

Crucial week spells out lawmakers' records

Here's how Observer & Eccentric-area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes between Oct. 12-19.

HOUSE:

To Reduce Deficit — By a vote of 227 for and 203 against, the House sent to conference with the Senate a Democratic-drafted budget reconciliation bill (HR 5835) that is the cornerstone of a plan to reduce deficits by \$40 billion in fiscal 1991 and \$500 billion between 1991 and 1995. Sponsors said they hoped the plan would cut annual deficits from the current \$300 billion-plus range to double digits within a few years.

This bill accounts for nearly \$200 billion of the targeted \$500 billion, with the remainder to be achieved as individual committees make program cuts the legislation requires of them. Its major component is nearly \$150 billion in new taxes (see next issue) that touch all income levels but hit hardest at the wealthy. Other key provisions are major spending restraints in Medicare and farm subsidies. Milder curbs in a variety of other programs and lower interest payments that will result from the legislation.

A yes vote was for the Democratic-drafted budget bill.

Voting yes were William Ford, D-Taylor and Sander Levin, D-Southfield. Voting no from Michigan were Carl Pappalardo, R-Flynnouth, Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods and William Broomfield, R-Birmingham.

The Democratic Fiscal Plan — By a vote of 233 for and 192 against, the House amended HR 5835 (above) to incorporate tax increases, Medicare cuts and other provisions drafted by the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee to form the heart of the \$500 billion reconciliation bill.

Provisions aimed at the wealthy would increase top-bracket income tax rates from 28 to 33 percent, put a 10 percent surtax on taxable income above \$1 million, levy a 10 percent luxury tax on certain expensive consumer goods and increase the alternative minimum tax utilized by many affluent taxpayers from 21 to 25 percent.

Among provisions that could affect most or all income levels, the measure delays for one year that adjustment of income tax brackets for inflation, raises taxes on cigarettes and alcoholic beverages, increases airline ticket taxes, and allows certain tax-free capital gains. To cushion the impact of higher sales taxes on the working poor, it increases the earned income tax credit.

Regarding the elderly, the measure increases monthly Medicare insurance premiums from \$28.60 to \$46.20 by 1995, raises from \$51,300 to \$100,000 the wage base for the 1.45 percent Medicare payroll tax and increases the Medicare deductible for doctors' bills from \$75 to \$150.

A yes vote supported the deficit-reducing amendments.

Voting yes were Hertel, William Ford and Levin. Voting no were Pursell and Broomfield.

Trade With China — The House voted 247 for and 174 against to end trade preferences for China. This approved measure (HR 647) overturning President Bush's designation of China as a most-favored trading partner despite its restrictions on emigration by its citizens. Most-favored nations receive the lowest available tariff on their exports to America.

Sponsor Gerald Solomon, R-N.Y., said "We cannot stand by while thousands of Chinese are imprisoned and hundreds are executed every month just because they want to be free like you and I."

Bob Michel, R-Ill., the minority leader, said "If we stay in contact (with China), the cause of democracy will be strengthened."

A yes vote was to stop favored treatment of imports from China.

Voting yes were Pursell, Hertel and Levin. Voting no from Michigan were William Ford and Broomfield.

To Cut Defense — The House rejected, 201 for and 215 against, to cut 2 percent across-the-board from the \$268.2 billion defense appropriations bill for fiscal 1991. The cut would not have affected the Desert Shield operation in the Middle East,

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which is funded separately.

The bill (HR 5803) was passed and sent to conference with the Senate. Counting military funding in other bills, the Pentagon's first post-Cold War budget will total \$286 billion, about 4 percent below the comparable 1990 figure.

Amendment sponsor Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said "every dollar we spend on ... land wars in Europe is a dollar thrown away from America's future."

Opponent Tom Lewis, R-Fla., said "across-the-board cuts are dangerous" because they affect vital programs as well as lesser ones.

A yes vote was to cut the 1991 defense budget by 2 percent.

Voting yes: Pursell, Hertel and Levin.

Voting no: William Ford and Broomfield.

To Cut Interior Bill — By a vote of 167 for and 234 against, the House rejected a proposed 4.6 percent cut in the fiscal 1991 appropriations bill (HR 5769) for the Interior Department and related agencies. As later approved by the House, the bill cuts about \$11.9 billion, up six percent over the comparable 1990 bill.

Sponsor Bill Frenzel, R-Minn., said "a modest 4.6 percent cut ... is certainly warranted in these times of fiscal despair."

Opponent Ralph Regula, R-Ohio, said that "we have worked hard to keep the totals down" in Appropriations committee crafting of the bill.

A yes vote was to cut the Interior appropriations bill by 4.6 percent.

Voting yes were Pursell and Broomfield.

Voting no were Hertel and Levin.

Not voting was Ford.

Covert Aid To Angola — By a vote of 175 for and 246 against, the House rejected an amendment to end covert aid, reportedly \$60 million this year, to the UNITA forces fighting the Soviet-backed Marxist government of Angola. The amendment

stipulated that any continuation of the aid be openly requested by President Bush and publicly approved by Congress. The vote occurred as the House sent to the Senate a bill (HR 5422) funding the CIA and other government intelligence activities in fiscal 1991.

"If it makes sense to provide aid ... why should it not be dealt with in the open?" asked sponsor Ron Dellums, D-Calif.

Opponent Henry Hyde, R-Ill., said America is "committed to fighting Communist Tyranny, whether it is in Afghanistan ... Cambodia or ... Angola."

A yes vote was to end covert aid to anti-Marxist rebels in Angola.

Voting yes were Hertel, Ford, and Levin.

Voting no was Pursell and Broomfield.

Civil Rights Bill — By a vote of 273 for and 154 against, the House approved the conference report on a bill (S 2104) making it easier for minorities, women and others to seek redress in the courts against job discrimination. President Bush has said he will veto the bill because it could lead employers to adopt personnel quotas.

Reversing Supreme Court decisions of recent years, the bill shifts to employers the burden of showing challenged personnel decisions were made out of business necessity rather than bias. Another key provision enables plaintiffs to collect punitive as well as compensatory damages if they win their suit.

Supporter Augustus Hawkins, D-Calif., called it "public relations, the big lie technique" to claim the bill would lead to personnel quotas.

Opponent Harris Fawell, R-Ill., said "simply stating that this bill is not a quotas bill does not mean that it is not a quotas bill."

A yes vote was to approve the bill.

Voting yes were Pursell, Ford, Hertel and Levin.

Voting no was Broomfield.

SENATE:

Civil Rights Bill — By a vote of 62 for and 34 against, the Senate approved the conference report on a bill (S 2104) to combat workplace discrimination based on race, sex, religion, nationality or color. Sixty-seven votes are needed to override President Bush's promised veto of the bill if all 100 senators vote.

The civil rights measure counters Supreme Court rulings that have made it more difficult for plaintiffs to file and win job bias suits. It also adds punitive damages, of up to \$150,000 in most cases, to the remedies available to those who win their case.

Supporters said the legislation protects civil rights without imposing affirmative action quotas, while opponents said employers would resort to hiring and promoting by the numbers to avoid costly litigation. The president's veto vow reflects business community criticism it is a quota bill.

A yes vote supported the bill.

Voting yes were Senators Carl Levin, D and Donald Riegle, D.

Abortion — By a 48-48 tie vote, the Senate failed to table (kill) a requirement that medical authorities notify at least one parent in advance when a daughter under 18 is scheduled for an abortion in a federally funded hospital or clinic. Parental approval of the operation would not be required. The amendment was attached to a Department of Health and Human Services appropriations bill (HR 5257) later sent to conference with a House bill containing no such provision. It would become the first such requirement in federal law.

A yes vote was against the parental notification requirement.

Voting yes were Levin and Riegle.

Stealth Bomber — By a vote of 44 for and 50 against, the Senate refused to limit production of the B-2 or Stealth bomber to six planes rather than the 75 copies the Air Force wants built. The amendment sought to signal an end to B-2 production while preserving the technological base that the taxpayers' \$27 billion investment in the Stealth program has bought. Before the Cold

War ended, the ultimate mission of the radar-evading plane was to deliver nuclear warheads deep inside the Soviet Union. This vote occurred as the Senate sent to conference with the House a \$268 billion defense appropriations bill (HR 5803) for fiscal 1991.

A yes vote was to end the B-2 bomber program.

Levin voted no. Riegle voted yes.

Fiscal Plan — By a vote of 54 for and 45 against, the Senate sent to conference with the House its version of the most massive deficit reduction ever attempted by Congress, a bill (S 3209) to reduce red ink by \$500 billion between fiscal 1991-95.

One key difference between the House measure (above) the Senate bill is that the latter raises the federal gasoline tax, from 9 to 19.5 cents per gallon. Another is that the Senate does not raise the top-bracket tax rate, as the House does, but increases taxes on the wealthy by curbing their deductions, nor does the Senate go along with the House plan to delay for one year the adjustment of income tax brackets for inflation, a revenue-raiser that has drawn heavy Republican criticism. The Senate version achieves smaller Medicare savings than the House measure.

The bills are similar or identical in most other areas, including plans to put an income tax surcharge on the wealthy, raises in taxes, add a special excise tax on luxury purchases and impose new taxes on airline tickets and raise higher taxes or fees on scores of government services for veterans, students, boaters and other constituencies.

A yes vote supported the \$500 billion deficit-reduction plan. Voting no were Levin and Riegle.

Gasoline Tax — The Senate refused, 40 for and 59 against, to take a crucial procedural step removing an increase in the federal gasoline tax from the budget reconciliation bill (S 3209; see preceding vote). This left intact language to raise the tax from 9 to 18.5 cents a gallon.

A yes vote was to move toward deleting the gasoline tax hike. Voting yes were Levin and Riegle.

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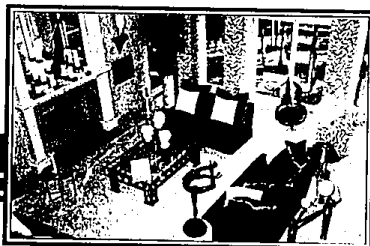
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