiment in governance – the first major democracy on the face of the earth. Scripture is clear that governments that have the support of the multitudes of the people are blessed:

*In a multitude of people is the glory of a king,
but without people a prince is ruined.*

Proverbs 14:28

The founding of our nation, as described in the *Declaration of Independence*, was based on two important precepts:

- 1) That God has established certain basic natural laws including the rights of men, and
- 2) That governance should be based on the consent of the governed.

In this upcoming month, this eleventh hour for our nation, while the Congress is at home, let us pray that on November 8 the multitudes will speak out with a clear, strong majority in deciding who the next President will be, and in determining the composition of the Senate and the House. We need the public to make their intent for the nation clear, and we need to pray that the public's desire is for our nation to support God's natural laws.

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