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## Will end of 'Government Motors' buoy Democrats' chances in November?

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WASHINGTON – The impending end of “Government Motors” could be the economic news President Barack Obama and the Democratic majority in Congress have been looking for headed into the midterm elections.

Today, the White House declined to comment as **General Motors and its majority owner – the U.S. Treasury Department – filed documents** that should lead to a public sale of stock that could begin repaying taxpayers later this year.

But GM’s recent return to profitability is a welcome turnaround in fortunes for Democrats desperate to show the public any kind of economic improvement.

“GM is rolling again – thanks to the investment and patience of the American taxpayer,” said U.S. Rep. John Dingell, a Dearborn Democrat and the longest-serving member of the House ever.

For now, Treasury is still keeping its cards close. The documents filed today did not say how many, if any, shares the government is willing to sell. But speculation has been high that the offering will reduce the government’s 61% stake to something below 50%.

Any successful sale provides proof that the rescue plan worked, said U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, a Michigan Democrat.

“I’m optimistic this success story is going to keep getting better,” he said.

Many of the biggest doubters were silent today.

Sen. Richard Shelby, an Alabama Republican, declined to discuss the public offering, though he was perhaps the biggest critic when GM and Chrysler sought aid. Republican Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee, who also asked for assurances, also didn’t respond to the Free Press for comment.

But concerns remain. U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, an Iowa Republican, has asked the Inspector General’s office to analyze whether the stock offering makes sure that “when the dust settles, the taxpayer will not have lost billions of dollars on GM.”

Daniel Ikenson, associate director of the Center for Trade Policy Studies at the libertarian Cato Institute, said it’s good that the government is moving to get out of the auto industry but that doesn’t change the damage already done to the free market system.

As to whether a public offering will protect Democrats this fall, Nathan Gonzales, political director of the Rothenberg Political Report, which handicaps congressional races, said no.

“Democrats need either a lot more or a lot bigger news to change people’s views of Washington,” he said.

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