



## International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, September 9, 2019

### The White House

- Tonight President Trump will appear at a rally in support of Republican state Senator Dan Bishop who is locked in a highly competitive special election to represent North Carolina's 9th Congressional District in the US House of Representatives. The rally tonight will be an indicator of whether Trump can still motivate his base enough to sway an election in North Carolina, which is critical to the reelection bid of Republican Senator Thom Tillis, as well as Trump himself, next November.
- Bishop's opponent is Dan McCready, the 2018 Democrat nominee for that House seat, which is located in the south-central part of North Carolina. (The 2018 election was initially called in favor of another Republican, but the result was not certified because of allegations of absentee ballot fraud, which later prompted the State Election Board to hold this special election).

### Congress

- Both Chambers are back in session this week after concluding the August recess.
- Before the August recess, the Senate Environment and Public Works ("EPW") Committee unanimously passed its surface transportation reauthorization bill, which would authorize federal highway programs for five years at levels roughly 25% higher than current spending.
- The top agenda for Congress this month will be to extend government funding before the deadline at the end of the month. Before adjourning for August recess, Congress passed and the President signed a bipartisan debt limit and budget caps deal, which will make it easier for both Chambers to agree on spending levels and pass appropriations bills. However, with limited time before the fiscal cliff it is likely that Congress will pass a continuing resolution to extend funding while the Chambers advance appropriations bills for fiscal year 2020.

### Analysis

- The unanimous passage of the surface transportation bill out of the EPW Committee is a big first step, but it's only the first step in a long, complicated process. On the House side, the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee does not plan to release its version of the bill until this winter. But even more important than the T&I version is how

the EPW bill is received with the Senate Finance Committee, which will be responsible for funding the measure. Senate leaders, including leaders of the Senate Finance and EPW Committees, have ruled out a federal gas-tax increase as a way to pay for the bill, making the process of raising the roughly \$100 billion in additional revenue needed to fund the measure that much more difficult.