

Roll Call Report

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes July 21-27.

HOUSE
FOOD STAMPS—Rejected, 102 for and 317 against, an amendment to retain the "purchase requirement" for food stamps. Defeat of the amendment left intact plans to provide food stamps free of charge to poor people. The amendment was proposed to the new farm bill (HR1717), which was headed for final passage and conference with the Senate. Part of the bill is a four-year extension of the stamp program, which costs \$5.6 billion annually.

The government now requires the payment of a minimum amount—an average of 25 per cent of a family's net income—for stamps which at the grocery checkout are worth more than they cost the recipient. HR1717 eliminates the requirement that the stamps be bought.

Rep. W.R. Poage (D-Tex.), a supporter of the amendment, said HR1717 would make food stamps another "handout" program. "Providing food for one's family always been considered a first priority by both savage and civilized people," he added. "This bill shifts that responsibility and puts the entire burden on the government."

Opponents of the amendment said doing away with the purchase requirement would enable the poorest people to obtain stamps, reduce the program's administrative costs, and cut down on vendor fraud and black-marketing.

Members voting "nay" favored removing the purchase requirement for food stamps.

Rep. William Broomfield (R-19) voted "yea."
Rep. David Bonior (D-12), William Brodhead (D-17), James Blanchard (D-18) and Carl Pursell (R-32) voted "nay."

FOOD STAMPS—Rejected, 170 for and 249 against, an amendment denying food stamps to persons on strike. This vote left strikers subject to the same eligibility requirements that apply to other applicants for food stamps. The amendment was proposed to HR1717, the Agricultural Act of 1977, which was headed for final passage.

Rep. Richard Kelly (D-Fla.), the sponsor, said his amendment "says we are not going to reward him who goes out on strike and quits working..."

Rep. Floyd Fithian (D-Ind., an opponent, said "I do not believe strikers should be treated any differently than we treat anyone else in applying food stamp regulations. Individuals who qualify for food stamps...should not be excluded...simply because they are on strike."

Members voting "yea" opposed allowing strikers to receive food stamps.
Broomfield voted "yea."
Bonior, Brodhead, Blanchard and Pursell voted "nay."

PEANUTS—Rejected, 207 for and 210 against, an amendment allowing the federal price support level for peanuts to diminish to \$345 per ton in 1981. It sought to replace language in HR1717 (see above votes) setting a subsidy level of \$200 per year through 1981.

Rep. Margaret Heider (R-Mass.), the sponsor, said that commercial prices for peanut products are pegged to the federal subsidy level. "...This peanut subsidy is doing up the cost of peanuts and causing yet another drain on the budget of the average American home, particularly the poor who have peanut butter sandwiches are served more regularly than roast beef."

Rep. Robert Daniel (D-Va.), said: "The immediate effect of this amendment would be to impose a recession on vast areas of Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Texas and Oklahoma and that it would 'in the long run save the taxpayer and the consumer very little money.'"

Members voting "yea" favored the lower price support level.
Bonior, Brodhead, Blanchard, Broomfield and Pursell voted "yea."

SENATE
PUBLIC FINANCING—Rejected, 37 for and 56 against, an amendment ostensibly to provide for public financing of Senate general election and primary campaigns. Despite its stated purpose, supporters and opponents understood that the actual intent was to bring defeat of pending legislation providing for public financing of general election Senate campaigns.

The topsy-turvy strategy arose in the midst of a filibuster by Republicans and conservative Democrats who oppose S 926. The bill would enable a Senate candidate to finance up to 62.5 per cent of his campaign with public funds, with each state having a spending ceiling based on a voting population. The money would be raised by a tax-checkoff method similar to the check-off no used to publicly finance presidential campaigns.

Supporters of the amendment understood that S 926 would probably meet defeat if weighted down with primary campaign provisions. Sen. Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), the sponsor, said if supporters of S 926 "think that public financing is a real reform, and not a public relations gimmick, then surely they will wish to extend it to all Senate elections."

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), an opponent, called the amendment "a Trojan horse intended to make the overall bill impassable." He said public financing of primary elections was inevitable but should not be enacted this year.

Virtually all senators voting "yea" opposed public financing of Senate campaigns. Most senators voting "nay" favored passage of S 926.

Sen. Robert Griffin (R) voted "yea" and Sen. Donald Riegle (D) voted "nay."
BLACK LUNG—Adopted, 47 for and 45 against, an amendment to extend

indefinitely a coal tax to be used to raise money for black lung benefits. The amendment removed a proposed Oct. 1, 1982 termination date, a "sun-set" date set so that the tax's success or failure could be measured after five years.

The amendment was attached to S 1538, which was awaiting final passage. S 1538 is designed to improve the federal law providing disability benefits for coal miners stricken by black lung disease.

Sen. Jennings Randolph (D-W.Va.), the sponsor, said: "One of the major reasons for S 1538 was to transfer the burden of paying black lung benefits from the federal government to the coal industry where, we believe, that burden belongs. If the tax is terminated after five years, this sound policy will be entirely nullified."

Sen. Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.), an opponent, noted that the coal tax would be passed through to consumers, and said that since it was new it should be evaluated after a five-year trial. He asked: "Do we want that program to go forward without implementing it into workers' compensation or requiring some other evidence of responsibility?"

Sensors voting "nay" favored automatic termination and review of the one per cent tax.

Riegle voted "yea" and Griffin voted "nay."

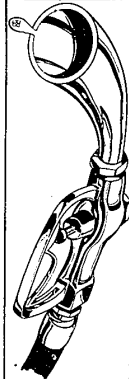
BLACK LUNG—Voted, 48 for and 42 against, to continue the present system whereby the government can double-check chest x-rays submitted to document black lung disability claims. This voted adopted an amendment to S 1538, the Black Lung Benefits Revenue Act of 1977, which was awaiting Senate passage (see above vote).

In order to speed up claims processing, S 1538 had proposed dropping the government review x-rays which were already certified by the applicant's private physician. This amendment maintained the review except for claimants with more than 25 years in the mines.

Sen. John Chafee (D-R.I.), the sponsor, said his amendment "provides the government, which is making the payments, some protection (against fraud) by providing for this second reading."

Sen. Jennings Randolph (D-W.Va.), an opponent, said that an x-ray alone does not establish eligibility. "The claimant must still prove his case...the government can still, in any case, dispute the miner's claim of the disability..."

Griffin voted "yea" and Riegle voted "nay."



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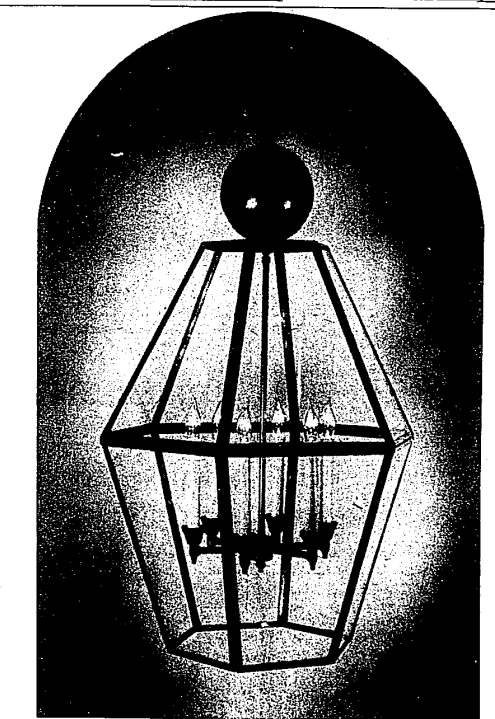
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