



**WIPP WORKS IN WASHINGTON by Ann Sullivan
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The 113th Congress – The Old and the New

With the Inauguration festivities behind us (WIPP and WBENC threw quite the party), the 113th Congress and a reelected President are getting down to business. Some of the legislative ideas coming out of the gate are new and some are old.

New. The lack of a fight over the **debt ceiling**. Although the House has decided that it is not the time to make the financial markets worry about a government default, they set a new temporary deadline, May 18, when the debt ceiling has to be revisited again. **New--**the plan requires the Senate to pass a budget, which has not happened since 2009. **Old.** A temporary resolution of the budget issue rather than a long-term strategy on federal spending.

Sequestration. **Old.** The threat of 9% across the board cuts government-wide go into effect in March unless the Congress acts. **New.** Some pretty credible Members of Congress, such as Paul Ryan are saying it could happen.

New. Introduction of bipartisan legislation in the Senate on putting forward a sound **immigration** policy. **New** meaning bipartisan. **Old.** Talking about the issue, which the Congress has been doing for decades.

New. **Trans-Pacific Partnership.** The Congress has to ratify a treaty for trading with 10 countries in the Asia Pacific region. The US Trade Representative has been working on this agreement since 2010.

New. **Streamlining the rules of the Senate.** A group of Senators put forward a plan to make the Senate less likely to be tied up in procedural knots. **New.** Even though that plan didn't pass, Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell came up with compromises that did pass.

Old and New. **Old.** **Senators deciding not to run again.** Chambliss, Harkin and Rockefeller. Not everyone wants to stay in the Senate forever. **New.** The reason cited for quitting is frustration with the partisanship in the Senate. Up until recently, even if they thought it, they didn't say it.

New. **More women in the House and the Senate.** A new record in the Senate—20 women Senators and 81 women Representatives in the House for a total of 101. **Old.** Should we really be excited over 20% of the Senate being female or 18% of the House? In the scheme of things, that's a pretty low number.

As WIPP prepares to work with the 113th Congress, we plan to come forward with our own new ideas, based on our membership's input. We plan to work with all Members of Congress, no matter their partisan bent. One of the few things Congress can agree on is that enabling small businesses to grow will surely lead to economic growth. That leads to some pretty strong policy, even in Congresses where the overall legislative performance has been pretty weak. Let's work together for the next two years to strengthen the success of women owned businesses. I'm ready—are you? Get involved. Join WIPP's issue committees* and lend your voice.

**You must be a WIPP dues-paying member to join the issue committees.*