



## **On House Schedule, Wednesday Is the New Monday**

September 17, 2010

By Alan K. Ota, CQ Staff

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her leadership team have delayed the first of this week's House votes until Wednesday, Sept. 22, responding to requests for a tighter schedule that allows more time for campaigning.

The House normally holds its first votes of the week on Monday or Tuesday. According to the House historian's office, the last time the House started the week's votes on a Wednesday was Feb. 6, 2008.

Democratic leaders offered no formal explanation for the unusual step. But two senior Democratic aides said that Pelosi, D-Calif., and other party leaders have been under pressure from the rank and file to allow lawmakers more time in their districts.

Sentiment for a tighter work schedule is growing after the House did relatively little last week, and with all indications pointing to a light voting schedule this week.

"Freshmen and sophomores have told the leadership that if they do not need to be in Washington, they would prefer to be working back in their districts," one aide said.

"Members always like to work in their districts as much as possible, and this fall is no exception," said Katie Grant, a spokesman for Majority Leader Steny H. Hoyer, a Maryland Democrat.

Republicans have also noted the light floor agenda during the pre-election work period, and they are in no hurry for House action on the Democratic majority's legislative agenda. "People are asking why are we here," a senior GOP aide said.

Aides to several Republicans suggested that the postponement of this week's votes might be related to a joint fundraising event in New York on Sept. 22 for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Those suspicions were fueled last week when Hoyer canceled his customary floor colloquy with Minority Whip Eric Cantor, R-Va., regarding the floor schedule for the upcoming week.

It is customary to schedule floor action to accommodate party activities and social events involving many members of Congress.

Democratic aides denied that the delayed voting is connected to the fundraising event. “That theory doesn’t work at all,” said one senior aide.

Pelosi is scheduled to attend the New York fundraiser, but Hoyer is not going.

This week’s House floor agenda includes final action on a small-business bill (HR 5297) that the Senate passed last week.