Republicans in Congress are once again in hot water with the American public. Last Thursday, the House of Representatives passed a 90-day stopgap bill to continue funding necessary highway and infrastructure projects. In contrast, the Senate overwhelmingly passed a bipartisan three-year extension.

Failure to pass any highway bill would leave America’s bridges, highways, and roads with insufficient funds to continue necessary repairs. Congress has been unable to pass a full highway funding bill since the previous legislation expired in 2009. Since then, Congress has passed nine temporary measures to continue funding road and infrastructure repairs.

On Thursday, March 29, the House of Representatives passed the stopgap measure with a vote of 266-158, with many Democrats voting for the measure. Once signed into law by President Obama, the federal government will continue to fund highway and infrastructure repairs for another 90 days.

However, Senate Democrats have hammered the House Republicans for passing the 90 day stopgap bill, it was Boehner’s method of fighting back against the Senate Democrat plan.

The highway funding bill is expected to come back up in late June, although it is unlikely that Congress will settle on a long-term extension of the funds.

Presidential Republican Primary

March has provided the American voters with a better idea of how the Republican primary race will conclude as Mitt Romney has begun solidifying the delegates to win the Republican nomination, although Rick Santorum remains competitive. There were several important races after Super Tuesday that will affect the race for nomination.

In March, Santorum emerged as the victor in Kansas, Alabama, and Mississippi allowing him to emerge as the clear alternative to Romney. These big wins have allowed Santorum to continue his campaign until the Republican Convention this summer, as he has promised.

Mitt Romney won the primaries in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Illinois. These victories have given Romney a nearly insurmountable lead in delegates over Santorum. On Tuesday, April 2, Romney swept the Presidential primaries in Wisconsin, Maryland, and the District of Columbia to inch closer to locking up the nomination.

Romney biggest win of late was Illinois and this will likely give him the momentum that he needs going into April. It is expected that Romney will now carry that momentum through the GOP convention into his race against President Obama.

Romney stays in National Lead
Gallup Daily Tracking Poll
3/30–4/3
MoE ± 4.0%
Romney: 40
Santorum: 25
Paul: 12
Gingrich: 11
Primary pits GOP leadership versus the Tea Party

On March 20, a Congressional primary was held between Rep. Adam Kinzinger and Rep. Don Manzullo with Kinzinger pulling out a decisive 12-point victory. Redistricting left both of these members of Congress in a tough primary against each other. Not surprisingly, the race between Rep. Kinzinger and Rep. Manzullo was both expensive and very aggressive.

Kinzinger won 56% of the vote, while Manzullo got 44% of the vote. Some issues were raised by Majority Leader Eric Cantor’s support of Kinzinger, who he personally endorsed. A Super PAC, the Young Guns Action Fund, a political action committee closely associated with the Majority Leader Cantor, released more than $50,000 worth of television ads in support of Kinzinger. Rep. Manzullo was angered by the Young Guns Action Fund. This campaign may have consequences for Cantor as there are quiet grumblings that leadership should not have involved themselves in a primary between two members. Currently, in the Senate, Jim DeMint is receiving a lot of heat for picking a member in a primary. This is not something senior members of Congress generally do.

Supreme Court to decide fate of “Obamacare”

In the biggest Supreme Court case since Bush v. Gore in 2000, the Supreme Court heard arguments on the constitutionality of the President Obama’s signature piece of legislation, the Healthcare law, last week. Now it is up to just nine men and women to answer the question of year: Is the individual mandate to buy health insurance in “Obamacare” constitutional?

Although the Supreme Court did not allow cameras in the courtroom, they did release audio of the proceeding at the end of each day. Expectations of protest were high because this is a widely debated and hotly contested topic. It will also have consequences for Presidential Obama’s reelection campaign if the law is struck down.

The Obama election campaign may be tied to this decision on the Health Care Law. Currently polls have 56% of people wanted this bill repealed, while only 39% oppose repeal. This bill will be decided at the latest in July.

The Supreme Court is expected to make a final decision on the constitutionality of the law in late June of this year.

Justice Kennedy is expected to be the swing vote in the decision. Chief Justice Roberts and justices Scalia, Alito, and Thomas often stick together on votes, and Ginsburg, Breyer, Kagan, and Sotomayor is expected to vote together. This will leaves Justice Kennedy to be the deciding factor in the Affordable Care Act decision. We will have to wait to see what Justice Kennedy decided to do.

Arguing Constitutional rights

On Dec. 2, 2009, Chris Drew was arrested for selling art without a permit in Illinois. What Drew did not know was that one can be charged with a felony if they record a police officer in Illinois without their consent. He claims that the law is outdated and infringes on his first amendment rights. A Cook County judge recently said that the law is too broad and was not meant for this type of case. Many constitutional experts are eagerly awaiting the court’s ruling on whether this charge is allowed to stand.

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McCain takes on Obama Again?

Once again President Obama and John McCain do not see eye to eye on things. However, this time it is not about ideology or about how our country should be run, but rather who is going to win the College Basketball’s coveted “March Madness” tournament. Both President Obama and John McCain posted a ballot online.

Surprisingly, both of the men had similar picks in the Final Four. John McCain decided to go with University of Missouri, Syracuse University, the University of North Carolina, and the University of Kentucky. President Obama had slightly different picks for the final four teams in the tournament. The President went with Missouri, North Carolina, Kentucky and, the Ohio State University.

There was one other difference in their brackets; John McCain picked the University of Kentucky to beat Syracuse University in the Finals. The President went with the University of North Carolina beating the University of Kentucky.

The Final was decided on Monday April 2nd, with Kentucky winning over Kansas.

Montana Senate race leans Republican

Sen. Jon Tester (D)    Rep. Denny Rehberg (R)

The Montana Senate race is expected to help decide which party controls the Senate after the 2012 election. Rep. Denny Rehberg has emerged as a top-tiered challenger to incumbent Jon Tester with several polls showing the challenger leading by 2-3 points. The New York Times rates Montana as a toss-up heading into this November’s elections.

Montana’s electorate has shifted more conservative over the past few years. In 2010 the state legislature had a large shift towards conservative Republicans. Also, another factor that has hindered Tester chances or reelection is the country’s anti-incumbent mentality. This has allowed Rep. Rehberg a chance to win the Montana Senate seat.

Tester was originally elected to the United States Senate in the Democratic wave of 2006. Rehberg was elected to the House of Representatives in 2000 and was reelected in 2010 for the sixth time. Rehberg decided to forgo another House run to run for the Senate seat.

Experts expect both the RNC and the DNC, as well as numerous outside “Super PACs,” to spend a great deal of money on this race since it has the potential to ultimately decide control of the United States Senate.