As we approach the twilight of the Obama era and the dawning of the Trump administration, HR professionals are grappling with exactly what kind of changes to expect.

President Obama used the inherent power of the executive branch to bring about workplace changes he could not wrangle out of Congress. Chances are, soon-to-be President Trump will do the same, but with the backing of a Republican Congress.

The questions now: Which executive orders and agency regulations will Trump revoke? With Congress poised to flex its muscle, will fresh legislation redraw the HR map?

Here are four “what if” scenarios that could come to pass:

1. **What if Trump and Congress don’t move to repeal all of the Affordable Care Act**, as they have promised?

   Recent comments make this seem more and more likely.

   After a post-election sit-down with President Obama, Trump announced that he does not want to eliminate the requirement to cover all individuals without regard to pre-existing conditions. Problem: The actuarial math makes this unsustainable without retaining the individual mandate that requires everyone to have health insurance. Otherwise, a premium death spiral would likely result.

   Trump also said he wants to continue requiring insurance plans to allow adult children to piggy-back on their parents’ coverage until age 26.

2. **What if new mothers gain an entitlement to paid maternity leave?** Trump stated he favors legislation to provide at least six weeks paid maternity leave for new mothers.

   The plan would be paid as part of the existing unemployment compensation system and would require a small payroll tax. Because the plan only applies to mothers, challenges by fathers are likely and could succeed through a Title VII sex discrimination challenge.

   The bottom line: More parents are likely to take at least six weeks off following birth. That’s especially true in low-wage industries where new parents seldom take a full 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave.

3. **What if Trump expands veteran preference in federal contracting?** It seems more and more likely that in a Trump administration, several groups will benefit from the power of the executive branch to dictate the terms of federal contracting.

   During the campaign, Trump repeatedly called for more opportunities for veterans and veteran-owned small businesses. One possible way would be to issue an executive order providing enhanced federal contracting set-
4. What if massive infrastructure projects take off? Candidate Trump promised large-scale, nationwide upgrades to everything from highways and bridges to airports.

In a time of relatively low unemployment, that may mean an increase in wages as more workers are hired for construction work and are lured away from other jobs. Upward wage pressure may mean all employers will have to raise their pay.