



Client Note: A House Floating Without Moorings

Campaign Deep Dive Memo

Every two years, election season swamps D.C., taking up politicians' time, impacting policy, and determining who is in charge not only of the White House and Congress, but of critical agencies, committee chairmanships, etc. And with incumbents staring down the public's judgment of their performance, they are even more focused on how politically salient topics play back home. While the Republican presidential primary has been underway for months, most other campaigns are just starting to ramp up. To provide a sense for what's actually going on behind the scenes and offer more context for all the election-related news and developments, we tapped former campaign managers, chiefs of staff, and statewide party officials in the Pioneer orbit to put together [this memo](#), which gives you a peek at how campaigns actually run – focusing on campaigns for Congress, President, and larger state-wide offices.

House Speaker Race

After booting Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) two weeks ago and Majority Leader Steve Scalise's (R-LA) bid fell short last week, House Republicans have failed yet again to figure out a path forward, plunging even deeper into chaos and acrimony than anyone thought possible. As one reporter put it, [they're nowhere](#). The most important questions are when will they hit rock bottom, what will that look like, and how much damage will it do to the country in the meantime.

But first, a recap of the many twists and turns from the last week – there's a lot, stay with us!

After Scalise's stunning withdrawal last week, House Republicans nominated House Freedom Caucus founder, top Trump supporter, and Judiciary Chairman Jim Jordan (R-OH) for Speaker. Jordan's challenges were clear from the beginning – he lost 81 votes in the first internal election, and 55 in a second vote to show how many holdouts remained. Undeterred, Jordan scheduled a floor vote for Tuesday. While he reduced his opposition dramatically, he still lost 20 Republican votes, a massive public embarrassment and 16 more than he could afford. Never one to back down from a fight, Jordan tried again on Wednesday, but his opposition actually increased to 22.

It seemed like he might have seen the writing on the wall. On Thursday, Jordan said he'd forego a third floor vote and instead endorsed a plan to temporarily give Speaker pro tempore Patrick McHenry (R-NC) additional powers so that the House can at least work on appropriations (which run out in 28 days), a promised \$100 billion national security package (with aid for Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan, and the southern border), and other crucial legislation (like the Farm Bill and FAA reauthorization). [Democrats have indicated](#) they'd support empowering McHenry, but over the course of the day enough Republicans voiced opposition to kill the plan. So instead, Jordan scheduled a third floor vote for this morning, where he lost an additional three Republicans (total of 25). Ultimately, moderate Republicans don't trust that Jordan has changed from his streetfighting past and will push for future government shutdowns and right wing culture war policies.

Absolutely no one knows where this will go next. It is getting clearer that no Republican can earn the 217 votes within their conference to become Speaker, though there seem to be more than a few waiting in the wings willing to try. How long are Republicans willing to take to figure out a solution? Will Republicans futilely continue trying to elect a new speaker, or will Republicans decide to actually go down the path of empowering a Speaker pro tempore? Every day without an answer means we're closer to a government shutdown, we're unable to support our allies during a critical time (and get humanitarian aid to Gaza), and we actively weaken the case for democracy around the world.

Manchin Continues Strict Oversight of DOE's IJA and IRA Funding

Yesterday, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee held a [hearing](#) to examine DOE's decision-making process for awarding grants and loans through the IJA and IRA. DOE's Under Secretary for Infrastructure David Crane, Loan Programs Office (LPO) Director Jigar Shah, and Inspector General Teri Donaldson testified as witnesses. Cue many references to Solyndra (and the new Republican attempts at Solyndra-esque calling cards: Microvast, CATL, and newly KORE); a few GOP ethics-related conspiracy theories; and lots of side-eye from Senators irked that their states were not selected for DOE's recently-announced hydrogen hubs.

In what will come as a surprise to no one, Chairman Joe Manchin (D-WV) opened the hearing hyper-focused on whether IRA/IJA funding will benefit any Chinese entity in any way, with several digs at the Biden Administration's interpretation of domestic content requirements in the IRA and at the renewable energy industry for being reliant on U.S. adversaries (accusations the Biden Administration and most Democrats would challenge). Manchin also lamented LPO's significant commitments to projects involving EVs, and felt fossil fuels were underrepresented in LPO's portfolio.

Ranking Member Barrasso (R-WY) and Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) theatrically drilled Jigar Shah on speaking at conferences that require payment to attend, trying to paint Shah's promotion of LPO as a major ethics violation. Throughout the hearing, many Senators posed questions to Shah and Crane about the grant and loan review process, trying to ascertain whether the awards are politically-driven, whether unsuccessful applicants can receive feedback for improving future applications, and whether applicants from their states got a fair shake in the hydrogen hubs competition (Sen. Bill Cassidy [R-LA] in particular felt the process was rigged), putting Undersecretary Crane on the defense for much of the hearing. Lastly, Sen. Barrasso and House Energy and Commerce Chairwoman Cathy McMorris Rogers (R-WA) [released](#) a report criticizing the IRA's clean energy provisions.

In Other News

Sen. Laphonza Butler (D-CA), recently appointed to fill the late Sen. Dianne Feinstein's seat, was assigned to the Senate Judiciary, Banking, Homeland Security, and Rules Committees. The news came shortly before she [announced](#) her decision to not join the crowded race for the seat in 2024.

Additionally, Senate Majority Leader Schumer announced the following assignments following Sen. Feinstein's death: Sen. Kyrsten Sinema (I-AZ) is now on Appropriations, Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ) is now on Intelligence, and Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA) is now on ENR.

Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs)

This week, DOE and Treasury [announced](#) that applications are now open for the [Low-Income Communities Bonus Credit Program](#), which provides a 10 or 20 percentage point credit increase to the investment tax credit for qualified solar or wind energy facilities that are less than five MWs. After the initial application window closes on November 18, DOE will accept applications on a rolling basis while capacity remains through early 2024.

Additionally, DOE and GSA [issued](#) a request for information (RFI) on innovative, emerging, and sustainable technologies that advance the carbonization of commercial buildings. Responses from interested parties are due December 8.

Last week, DOE [noticed](#) its intent to open a \$9.5 million funding opportunity later this fall for projects that support the flexibility of hydropower.

Concept papers for the first \$300 million in funding under the [Transmission Siting and Economic Development Grants Program](#), which provides support for transmission and permitting efforts, are [due](#) October 31.

Next Week: [Hearings to Watch](#)

Tuesday, October 24, 2023

House Financial Services Subcommittee on Capital Markets

“Examining the SEC’s Agenda: Unintended Consequences for U.S. Capital Markets and Investors”
(10:00 AM EDT), watch [here](#)

House Natural Resources

“Full Committee Markup”
(10:15 AM EDT), watch [here](#)

Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Competition Policy, Antitrust, and Consumer Rights

“Hearings to examine competition and consumer rights in the housing markets”
(3:00 PM EDT), watch [here](#)

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

Senate Budget

“Bottlenecks and Backlogs: How Climate Change Threatens Supply Chains”
(10:00 AM EDT), watch [here](#).

House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

“Legislative Hearing”
(2:00 PM EDT), watch [here](#)

House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries

“Legislative Hearing”
(2:15 PM EDT), watch [here](#)

Thursday, October 26th, 2023

Senate Energy and Natural Resources

“Full Committee Hearing to Examine Federal Offshore Energy Strategy and Policies”

(9:30 AM EDT), watch [here](#).

Senate EPW Subcommittee on Superfund, Waste Management, and Regulatory Oversight

“Hearings to examine evaluating alternative materials for single-use plastics”

(10:00 AM EDT), watch [here](#)

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