Washington Nationals Stay in the Fight. The Washington Nationals are heading to the World Series for the first time ever, and the Buzz is shocked—shocked!—that members of Congress are jumping on the bandwagon and looking to take advantage of the opportunity to fill their campaign coffers. And with their four-game sweep of the St. Louis Cardinals in the National League Championship Series, the Nats disappointed not only the Redbirds, but also those politicians who scheduled their fundraisers for Game 5. Luckily, those lawmakers can reschedule (at a heftier price, no doubt), as Games 3, 4, and (if necessary) 5 of the World Series are slated to be played at Nationals Park.

The last time a team from Washington, D.C., played in the World Series was in 1933, when the Washington Senators lost to the New York Giants, four games to one. At that time, Franklin D. Roosevelt was president (he threw out the first pitch before Game 3), Joseph T. Robinson (D-AR) was U.S. Senate majority leader, and Henry T. Rainey (D-IL) was speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Hawaii—the birthplace of Nationals catcher Kurt Suzuki—wouldn’t become a state for another 26 years.
Congressional Fall Preview. After a two-week break, federal legislators returned to Washington, D.C., this week, where much of the focus is centered on the ongoing impeachment drama in the House, as well as foreign policy matters. Legislators are scheduled to be in town until Thanksgiving break (though the House departs for a week in early November). Here are some of the other big-picture issues that they will be working on during this legislative period:

- **Government funding.** Remember the 35-day government shutdown earlier this year? The longest one in our nation’s history? Our legislators undoubtedly do, so they will be working on an agreement to fund the government after November 21, 2019. Among other anticipated sticking points is—you guessed it—funding for a border wall.

- **Trade.** The White House and the business community are hoping that an agreement on United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement can be reached prior to Thanksgiving. However, the AFL-CIO opposes the current deal, and it is assumed that Democratic leadership in the House will need labor’s approval to move forward.

- **Healthcare.** Bipartisan proposals to address prescription drug prices and surprise medical billing have made significant advancements in both the Senate and House. Proponents of these measures would clearly like to see them cross the finish line in the next few weeks.

But of course there will be plenty of labor and employment policy debates as well. For example, the House is expected to vote on the PRO Act in the coming weeks. The bill has 214 cosponsors in the House, just a few short of the 218 votes needed for passage. Further, beginning next week, the House Committee on Education and Labor will hold the first in what is expected to be a series of hearings examining the future of work. The Senate began this current legislative period by doing exactly what it has been doing for much of the past two years: confirming federal judges. Stay tuned: it is bound to be a busy few weeks.

**Will Senate Address Multiemployer Pensions?** In addition to confirming judges, is there room—not to mention the will—in the Senate to address multiemployer pension reform this fall? This week, Senate Democrats urged Republicans to take up the Rehabilitation for Multiemployer Pensions Act of 2019 (H.R. 397) (also known as the Butch Lewis Act), which passed the House in late July of this year and which would make long-term, low-interest loans to critical and declining multiemployer plans. Unlike some issues we deal with at the Buzz, this one actually enjoys some bipartisan support in Congress in that both Democrats and Republicans recognize the problem and are at least willing to be in the same room together to discuss it, at least temporarily. But many Republicans view the House bill as a taxpayer bailout, so the Buzz remains pessimistic about its chances in the Senate.

**“Fair Scheduling” Bill Introduced.** On October 17, 2019, Democrats in the Senate and House reintroduced the Schedules That Work Act. Though its text isn’t yet available, the bill is expected to require employers in the retail, food service, and cleaning industries (as well as other industries designated by the secretary of labor) to provide employees with 14 days’ notice of changes in their work schedules. The bill would also require “reporting pay,” “call in pay,” and “split shift pay.” Additionally, all other employers would be required to engage in an interactive
process with employees who request changes to their schedules, and in certain instances—such as when the request relates to an employee’s health—employers must grant the request.

**Happy Birthday, U.S. Navy.** The United States Navy marked its 244th anniversary on October 13, 2019. On that day, way back in 1775, the Second Continental Congress authorized the purchase of two ships “for intercepting such transports as may be laden with warlike stores and other supplies for our enemies.” The Continental Navy was disbanded upon the end of the Revolutionary War (because why would a brand-new country need a navy if it wasn’t at war?). But when pirates began to attack and seize U.S. merchant vessels on the high seas, Congress passed—and President George Washington signed—the Naval Act of 1794. The act appropriated $688,888.82 for the construction of six frigates and created a permanent standing Navy. Those six ships have grown into a Navy that today boasts 290 deployable battle force ships, as well as over 337,000 active duty personnel and over 101,500 ready reserve personnel.
