

# House grinds ax in wake of Prop. 13

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes June 8 through June 14.

## HOUSE

**ECHO OF PROP. 13:** Adopted, 220 for and 181 against, an amendment to cut \$800 million from the budgets of the departments of Labor and HEW. The vote was interpreted as a direct response to the so-called taxpayer revolt sparked by passage in California of Proposition 13. The amendment was attached to the \$57.9 billion fiscal 1979 appropriations bill for the two departments. The bill (HR 12923) was later passed and sent to the Senate.

The amendment effects a two per cent, across-the-board cut in all programs except those such as Social Security whose spending levels are fixed by law. Decisions on which programs would be cut and by how much are left up to Labor and HEW department officials. No single program may be cut by more than five per cent.

Rep. Clarence Miller (R-Ohio), the sponsor, said the HEW budget is larger than that of the 50 states combined. "Almost everyone is concerned today about the explosive cost of government. The vote in California... on Proposition 13 underscores what the public thinks."

Rep. Silvio Conte (R-Mass.), an opponent, asked: "Just where would

## Roll Call Report



this cut come? Would it be in the basic opportunity grants program, the Title I elementary and secondary education account, or perhaps health resource funding... research in cancer, heart, lung, arthritis, child beating?"

Members voting "yes" favored the amendment.

Rep. William Broomfield (R-Birmingham) voted "yes."  
Reps. David Bonior (D-Mt. Clemens), William Ford (D-Taylor), William Broadhead (D-Detroit), James Blanchard (D-Pi. Ridge), and Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth), voted "nay."

**FREEBIES:** Adopted, 214 for and 159 against, an amendment to curtail the practice of House members having free access to congressional wall calendars and agricultural yearbooks (which they mail to constituents) and plants from the U.S. Botanic Garden

and shipping trunks (which many members use personally or in their offices).

Under the amendment, members would have to pay for such items out of their office expense allowances. Presently, government agencies provide such accessories at virtually no cost.

The amendment was attached to HR 12935, a bill appropriating money for the legislative branch, later passed and sent to the Senate.

Rep. William Armstrong (R-Colo.), the sponsor, said that House members often say: "Of course, the calendar practice is reprehensible. Of course it is not a good expenditure of the taxpayers' funds. Of course we ought to curtail it some day..." Armstrong added: "Year after year the same refrain. Well, I think this would be an excellent time to do it."

Rep. Bob Traxler (D-Mich.), an opponent, said: "There is no more popular publication among my rural constituents than the Agricultural Yearbook." He said he would ask Armstrong "not to take away that publication that represents to my constituents their communication with the American government that they pay taxes to."

Members voting "yes" favored curtailing the practice. Blanchard, Broomfield and Pursell voted "yes."  
Bonior and Broadhead voted "nay."  
Ford did not vote.

**TELEVISION:** Voted, 235 for and 159 against, to put the House rather than private journalists in control of the cameras when the House begins television floor proceedings. The vote adopted an amendment—to a bill funding congressional operations

(HR 12935)—stipulating that money cannot be spent for operation of cameras by any party other than the House.

Network news departments and other journalistic organizations say the controversy is a First Amendment question of who will control the news, government or the governed. Many House members, however, say the networks would televise them in a "circus" context that would convey an unrealistic picture of House activity.

Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-Tex.), a supporter, said: "We are not trying to pass judgment... on the journalistic skill or objectivity of network journalism... The question is whether we have confidence in the U.S. House of Representatives to record its own proceedings with dignity and integrity as an historic record for now and for the future."

Minority Leader John Rhodes (R-Ariz.), an opponent, said: "I would much rather put my faith in the content of television programs which come from this House in the networks, because I think they may be unfair to all of us, but in an absolutely fair way."

Members voting "nay" favored network control of House TV cameras.

Bonior and Blanchard voted "yes."  
Broadhead, Broomfield and Pursell voted "nay."  
Ford did not vote.

## SENATE

**FILIBUSTER:** Failed, 58 for and 41 against, to achieve the three-fifths majority required to end the filibuster against the bill (HR 810) to amend the 1953 National Labor Relations Act.

The bill is favored by organized labor and the Administration and opposed by the business community and many Republicans and conservatives. The thrust of its many changes in the 43-year-old law is to make it easier for workers to organize and win contracts from management. The bill has been passed by the House.

Senators voting "yes" wanted to end the filibuster.  
Sen. Donald Riegle (D), voted "yes."  
Sen. Robert Griffin (R), voted "nay."

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## Voters blast land taxes, push for cuts in prices

The biggest tax rebellion in the nation's history is now under way, spurred by the overwhelming victory of Proposition 13 in California, according to a noted expert on taxation.

Taxpayers are convinced that one of the basic causes of the inflation from which they suffer is unbridled government spending. University of Michigan Prof. Karl Pearson told a gathering of real estate agents in Grasse Pointe Wednesday.

"They are therefore increasingly going to act on the premise that the only way to cut down on this government spending is not to give government so much money in the first place."

Proposition 13's victory cut back property taxes by 57 per cent when California voters, by a two to one margin, approved a constitutional amendment which:

- Limits property taxes to one per cent of 1975-76 assessed value.
- Limits tax assessment increases to two per cent a year.
- Requires a two-thirds majority vote of the state legislature for any new or increased taxes.
- Property taxes for many homes in California have doubled just in the course of one year," said Pearson, a faculty member of the U.M. Graduate School of Business Administration and the university's director of real estate education. "Property taxes there have in many instances tripled and quadrupled in the last five years. Some tax assessments are reported to have climbed by 600 per cent over a nine-year period. For example, \$4,600 in taxes were paid on a modest home purchased nine years ago for \$38,000. Staggering tax increases are not confined to California, but are reported in all other states, he added.
- Homeowners have been pleading

for tax relief, but their cries have gone unanswered. They have begged their assessors not to raise assessments so high, but the assessors have replied that there is nothing that can be done for their plight, for the law requires tax assessors to assess properties with reference to current market value.

"Home owners have tried to argue their case before local tax officials, who have replied that nothing can be done for them because tax rates have already been set and maintain the force of law."

Pearson said that taxpayers are registering their protest against "government of the bureaucrats, by the bureaucrats, and for the bureaucrats" and also against the huge sums going into welfare programs.

He estimates that cutting down on property taxes is now a major issue in 39 of the 50 states, with hundreds of homeowners organizations actively trying to bring about tax limitations.

The real estate authority noted that home owners are also "up in arms against the tremendous number of property tax exemptions which result in higher tax bills for the non-exempt."

In some cities, he said, these exemptions run as high as 50 per cent of property values and nationwide they average almost 35 per cent. These exemptions include county, state and federal properties; churches, colleges and charitable groups; some mental and moral improvement associations; and tax benefits offered to industry in many cities to locate there.

"Hardly anyone has a good word to say for the property tax," Pearson said. "It is a regressive tax, hitting low and moderate income families harder proportionally than those with high income. It is in no way related to ability to pay."

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