

95th Congress calls it quits

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes held Dec. 15, the last day of the first session of the 96th congress.

HOUSE

SOCIAL SECURITY: Adopted, 189 for and 163 against, the conference report on HR 9346, the bill to shore up the financially-sagging Social Security trust fund by means of greatly increased payroll taxes on employees and employers. The measure, approved the same day by the Senate (see vote below), was sent to President Carter for his signature.

Beginning in 1979, the legislation hikes both the payroll tax rate and the wage base subject to Social Security taxation, with middle- and high-income wage earners hardest hit. By 1986, the tax rate on both employees and employers will have risen to 7.15 per cent of the first \$40,200 in wages. Now the rate is 5.85 per cent on the first \$18,500.

Rep. Al Ullman (D-Ore.), a supporter, said: "If we vote against this bill and it fails, we cannot go home and say to either the people who are working or to the people who are on retirement... that we acted responsibly."

Rep. Barber Conable (R-N.Y.), an opponent, said the bill "will increase payroll levies over the next 10 years by an estimated \$227 billion, thus giving it the notoriety, if not the distinction, of constituting the biggest peacetime tax increase in our history."

Members voting "yea" favored passage of the Social Security bill. Reps. David Bonior (D-Mt. Clemens), William Ford (D-Taylor), William Brodhead (D-Detroit) and James Blanchard (D-Pleasant Ridge) voted "yea."

Rep. William Broomfield (R-Birm.) voted "nay."

Rep. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth) did not vote.

SOCIAL SECURITY: Agreed, 178 for and 175 against, to the rule that

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permitted final consideration of the Social Security bill. Had this move failed, the measure to bolster the Social Security trust fund by increasing payroll taxes probably would have been shelved until the 1978 session of Congress.

Rep. John Seiberling (D-Ohio), a supporter, reflected the lukewarm popularity of the measure by saying he would vote for the rule reluctantly. "It is a poor way to make tax policy... for the Congress to increase this regressive tax before having any clear idea what kinds of cuts it is going to make in the personal income tax to offset the economic drag of the Social Security tax increase."

Rep. John Anderson (R-Ill.), an opponent, called it a "fraud" that taxpayers "are being asked to take the bitter now and wait for the vague promises of tax relief to be realized later."

Members voting "yea" favored bringing the Social Security bill up for final consideration this year.

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

Broomfield voted "nay."

Pursell did not vote.

SENATE

SOCIAL SECURITY: Adopted, 56 for and 21 against, the conference

report on HR 9346, the Social Security Financing Amendments of 1977 (see above vote). Among its many provisions, the legislation eased the "earnings test" that limits the outside income a pensioner can receive without having his Social Security check penalized. Currently the cutoff is \$3,000; under this legislation it will rise gradually to \$6,000 in 1982 and be eliminated after that year.

Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), a supporter, said: "If the Senate rejects this reform proposal in order to retain the status quo, it will indicate to all Americans that, while we recognize the urgency of the Social Security problem, we are not willing to take the necessary steps" to solve it.

Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.), an opponent, said "Social Security has failed, and we would be better off in this country if we pledged to every person who has ever paid a dime into the Social Security fund that that money would be returned, and then forget about the whole thing."

Senators voting "nay" opposed passage of the Social Security bill.

Sen. Donald Riegle (D) voted "nay" and Sen. Robert Griffin (R) did not vote.

OL Road widening gets hearing

A public hearing is planned for February to gather citizens' comments on the proposed widening of Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield Township, announced John L. Grubba, Oakland County Road Commission managing director.

Grubba said reconstruction of Orchard Lake Road from a two-lane to a five-lane pavement between Twelve Mile and Fifteen Mile roads is a major goal of the road commission's proposed 1978 construction program.

He said the 2.8 mile project is scheduled for \$3.2 million of the road commission's 1978 construction program funds, of which \$2.1 million is anticipated federal aid. The remainder of costs would be shared \$0.50 by the road commission and local units of government, he said.

"This much-needed road improvement has been designated a 'major impact' project by the Federal Highway Administration, and thus requires an involved environmental impact review," said Grubba.

"The public hearing, which is a part of the review process, will be held at the conclusion of federal and state approvals of early steps in the procedure," he said.

"We appear to be ahead of schedule

in the environmental impact review, and it may be possible to get as far as contract letting and some initial construction work in 1978. But it does not appear likely that full construction will be under way before 1979," said the road commission's managing director.

He noted that widening of Orchard Lake Road is a high priority improvement project because of heavy traffic volumes, which are largely generated by an interchange with I-496 near Twelve Mile. The route's congestion is further compounded by turning movements at mile-road intersections and numerous commercial driveways along the project length, he said.

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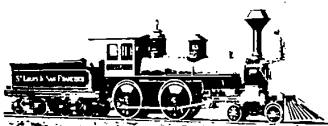
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