

House thwarts Reagan on nerve gas policy

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes June 9-16.

HOUSE

NERVE GAS — The House rejected, 202 for and 215 against, an amendment to resume U.S. production of binary nerve gas, at a cost of \$115 million in fiscal 1984. Production has been suspended since 1969.

The vote occurred during debate on HR 2869, a defense spending bill that awarded final House action. It thwarted administration plans to increase the Army's nerve gas capability, in part to encourage the Soviets to sign a treaty banning chemical warfare.

Supporter Marvin Leath, D-Texas, said the U.S. nerve gas stockpile "is totally inadequate to pose any semblance of a counterthreat to deter the Soviets from using chemical weapons

Opponent Jim Leach, R-Iowa, warned of an arms race involving chemical weapons, saying they "could all too easily become the poor man's weapons of mass destruction."

Members voting no wanted to keep the moratorium on U.S. nerve gas production. Voting no were Dennis Hertz, D-Detroit, William Ford, D-Taylor, and Sander Levin, D-Southfield.

Voting yes: William Broomfield, R-Birmingham.

Not voting: Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth.

SPACE WAR — The House refused, 177 for and 243 against, to delete \$19 million in the fiscal 1984 defense authorization bill (HR 3068) earmarked for anti-satellite weaponry.

The amendment sought to prevent the testing later this year of a "satellite-killer." It left untouched more than \$200 million in the bill for research and

roll call report

development of space weaponry. Quoting a General Accounting Office study, Rep. George Brown, D-Calif., said the weaponry is "a lousy system" that will end up cost \$15 billion but "will not do the job."

Rep. Ken Kramer, R-Colo., said that "without the development of this type of capability . . . the Soviets would be free to launch (a) first strike against us" from outer space.

Members voting yes wanted to delete \$19 million for testing the anti-satellite weaponry. Voting yes: Hertz, Ford and Levin.

Voting no: Pursell and Broomfield.

DEMOCRACY — By a vote of 194 for and 215 against, the House rejected

an amendment to kill the proposed National Endowment for Democracy.

The endowment is planning as a private sector effort to promote democratic ideals throughout the world, offsetting the totalitarian message.

Among organizations that would get federal grants to advocate democracy abroad are the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO. The endowment would cost taxpayers upwards of \$20 million in fiscal 1984.

The vote occurred during debate on HR 3919, a State Department funding bill later sent to the Senate.

Rep. Hank Brown, R-Colo., who wanted to kill the endowment, said "Our democracy is a marvelous sys-

tem" but that "to subsidize it with federal funds . . . is a real danger to the whole concept of democracy itself."

Rep. Benjamin Gilman, R-N.Y., said "our nation is engaged in a battle of ideas with authoritarian governments, and this is one of the better ways of highlighting what are nation stands for."

All local congressmen — Pursell, Hertz, Levin and Broomfield — voted against blocking the endowment except Ford, who did not vote.

SENATE

CABLE TV — The Senate rejected, 44 for and 55 against, an amendment to keep telephone companies competitive with cable television in selling specialized data such as news transmissions and banking and shopping services to consumers in their homes.

The amendment was offered to a bill removing most local and state regulation of cable TV and setting federal

guidelines for the industry. The bill (S 66) was sent to the House.

AT&T was the driving force behind the amendment. It argued that because local Bell companies are regulated, they will be unable to compete with unregulated cable operations in offering into-the-home telecommunications services.

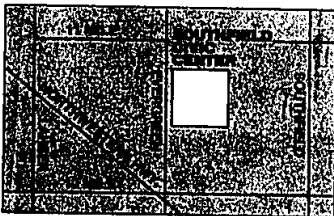
Sponsor James Abdnor, R-S.D., said cable companies are "not infant or insignificant competitors — they are truly the major economic alternative for a telephone company's most important source of revenue."

Opponent Robert Packwood, R-Ore., noted that specialized data transmissions now provide only a tiny share of cable companies' income. He said any competitive disadvantage faced by local phone companies can be addressed by Congress when it arises.

Carl Levin and Donald Riegle, both Michigan Democrats, voted yes.

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