

House refuses to centralize energy jurisdiction

Here's how area House members were recorded on major roll call votes March 20 through March 26.

HOUSE

ENERGY JURISDICTION: The House rejected, 282-125, an attempt to create an Energy Committee to assume an energy jurisdiction now spread among more than 80 House committees and sub-committees. The vote came during debate on H Res 549, later adopted in a form that gives the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee broader jurisdiction over energy matters.

Rep. Jerry Patterson, D-Calif., a supporter, said: "The U.S. today is the only industrialized nation without a comprehensive energy policy. The fault, in part, is the fault of this House. We cannot, any longer, avoid our responsibility."

Rep. Jonathan Bingham, D-N.Y., an opponent, said: "A truly comprehensive Energy Committee is an impossible idea," in part because "if we divide up jurisdiction on taxes, then we are going to have a totally confused situation with respect to our tax laws."

Members voting "yes" want a single House committee to handle virtually all energy legislation.

Rep. Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, voted "yes."

Reps. David Bonior, D-Mt. Clemens, William Ford, D-Taylor, William Brodhead, D-Detroit, James Blanchard, D-Pleasant Ridge and William Broomfield, R-Birmingham voted "nay."

roll call report

BUYING A HOME: The House voted, 238-178, to severely restrict the practice of states and localities issuing tax-exempt bonds for home mortgage purposes. A growing number of states and cities issue "mortgage subsidy" bonds to raise money which they, in turn, use to subsidize home mortgage interest rates at private lending institutions. This stimulates home-buying.

State and municipal bonds are tax-exempt in that their purchasers do not pay federal income tax on the interest received. The bill (H.R. 5741), sent to the Senate, ends the tax-exempt status of mortgage-subsidy bonds after 1982, except when they subsidize home purchases by veterans and low-income persons.

Rep. Barber Conable, R-N.Y., a supporter, said: "Everyone is a winner with mortgage-subsidy bonds, except the U.S. Treasury and 220 million taxpayers."

Rep. Tom Railsback, R-Ill., an opponent, said that in his district home-mortgage bonds have yielded benefits "felt not only by the individuals buying houses, but by the area's entire economy."

Members voting "yes" want to curb the issuance of tax-exempt home-mortgage bonds.

Pursell, Bonior, Ford, Brodhead, and Blanchard voted "yes."

Broomfield voted "nay."

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION: The House adopted, 216-201, a resolution (HJ Res 514) providing a stopgap appropriation of \$9.8 million to keep the Federal Trade Commission in operation for another 45 days. A separate bill, providing regular, long-term funding for the embattled agency, is expected to be enacted before the 45-day period runs out.

Rep. John LaFalce, D-N.Y., a supporter, said "The FTC is not perfect, but it often is the consumer's only protection from victimization by special-interest groups."

Rep. James Quillen, R-Tenn., an opponent of funding the FTC, said: "Back home, the way to kill a rattlesnake is to cut its head off."

Members voting "yes" favor stopgap funding to keep the FTC from closing its doors.

Pursell, Bonior, Ford, Brodhead and Blanchard voted "yes."

Broomfield voted "nay."

SENATE

MONEY FOR FTC: Following the lead of the House (see preceding vote), the Senate voted 79-13 against to provide interim funding to keep the Federal Trade Commission open for business. The resolution (HJ Res 514) thus became law.

Sen. John Warner, R-Va., a supporter, said: "My immediate concern is with some 1,700 employees of the FTC whose paychecks once again have been put in jeopardy." No senator spoke against the legislation.

Senators voting "yes" support interim FTC funding.

Sens. Donald Riegle and Carl Levin, both Democrats, voted "yes."

FEDERAL SPENDING: The Senate rejected, 52-45, a Republican move to table the Democrats' non-binding "sense of the Senate" language in favor of a balanced federal budget for the fiscal year that begins in October (FY 1981). The GOP wanted, instead, even more drastic spending cuts coupled with tax relief. The vote came during debate on S Res 380, later passed which put the Senate on record as endorsing a

balanced 1981 budget and using any surplus revenue to cut taxes.

Sen. William Roth, R-Del., a supporter of substituting the tougher GOP language, said: "The best way to get more out of our country is to get less out of our government. . . . The best way to stop inflation is to put a lid on federal spending."

Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W. Va., an opponent of the GOP move, said: "Mr. Roth talks about guts, courage. Ah, wait until we start balancing the budget. . . . That is where the men will be separated from the boys."

Senators voting "yes" want to limit federal spending in FY 1981 to 21 percent of the Gross National Product, and senators voting "nay" favor the austere but less severe approach of balancing the FY 1981 budget.

Riegle and Levin voted "nay."

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Bill requires employers to post chemical notice

Gov. William G. Milliken has signed into law a bill aimed at protecting workers exposed to chemical substances.

The bill (HB 4053, I.E.) amends the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Act to require employers to post conspicuously safety information listing the chemical substances with which employees must work or to which they may be exposed in the workplace.

"The posting must include such in-

formation as the hazards of the chemical, the permissible exposure levels, protective measures to be employed in handling the chemical and such characteristics as its boiling point, flashpoint, the stability of the substance or mixture, and the conditions and situations which must be avoided," Milliken said.

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