

roll call report

Area reps vote to keep ceilings on farm loans

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes during the week of April 25-19.

HOUSE
FARMERS — By a vote of 284 for and 121 against, the House voted to keep the existing ceiling on Farmers Home Administration loans for real estate acquisitions and capital improvements.

This was a victory for lawmakers from the Midwest and other areas that have smaller farms. It was a defeat for western lawmakers, whose farmers have bigger spreads requiring larger FmHA loans.

With FmHA money scarce, a lower ceiling per loan means more farmers can get aid.

The vote affected only FmHA "ownership" loans. It kept the ceiling at \$200,000 per loan and \$300,000 per loan guarantee. It killed language in a pending bill (H.R. 1190, which awaited final action) to raise those limits to \$300,000 and \$400,000 respectively.

The vote had no bearing on the FmHA loan ceilings for operating expenses and rural non-farm housing, which were to be considered separately.

Sponsor Berkeley Bedell, D-Iowa, said the FmHA "is intended to serve as a lender of last resort... to moderate-size family farmers."

Opponent Jack Hightower, D-Tex., told Bedell he was "forgetting... that farming is done in different ways in different parts of the world."

Members voting yes wanted to keep the present per-transaction ceiling on FmHA ownership loans and loan guarantees. Voting yes: Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, Dennis Hertel, D-Detroit, Sander Levin, D-Southfield, and William Broomefield, R-Birmingham.

Not voting: William Ford, D-Taylor.

FREEZE — The House voted, 215 for and 194 against, to reaffirm a freeze of U.S. and Soviet nuclear weaponry at existing levels as the top priority of the resolution (HJ Res 13)

calling for a "mutual and verifiable freeze on and reductions in nuclear weapons."

A triumph for pro-freezers, the vote once again rebuffed efforts by opponents to establish "reductions" as a co-equal priority of HJ Res 13. President Reagan says reducing superpower arsenals is needed to keep a freeze from insuring U.S. inferiority.

The vote came as the House continued to be tied in knots by HJ Res 13 while delaying consideration of many pending bills needed to run the government on a daily basis. The House at week's end had debated the freeze measure inconclusively for 32 hours in five sessions over six weeks.

Members voting yes wanted to keep

a freeze as the unchallenged first priority of HJ Res 13. Voting yes: Pursell, Ford, Hertel and Levin.

Voting no: Broomefield.

SENATE
IMMIGRATION — By a vote of 40 for and 51 against, the Senate rejected an amendment to the immigration reform bill (S. 539) dealing with proposed penalties on employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens. Final actions on the bill was delayed until May 10 or later.

The amendment sought to "sunset" the penalties, called employer sanctions, after five years if they were found to be discriminatory.

Under the section, aliens applying for work would have to display a card documenting their legal residency.

Employers who intentionally hire undocumented workers would be subject to criminal penalties including imprisonment.

Employer sanctions are opposed by liberals, who say there are "police state" connotations to requiring aliens to carry an identify card, and who fear legal aliens will lose work opportunities merely because of their appearance.

Conservatives also oppose the sanctions, saying they put too much of a paperwork and investigative burden on employers.

Lawmakers in the middle say the influx of illegal aliens will never be curbed until employers stop hiring them.

The immigration bill would grant residency to illegal aliens who entered the country before 1977, and tighten the Mexican border, among its many provisions.

Senators voting no were opposed to watering down the "employer sanctions" section of the bill.

Michigan's two Democratic senators, Carl Levin and Donald Riegle, both voted yes.

AMNESTY — The Senate rejected, 20 for and 70 against, an amendment to liberalize the immigration reform bill (above) by allowing more illegal aliens to achieve legal residency under the "amnesty" section.

Levin voted yes. Riegle voted no.

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