



Election Season in Full Swing

By HPBA

It is hard not to notice that election season is underway with the deluge of advertisements inundating us at every turn. There was a brief respite after many states' primaries wrapped up in spring and early summer, but with the general election now less than 17 weeks (about four months) away, campaigns are in full swing.

The outcome of every election this fall will shape policy priorities and agendas from the top of the ticket down to your state legislature. Issues that impact the hearth industry will not be immune to changes in leadership. Staying on top of the elections and areas will help you and our industry as voters head to the polls on November 5.

Top of mind to most voters is the presidential race; in many instances, people are not undecided about this race, with ardent supporters on both sides. However, for our industry, the policies of the candidate who wins the highest office aren't necessarily the most pressing. While

important, we should also focus on how state and local governments shape their policies in reaction to the winner of the presidential race.

If the Democratic nominee wins, we will likely continue to see some top-down incentivization of electrification from a regulatory perspective, with a divided legislature and little movement from that branch of government. Also, expect an increase in influence from the Supreme Court, which will be used to adjudicate all manner of issues, including potential Berkeley and EPCA matters. From a state and local perspective, we would anticipate more of the same with restrictions on some gas appliances, mainly from a stretch code or standards direction, with a cooling off on the issue still holding firm since the Berkeley decision.

If the Republican nominee were to win, we could expect a much more relaxed federal regulatory agenda. Anticipating a divided legislative branch, very few policies of consequence would come from Congress. However, through a state and local lens, there may be increased urgency to address environmental issues that could impact some of our HPBA members' appliances. We could expect this to manifest through an increase

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in more explicit city or state bans on gas hook-ups for new construction and major renovation.

Both scenarios are predicated on state and local governments reacting or pushing back from the president’s agendas. Nothing will occur overnight, but these trends will play out over the next president’s four-year term.


At the state level, 87 of the 99 legislative chambers nationwide will have elections on November 5. Currently, Republicans control 56 of the legislative chambers, while Democrats control 41; there are two chambers organized under power-sharing coalitions, both in Alaska. In counting the states that have single-party control of both chambers and the governor’s mansion—which we call “trifectas”—there are 17 Democratic trifectas and 23 Republican trifectas. This leaves 10 governments under divided control.

A few jurisdictions to watch at the state level include Michigan, Minnesota, and North Carolina. In the two Midwest states, there are elections for the state house; these are both places where a few races could swing the balance of the majority. This could move these two states

from Democratic trifectas to divided governments, making it harder for the executive branch to enact their agenda. Conversely, in North Carolina, they are holding a governor’s contest where the race is close, within the margin of error. The race for governor there could either continue to keep North Carolina as a divided government or flip the state to a Republican trifecta.

If any of these states shift in party control, we could see their government’s ability to enact policy change dramatically.

To stay on top of what policy ideas are percolating in your home state or town, be sure to check out all the offerings from the HPBA Government Affairs team. *Hot News*, published once a month, is full of timely and relevant information about the changing political landscape that impacts the hearth industry. Also, don’t miss the weekly *Hot Headlines* that aggregate news stories from across the country and contain important information that may impact your business. Finally, stay tuned to *The Fire Time Magazine* Podcast, where HPBA team members regularly update the listening audience on current government affairs and regulatory events.



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