

Broomfield, Levin back simplified tax code

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll-call votes during the week ending Sept. 26.
HOUSE

Roll Call Report

TAX REFORM — By a vote of 292 for and 136 against, the House passed and sent to the Senate a historic bill (HR 3838) that radically changes the U.S. tax code to make it more fair, less complex and more of a spur to real economic growth. America's new tax system would take full effect in 1988, lowering the top individual rate to 28 percent and the top corporate rate to 34 percent. The great majority of individuals would owe less in taxes and the typical corporation more, because the bill eliminates a host of breaks that have benefited businesses and wealthy individuals. Some 6 million working poor would pay no income taxes.

Perhaps the bill's most fundamental change is this: By stripping the tax code of most of its preferential provisions for narrow interests, it seeks to direct capital away from shelters that retard national economic growth and toward the free market. The idea for investors will be to use the code to make profits rather than avoid taxes.

Supporter Lynn Martin, R-Ill., said "if we do not seize this opportunity we will insure the final and permanent victory of the special interests. The tax code will forever be their domain."

Opponent Bill Frenzel, R-Minn., said "we just do not want tax reform at a cost that inflicts too much pain and too much suffering on our economy."

Members voting yes favored the bill.

Voting yes: Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, Sander Levin, D-Southfield, William Broomfield, R-Birmingham.

Voting no: Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods, William Ford, D-Taylor.

BUDGETING CUTTING — By a vote of 309 for and 106 against, the House passed and sent to conference with the Senate a bill (HR 5300) to slice \$15.1 billion from the projected deficit for fiscal 1987, which begins Oct. 1.

The conference is expected to produce a bill lowering the anticipated 1987 deficit to within the \$154 billion ceiling permitted by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings budget law.

Lawmakers thus will have sidestepped across-the-board cuts that Gramm-Rudman mandates when Congress and the White House can't meet deficit targets. Few members relished voting on such cuts with Election Day around the corner.

This so-called "reconciliation bill"

meets the 1987 target not by structural change such as a tax increase, but by imposing several one-shot revenue hikes, spending cuts and accounting tricks.

For example, it raises most of its money by selling assets such as Conrail and government loan portfolios, and it employs bookkeeping gimmicks such as making fiscal 1987 revenue-sharing payments in the final days of fiscal 1986 and thus swelling the 1986 deficit.

Members voting yes supported the bill.

Voting yes: Pursell, Hertel, Ford, Levin.

Not voting: Broomfield.

PESTICIDE CONTROL — By a vote of 214 for and 121 against, the House adopted an amendment to prohibit states from exceeding federal standards in regulating the pesticide content of food bound for market.

The vote established the supremacy of federal tolerance levels for chemical residue on food, if the pesticide was tested and registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency after April 1985.

It occurred as the House passed and sent to the Senate a major overhaul (HR 2482) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, which regulates about 800 pesticide ingredients used on the farm, in industry and in the home.

Many pesticides cause cancer in heavy doses. In part, the new legislation requires pesticides now on the market to be retested and reregistered by the Environmental Protection Agency by 1985.

Growers and the food industry favor a uniform federal policy over conflicting state regulations that they say would disrupt interstate commerce.

But many environmentalists argued that, to protect the public health as well as state's rights, states should be able to get tougher than the federal government in regulating pesticides.

Members voting yes wanted federal standards to supersede state standards in controlling pesticides.

Voting yes: Pursell, Broomfield, Hertel, Ford, Levin.

SENATE

55 MPH LIMIT — By a vote of 56 for and 36 against, the Senate adopted an amendment permitting states to raise the speed limit from 55 to 65

mph on rural interstate highways.

The provision was added to a bill (S 2405) that reauthorizes the federal-aid highway program and other transportation programs. Because the House voted to keep the 55 mph limit in its version of the bill, the issue will be debated in an upcoming House-Senate conference.

Noting that most drivers already exceed 55 mph on interstates, supporter Steven Symms, R-Idaho, said "we can expect only slight increases in actual driving speeds" if the limit were raised.

Opponent Robert Stafford, R-Vt., said "if the speed limit is raised to 65 mph, there will be those who believe that means they can drive 75 mph."

Senators voting yes favored a 65 mph speed limit on rural interstates. Voting no: Carl Levin, D-Mich. Voting yes: Donald Riegle, D-Mich.

SOUTH AFRICA — The Senate voted 65 for and 32 against to eliminate language in the federal-aid bill (above) aimed at penalizing South Africa for its apartheid policies.

Senators voting yes wanted to eliminate the highway bill's anti-apartheid provision.

Voting no were Michigan's Levin and Riegle. The measure killed language permitting state and local governments to reject the lowest bid on a highway construction contract if the bidder had investments in or business ties with South African concerns.

Malcolm Wallop, R-Wyo., who voted to kill the provision, said "the conduct of foreign policy... does not belong in the hands of local governments."

Daniel Moynihan, D-N.Y., said "it is characteristic of our country that when people feel strongly about ethical (and) moral issues, they act in local ways."

Levin's topic: new tax law

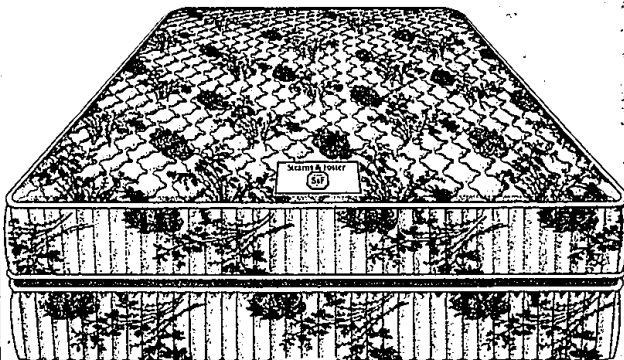
U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., will speak Thursday, Oct. 16, at Oakland University on the new tax reform law, which he voted against.

Levin's free 4 p.m. lecture will be in the Gold Room of the Oakland Center and is sponsored by University Congress, the student government body.

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