

May 22, 2009

# Government Relations

## Congressional Update



## Current News on Capitol Hill

### The Race to Memorial Day

Over the past few months, many politicians and the Administration have cited Memorial Day weekend as their deadline for major policy initiatives. Congressman Waxman (D-Calif.) has pushed his cap-and-trade legislative effort with the onus of having a marked-up bill by Memorial Day. Health care reform has been touted as an issue to start tackling 'before Memorial Day'. Significant credit card reform legislation has even passed expeditiously before Memorial Day.

Accordingly, lawmakers recess today until they resume work on Capitol Hill in June. The following is a breakdown of action before and after the legislative break:

### Actions Taken in the Past Week

- **Credit Card Accountability Responsibility and Disclosure (Credit CARD) Act of 2009:** Approved by Congress and quickly signed by President Obama to crack down on undisclosed interest rate hikes, double-cycle billing, and unwarranted fees.
  - The Credit CARD Act is a major advance for consumer advocates and the Administration that so strongly supported this reform effort.
- **American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009:** Inching closer to becoming law after the House Energy and Commerce Committee voted late Thursday to advance the bill; major provisions include a cap-and-trade system for pollution emitters such as power plants, oil refineries, and manufacturers that would seek to lower greenhouse gas emissions by 17 percent by 2020.
  - Rick Boucher (D-Va.), the state's coal region representative, played a role in the drafting of this legislation by negotiating lower emissions targets and research funding. These issues, among others, are major for Virginia's energy supply and the state's coal region.

### Key Contacts

**Jerry W. Kilgore**  
Williams Mullen  
804.783.6933  
jkilgore@williamsmullen.com

**Matthew B. Keelen\***  
Keelen Group  
202.293.8120  
mkeelen@keelengroup.com

**Michael J. Falencki\***  
Keelen Group  
202.327.5065  
mfalencki@keelengroup.com

\*non-attorney consultant

[www.williamsmullen.com/keelen](http://www.williamsmullen.com/keelen)

Continued, page 2

Continued from page 1

### Issues to be Addressed in Early June

- **Health Care Reform:** Several Republican and Democratic proposals are floating around related to increasing health care access and increasing health care coverage for families; in the Senate, Sen. Baucus (D-Mont.) and Sen. Grassley (R-Iowa) are leading the effort to choose a financing option for comprehensive health care reform.
  - Senate Finance Committee proposals include consumer tax increases on items such as sodas and alcohol; however, members have not been able to reach consensus on these funding mechanisms.
  - House Republicans are taking a different approach by proposing taxes on employer-provided health care plans to provide tax credits for individual health care access.

Legislators will still be working during their week hiatus. Many members, for example, have been tasked with returning to their home districts to highlight stimulus package successes or other policy accomplishments from the first session of the 111th Congress.

*For more information or inquiries, please contact Matt Keelen at [mkeelen@keelengroup.com](mailto:mkeelen@keelengroup.com) or Mike Falencki at [mfalencki@keelengroup.com](mailto:mfalencki@keelengroup.com).*

Williams Mullen Government Relations Legislative UPDATE. Copyright 2009. Editorial inquiries should be directed to Jerry Kilgore, 1021 East Cary Street, Richmond, VA 23219, 804.643.1991. This information is provided as an educational service and is not meant to be and should not be construed as legal advice. Readers with particular needs on specific issues should retain the services of competent counsel.

[www.williamsmullen.com/keelen](http://www.williamsmullen.com/keelen)