

# Middle class tax break aborted

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes March 17 through 23.

## Roll Call Report

**CAMPAIGN FINANCING**—Refused, 196 for and 209 against, to bring to the floor HR 11315, a bill making major changes in the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971. Most of the changes were aimed at reducing the money political parties and political action committees can contribute to House and Senate candidates, and at limiting the money spent by such candidates to gain election. Had the bill been brought to the floor for debate, an amendment to begin partial public financing of congressional campaigns would have been offered.

The bill was drafted by the Democratic-controlled administration committee. Much opposition centered on the fact that the Republican Party—which traditionally raises much more congressional campaign money than the Democratic Party—was widely seen as having been unfairly penalized by the proposed cut in campaign spending.

Rep. Frank Thompson (D-N.J.), a supporter, said: "To vote against this bill now would be to perpetuate the influence of special interest money at the expense of the individual citizen and, second, it would be to deny the House its right to debate the question of partial public financing."

Rep. James Quillen (R-Tenn.), an opponent, said: "What we have a case of here is an attempt on the part of some members of the majority to alter the political process in such a way as to deny the minority a fair chance of becoming the majority."

Members voting "yea" favored calling the bill up for debate.

Reps. David Bonior (D-Mont. Clemens), William Ford (D-Taylor), William Brodhead (D-Detroit) and James Blanchard (D-Pleasant Ridge) voted "yea."

Reps. William Broomfield (R-Birmingham) and Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth) voted "nay."

**EDUCATION AID**—Rejected, 156 for and 218 against, a bill providing the middle-class with more federal aid to defray tuition at colleges and other post-secondary schools.

The main thrust of HR 11274 was to change the formula for awarding federal grants under the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant Program. Poverty students would continue to be major beneficiaries of the program, but under the bill a broader range of

middle-income students would also become eligible for the federal grants.

During brief discussion on the floor, no supporters or opponents spoke on the merits of the bill.

The Democratic leadership, administration and other supporters generally regarded direct grants to middle-income students as the best vehicle for easing the middle-class tuition crunch.

Opponents generally favored the Republican plan of providing tax credits rather than grants to offset tuition costs. Opponents also objected to the short-cut parliamentary procedure (no amendments allowed, two-thirds majority required for passage) under which the Democratic leadership had brought HR 11274 to the floor.

Members voting "yea" favored the bill.

Bonior, Ford, Brodhead and Blanchard voted "yea."

Broomfield voted "nay."

Pursell did not vote.

**FARM BILL**—Voted, 224 for and 167 against, in opposition to the so-called "flexible parity" provision for farmers. This vote tabled an effort to have House conferees go along with Senate language implementing flexible parity. It came as the House considered an emergency relief bill aimed at easing the financial plight of farmers. The bill, now in House-Senate conference, would boost farm income by such measures as increased price supports. It is opposed by the administration as inflationary.

Flexible parity would enable a wheat, feedgrain or cotton farmer to set his own price support levels up to 100 per cent of parity, with the actual level dependent on how much land he agrees to take out of production. It would raise 1978 market prices of those crops.

No supporter of tabling spoke during debate. An opponent of tabling, Rep. Robert Bauman (R-Md.), said: "With all the many problems facing our farmers, the least we can do is to permit full debate on the parity

issue... It is an insult to American farmers to treat this issue in such a cavalier manner."

Members voting "yea" were opposed to including the flexible parity provision in the emergency 1978 farm bill.

Bonior, Ford, Brodhead and Blanchard voted "yea."

Broomfield and Pursell voted "nay."

### SENATE

**FARM BILL**—Passed, 67 for and 26 against, the Emergency Agricultural Act of 1978, a measure aimed at improving the 1978 income of farmers. Among many provisions, it raised price support and subsidy levels on grains and cotton, enabled farmers to gain immediate cash by setting aside more acreage, and provided for "flexible parity" linking price support levels to the amount of acreage set aside. The bill (HR 6782) was sent to conference with the House, where its future was uncertain.

Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.), a supporter, said the bill "addresses itself in the short range to the present emergency by pumping an estimated \$2.3 billion into the hands of farmers

quickly in return for their agreement to lay aside land."

Sen. Edmund Muskie (D-Maine), an opponent, said the bill would cost consumers at the supermarket, and added that bills approved "under the pressure of emotion and urgency" usually create "side effects that were worse than the original problems."

Senators voting "yea" favored the emergency farm bill.

Sen. Robert Griffin (R) voted "yea."

Sen. Donald Riegle (D) did not vote.

**PANAMA CANAL**—Rejected, 39 for and 45 against, an amendment to the proposed Panama Canal Treaty. It sought to prohibit the introduction of any military force, other than that of the U.S. and Panama, into Panama between now and 2000. It was considered as the Senate approached a late-April final vote on the second and final proposed treaty, which would relinquish U.S. control of the canal in 2000.

Sen. John Melcher (D-Mont.), a supporter, said his discussions with Gen. Omar Torrijos and other Panamanian leaders indicated "this is exactly what the treaty meant, that there would not be any other troops between now and the year 2000... in Panama."

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho), an opponent, said that "if you have a good neighbor, you do not ask that neighbor to protect the neighborhood by promising you in writing not to let the Mafia use his house. For 75 years, Panama has been a good neighbor."

Senators voting "yea" favored the amendment.

Riegle voted "nay."

Griffin did not vote.



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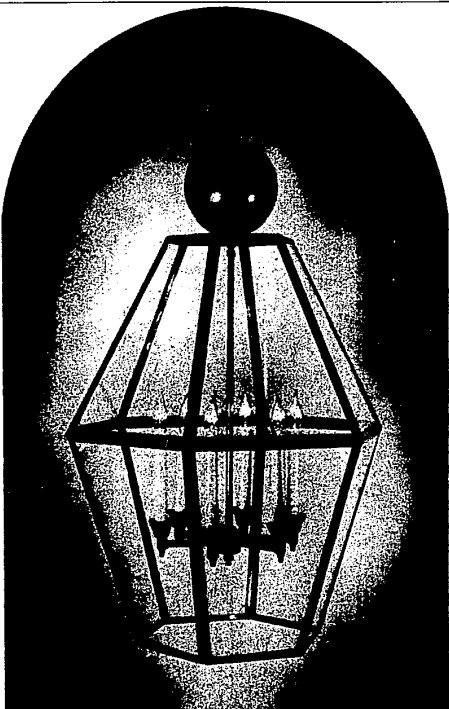
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