## DA Politics

**Won’t be a vote before the election and not enough democratic support**

**Boles, 9/10** (Corey, 9/10/2012, Dow Jones Global Equities News, “Russia Trade Bill Looks Delayed Until After Election,” Factiva, JMP)

A senior House Republican said he now expects it will be difficult to pass a law before the election permanently removing trade restrictions with Russia, a move required in order for U.S. companies to gain more unfettered access to Russian markets.

Following Russia's entry to the World Trade Organization in August, members of the club are obliged to permanently normalize trade relations with the country. In the case of the U.S., this means dropping legislation known as the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which has placed trade barriers on Russia since the height of the Cold War.

Two senior Democratic Senate aides, meanwhile, have said there is little chance of Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.) bringing legislation lifting the trade restrictions to the Senate floor before the election, as Democratic leaders don't want to force vulnerable incumbents to vote for any contentious bills before the election.

Taken together, the chances of the bill being agreed to by Congress before the Nov. 6 elections now seem to have significantly diminished.

House Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy (R., Calif.) said that while Republicans are ready to bring the bill to the House floor, there wasn't enough Democratic support for the measure. He blamed the White House, suggesting that administration officials had promised to rally more Democratic support for the vote than they had been able to deliver.

**Will only pass with human rights legislation that will tank relations**

**IHT, 9/10** (Steven Lee Myers and David M. Herszenhorn, 9/10/2012, International Herald Tribune, “Trade sanctions will end, Clinton tells Russia,” Factiva, JMP)

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has pledged that the United States will soon lift Cold War-era trade sanctions on Russia, but she did not address human rights legislation in Congress that has so far stalled passage, infuriated the Kremlin and become an unexpected issue in the U.S. presidential race.

Attending the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit meeting here Saturday in place of the campaigning President Barack Obama, Mrs. Clinton welcomed Russia’s accession to the World Trade Organization last month. And she said that the United States must now normalize trade relations so that U.S. businesses can reap the benefits of Russia’s membership, including lower tariffs for U.S. products.

Although the sanctions included in the 1974 law known as Jackson-Vanik are waived each year and have no practical effect, they violate W.T.O. rules, which could allow Russia to retaliate against U.S. businesses.

The effort to grant Russia normal trade status, however, has become entangled in legislation that would punish Russian officials accused of abusing human rights, denying them visas and freezing their assets. That has raised doubts that any agreement on lifting the Jackson-Vanik provisions can be reached before the November election.

The human rights bill, which has bipartisan support in both houses of Congress, is named after Sergei Magnitsky, a lawyer who died in prison in 2009 after being prosecuted on charges that his supporters argue were manufactured to cover up official corruption.

**Nothing but continuing resolution will pass**

**Taylor, 9/11** (Andrew, 9/11/2012, “Congress returns for short pre-election session,” http://www.nwherald.com/2012/09/10/congress-returns-for-short-pre-election-session/a91clfv/, JMP)

WASHINGTON – Congress returned to Washington on Monday for an abbreviated pre-election session in which it appears likely to do the bare minimum: making sure that the government doesn't shut down.

Almost everything else of consequence, most notably a set of automatic, economy-rattling spending cuts and tax increases that have been dubbed a "fiscal cliff," will get put off until a postelection lame duck session – and maybe beyond.

Top lawmakers unveiled a six-month spending bill that would finance the government's day-to-day operations until next March to give the next Congress and whoever occupied the White House time to work out a final solution on more than $1 trillion in annual spending for the Pentagon and other Cabinet departments.

**Current distribution methods are totally expensive – ITV actually net saves money – that shields the warrant to their link**

**Hampton 12** (Lana, Defense Logistics Agency, January 5, 2012, “News: DLA develops local procurement process for Afghanistan customers,” http://www.dvidshub.net/news/82075/dla-develops-local-procurement-process-afghanistan-customers#.UC8vAN2PXAw, alp)

Early in the Northern Distribution Network local procurement effort, DLA recommended a system similar to the Defense Travel System be used to move goods procured in South Caucasus, Central and South Asian countries to Afghanistan. The key reasons were cost, custom issues, in-transit visibility, security and freight delivery, Rogers said. “Transportation costs to move goods from SC/CASA into Afghanistan are expensive for all shippers,” Rogers said. “Previously, DLA’s procurement process included the transportation costs as part of the product cost as a first destination transportation fee, making the overall product cost unjustifiable.” These commercial, prime-vendor shipments were outside DTS and lacked critical in-transit visibility and customs clearance assistance. The end results were expensive products with unreliable delivery times. DLA’s reimbursement efforts for these intratheater transportation costs were also manual and lengthy, Rogers said.

**Link non-unique and link-turn – there’s already fighting over other military spending, but military spending has bipartisan support**

**Liebelson 5/31 (**Dana, Yahoo! The Week, May 31, 2012, “Washington's Daft Punk justification for wasteful military spending,” http://news.yahoo.com/washingtons-daft-punk-justification-wasteful-military-spending-182000719.html, alp)

Republicans and Democrats alike seem blinded by the desire for a "harder, better, faster, stronger" America — so much so that they support useless defense projects. What's the difference between a Republican and a Democrat when it comes to defense spending? I posed this question to longtime defense analyst Winslow Wheeler, who may be the only person to have ever worked as a personal staffer for a Republican and Democrat in Congress... at the same time. "Republicans, with only the rarest exceptions, busy themselves pretending that more money means better defense, and that anyone urging budget restraint is worse than a fool," Wheeler told me. And Democrats? "[They] have fallen for the gag, and cower in the corner, thinking that going along with more money for the Pentagon will protect them from further political slander." Wheeler argues that the key to successful military reform is not the old adage that more money equals better defense — instead, it's about spending smarter. And there's no better time to advocate for better defense spending than when the House and Senate are fighting tooth and nail over the fiscal year 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The Senate Committee on Armed Services passed this major defense bill last week, and it now must be approved by the entire Senate in the coming months. (The Senate bill is also up against a competing version that has been passed by the House.) These overpriced programs are just two examples of the kind of defense spending that is hurting taxpayers. It's easy for Republicans and Democrats to scare us into coughing up more money for the military, but we should demand smarter spending. That's the key towards working together for a harder, better, faster, stronger — and safer America.

**Biden push solves**

**Cohn & Clift 11** (Douglas Cohn and Eleanor Clift, “Obama cannot bypass Congress,” http://www.poconorecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110923/NEWS04/109230324/-1/news04)

Obama has no power base in Congress, but Vice President Joe Biden does, and any recent legislative activity that has borne fruit on Capitol Hill has been brokered by Biden. He worked directly with Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell to get a deal after the 2010 elections that was widely seen as politically benefiting both the Republicans and Obama. In the more than half year since then, relations have deteriorated between the White House and Congress, and it's hard to see Obama getting them back on track.

**There’s strong and increasing bipartisan congressional support for DoD logistics and technology acquisition**

**Shackelford et. al. 9** (Lt. Gen. Mark D., James Thomsen, Lt. Gen. N. Ross Thompson III, officers in the Acquisition departments of the army and air force, November-December, 2009, “The Future of Acquisition Excellence,” http://www.dau.mil/pubscats/ATL%20Docs/Nov-Dec/nov-dec09.pdf, alp)

On October 26, 2009, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Dr. Ashton B. Carter chaired the DoD Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Workforce Senior Steering Board. In opening the board, he stated: “The department is in an enviable position because President Obama and Secretary Gates intend to improve the acquisition process and rebuild and reshape the acquisition workforce. In addition, there is congressional support on both sides of the aisle. We must grow and reshape the workforce to meet current needs, with special emphasis and focus on improving workforce quality. Two imperatives needed to ensure operational logistics adaptability are reduced logistics demand and intelligent supply chains, with both enabled by data fusion and science and technology. Operational logistics adaptability translates to decision making in the face of complexity and the ability to share information across the joint force unhindered by distance, terrain, weather, or hostile activity; and intelligent supply chains of the future will require radically advanced data collection, transmission, analysis, and discovery of relationships normally hidden in vast quantities of data scattered throughout multiple global data bases. Reduced logistics demand and intelligent supply chains will require integrated and interoperable logistics systems and processes, providing a near-real-time logistics common operating picture and adhering to common net-centric standards and protocols—necessary for success within a common logistics operating environment.

**Military lobby shields the link**

**Paulsen 98** (Monte, How the Pentagon Lobbies Congress From Within, http://www.monitor.net/monitor/9808a/copyright/pentagonlobby.html, ZBurdette)

The United States' most elite fighting force is neither a SEAL team wading through some tropical jungle nor an Airborne Ranger unit treading across a distant dune. Far from it. The troops who wage the most battles -- and the ones who climb the ranks the fastest -- are the men and women who quietly soft-shoe the marble halls of Congress.

Roughly 100 career military officers shadow the staffs of senators, representatives and committees each year. They're on the Pentagon payroll, but they work out of uniform and outside the chain of command. They work inside Congress, but neither are they elected nor wholly beholden to anyone who is.

They are, in effect, temporary workers loaned from the Pentagon to Congress at an estimated cost to taxpayers of $12.5 million a year. Some are loaned through fellowship programs. Others are loaned directly to lawmakers. Both types routinely violate military and congressional rules, according to official documents.

And both types of temps are able to lobby Congress from within. While admirals and arms peddlers pace the lobby, these mid-career officers write bills that buy billions of dollars worth of weapons, ships and airplanes each year.

"It's as if the taxpayers were paying lobbyists from Boeing and Lockheed Martin to go to the Hill and influence the process to the benefit of Boeing and Lockheed Martin," retired Rear Adm. Eugene J. Carroll said. "Now why should the taxpayers pay for that?"

Taxpayers should not, argues Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), the lone voice of dissent in this matter on Capitol Hill. In a November 1996 letter to the Pentagon, Grassley warned that the practice of assigning military personnel to Congress "has the potential for undermining and eroding two sacred constitutional principles of American national government: the separation of powers and civilian control of the military."

Business cards did not say was that he was an Air Force major and missile expert

ACCESS, INFLUENCE

Like shadowy Department of Defense agents on television's "X-Files," these military officers pop up in episode after episode of Capitol Hill's real-life political drama:

Dan Ciechanowski worked the Senate floor during the summer of 1996. He handed out "fact sheets" supporting a massive military spending program along with business cards that identified him as a "Defense Fellow" in the office of Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.).

What his embossed cards did not say was that Ciechanowski was an Air Force major and missile expert who had personally crawled inside Russian missile silos. Nor did Ciechanowski's fact sheet explain that Kyl's Star Wars-like missile defense plan would violate a major disarmament treaty and would cost taxpayers a whopping $60 billion to build.

Grassley was one of the senators lobbied by Ciechanowski. After he learned the defense fellow was a major, Grassley demanded to know why there was an "... active duty military officer on the floor of the Senate ... aggressively lobbying against a measure to control military spending.

"That is not appropriate," Grassley wrote, "and it may not be legal."

Eric Womble worked behind the scenes to maneuver an extra $750 million destroyer into Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott's (R-Miss.) hometown.

Lott's Pascagoula home stands within sight of the aging Ingalls Shipyard. Ingalls lost a major Navy contract in early 1997, and the yard where Lott's father had worked was facing huge layoffs. But with the help of Navy Cmdr. Womble, Lott was able to transform a three-ship deal into a four-ship deal, and get that extra ship built in Pascagoula.

No one needs the extra ship. It's an Arleigh-Burke class destroyer, a ship designed during the Cold War to defend carriers against massive (100-plane-plus) airborne attacks by the Soviet Union. But the Soviet threat no longer exists, and the Navy itself has concluded that no other potential enemy is capable of mounting such an assault.

Lott rewarded Womble by hiring the commander on his personal staff -- a move that required persuading the Pentagon to give Womble a full Navy pension even though he was a two years shy of the 20-year minimum term.

Drew Bennett worked even further in the shadows. He worked directly for the Republican Party, helping author a handbook for incoming freshmen.

Bennett, who has a Ph.D. in adult education and a background in military "operations and doctrine," was assigned to the House Republican Conference. There he helped write a 66-page operations manual filled with hardy terms such as "war game" and "engaging the opposition."

A lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps, Bennett was one of six senior military officers working through House Speaker Newt Gingrich's office in 1996. The others included an Army major assigned to a Republican task force and an Air Force major asked to develop a military-style command center through which the speaker could track his troops.

Gingrich's personal platoon received unprecedented access and influence. The officers took turns traveling with the speaker. In a routine report to Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Randall West, Lt. Col. Bennett remarked, "While staffers have no vote, I am amazed at the influence they have on the Congress through their day-to-day work."

## DA Elections

**Romney will win --- our ev cites the best model**

**Hayward, 8/23** (John, 8/23/2012, “Electoral college model predicts big Romney win,” http://www.humanevents.com/2012/08/23/electoral-college-model-predicts-big-romney-win/)

Professors Ken Bickers and Michael Berry, of the University of Colorado, have a system for predicting the Electoral College outcomes of presidential races. Their model has accurately forecast the winner of every presidential race since 1980. According to an article published by UC-Boulder, they even got the Perot-flavored election of 1992, and the Bush-Gore photo finish in 2000, right.

This year, the Bickers-Berry model shows Mitt Romney winning with 320 electoral votes to Obama’s 218, with a 20-vote margin of error. A popular vote margin of 53-47 percent in Romney’s favor is predicted.

The Bickers-Berry model draws upon a wide range of state and national economic data, rather than collating public opinion polls. It anticipates little lasting effect from factors such as the location of the party conventions, the vice-president’s home state, the party affiliation of state governors, or – according to Bickers – “gaffes, political commercials, or day-to-day campaign tactics.” He finds the focus of voters upon big issues “heartening for our democracy.”

The Associated Press notes that “the model does not account for sudden changes in the economy or unexpected developments in states split 50-50.” There appear to be quite a few states fitting that definition at the moment. The Bickers-Berry model has Obama losing almost every swing state, including Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Florida.

Interestingly, the model predicts different partisan effects for two key economic factors: “Voters hold Democrats more responsible for unemployment rates while Republicans are held more responsible for per capita income.” That’s obviously not good news for President Obama, who has made double-digit unemployment a permanent feature of the American landscape.

The forecast that has Romney winning with 320 electoral votes is based on five-month-old economic data, with an update planned for September. There are reports today that jobless claims are starting to rise again. Maybe Romney will do even better, when even more dismal Obama economic data is plugged into the Bickers-Berry model.

On the other hand, the professors note that it’s hard to predict if the public will judge the economy in “absolute” or “relative” terms – in other words, will they consider the totality of the Obama record, or will they accept a possible uptick in a few key indicators during October as encouraging signs that the President is turning around?

**Military efficiency is popular – streamlining checks unpopular spending**

**Collender 12** (Stan, National Director of Financial Communications for Qorvis Communications Agency, former member of the House and Senate Budget Committee, former member of President Clinton’s financial commission, master’s degree in public policy from UC Berkeley, “Obama Pentagon Spending Cuts Will Change The Budget Debate,” http://www.qorvis.com/blog/obama-pentagon-spending-cuts-will-change-budget-debate, alp)

There are five reasons why it was virtually inevitable the White House is making military spending an issue this year. The Pentagon Has Become Increasingly Unpopular. After foreign aid and NASA, military spending is the area of the federal budget that has the least amount of public support. Many national polls conducted over the past year show that more than half the country thinks that reductions in defense spending are warranted. The Obama administration could not possibly fail to notice that, while the generality of “a strong defense” continues to be popular, there is a growing feeling that it can be provided at a much lower cost.

**Plan saves money – proves it’d be perceived as strong defense at a lower cost**

**Hampton 12** (Lana, Defense Logistics Agency, January 5, 2012, “News: DLA develops local procurement process for Afghanistan customers,” http://www.dvidshub.net/news/82075/dla-develops-local-procurement-process-afghanistan-customers#.UC8vAN2PXAw, alp)

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**Defense tool spending is super popular – jobs and psychology**

**Beitelman 12** (David A., PhD in political science at Dalhousie University, Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Masters in American Studies and Political Science, July, 2012, “Military Spending Fight: How the U.S. Can Safely Cut its Defense Budget,” http://www.policymic.com/articles/11413/military-spending-fight-how-the-u-s-can-safely-cut-its-defense-budget, alp)

For a nation that spends more on its military than the rest of the world combined, defense cuts are a surprisingly thorny issue. This is especially true during an election cycle, where political optics tend to overshadow practical and needed debate. With automatic defense cuts looming for the 2013 fiscal year (FY) as a result of the 2011 Budget Control Act, and the general need to rein in government spending across the board, the debate over whether or not the U.S. should (or can) reduce its military spending is heating up. The first and most obvious answer is politics. Reducing military spending is politically risky. Budget cuts mean people lose jobs, and in today’s economy, being a politician responsible for layoffs, whether in your district or another, tends to make you unpopular at the polls – fiscal responsibility be damned. There are also the optics: voting in favor of cutting the defense budget must mean you are against the troops and want to deprive them of the tools they need to do the nation's dirty work overseas. Less defense must mean you are in favor of promoting weakness; voting in favor of increases means you’re strong and powerful. It’s easy to see how quickly defense cuts become fodder for political battles.

**Their link is terminally non-unique – perception of action on military spending inevitable – if the plan would make Obama lose, Romney’s public indictment of his defense spending policy should have already**

**Walsh 9/10** (Deidre, CNN, September 10, 2012, “Congress has little motivation for compromise before election,” http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/10/politics/congress-election-compromise/index.html, alp)

Noting that House Republicans have also passed a bill to undo the automatic spending cuts scheduled to go into effect in January and extend all the current tax rates, Smith added, "We are ready to act on all of those measures if the president and Senate Democrats would show some courage to work with on those things with us." Romney continues to highlight the Obama administration's failed loan to the now-bankrupt energy company Solyndra. House Republicans will keep the issue out front with a vote this week on a bill to eliminate the federal loan guarantee program that funded several energy start-ups. Dubbed the "No more Solyndras Act," the GOP bill is expected to pass mostly along party lines, but won't move in the Senate. One open question is whether GOP vice presidential nominee Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin will return to the Capitol for any part of the September session. Under Wisconsin law, Ryan is allowed to also run for his House seat, so he may feel pressure to take a break from barnstorming battleground states to vote on the bipartisan deal to keep the government funded. What won't get done -- a deal to avoid the 'fiscal cliff' Congress faces a "fiscal cliff" at the end of this year -- the combination of the deep automatic cuts to federal agencies scheduled to go into effect in January that were part of last summer's debt deal and the expiration of the "Bush era" tax cuts at the end of December. Economists and budget experts warn that a failure by the divided Congress to come to some agreement on significant deficit reduction and tax policy before the end of the year could trigger another recession. But neither side expects anything more than symbolic action on those issues until after the election. New Woodward book goes in depth on debt battle On Friday, the White House missed a deadline to submit a report to Congress that details which government programs would face cuts as part of the sequestration in January, but White House press secretary Jay Carney told reporters the report would go to the Hill this week. House Republicans passed a plan earlier this year without any Democratic support that shielded the Defense Department from any cuts and replaced the across-the-board reductions prescribed in the debt deal with other mandatory spending cuts to food stamp and other domestic programs. Although the majority of House Republicans voted for these spending cuts that were included in last summer's compromise to raise the debt ceiling, there has been a GOP push in recent months to blame the Obama administration and paint Democrats as responsible for any impact the cuts would have on the military. Over the weekend, Romney criticized Obama for proposing the cuts as a mechanism to broker the debt deal, saying "it was a mistake for Republicans to go along with it." Romney explains why he thinks GOP made mistake To reinforce that they now oppose the massive cuts to the military that sequestration would set in motion, the House GOP is scheduling another vote on the issue next week. The new bill would replace the mandatory cuts with their alternate set of reductions and again calls for the White House to explain how it will implement spending reductions.

**It’s impossible to predict the outcome of elections – Black Swans can always alter the outcome – empirics prove**

**Greensfield 5/1** (Jeff, 5/1/12, “Why 2012 election predictions are rubbish: Fear the Black Swan!”, Yahoo News, http://news.yahoo.com/why-2012-predictions-are-rubbish--fear-the-black-swan-.html. Mr. Greensfield is a political correspondent for Yahoo News.) RS

You want to know who’s going to be the next president of the United States? Happy to oblige. Just tell me who’s going to win Ohio. No Republican has ever won the White House without winning Ohio. And only one Democrat has done it—JFK by a whisker—in the past 50 years. Or tell me what will happen to real personal income growth in the third quarter of 2012. Or tell me what the jobless rate will be in the fall, since (all together now), no incumbent since FDR has been re-elected when the unemployment rate has been higher than 7.2 percent. What’s that? You can’t do that because it’s only April? That doesn’t stop an army of soothsayers — including ones at Yahoo! — from offering up formulas to calculate, with scientific precision, the shape of the November vote. As common-sense guides, they make sense: incumbents and incumbent parties suffer when the economy is bad; a deeply divided party has a hard time winning a general election. As “laws” with the predictive capacity of knowing when ice melts ... not so much. (Back in 2000, the most trusted academic models of the election forecast a comfortable-to-overwhelming Democratic popular vote victory based on the glowing economy; what we got was an effective tie). I received an early lesson in caution after boldly predicting that John Lindsay would win the White House in 1972. Even stronger lessons were provided over the years by the appearance of a hugely influential factor in Presidential elections: the Black Swan. The term comes, not from that Natalie Portman ballet movie, but from a best-selling book in 2007 by Nassim Nicholas Taleb that examines our persistent “ability” to ignore the potentially huge effects of unlikely, random events. Given what happened a year later--when we woke up on a mid-September day to find the financial universe on the brink of collapse--the book seemed prescient. In political terms, “Black Swans” have shown up often enough to make even the boldest soothsayer hold his tongue. Think back to 1960, when Republicans could still compete for the black vote, and when an influential figure like Martin Luther King Sr. endorsed Richard Nixon out of concern about a Catholic in the White House. Then, on October 25, King’s son was arrested on a bogus parole-violation charge and transferred to a rural state prison where, his family feared, his life might be endangered. After John Kennedy called King’s wife, and Robert Kennedy called the governor of Georgia (and after Richard Nixon’s efforts to have the Justice Department intercede were ignored), King was released, and his father announced he was transferring his "suitcase full of votes” to Kennedy. On Election Day, black voters were crucial to Kennedy’s razor-thin margins not just in Illinois (8,000 controversially counted votes), but also in Michigan, New Jersey and Missouri. Or consider 1968, when Hubert Humphrey had closed the once-cavernous gap between himself and Richard Nixon. With days to go before Election Day, the United States and North Vietnam were very close to an agreement on peace negotiations. Thanks to the intervention by Anna Chennault, an unofficial but well-connected Nixon campaign emissary, the South Vietnamese government balked. Had that deal been concluded by the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, there’s good reason to think that Vice President Humphrey would have won the election. Go back to the last days of the 2000 campaign, and the disclosure of a drunk-driving arrest of a young George W. Bush. Karl Rove maintained that the story cost Bush the popular vote by keeping a few million evangelicals away from the polls. And for Democrats, that butterfly ballot in Palm Beach County will always be a Black Swan of pterodactyl-sized proportions. Or look again at the financial collapse of mid-September 2008. I’m skeptical of claims that John McCain could have won that contest under any circumstances, given the financial resources of Barack Obama’s campaign and the country’s unhappiness with President Bush. Without question, though, the fear of economic meltdown meant a shift in the tenor of the campaign, one that that redounded in Obama’s favor. Not every late-breaking event changes the outcome of an election. John Kerry believed that the release of an Osama Bin Laden video just before the 2004 election cost him the White House; I lean more toward a superior get-out-the-vote operation in Ohio by the Bush campaign. And it’s not that fundamental things don’t apply. If you think in terms of probabilities rather than predictive certainty, the fall economic data is a sound guide for placing bets. But until someone can take a quick trip into the future and tell me how Ohio’s going to vote, I’ll say no sooth.

**Polls are irrelevant – disregard their evidence.**

**Zapor 6/22** (Patricia, staff writer of the Catholic News Service “ Presidency not a horse race; election hinges on economic interests” 6/22/12 www.thecompassnews.org/news/nation-and-world/3401-presidency-not-a-horse-race-election-hinges-on-economic-interests.html?utm\_source=feedburner&utm\_medium=feed&utm\_campaign=Feed%3A%20TheCompassNewspaper%20(The%20Compass%20-%20Official%20Newspaper%20of%20the%20Catholic%20Diocese%20of%20Green%20Bay%2C%20Wisconsin)

WASHINGTON — With more than four months until the presidential election, pundits and pollsters are producing a steady stream of predictions about the outcome, with each day's major news parsed for how it might affect the race. Administrative decision to allow some undocumented immigrants to stay? Improves President Barak Obama's standing with Latinos. Unemployment numbers for the month show little change? Improves the prospects of the presumptive Republican nominee, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney. Or so the pollsters and pundits would have us believe. Never mind that predictions are meaningless until voters go to the polls Nov. 6, or start posting their mail-in ballots in October. Especially in a world where news is summed up into tweet-size bites, campaign coverage is dominated by the horse race: who's in front right this minute, based on the influences of the day. Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney addresses the annual conference of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials during a campaign stop in Orlando, Fla., June 21. (CNS photo/David Manning, Reuters) But, as explained by panels of speakers at two recent forums, the answer to who will be president next year is far more complex than what can fit into a nugget of information.

**No link uniqueness – federal spending on infrastructure now**

**Fox News 6/18** (6/18/12, “Government spending millions on contract to assign numbers to contractors”, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/06/18/government-spending-millions-to-assign-numbers-to-contractors/) RS

The federal government is looking to break the stranglehold one company has on the use of -- numbers. Uncle Sam is currently spending millions of dollars on a contract with Dun & Bradstreet, which runs a database that assigns numbers to other contractors. The growing cost of that program was documented last week in a letter from the Government Accountability Office to Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb. The office found the government is now spending roughly $19 million a year on the system that cost just $1 million annually one decade ago. What's the point of this system? The government handles more than $1 trillion a year in contracts and grants. Washington needs to assign a unique number to each one of them, to track all the businesses and other entities it deals with. For more than three decades, it has turned to one company -- Dun & Bradstreet -- for its numbering needs. But over the years, various government dictates have expanded the use of that system, and it's grown to include other information like business names, addresses and ownership details. As a result, costs have skyrocketed. So the government, after years of watching those costs rise, is finally starting to consider an alternative -- amid concern that Dun & Bradstreet's domination of the numbering market has driven up costs. "GSA believes that Dun & Bradstreet effectively has a monopoly for government unique identifiers that has contributed to higher costs," GAO wrote in its letter to Nelson. GSA, or the General Services Administration, manages the contract. The rising price-tag of the mundane system is emblematic of the struggle Washington has faced to control costs across its bureaucracy at a time of gaping deficits.