

US Senate's 50-50 Split continued....

Though a supermajority of 60 senators is generally needed to pass major legislation in the Senate, the chamber moves routine measures without a formal vote, and a simple majority is enough to advance certain annual budget and tax-related measures via a process known as reconciliation. Only matters that are reasonably related to taxing and spending are supposed to make it into such bills.

Among Biden's agenda items, those could arguably include raising some tax rates, lowering the eligibility for Medicare, and expanding Obamacare. Reconciliation also could empower Democrats to enact additional stimulus relief opposed by Republicans. The same would hold true for Biden's climate and immigration priorities.

Republicans still maintain the power to filibuster or demand unlimited debate on legislation that doesn't have the backing of a 60-vote supermajority. That means the Democratic majority needs at least 10 Republicans, to advance non-budgetary initiatives on topics including federal minimum wage, family leave, labor rights and background checks for gun purchases. With a slim "50-50 majority", Democrats must stick together...no defections.

Thus, Senator Schumer must keep ALL 50 Democrats in line on major votes. Conservative Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia will carry extra clout.

On the other hand, Republican Senators including Utah's Mitt Romney, Maine's Susan Collins and Alaska's Lisa Murkowski could tend to vote with Democrats.

What does this mean for Florida? Senator Marco Rubio no longer chairs the Small Business Committee and Intelligence Committee.... he is now Ranking member

Stay tuned.