

Sen. Donald Riegle is making Japanese imports his bigg issue as he seeks a third six-year term.

Senator leads where labor, business agree

REPUBLICANS see Sen. Donald Riegle as a free-spending liberal, other sourc-es suggest he's a mainstream

Democrat.

In 1986, Roli Call Report, a Washington service to which this newspaper subscribes, compiled ratings by special interest groups. Key samples:

ples:

AFL-CIO — the labor federation
in 1986 gave Riegle 80 percent favorable rating, the same as Sen. Carl
Levin, D-Mich. But suburban U.S.

Levin. D-Mich. But suburban Us. representatives such as Dennis Hertel, William Ford and Sander Levin all scored 100.

National Education Association—the teachers group gave Riegle 100 compared to 88 for Carl Levin, 83 for Hertel, 100 for Ford and 75 for Sander Levin.

Americans for Democratic Action—the group that virtually defines liberal Democrats scored Riegle 95 vs. 100 for Carl Levin, 80 for Hertel and Ford and 85 for Sander Levin.

Us. Chamber of Commerce — 24 for Riegle, 31 for Carl Levin, 27 for Hertel, 20 for Ford, 32 for Sander Levin.

Levin.

RIEGLE STARTED his career as a Republican in Gov. George Romney's landslide year of 1956.

Riegle was elected to Congress in a Film district, toppling Rep. John C. Mackle, better known as a former highway commissioner. Among the "class of 156" Republican freshmen were Marvin Esch, whom Riegle later would defeat for the Senate in 1976, and Philip Ruppe, whom Riegle would beat in 1982.

In his Republican years, Riegle's voling record was virtually indistinguishable from Esch's and only a bit to the right of Ruppe's.

But Riegle's party behavior was different. In 1972, Richard Nixon's presidential re-election year, Riegle impod the traces to campaign for Pete McCloskey, an anti-war Culifornia congressman. It was an uphill, hopeless, purely symbolic race, but it gave an indication of things to come.

MEANWHILE, at home Riegle was one of two Michigan Republicans getting any help from organized labor. And blacks were coming him with problems.

In his book "O Congress," Riegle wrote of a November 1971 conversation with Bill McLaughlin, then state GOP chairman. McLaughlin was asked how much of the partys \$1,575 million budget would be allocated to the 12 Republican congressman.

cated to the 12 separate man.

"'None,' McLaughlin replied; we'd be better off trying to raise our own Index. This really Irritated me ... A sked how he will counter that registered a strong objection and argued that some money ought to get is "a big tax, big spend Demo-into the congressional races."

analysis

Left to run an independent race, Riegle felt he owed little alleglance to the Nixon-led party. Less than a year later, in February of 1973, Rie-gle became a Democrat.

"THE ALMANAC of American Politics," co-authored by Michael Barone, a former Michiganian who knows the state personally as well as from research, is a reference bos. In the political current with the political personal part of the political personal part of the political personal part of the political personal persona

and a young woman. To political insiders, it was old stuff.
And it, backfired. The invasion of Riegic's privacy got him public sympathy, Barone wrote. Riegie won his first U.S. Senate term.

Barone in 1982 wrote that Riegie "can be counted on to oppose moves to weaken labor legislation." "He was the Senate's leading advocate of reducing clean air standards, a move suported both by the auto companies and the UAW. "As chairman of the consumer affairs subcommittee of Banking, but the subcommittee of Banking, and the subcommittee of Banking, and the banking between the subcommittee of Banking, but the July and the bank banking and be can be subcommittee of the subcom

THAT MAY BE the key — Riegle leaps on an issue where both business and labor agree.

And the one issue most labor leaders and many industrialists agree on is the danger of Japanese imports.

Indeed, Riegle, announcing his re-election effort in February, almost ignored the Republicans and Spence Abraham. He's running against Japanese imports.

'Big spenders'one group's version

The National Taxpayers Union lists seven Michigan lawmakers arong Congress "big spenders," including Sen. Donald Riegle and two area representatives.

The conservative lobbying group based its latest rankings on 122 roll-call votes in the Senate and 219 in the House. The votes were weighted by an assessment of budgetary impact

by an assessment of burgetary in-pact.

The group considers a high score good. It meant the member of Con-gress voted for less federal spending. All Senate Democrats averaged 42 percent; House Democrats, 29 per-

LISTED AS "big spenders" were:
• Sen. Donald Rlegle, D-Mich,
with a score of 32.
• Observer & Eccentric area U.S.
Reps. William Ford of Taylor, 27:
Sander Levin of Southfield, 25.
Here is how other area members
of Congress were rated: Sen. Carl
Levin, D-Mich., 45: Reps. William
Broomfield, R-Birmingham, 55;
Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods, 38;
Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, 51.

The Riegle record

GOP paints him as tax-spend liberal

By Tim Richard staff writer

To hear state Republican chairman Spencer Abraham tell it, U.S. Sen. Donald Riegle is "a big tax, big spend Democrat."
"Since he was elected in 1976 and

Sen. Donald Riegle is "a big tax, big spend Democrat."

"Since he was elected in 1976 and particularly in the past five years, Riegle carved out one of the most liberal voting records in Washigton," sol da Abraham.

So last week the top GOP spokesman picked Oakland County to start an information program publicizing Riegle's record.

The going will be tough for Republicans as Riegle seeks a third term noxt year. Despite his warm relations with the United Auto Warkers Union, Riegle enjoys a reputation as a moderate with a Harvard Business School education (see related story).

Just how liberal is Don Riegle?

"TOO LIBERAL for mainstream ichigan," answered Abraham, cit-

Michigan," answered Abraham, citing Riegle's:

• 16 votes to increase taxes by a cumulative \$200 billion. That tally covers 4½ years of Riegle's second term.

175 votes to increase spending by more than \$250 billion.



• 70 percent opposition to de-

fense spending.

"Don Riegle votes against Ronald Reagan more than any other senator," added Larry Dickerson, Oakland County GOP chairman tapped

by Abraham to lead the information campaign against the senator. Republicans said they will target youth, small business people, young professionals and senior clitzens. Why those groups? Dickerson could only say that "youth are very much aligned with President Reagan." Left off the list were: industrialists, farmers and a group Reagan cultivated with great success — white male suburban blue-collar workers.

workers.
Dickerson, a Farmington Hills resident who sells for a Livonia firm, had no details on target groups would be reached, other than through existing newsletters.

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THE TWO leaders had few answers to the barrage of questions from newpaper and radio reporters.

Q. Why lan't the state party doig the program Instead of delegating it to Oklamer It needs to be a "grass roots program". Riegle creates a moderate image in Michigan but votes liberal in Washington.

Dickerson: It will be a "labor-intensive, volunteer effort."

Unspoken answer. The Republican State Committee has been captured by adherents to Rep. Jack Kemp and Rev. Pat Robertson; Oakland is still

generic Republican territory, where George Bush is strong.

Q. What will the GOP do about a candidate, since Rlegle began campaigning in February of '87 for an election to be held in November of '82'

Abraham: "The state party will be neutral. By fall, that (sendiment toward a candidate) will crystallize. At this stage, the most we can do is get the word out."

IN SUM, Abraham wants:

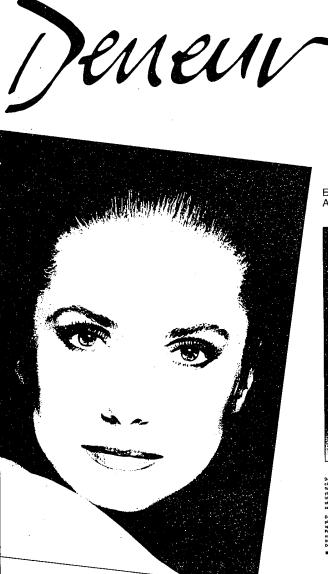
• An issue-oriented campaign rather than one centered on Riegle's love life (as in '76) or rumored health

love life (as in "6) or rumored health problems.

• A 144-year campaign rather than one patched together in September of 1988 by the desperate survivor of a primary.

• A mainstream Republican set of anti-Riegle issues that any candidate can run on, rather than the personal axes of whoever captures the primary.

Abraham, a 34-year-old Lansing wyer and polister, is himself a Sente prospect who admits "I have not the door." But he concentrated " shut the door." But he concentrated his effort on acting like a party lead-er whose work will help any Repub-lican candidate.



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