

IEC Webinar Recap: Plug in to Policy Conference - An Outlet for Meaningful Advocacy

Ben Brubeck- IEC Lobbyist, Jeremy Croft- IEC Sr. Manager of Government Affairs, and Mahsa Poorak- CEO of Southern Electric Company

Political & Legislative Landscape

IEC Policy Conference

- Allows for timely engagement on policy and political issues important to IEC and the electrical contracting industry.

Congressional Dynamics

- **House:** Extremely tight margins (218-214 with three vacancies), resulting in difficulty passing legislation.
- **Senate:** Republicans hold 53-47 majority; leadership shift from McConnell to Thune.
- Gridlock is common; both chambers often prioritize politics over policy.

Administration Priorities

- President Trump is advancing an aggressive policy agenda, including reshoring, deregulation, and workforce initiatives.
- 142 executive orders in first 100 days → major shift from previous administrations.

Key Issues Impacting IEC & Construction Industry

- **Permitting Reform:** Bipartisan interest; critical for infrastructure, energy projects, and data centers.
- **Energy & Manufacturing Policy:** AI/data center expansion and domestic EV charger manufacturing.
- **Workforce Development:** 350,000 worker shortage; need 80,000 new electricians annually.
 - Push for 1 million apprentices, Workforce Pell expansion, and 529 flexibility.
- **Regulatory & Labor Policy:** NLRB appointment confirmations an IEC win but need one more board member appointed and confirmed; potential shifts in workplace rules.
 - PRO Act opposition; support for Employee Rights Act.
 - Ongoing issues to watch: OSHA heat rule, independent contractor rule, Davis-Bacon litigation, Project Labor Agreement (PLA) mandates.
- **Tariffs & Immigration:** Tariffs continue to raise material costs with some offsetting benefits for the construction industry; immigration restrictions impact labor supply and are not solvable through legislation this Congress due to political dynamics.

2026 Elections Outlook

- Highly competitive House & Senate maps.
- Election outcomes will significantly influence IEC priorities (permitting, workforce, PLAs, and NLRB nominations).

Policy Conference Overview (May 4-6, Washington, DC)

Day 1: Arrival & Networking (May 4)

- Registration & opening reception (5-7 p.m.)
- Optional DC Night Bus Tour

Day 2: Programming & Policy Deep Dives (May 5)

- Lawmaker opening remarks
- How to Lobby + IEC Issues Overview with Ben Brubeck (IEC participants will receive a copy of talking points and an issue brief on priority issues at least two weeks prior to the event to prepare).
- Election briefing from NRSC (NRCC invited)
- Keynote panel with journalist Brody Mullins
- Labor & employment policy developments
- Department of Labor speaker (Henry Mack III invited)
- Data center construction + permitting reform
- Women in Power Happy Hour (open to all attendees)
- PAC Dinner at Officina (must donate to PAC or Freedom Fund)

Day 3: Capitol Hill Advocacy (May 6)

- Hill visits scheduled via Advocacy Associates app (starting approximately 8 weeks out)
- Meetings with congressional staff/lawmakers
- Post-visit reception in a congressional committee room

How Attendees Can Prepare for Effective Advocacy

- Know your representatives/senators and their priorities.
- Share your company's local economic impact (employees, payroll, projects, etc.).
- Understand where lawmakers stand on apprenticeships, data centers, unions, etc.
- Tell personal stories; be authentic, build relationships, and follow up with staff.
- Invite members to visit your job sites or apprenticeship training centers.

PAC vs. Freedom Fund

- **PAC:** Supports federal candidates who align with merit shop values.
- **Freedom Fund:** Supports issue advocacy and voter education but not candidates.