

U.S. House reverses itself on outside income

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

HOUSE

OUTSIDE INCOME — House members voted, 333 for and 68 against to reverse their decision of a day earlier and lower by \$7,870 the amount of "earned" outside income they can receive to supplement their government salary of \$75,100 annually.

This supplemental income often comes in the form of speaking honoraria a lawmaker receives from special interests whose economic wellbeing is linked to the lawmaker's committee work. House rules distinguish it from "unearned" income such as interest and dividends, upon which there is no limit.

Lawmakers say they need the extra earned income to offset the high costs and comparatively low pay of congressional existence. But critics such as Common Cause say lawmakers often allow themselves to be compromised by groups that provide honoraria, and that members can always quit Congress if they don't like the pay.

This vote came a day after the House — by voice vote and without debate — sparked public outcry by raising the ceiling on earned outside income from \$22,530 to \$30,400. That is, from 30 to 40 percent of a House member's salary.

On neither day was their debate on the issue of whether the higher level of supplemental income is warranted.

Members voting yes wanted to block any raise in the amount of outside earned income House members can receive.

Voting yes: Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods, Sander Levin, D-Southfield, William Broomfield, R-Birmingham. Voting no: William Ford, D-Taylor.

GARRISON PROJECT — By a vote of 354 for and 154 against, the House passed a bill authorizing \$600 million for resuming work on the Garrison Diversion Project in North Dakota, which would divert Missouri River water to irrigate up to 131,000 acres of farmland and feed numerous agricultural and industrial water systems throughout the state.

Its ultimate federal cost is esti-

Roll Call Report

mated at \$1.17 billion.

The legislation, which was sent to the Senate, is a scaled down version of the Garrison Diversion project that has been on the federal drawing board for four decades. Construction of the massive water-delivery system was begun in 1965, but halted in the early 1980s in the face of criticism from environmentalists, the Canadian government, and fiscal watchdogs such as the National Taxpayers Union.

Supporter Silvio Conte, R-Mass., called the bill a compromise under which "everyone wins — the people of North Dakota, the federal taxpayers, the Canadians, and the wildlife resources of North Dakota."

Opponent Berkley Bedell, D-Iowa, complained that the bill did not go far enough in requiring cost-sharing on the part of farmers who would use the irrigation water to grow crops already in surplus.

Members voting yes favored the bill.

Voting yes: William Ford, Levin. Voting no: Pursell, Hertel, Broomfield.

COST-SHARING — The House rejected, 199 for and 203 against, an amendment requiring farmers in North Dakota to reimburse the government the full cost of Garrison Diversion Unit federal irrigation water used to grow crops such as potatoes and wheat that already are in surplus.

Defeat of the amendment left intact a provision of the bill (HR 1116; preceding vote) assessing farmers an irrigation-water surcharge equal to 10 percent of the government's cost of supplying the water.

Supporter Thomas Peiri, R-Wis., said: "There is no reason the federal government should provide any irrigation subsidy to farmers who use these lands for producing surplus commodities."

Opponent Virginia Smith, R-Neb., said the amendment "would stop U.S. water development dead in its tracks." She added it was wrong to penalize farmers while routinely funding costly projects such as the Washington, D.C., subway, "which will never produce anything, surplus or otherwise."

Members voting yes favored the amendment in behalf of full cost-sharing. Voting yes: Pursell, Hertel, Broomfield.

Voting no: William Ford, Levin.

SENATE

DOMESTIC CUTS — By a vote of 14 for and 83 against, the Senate rebuffed President Reagan and rejected an amendment to eliminate 43 domestic programs that his fiscal 1987 budget proposes killing at a savings of \$4 billion.

Among politically popular programs the Senate voted to save were Amtrak, the Legal Services Corp., federal crop insurance, the taxpayer subsidy for the Postal Service, the Economic Development Administration, Urban Development Action Grants, agricultural extension services and certain food and shelter programs.

The vote occurred as the Senate began debate on its version of the fiscal 1987 congressional budget resolution, which will set spending, revenue and deficit guidelines for all major categories of federal fiscal activity.

The Senate's proposed budget recommends 1987 outlays of \$1,697 trillion, revenue of \$862.7 billion, and a deficit roughly equal to the \$144 billion figure mandated by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings law.

Reagan's budget is a separate document that makes thousands of fiscal recommendations Congress can accept or repudiate. This vote highlighted a major split between Reagan and the Senate, which de-

spite its Republican majority is unwilling in an election year to eliminate a host of domestic programs. Senator William Armstrong, R-Colo., complained that the amendment was an attempt "to embarrass a number of senators" who had been calling for domestic spending cuts.

Opponent Lawton Chiles, D-Fla., said the amendment gave conservative critics of domestic spending an opportunity "to put their votes where their comments have been."

Senators voting no were against the widespread elimination of domestic programs that President Reagan has urged.

Voting no: Carl Levin, Donald Riegle.

EDUCATION HIKES — By a vote of 60 for and 38 against, the Senate adopted an amendment to increase fiscal 1987 budget authority for higher education by \$300 million and to increase revenues by the same amount.

The vote occurred during Senate debate on the fiscal 1987 congressional budget resolution (above).

Supporter Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., complained that budget priorities advocated by President Reagan and the GOP-led Senate Budget Committee put too much emphasis on defense and not enough on education.

Opponent Phil Gramm, R-Texas, said he opposed the tax increase that would be needed to pay for the additional outlays for education.

Tax amnesty offices open

Tax amnesty offices will open throughout the state next week, making information about the program available to all Michigan residents, announced state Treasurer Robert Bowman.

"The local tax amnesty offices provide yet another outlet for information and will function as a local resource base," Bowman said.

"It's one of the many steps we're taking to make it as easy as possible for individuals and companies to get tax amnesty before we crack down on cheaters."

The local offices are staffed by treasury department officials and offer forms, pamphlets and other amnesty-related material.

The state also operates a toll-free telephone line to answer confidential questions about amnesty (1-800-1-0-TAXES).

Michigan's Tax Amnesty program, which runs now through June 30, allows delinquent taxpayers to pay back taxes without penalty or prosecution.

The state hopes to collect \$50 million in delinquent taxes during the amnesty period. When amnesty ends, fines and penalties double.

Citing the tougher penalties and treasury's increased enforcement staff, Bowman is warning delinquent taxpayers to "Get to us before we get to you," which is the theme of the program.

Okland County offices include:

• Farmington: Secretary of State, 3847 W. Ten Mile, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

• Southfield: Delta Dental Building, 17115 Northwestern, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

• Troy Community Center, Big Beaver at I-75, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays, May 14, 21 and 28 and June 4, 11 and 18; Fridays, May 16, 23 and 30 and June 6, 13 and 20.

• Troy: Secretary of State, 3530 Rochester Road, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

• West Bloomfield: Secretary of State, 4325 Orchard Lake Road, Pine Lake Mall from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays.

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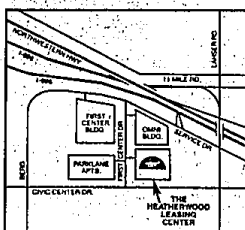
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