



*A publication for ROCKPAC Major Donors with insight and news on today's political landscape*

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**SEPTEMBER 25, 2008**

**VOLUME V, NUMBER 3**

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**ELECTION DAY IS JUST WEEKS AWAY! THERE IS NO GOOD EXCUSE NOT TO VOTE!**

In just a few short weeks Election Day will be upon us when control of the White House and Congress is up for grabs. Many of these races will be decided by a number of votes smaller than the number of employees working at NSSGA member companies in those states. Your vote and those of your colleagues can make the difference – literally!

NSSGA's political program is your "one-stop" place for everything you need to vote. Just access the NSSGA Election '08 "Vote for Aggregates Business" web site via the [Government Affairs Division](#) section. There you can register to vote, request an absentee ballot, learn who the candidates are, locate your polling place, and much more.

More than ever, it is crucial for business to play a key role in electing those who will govern us. NSSGA's "Vote for Aggregates Business" project has made this easier than ever before. Just [click here](#) or on the logo below to get started today and don't forget to spread the word to your coworkers to register and vote – time is running out!

## **DEMOCRATS AIM FOR 60 SENATE SEATS; REPUBLICANS SEE OPENING TO HOLD THE LINE IN THE HOUSE**

In such an unpredictable election year where fortunes are reversed on a dime, it is impossible to tell how things will shake out over the final weeks. What is clear at this particular moment in time is that Senate Democrats are aiming for a filibuster-proof 60-member majority while House Republicans suddenly see an opportunity to hold the line.

The playing field in the Senate favors additional Democratic gains with 23 Republican seats up compared to only 12 Democratic ones. Among the GOP seats are five open seats as well as two seats where Republican senators were appointed to fill vacancies and must run in a special election to fill the remainder of the terms.

Democrats, who currently hold 49 seats plus two independents who caucus with them, see solid opportunities to win open seats in Colorado, New Mexico and Virginia. They also are fielding strong challengers to Republican incumbents in Alaska, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Oregon. If they sweep all nine of these contests, that would hand them 60 votes. Complicating matters, however, is that one of the independents who caucuses with them is Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) and relations between the two sides have become strained in recent months due to Lieberman's vocal support for Republican presidential nominee John McCain.

On the House side, dispirited Republicans who not long ago were hoping to lose no more than an additional dozen seats are now seeing the possibility of gaining seats based upon recent polling trends. A Gallup poll on generic congressional preference released in early September showed Republicans leading among likely voters, although other polls continue to show Democrats with a lead in the mid to high single digits. It will be a very good night for House Republicans if they hold the line and gain one or two seats. It is possible that they may chip away at the Democrats' majority or at least hold any losses to a minimum.

ROCKPAC continues to look at candidates on both sides of the political aisle who will best represent the interests of the aggregates industry so that the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress has pro-aggregates, pro-business, and pro-transportation members.

## **NSSGA BLITZES DEM, GOP CONVENTIONS**

With elected officials and their staffs having vacated Washington for the two party's conventions, NSSGA staff traveled to Denver and St. Paul to represent the aggregates industry's interests. When the Democratic Party gathered in Denver, Colo. to officially nominate U.S. Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) as their presidential candidate and U.S. Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.) as his vice presidential running mate, NSSGA was there. Likewise when Republicans met in St. Paul, Minn. to select U.S. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as their standard bearers, NSSGA carried the banner for the aggregates industry.

As for the nominees and where they stand with regard to the aggregates industry, Sen. Obama has a 65 percent lifetime NSSGA vote score while Biden scores 54.3 percent. Biden has consistently been a strong advocate for more highway funding, but he has voted against NSSGA's positions on permanent repeal of the death tax and the Employee Free Choice Act. Sen. Obama scores higher but there are fewer votes on which to base his rating as compared to Biden, who has served in the Senate for 36 years. Obama also supported the Class Action Fairness Act that NSSGA backed.

Sen. McCain has a 25.7 percent lifetime vote score from NSSGA. He has consistently been a strong advocate of NSSGA's positions on tax and regulatory issues as well as being a vocal opponent of the Employee Free Choice Act, McCain's opposition to earmarks and what he considers "pork barrel spending" led him to vote against SAFETEA-LU and virtually every appropriations bill that we have key-voted. During her 2006 campaign, Gov. Palin highlighted transportation as a key issue.

NSSGA submitted statements and draft language for both party's platform's planks on transportation. While neither party adopted the exact verbage used by NSSGA, their transportation planks reflect several of NSSGA's priorities. A side-by-side comparison of the two presidential candidates on key aggregates industry issues follows.

**MAJOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE POLICY POSITIONS ON KEY ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THE AGGREGATES INDUSTRY**

	<b>John McCain</b>	<b>Barack Obama</b>
<b>Highway Financing</b>	Sen. John McCain is the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and is a former Committee Chairman. In opposing the 2008 appropriations act for the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, he stated that "funding for transportation infrastructure and transportation safety is of enormous importance and I know all of us support doing what we can to improve our nation's transportation system, from our roads and bridges to our air service." He opposed the bill because it was a "budget buster". In the past, he has encouraged a more equitable distribution of funds from the Highway Trust Fund. In a recent	Sen. Barack Obama has called for the creation of a "National Infrastructure Reinvestment Bank" that would invest \$60 billion over 10 years in highways, technology and other projects. It would be an effort to "rebuild America" and create 2 million jobs in the process. Obama says he would pay for the bank by "ending this war in Iraq. It's time to stop spending billions of dollars a week trying to put Iraq back together and start spending the money on putting America back together instead."

	<p>interview with the Austin American Statesman in Texas, Sen. John McCain said that he will push to let states keep their federal gas-tax revenues. Under the current system, all that tax money goes to Washington and is then reallocated to the states. Texas and many others are “donor” states: They get back less than they send in. “I’d like to see 90 percent of the federal gas tax money stay in the states,” he said. “I’d like them to get the whole dollar back.”</p>	
<p><b>Gas Tax Suspension</b></p>	<p>Introduced S. 2890 to temporarily suspend the highway user fee. McCain’s bill currently has nine cosponsors – Sens. Richard Burr (R-N.C.); Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.); Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.); Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.); Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.); Mel Martinez (R-Fla.); John Sununu (R-N.H.); John Warner (R-Va.); and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.)</p>	<p>Obama rejected suspending the user fee. He cited a 2000 vote that he cast in the Illinois State Senate for a six-month, five-percentage point break on the state's 6.25 percent gas sales tax when the average price of gas was \$1.52 per gallon. During debate to make the suspension permanent, he opposed that measure, but defended his original vote saying, "I originally voted for the suspension because I thought that it was extraordinary circumstances, given the huge hike in prices." Subsequent studies showed the tax break did not benefit consumers to any great degree and his campaign is pointing to that as a reason for his opposition now.</p>
<p><b>Taxes</b></p>	<p>Supports making the Bush tax cuts permanent, even though he voted against the cuts originally. Supports permanent repeal of the Alternative Minimum Tax. Supports requiring a 3/5 majority in Congress to raise taxes. Proposes to permit corporations to immediately deduct the cost of equipment investment. Supports reducing the federal corporate tax rate to 25</p>	<p>Will cut income taxes by \$1,000 for working families to offset the payroll tax they pay. Obama will also eliminate all capital gains taxes on start-up businesses to encourage innovation and job creation. Has indicated he will raise taxes on those earning more than \$250,000 per year.</p>

	percent from 35 percent.	
<b>Energy</b>	Supports an “all-of-the above” approach to increasing American energy independence. Advocates building more nuclear power plants, increasing offshore oil and gas drilling as well as development of alternative fuels.	Supports development of alternative fuels, particularly wind, solar and other sustainable sources. Is open to the possibility of nuclear power, but opposes building more reactors until better waste disposal methods can be found. Favors limited offshore oil and gas drilling.
<b>Global Climate Change</b>	Supports “sustainable use of ample and unspoiled natural resources.” Advocates approaches to limit carbon emissions by harnessing market forces that will bring advanced technologies, such as nuclear energy, to the market faster, reduce our dependence on foreign supplies of energy.	Obama supports implementation of a market-based cap-and-trade system to reduce carbon emissions by the amount scientists say is necessary: 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Obama's cap-and-trade system will require all pollution credits to be auctioned. A 100 percent auction ensures that all polluters pay for every ton of emissions they release, rather than giving these emission rights away to coal and oil companies. Some of the revenue generated by auctioning allowances will be used to support the development of clean energy, to invest in energy efficiency improvements, and to address transition costs, including helping American workers affected by this economic transition.
<b>Labor</b>	Voted against the Employee Free Choice Act.	Obama cosponsored and is strong advocate for the Employee Free Choice Act. He has said that he will continue to fight for EFCA's passage and sign it into law as president.

## **CDW RAMPS UP PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON UNION “CARD CHECK” BILL**

The Coalition for a Democratic Workplace (CDW), of which NSSGA is a member, has ramped up its public awareness campaign to include airing television commercials (viewable [here](#) and [here](#)) in targeted states to inform the public about the labor union-backed Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), or “card check” legislation, that threatens worker privacy.

In an effort to fight declining union membership, the labor lobby has aggressively sought Congressional passage of EFCA, under which workers would lose their right to a secret ballot

when deciding whether to join a union. The secret ballot would be replaced with a “card-check” scheme where a union is organized if a majority of workers simply sign a card.

The workers’ signatures are made public to their employer, the union organizers and their co-workers, so everyone would know who signed and who did not. Furthermore, there is the possibility that not every employee would even have the opportunity to sign or refuse to sign a card if organizers were able to accumulate a majority before getting to them, thus taking away their right to vote on whether or not to unionize completely.

The bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives, but was blocked in the Senate in June 2007. The labor lobby has promised to reintroduce the legislation in 2009 when they hope to have even more supporters in Congress. Among the presidential candidates, Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.) has stated he would sign EFCA into law while Sen. John McCain has indicated his opposition to the bill.

As the leading, broad-based coalition fighting the anti-worker “card check” scheme, CDW has been actively working this issue since early 2007. The coalition began its voter education campaign in the Spring with a series of national cable TV buys and ran TV and radio ads in states and Congressional districts last year urging members of Congress to support private ballots for workers and oppose the Employee Free Choice Act. NSSGA will continue its efforts with the CDW to oppose this legislation for the remainder of the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress and into the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress that will convene in January. Labor unions have made this their top priority for the next Congress.

## **“THE ROAD TO CONGRESS” RUNS THROUGH NSSGA**

Once again, NSSGA has partnered with several other organizations to produce *The Road to Congress* candidate binder. This publication was created to help educate those running for office on how highway issues can strengthen their campaigns. Covering road safety, quality of life and sensible use of tax dollars, this informational resource provides the reader with valuable statistics and voter-tested messages.

We urge you to meet with your elected federal officials and candidates for Congress between now and Election Day to stress the importance of transportation issues. *The Road to Congress* provides you with the ideal opportunity to set up these meetings and discuss the need for additional highway funding and the upcoming surface transportation financing authorization bill. If you would like to receive copies of *The Road to Congress* for any meetings that you are setting up, please contact NSSGA’s [Government Affairs Division](#).

## **GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING SET FOR NSSGA BUSINESS WEEK**

NSSGA’s Government Affairs Committee will hold a breakfast meeting on Tuesday, October 7, from 8-11:30 a.m. during NSSGA’s Business Week. With the need to authorize a new surface

transportation bill in 2009 and the pending election of a new president and Congress, it is crucial for the aggregates industry to plan its strategy for the coming year. This is your chance to be a part of it.

Other meetings will be held throughout the week and there will be networking receptions on Tuesday and Wednesday nights from 6-7 p.m.. Please [click here](#) for the full schedule of events.

If you would like to register for Business Week online, you may do so [here](#). Please be sure to let us know which meetings you plan on attending. You can also book your hotel reservations online via this [web site](#).

We'll look forward to seeing you in October!