PUBLIC POLICY NEWSLETTER

Power in Congress Shifts: Positive TDM Policy Outcomes Expected from the 2026 Midterm Elections



November's midterm elections brought a sweeping change to the makeup of Congress. Democrats went in optimistic about flipping the House and, maybe, the Senate, but almost no one expected a shift in voter sentiment this dramatic. Once the weeks of vote counting wrap up, Democrats are expected to have flipped nine Senate seats, giving them a 56-44 majority, and nearly 50 House seats, for a 259-176 majority.

With power in Congress shaken up this much, we expect positive policy outcomes for TDM as the 120th Congress works to finish surface transportation reauthorization.

Influence Over Surface Transportation Reauthorization
Most importantly, the majority changes in both chambers mean Democrats will take over leadership of the key transportation committees. In the House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, current Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA) is expected to become Chair. In the Senate, current Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) is expected to chair the Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee. These two committees are the biggest players in the surface transportation reauthorization process.

House T&I Democrats will also have the power to rewrite or heavily amend the committee-passed reauthorization from the 119th Congress, the Build America 250 Act, which reflected more Republican influence. That assumes no surface transportation bill is signed into law before the end of the year, which is highly unlikely. However, even if Larsen and the Democrats redo the bill, it will still need bipartisan support to get through the Senate's 60 vote threshold and ultimately earn President Trump's signature.

The Senate did not produce its own surface transportation reauthorization bill in the 119th Congress. It will most likely draft its version next year.

Introduce Your Organization to the New Congress
When the new Congress convenes in early January, ACT will provide resources to help organizations introduce themselves and the programs they run to their members of Congress, both returning and newly elected.

Transportation at the Local Level
Alongside the big shifts in federal politics, local ballot measures delivered major wins for public transportation across the country. Of the 27 public transportation measures on the ballot, 22 passed, approving a total of $27.4 billion in long-term transit funding.

Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit Increased for 2027

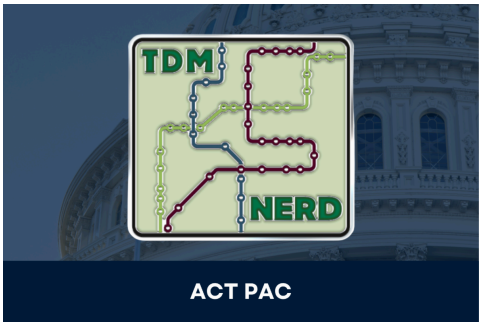


The IRS has adjusted the qualified transportation fringe benefit dollar amounts for 2027 by $10, raising the total amount to $350 per month.

Read the full press release from the IRS below.

Learn more

ACT PAC Is Making Moves!



ACT PAC has made a contribution to Rep. Marilyn Strickland (D-WA), the House sponsor of the Maximizing Transportation Efficiency Act (MTEA), and a member expected to remain on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. We're planning a sit-down with the Congresswoman to talk about surface transportation reauthorization, highlight TDM success stories, and get her insight into what's ahead in the new Congress. We thank all of our members who have contributed thus far and made this donation possible.

Want to help us keep these opportunities coming and strengthen TDM's voice in Washington? Please consider donating to ACT PAC. You can order a "TDM Nerd" pin, with proceeds going to the PAC, or make a contribution as usual.

reminder: contributions must be made with person funds

Purchase a pin

Additional Policy Resources







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