

Broomfield votes against family leave bill

WASHINGTON - Here's how Observer & Eccentric area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes in the week ending May 11.

HOUSE:

FAMILY LEAVE BILL - By a vote of 237 for and 187 against, the House sent to the Senate a bill (HR 779) requiring private employers of at least 50 workers, state and local governments and members of Con-

gress to institute "family leave" as a job benefit.

These employers would have to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year to enable parents to care for a new child or ailing parent, spouse or child. Seriously ill employees could use the time for personal medical leave. Leave-takers would retain any medical insurance provided for them and be assured of returning to the job they left or its equivalent.

Federal employees would get broader benefits, receiving up to 18

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weeks of family leave over two years and 26 weeks of unpaid medical leave annually.

Supporter Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y., said "we talk about family values in this town a lot" and it is time to act.

Opponent Robert Walker, R-Pa., said "this is not a family bill (but) another big government welfare-oriented kind of bill." A yes vote was to pass the bill.

Michigan representatives voting yes were Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods, William Ford, D-Taylor, and Sander Levin, D-Southfield. Michigan representatives voting no were Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, and William Broomfield, R-Birmingham.

TO GUT LEAVE BILL - By a vote of 155 for and 264 against, the House rejected a motion to replace key provisions of the family leave bill (above) with a two-year study of the issue and a pilot program conducted among House employees.

Sponsor Fred Grandy, R-Iowa, said his motion would "make us (in Congress) the guinea pig for a change."

Opponent Marge Roukema, R-N.J., said the motion "simply guts the bill."

A yes vote was to study the need for a family leave law.

Michigan representatives voting yes were Pursell and Broomfield, R-Birmingham. Michigan representatives voting no were Hertel, D-Harper Woods, William Ford, D-Taylor and Levin, D-Southfield.

TO FUND AMTRAK - The House approved, 322 for and 92 against, the conference report on a bill (HR 2364) providing Amtrak with an average annual subsidy of \$870 million between fiscal 1989-92. The Senate later sent the bill to the White House.

Taxpayers last year covered nearly 30 percent of the cost of operating Amtrak's rail passenger service to almost 500 communities. President Bush urges no federal funding of Amtrak and threatens to veto the bill.

"This country would lose its national rail passenger service" without a federal subsidy, said supporter Thomas Luken, D-Ohio.

Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., said "the only cure for deficit spending is to cut that spending."

A yes vote was to authorize the federal subsidy of Amtrak.

Michigan representatives voting yes were Pursell, Hertel, William Ford and Levin, D-Southfield. Broomfield voted no.

SENATE:

HATCH ACT OVERHAUL - By a vote of 57 for and 30 against, the Senate sent to conference with the House a bill (S 135) permitting federal and postal employees to engage in limited political activity under the 51-year-old Hatch Act. They could poll off the job but not run for partisan office. They could seek contributions from certain co-workers for their union's political action committee but not solicit the public. President Bush vows to veto the bill.

Supporter Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., said "federal employees should possess all the rights of citizens."

William Roth, R-Dele, said the bill "would undercut the neutral, non-

partisan administration of programs by civil servants."

A yes vote was to support the Hatch Act overhaul.

Michigan Democratic senators Carl Levin and Donald Riegle voted yes.

TO EXEMPT WORKERS - By a vote of 51 for and 46 against, the Senate tabled (killed) an amendment to continue the ban on partisan political activity by employees of the CIA, FBI, IRS and Federal Election Commission. They were to have been exempted from the bill (above) relaxing the Hatch Act, on the rationale that as handlers of sensitive information they should remain politically insulated.

Joseph Biden, D-Dele, who voted to kill the amendment, said existing laws as well as the new Hatch Act will prevent the feared abuses.

Amendment sponsor Robert Dole, R-Kans., said "there will inevitably be leaks and scandals" if these workers begin supporting candidates and elected officials.

A yes vote was to support the Hatch Act overhaul.

Levin and Riegle voted yes.

Battered duck symbol of senator's career

A stuffed duck, aging and battered, has a new name, Richard Fessler's state Senate office in Capitol.

Fessler received it Thursday on his 47th birthday, two days after revealing he won't seek reelection.

"It has a broken bill. It has had a few crash landings. But it's a survivor. It's still together," said Fessler, R-Commerce.

He chuckled at the symbolism. His own career includes a rancorous divorce case, an impaired driving case, a loss in the county prosecutor primary, four successful runs for the House and two successful runs for the Senate. And he's leaving politics voluntarily.

The duck, a male mallard, was

hanging on the wall of a portable building on the House side when Fessler arrived 16 years ago.

It was given to him Thursday by Reps. Ralph Ostling, R-Rosecommon, and Gary Randall, R-Elwell. "The duck travelled between their offices over the years," Fessler said.

They brought it to him Thursday in a garbage bag and told him, "Just reach in here," Fessler said, "I wouldn't reach in any garbage bag that guy (Ostling) gave me. That practical joker. I wouldn't put it past him to put a skunk in there."

When Fessler leaves office Dec. 31, the lame duck will stay in the Capitol Building.




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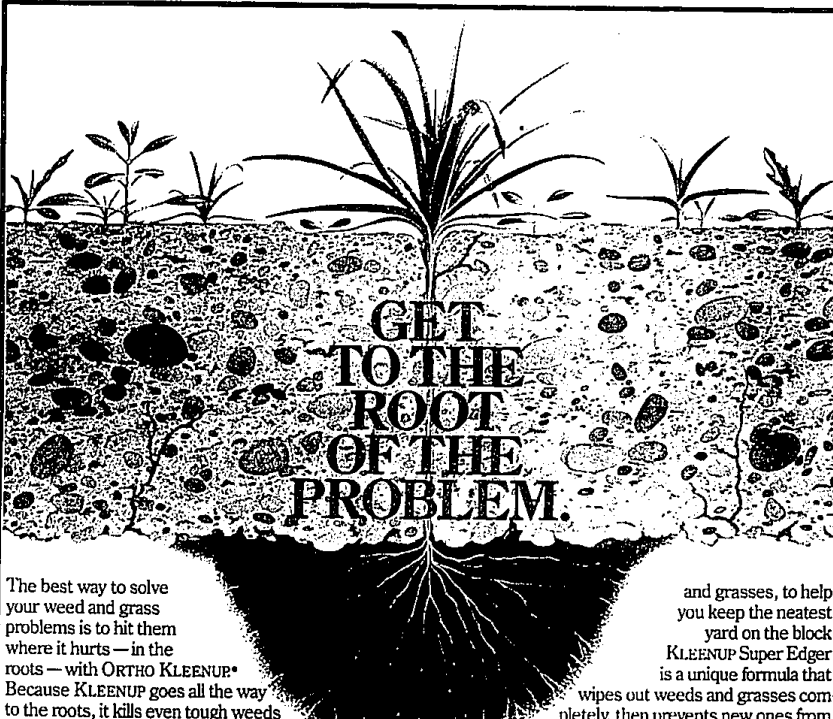
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