

EMPLOYMENT LAWSCENE ALERT: WHAT THE MIDTERM ELECTION RESULTS MEAN FOR LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT LAW

In the midterm elections on Tuesday, November 4, 2014, the Republican Party gained a majority in the U.S. Senate. Now with control of both the House and the Senate, it is likely that the GOP will introduce legislation in an attempt to stop many of the current administration's employment agendas. Although President Obama maintains veto power, the Republican Party could curtail certain efforts that are currently being made.

Areas for employers to watch for potential changes include the NLRB and other federal administrative agencies. As this blog has covered recently, the NLRB has been aggressive in its enforcement of the National Labor Relations Act, and the penalties for violators have been stiff. There is currently proposed legislation to alter the composition of the NLRB from five members to six, three being from each major political party.

Increased congressional hearings that will scrutinize the Obama administration's labor and employment agenda are also likely. A target of these hearings may be the EEOC, which has also been pursuing an aggressive agenda of discrimination cases that some consider to be an attempt to expand the reach of Title VII.

Control by the Republicans of both the House and Senate could lead to budget cuts for federal agencies that enforce labor and employment laws as well. While this would not change the laws themselves, it would restrict the agencies' ability to enforce them.

Republicans will also have the ability to block or hold up nominations for various posts in the administration related to labor and employment law. There is speculation that Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez could be nominated to take over for U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder when he resigns. If that happens, the Republicans will have a larger, and likely more employer-friendly, say in who takes over as Secretary of Labor.