

# Special interests play the rating game

Now that the 100th Congress is history, special-interest groups ranging across the political spectrum are rating the performances of individual senators and House members. They use the 1987-88 roll call votes they consider most important.

Roll Call Report Syndicate, in its annual feature, The Ratings Game, shows the grades area members of Congress have received on their most basic representative function — voting on the House and Senate floors.

The accompanying chart presents an across-the-board compilation of many of these ratings.

Area congressmen are: Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, whose district includes part of Livonia; Dennis Hertel, R-Harper Woods, whose district includes part of Troy; William D. Ford, D-Taylor, whose district includes Garden City, Westland, Canton and southern Livonia; Sander Levin, D-Southfield, whose district includes Redford Township; and William Broomfield, R-Birmingham, whose district includes the Rochester area, most of Troy, Birmingham-Bloomfield, West Bloomfield and the Farmington area.

Interest groups decide whether a yeay or nay on a limited number of

selected issues is the "right" vote and calculate "correct" voting percentages. Groups sometimes give any congressman scoring above a specified percentage an automatic re-election endorsement, while calling for defeat of those whose ratings fall too low.

CONGRESSMEN frequently trumpet high ratings from groups whose causes they believe to be popular among their constituents.

But when they receive a low score, they often criticize the group's rating methodology and claim the result understates their concern for the group's members.

While congressmen prefer high scores, election year politics can produce strange twists. Earlier this year Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, normally the proud owner of a liberal voting record, complained to the liberal Americans for Democratic Action when it gave him a 100 percent rating for 1987.

The 10 group included in the The Ratings Game for 1987-88 range from liberal organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union to the right-of-center American Conservative Union.

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## THE GROUPS are:

1. American Civil Liberties Union, often mentioned during the presidential campaign, lobbies on behalf of individual liberties. (Ratings cover 1987-88.)

2. Public Citizen, a liberal group founded by Ralph Nader, concentrates on consumer and environmental issues. (1987-88)

3. League of Conservation Voters is the political arm of the nation's leading environmental groups. (1987-88)

4. National Education Association represents many of the nation's public school teachers and advocates expanded federal education programs. (1987)

5. Americans for Democratic Action is a leading national liberal lobby. (1987)

6. American Conservative Union is a leading representative of the conservative cause in the capital. (1987)

7. American Farm Bureau Federation represents many of the nation's farmers and agricultural firms with a conservative, free-trade voice. (1987-88)

8. National Committee to Preserve and Protect Social Security and Medicare opposes attempts to restrain Social Security benefit increases or to use Social Security trust fund revenues for purposes other than benefits. (1987-88)

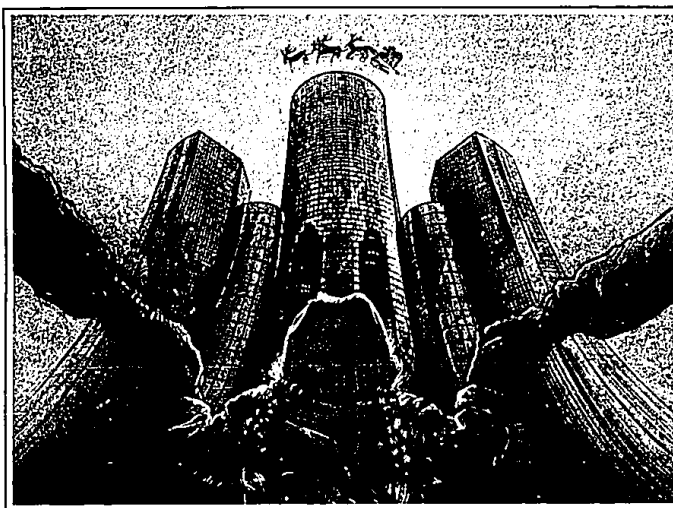
9. National Taxpayers Union bases its ratings on every vote in Congress that affects federal spending levels. (1987)

10. U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the leading Washington voice of the nation's business community. (1987)

## Legislators get organizational report cards

	Pursell R-2	Hertel D-14	Ford D-15	Levin D-17	Broomfield R-18
American Civil Liberties Union	59	91	95	90	35
Public Citizen	31	92	54	85	23
League of Conservation Voters	38	61	60	75	31
National Education Association	60	100	100	80	40
Americans for Democratic Action	20	88	92	84	0
American Conservative Union	55	0	0	0	96
American Farm Bureau Federation	88	38	44	44	88
Social Security Committee	63	88	75	75	50
National Taxpayers Union	45	27	22	23	54
Chamber of Commerce	71	13	0	13	93

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