2026 MIDTERM ELECTION OUTLOOK: TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION





ANALYSIS BY

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MONUMENT ADVOCACY

OVERVIEW: *Enforcement Swings, Infrastructure Endures*

The outlook for travel, transportation, and tourism policy will vary significantly depending on congressional control, with the most consequential differences emerging around immigration and border security, aviation and transportation security, surface transportation, infrastructure investment, workforce mobility, international visitation, and regulation. Regardless of the electoral outcome, transportation and tourism policy are likely to remain closely intertwined with homeland security, immigration, economic competitiveness, infrastructure, and technology.

Across all three scenarios, several cross cutting issues will warrant attention: surface transportation reauthorization and infrastructure investment; modernization of ports of entry and border infrastructure; aviation and transportation security; immigration and workforce mobility; international tourism and visitor facilitation; cybersecurity and critical infrastructure; major event preparedness; freight and supply chain mobility; and the deployment of emerging technologies across the transportation and homeland security systems. Major global events will also increase attention to transportation capacity and connectivity, including the ability of highways, transit, passenger rail, airports, and other transportation systems to accommodate increased domestic and international travel.

The traditional transportation committees will remain central as Congress considers surface transportation, aviation, infrastructure, safety, and related policy. At the same time, the House and Senate Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees will be

increasingly important where transportation intersects with immigration, border security, traveler processing, cybersecurity, critical infrastructure, and technology. As a result, significant policy developments affecting travel, tourism, and transportation are likely to emerge across a broader range of congressional committees than the traditional transportation policy structure alone.



IF THE HOUSE FLIPS

A Democratic House with a Republican Senate would likely produce greater House level oversight of DHS, CBP, ICE, and TSA, alongside targeted efforts on immigration, workforce mobility, aviation security, transportation infrastructure, and policies affecting international visitation. Surface transportation reauthorization would also be a major priority, with opportunities for bipartisan agreement around highway and bridge investment, public transit, freight and supply chain infrastructure, roadway safety, and faster project delivery, while differences could emerge over funding priorities, regulatory policy, and the federal role in transportation investment. Tourism policy could provide opportunities for bipartisan cooperation around visa processing, the international arrivals experience, Brand USA, major global events, and efforts to strengthen the competitiveness of the United States as a destination. Major legislative changes would remain dependent on bipartisan support and Senate agreement. The House Judiciary and Homeland Security Committees provide important venues for investigations and oversight involving immigration enforcement, border operations, transportation security, traveler processing, and DHS technology.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- Targeted immigration packages and investigations, including Dreamer protections, asylum and refugee policy, and agricultural/seasonal workforce visa reforms.
- Attempts at DHS funding reductions or restrictions affecting CBP and ICE.
- Border security with a focus on violent criminals, trafficking, and drug interdiction.
- Investigations into ICE and CBP enforcement practices, detention, civil liberties, and agency accountability.
- Aviation and transportation security oversight — increased scrutiny of TSA, CBP technology deployment, airport security funding, and passenger screening.
- Border and port-of-entry modernization, including inspection technology, biometric systems, and infrastructure.
- Renewed interest in shifting TSA to DOT, particularly in the context of broader aviation modernization debates.
- Increased Judiciary Committee activity around immigration enforcement, executive authority, asylum, sanctuary jurisdictions, and the legal boundaries of federal immigration policy.
- Increased Homeland Security Committee oversight of DHS operations, border security, transportation security, cybersecurity, and critical infrastructure.

MEMBERS TO WATCH:



REP. DAVID ROUZER
R-NC

Currently running unopposed to replace Chairman Graves as the top Republican on Transportation and Infrastructure next Congress.



REP. MIKE BOST
R-IL

Senior member of the committee and has expressed interest to succeed Rep. Rouzer as chair of the Highways and Transit Subcommittee.



REP. RICK LARSEN
D-WA

Currently the top Democrat on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and will take over the gavel should Democrats win the House.



REP. ROBERT GARCIA
D-CA

Emerging voice on ports, transit, and supply chain resilience and a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.



IF BOTH CHAMBERS FLIP

A Democratic House and Senate would create greater opportunity for broader immigration and workforce reforms, expanded legal pathways, transportation and infrastructure investment, and integration of climate and transportation policy. On surface transportation, congressional priorities could place greater emphasis on public transit, passenger rail, multimodal transportation, roadway safety, resilience, and maintaining a strong federal role in transportation investment. Congressional attention could also increase around DHS enforcement practices, border processing, transportation security, and the use of federal technology and surveillance systems. Tourism priorities could include international visitation, visa and entry facilitation, destination promotion, hospitality workforce needs, and investments designed to improve the visitor experience.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- Scaled immigration reform package, including border processing modernization, asylum and refugee policy, and adjustments to legal pathways.
- Border security with a focus on violent criminals, trafficking, and drug interdiction.
- Expanded work visa programs tied to labor shortages.
- DHS funding reductions or restrictions affecting CBP and ICE.
- Investigations into ICE and CBP enforcement practices, detention, and civil liberties.
- Transportation and climate integration — rail and transit expansion, electrification, and resilience investments in infrastructure.

- Renewed interest in shifting TSA to DOT, particularly in the context of aviation modernization debates.
- Expanded oversight of DHS, TSA, CBP, and ICE through the Judiciary, Homeland Security, and HSGAC committees.
- Increased focus on immigration processing, visa administration, border technology, and transportation security.

RISING MEMBERS TO WATCH:



SEN. KATIE BRITT
R-AL

Growing national voice on workforce mobility and border-related policy



SEN. TED BUDD
R-NC

Commerce Committee member with an increasingly active aviation portfolio, including bipartisan aviation modernization legislation



SEN. ALEX PADILLA
D-CA

Increasing influence on immigration and border governance policy.



REP. PETE AGUILAR
D-CA

Leadership role shaping caucus priorities, messaging, and immigration.



IF NEITHER FLIPS

If Republicans retain both chambers, the congressional agenda would likely continue to emphasize border enforcement, DHS and CBP and ICE resources, transportation efficiency, infrastructure delivery, and regulatory reform. Surface transportation priorities could include highway and bridge investment, freight mobility and supply chains, faster permitting and project delivery, state flexibility, motor carrier policy, and reducing regulatory barriers to infrastructure development and transportation operations. Aviation security, border technology, and efforts to streamline lawful travel and commerce would remain important areas of focus, alongside potential efforts to reduce regulatory barriers affecting trucking, aviation, maritime transportation, and the broader travel economy. International tourism could also remain connected to economic growth and preparations for major global events, with attention to secure visa processing, efficient ports of entry, and policies intended to increase international visitation.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- Border security and enforcement expansion — CBP/ICE funding increases, surveillance and physical infrastructure at the border.
- Freight and travel deregulation — trucking workforce reforms, port efficiency and supply chain throughput, airline regulatory rollback efforts.

RISING MEMBERS TO WATCH:



REP. CARLOS GIMÉNEZ
R-FL

Growing voice on border security, aviation, and port operations, with strong operational experience at the local level.



SEN. RICK SCOTT
R-FL

Increasing focus on supply chain resilience and port security.

MONUMENT'S TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION PRACTICE AREA

Monument's Travel & Transportation Practice has been instrumental in developing programs like Global Entry and TSA Pre-Check, representing key players in the aviation, shipping, public transportation and rail sectors, partnering with pioneering technologies like autonomous vehicles, managing complicated immigration and border security issues, and building coalitions to further amplify policy objectives across travel, transportation, and immigration.

This analysis is brought to you courtesy of Monument Advocacy's Travel & Transportation policy experts.

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