

Preparing to Respond To Landmark Decisions

The New York Times

June 25, 2012 Monday, Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2012 The New York Times Company

Section: Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 10; THE CAUCUS

Length: 797 words

Byline: By MICHAEL D. SHEAR

Body

Rarely have the black-robed justices at the Supreme Court held so much potential for dominating the political conversation.

This week, the court is expected to rule on two politically explosive issues that could shape the contours of the presidential and Congressional campaigns over the next five months.

How the justices will rule on Arizona's immigration law and President Obama's health care law, **decisions** that could come as early as Monday, is unknown. But so are the reactions to those rulings from the political establishment, which is on the edge of its seat.

Here is how various groups might react:

THE CANDIDATES Aides to Mitt Romney, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, are **prepared** to use the court's rulings to their advantage, no matter how they turn out.

If the court strikes down the health care law, they will argue that Mr. Obama lost his biggest legacy. If the court upholds it, they will argue that Mr. Romney is the last hope for conservatives seeking to undo the law.

The immigration law, which gives the police in Arizona broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally, is trickier for Mr. Romney, who faces the task of increasing his appeal among Latinos while not pushing away Tea Party conservatives.

Mr. Obama is traveling to the Northeast on Monday, so a ruling that day would quickly frame his trip. Aides have been exceptionally quiet about their **preparations** for a response on the health care law, but they are thought to be readying a furious response in case it is shot down.

The president has been pretty clear about Arizona's immigration law. He does not like it, and will put pressure on Mr. Romney to oppose it if it is upheld.

CAPITOL HILL In a memorandum to House Republicans on Thursday, Speaker John A. Boehner of Ohio urged his colleagues to avoid "spiking" the ball if the court strikes down Mr. Obama's health care law. The message: We are focused on the economy.

Still, Mr. Boehner promised his colleagues that the Republican-controlled House would move quickly to repeal "any part of Obamacare that is left standing" by the court.

In the Democratic-controlled Senate, the task would be to protect what is left and try to rebuild the rest - if it can.

Preparing to Respond To Landmark Decisions

Congress is unlikely to do anything on immigration this year, regardless of what the court says about the Arizona law.

INTEREST GROUPS Advocacy organizations have their press releases ready, their surrogates standing by and their outrage primed for both rulings.

Supporters of the health care law are preparing to assail the Supreme Court as political and out of touch if it strikes down the law. They will argue that re-electing Mr. Obama is critical to rein in what they call an out-of-control conservative majority on the court.

Opponents of the law are expecting to offer an outpouring of anger if it is upheld. Tea Party groups, which were born out of the summertime rage over health care in 2009, will stoke that anger.

Immigration activists on both sides are preparing to use the court's ruling to promote their causes. If the justices uphold the law, expect a push for similar rules in other states. If they strike it down, immigration rights groups will use that as an incentive to press for a broader overhaul of the immigration system.

INSURERS The insurance industry has been quietly preparing for the court's health care ruling for months. If the court strikes down the requirement that everyone must buy insurance - a mandate considered a boon to the industry - insurers will be ready with proposals for how to change the rest of the law so that they are not saddled by costs from other elements of the legislation.

If the entire law is struck down, the industry is prepared to go back to square one - though a full-blown debate over health care is all but certain to wait until after the November elections.

THE MEDIA News organizations are preparing for a huge week that could have a drastic effect on the election fight. Television networks and cable broadcasters are preparing special reports, newspapers are ready to deploy armies of reporters, and Twitter is hoping not to crash amid a crush of posts after the rulings.

The biggest challenge for the news media (and the politicians) will be making sense of complicated rulings in the moments after they are issued. Especially in the health care case, the decision will probably not be a simple "yes" or "no." Rather, there will most likely be nuanced points in long opinions.

But the imperatives of the news business will prevail. Expect headlines and Twitter posts to boil the news down quickly to "court upholds health care law" or "court strikes down mandate" shortly after the decision is announced.

This is a more complete version of the story than the one that appeared in print.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Publication-Type: Newspaper

Subject: US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2012 (90%); DECISIONS & RULINGS (90%); CONSERVATISM (90%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2008 (90%); LITIGATION (90%); US REPUBLICAN PARTY (89%); US STATE IMMIGRATION LAW (89%); LAW COURTS & TRIBUNALS (89%); IMMIGRATION (89%); HEALTH CARE POLICY (89%); HEALTH CARE LAW (89%); SUPREME COURTS (89%); ARIZONA IMMIGRATION LAW (89%); IMMIGRATION LAW (89%); POLITICAL PARTIES (78%); CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS (78%); TEA PARTY MOVEMENT (78%); HEADS OF GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS (77%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (77%); US

Preparing to Respond To Landmark Decisions

CONGRESS (77%); US PRESIDENTS (77%); US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (77%); OBAMA HEALTH CARE REFORM (76%); ASSOCIATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS (70%)

Industry: HEALTH CARE POLICY (89%); HEALTH CARE LAW (89%); OBAMA HEALTH CARE REFORM (76%)

Person: BARACK OBAMA (79%); MITT ROMNEY (79%); JOHN BOEHNER (58%)

Geographic: ARIZONA, USA (94%)

Load-Date: June 25, 2012

End of Document