

roll call report

Party lines decide votes

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes June 23-25.

HOUSE
PROBE: The House voted 256-161 for a secret rather than open probe of widespread, anti-GOP distortions in the editing of hearing transcripts.

To make some Republicans look bad, the transcripts altered what they actually said during subcommittee hearings last year involving the Environmental Protection Agency.

The vote authorized a probe by the Ethics Committee, which by law must meet in closed sessions, and block GOP calls for a special House panel that would air the issue in public.

Virtually all 256 members voting for private hearings were Democrats. Leaders of both parties agreed that Democratic employees were the culprits.

Supporter Jim Wright, D-Tex., said the Ethics Committee probe "reflects the rights of individuals as well as the honor of the House."

Opponent Robert Michel, R-Ill., said "what is at issue here is the integrity of the House... Our records are the heart of our legislative process."

Members voting yes favored a closed-door probe of the misconduct by Democratic staffers.

Voting yes: Dennis Hertz, D-Detroit and Sander Levin, D-Southeast.
 Voting no: Carl Persell, R-Plymouth and William Broomfield, R-Birmingham.

Not voting: William Ford, D-Taylor.
NETO: By a vote of 238-137, the House passed a bill (HR 2688) that keeps the Consumer Product Safety Commission in existence but with a smaller budget and less power than its most ardent backers wanted.

The bill (HR 2688) contains the first Court decision outwining the "Congressional veto" lawmakers had used to kill regulations and other executive branch actions they disliked.

It proposed using joint resolutions to replace the congressional veto.

However, this is a weaker tool because it needs presidential approval to take effect.

The bill, which was sent to the Senate, authorized a fiscal 1984 commission budget of \$35.7 million.

Many members voting no disliked the heavy attempt to replace the congressional veto or thought the bill too harsh on product safety.

Voting yes: Persell and Broomfield.
 Voting no: Hertz and Levin.
 Not voting: Ford.

ARTS: The House rejected, 150-271, an attempt to freeze fiscal 1984 spending for arts and humanities programs at 1983 levels.

The vote, occurring during debate on an appropriations bill (HR 3383) later sent to the Senate, left intact plans to hike National Endowment for the Arts outlays from \$144 million to \$165 million and National Endowment for the Humanities spending from \$130 million to \$150 million.

Sponsor John Hiller, R-Ind., criticized the government becoming "an ever-expanding and ever-available source of funding for artistic endeavor."

Opponent Benjamin Gilman, R-N.Y., said "nations are judged by the... atention, respect and support they give to their artists and their scientists."

Members voting yes wanted to freeze arts and humanities subsidies. Voting yes: Persell and Broomfield. Voting no: Hertz and Levin.
 Not voting: Ford.

SENATE
INCOME: By a vote of 54-58, the Senate rejected an amendment requiring senators to place in trust any "unearned" income exceeding 30 percent of their government salary.

Unearned income comes mainly from investments.

This was a sequel to the recent vote limiting "earned" outside income such as speech honoraria to 30 percent of senators' \$69,800 salary.

There is no limit on investment income, which angers less prosperous senators who had profited nicely from speech fees.

With this amendment, they retaliated against the many Senate millionaires who had voted to limit their honoraria.

Sponsor Jake Garn, R-Utah, said "I do not expect to pass. I would expect the denouement and the hypocrites to vote much as they usually do."

No opponent spoke against the amendment, and Garn observed "there is a single rich boy on the floor to defend himself."

Senators voting no opposed the trust requirement for investment income. Michigan's Democratic senators split their vote. Carl Levin voted no. Donald Riegle voted yes.

ABORTION: By a vote of 49-50, the proposed constitutional amendment enabling federal and state legislatures to outlaw abortions failed. A two-thirds majority, 67 votes, was needed for passage.

Seeking to nullify the 1973 Supreme Court decision Roe v. Wade, the amendment said "A right to abortion is not secured by this Constitution."

Sponsor Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said "this nation, with the possible exception of Communist China, has the most radical abortion laws of any nation in the world."

Opponent Robert Packwood, R-Ore., said that "by seeking to force all women into childbearing (the amendment) undermines their ability to control their bodies and their lives."

Senators voting yes supported the constitutional amendment.
 Levin and Riegle voted no.

TAX CAP: The Senate refused, 45-55, to cap the personal income tax cut that took effect July 1.

This killed the House-passed bill (HR 1183) that was originated by Speaker Thomas O'Neill, D-Mass., as a major challenge to the Administration's economic recovery plan.

The cap would have cost the wealthiest taxpayers while preserving the full benefit of the cut for the remaining 90 percent of taxpayers.

The 10 percent cut brought to 25 percent the cumulative cut in rates since 1981 under President Reagan's supply-side program.

Supporters said the cap would narrow the deficit by \$8 billion and add fairness to the president's program, while foes said it would retard the recovery now in progress.

Senators voting yes wanted the July 1 tax cut to be less beneficial to the wealthiest taxpayers.
 Levin and Riegle voted yes.



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