



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, July 8, 2019

The White House

- Leading Democratic Donor Tom Steyer may acquire a new favorite candidate to fund – himself. Last night Steyer tweeted on a New York Times op-ed critical of President Trump’s trade negotiations with China and began rolling out his campaign staff of the advocacy groups he funds. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/07/tom-steyer-2020-run/593434/> Steyer is the leader of the most organized effort to impeach President Trump, as well as the founder of NextGen America, a leading advocacy organization on climate change. His entry into the race will add to the prominence of this topic in the race.
- U.S. Representative Justin Amash (MI-3) changed his party affiliation from Republican to Independent last week, and is rumored to be preparing to run for President of the United States on the Libertarian Party line. Rep. Amash was the sole Republican in the U.S. House of Representatives to advocate for impeachment of President Trump. He would likely make that a main feature of his bid for President. <https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2019/07/07/sotu-amash-full.cnn>

Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week.
- On Wednesday, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will hold a hearing entitled “Investing in America’s Surface Transportation Infrastructure: The Need for a Multi-Year Reauthorization Bill.” <https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2019/7/investing-in-america-s-surface-transportation-infrastructure-the-need-for-a-multi-year-reauthorization-bill>

Analysis

- Both Parties are publicly demonstrating some internal tensions. Republicans in the Senate are pushing back against the budget negotiating positions coming out of the White House and Liberal Democrats in the House are outraged at their more moderate colleagues who recently voted to back a border-security funding package crafted by Senate Republicans.
- These divisions make it more likely that there will be a serious government-funding crisis. As a reminder, while the House has been passing appropriations bills, the Senate

has yet to pass any government funding measure even out of Committee. The Senate position has been that it is a waste of time passing funding bills while the top-line funding numbers are still under negotiation between Chambers and with the White House.

- The internal rifts between the Parties add to the ever-present disagreement between the Parties, which will make it all the more difficult to negotiate funding levels and accompanying legislation to keep the government operating in fiscal year 2020.
- The addition to the presidential race of two leading proponents of impeachment is not likely to make President Trump more inclined to compromise on spending, let alone any kind of infrastructure initiative.