

TAX PLAN SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT TRUMP

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With one stroke of his pen on December 22, 2017, President Trump signed the largest tax reform bill since President Ronald Reagan's 1986 overhaul. It took virtually an entire year of his term for President Trump to pass his first piece of major legislation (H.R.1) on a purely partisan vote.

In the Senate, all Republicans voted for the bill and all Democrats and Independents opposed the bill, leading to a final vote of 51-48. On the House side, it was also passed in a completely partisan way, with 224 Republicans supporting the legislation and all 201 Democrats voting to oppose this controversial legislation. Twelve House Republicans also voted with the Democrats against the bill.

In contemporaneous polling, the legislation proved to have many critics, as more than 55% of Americans opposed the bill and only 33% indicated approved for this major tax overhaul.

Among the controversial changes contained in the bill are the following:

- Lowering the top marginal tax rate from 39.6% to 37%, giving a 2.6% reduction in taxes to nation's top earners;
- Lowering the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21%;
- Temporarily reducing, only slightly, the tax rates on most workers, although by the year 2027 an estimated 84% of Americans will pay more in taxes, with virtually all cuts going to those earning more than \$200,000 per year.

The price tag for this bill will raise the national debt by at least \$1.45 trillion over the next ten years, which in turn will allow most Republicans to argue for cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other federal and postal benefits when Congress looks to pay for this unnecessary boondoggle.

THE SENATE DEMOCRATS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS FOR THE 2nd SESSION OF THE 115th CONGRESS

(* DENOTES SENATOR IS A NEW MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE)

Agriculture:

- Senator Tina Smith*

Appropriations:

- No Changes

Armed Services:

- No Changes

Banking:

- Senator Doug Jones*

Commerce:

- Senator Jon Tester*

Energy:

- Senator Tina Smith*

Environment

and Public Works:

- Senator Chris Van Hollen*

Finance [Committee

membership ratio changed from

14 (Republicans) – 12 (Democrats) to 14 (Republicans) – 13 (Democrats):

- Senator Sheldon Whitehouse*

Foreign Relations:

- No Changes

Health, Education, Labor & Pensions:

- Senator Tina Smith*
- Senator Doug Jones*

Homeland Security and Government Affairs:

- Senator Doug Jones*

Intelligence:

- No Changes

Judiciary [Committee

membership ratio changed from

11 (Republicans) – 9 (Democrats) to 11 (Republicans) – 10 (Democrats):

- Senator Cory Booker*
- Senator Kamala Harris*

Aging:

- Senator Doug Jones*

Budget:

- No Changes

Joint Economic:

- No Changes

Rules:

- No Changes

Small Business:

- No Changes

Veterans' Affairs:

- No Changes

Ethics:

- No Changes

Indian Affairs:

- Senator Tina Smith*

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES THREE NOMINEES TO THE POSTAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The current Postal Board of Governors (BOG) is comprised of only two members, namely Postmaster General Megan Brennan and Deputy Postmaster General Ron Stroman. When fully constituted, the BOG should encompass eleven members, with the nine missing members subject to nomination by the President and confirmation by the Senate.

In October 2017, President Trump submitted the names of three potential candidates. The three nominees are former Postal Service Inspector General David Williams; Pennsylvania resident and businessman Calvin Tucker; and past Republican National Committee Chairman Robert Duncan, who is also affiliated with a major political action committee (the Crossroads PAC) that supports Republican candidates for federal office. The nominees were referred to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which is supposed to schedule thorough hearings and then send the nominees to the full Senate for an up or down vote.

POLITICAL SCENE

On November 6, 2018, our country will have our midterms elections, with 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives

and 34 members of the U.S. Senate up for reelection. As of early February 2018, 38 Republican incumbents have decided to either retire or seek higher office, and that number should continue to grow. Political pundits believe that, with President Trump's record low approval ratings, the number of incumbents leaving office could switch control of the House to the Democratic Party.

The result of Alabama's special election in December 2017, with Democrat Doug Jones defeating former Judge Roy Moore, the Senate now is controlled by the Republicans with only a small, two-member majority. However, the Democrats have 26 seats they must defend this year, while the Republicans need only to defend 8 seats. The doomsday feelings that many Democrats have felt until recently have subsided somewhat, with observers believing that President Trump's low approval ratings also could help some Senate Democrats to keep their seats.

If you or family members are not registered to vote, please check with the Secretary of State's office in your State, where you can register and find the dates to which you must adhere to vote in this year's primary and general elections.

Become part of the solution and vote for the candidates that support working families and a strong and vibrant U.S. Postal Service.

U.S. OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL ISSUES HATCH ACT GUIDANCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

On February 13, 2018, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC), which is the federal agency charged with enforcing the Hatch Act applicable to federal or postal employees, issued written guidance concerning the use of social media under the Hatch Act. This guidance was released in conjunction with a 50-day suspension without pay of a Postal Service employee for posting 116 partisan political postings or messages on his Facebook account, while on duty, which conduct reportedly occurred shortly after the employee received Hatch Act training.

The guidance comes with two written products, including one that contains real world examples such as the following: "You stay at work during your lunch break and check Facebook on your personal cell phone. A Facebook friend posted a message about an upcoming event supporting a candidate in a partisan race. Even if you are not in a pay

status during your lunch break, you may not like or share that post while you are in the workplace."

As the 2018 mid-term elections approach, it is imperative for all employees to be aware of the limitations imposed by The Hatch Act. Generally stated, employees may not engage in political activity while on duty or in the workplace. Political activity is an activity directed at the success or failure of a political party, candidate in a partisan race, or partisan political group.

With the proliferation of social media, and in response to numerous questions, the OSC was compelled to issue the "Hatch Act Guidance on Social Media" and the "Social Media Quick Guide" to illustrate how social media and the Hatch Act intersect. Mail Handlers are encouraged to review the guide (see page 14) and take all steps to avoid non-compliance, as the penalties can be severe.