

House gives senate \$55 million snub

Here's how area members of congress were recorded on major roll call votes Aug. 17 through Aug. 23. The house began its summer recess Aug. 18 but the senate continued working toward an Aug. 27 recess date.

HOUSE

NEW SENATE BUILDING Refused, 133 for and 245 against, to appropriate an additional \$4.8 million for a new senate office building. The senate has approved the money, which will advance construction of its third office building. The house and senate disagreement over whether the project should go forward held up final congressional approval of HR 13467, an appropriations bill.

Blueprints for the new building call for a gymnasium, tennis court, roof-top restaurant, high-ceilinged offices, wood-paneled and other features that have drawn widespread criticism. Cost estimates range from \$135 million to \$210 million.

With this vote, the house broke the half-century-old tradition of "comity" under which neither house disapproves funds the other wants to conduct internal business.

Rep. George Mahon (D-Tex.), a supporter, said: "We ought not interfere" with the tradition of comity.

Rep. Mickey Edwards (R-Ohio), an opponent, called the building "a new legislative palace," and said: "We are trying to match the palaces and coliseums of Rome, but the old Roman empire is gone—because it knew no restraints, because it had no willpower, because it could not say 'no.'"

Members voting "yes" favored continuing construction of the senate office building.

Reps. William Ford (D-Taylor), and James Blanchard (Pleasant Ridge) voted "no." Reps. David Bonior, (Mt. Clemens), William Brodhead, (D-Detroit) and William Broomfield, (R-Bloomfield), voted "nay." Rep. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth), did not vote.

SENATE

BALANCED BUDGET Voted, 68 for and 22 against, to table and thus kill a proposed constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget. The vote came during debate on HJ Res 554, which calls for a constitutional amendment awarding congressmen to the District of Columbia.

Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W. Va.), a supporter of tabling, said the balanced budget proposal "would put the federal government in a straitjacket" and deny Congress the policy tools it needs "to deal with recession, with depression, with inflation, with unemployment, and with many other problems."

Sen. Herman Talmadge (D-Ga.), an opponent of tabling, said "deficit spending, travelling under the guise of economic stimulation, has become a way of life. To continue to borrow and inflate puts an unconscionable burden on generations of Americans yet unborn."

Senators voting "nay" favored enactment of a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget.

Sens. Robert Griffin (R.) and Donald Riegle (D.) voted "yes."

Roll Call Report



CONGRESSMEN FOR D.C.? Approved, 67 for and 32 against, a proposed constitutional amendment (HJ Res 554) to give the District of Columbia two senators and one or more representatives in congress. The house had already approved the measure. It now must be ratified by at least 38 state legislatures within seven years.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), a supporter, said: "The District of Columbia has more people than seven states, pays more taxes than 11 states, had more deaths in Vietnam than 10 states. It is a matter of simple justice. I cannot imagine any Vermont, denied this type of basic representation, who would not be prepared to lead a revolution against such a situation."

Sen. John Stennis, (D-Miss.), an opponent, said: "This is an innovation in this bill, the idea of giving power and privileges and strength to any unit of government without corresponding responsibilities. It is unsound, in my humble opinion, and it will not work and will bring about trouble."

Virtually all senators voting "yes" favor the granting of congressmen to D.C. Griffin and Riegle voted "yes."

HIGHWAYS Defeated, 10 for and 75 against, a proposal to eliminate the Highway Trust Fund. The fund takes in about \$8 billion a year in fuel and tire taxes, which are used primarily for road construction and repair. The measure was offered as an amendment to a bill (S 3073) authorizing funds for the federal highway aid program in fiscal 1979-80.

Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.), a sponsor of the amendment, said the fund: "Is one sacred cow which has been milked too long by highway interests... Purely and simply today, it is insane, it is illogical, and it is a payoff to the lobbying groups. It certainly cannot be explained in terms of supplying a logical transportation system to the United States of America."

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, (D-Tex.), an opponent, said: "To abolish the trust fund would be to gut the highway program... Perhaps the strongest argument in favor of retaining the trust fund is that it is urgently needed to finance outstanding highway needs... To abolish the trust fund would be to replace a proven, effective program with uncertainty—uncertainty that we can ill afford."

Members voting "yes" want to eliminate the Highway Trust Fund. Riegle voted "nay." Griffin did not vote.

State lotteries are a bad bet

For making money on a bet, your chances are much better in Las Vegas than in any state-run lottery. The September Reader's Digest reports that Prof. G. Robert Blakey of Cornell conducted a lottery study for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and concluded: "From a purely economic point of view, no one but a fool would gamble with state-run operations."

State lotteries are proposed as a way of holding down taxes, and most bettors believe this is true.

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