

Area reps split on '87 budget bill

Here's how area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes during the week ending May 18.

HOUSE

BUDGET — By a vote of 245 for and 179 against, the House passed and sent to conference with the Senate the 1987 budget resolution, which is the federal government's fiscal blueprint for the financial year beginning Oct. 1.

Authorized by the Democratic majority, the plan (H. Res. 337) calls for spending of \$294.3 million, defense outlays of \$255 million, \$137.5 billion.

In conference, it will confront the budget plan approved by the Republican-controlled Senate, which sets military spending at the higher level of \$301 billion, and anticipates a higher annual deficit, \$144 billion.

The House and Senate proposals would increase revenue (largely by unspecified tax hikes) by approximately the same amount, although the House specifies that \$4.7 billion of its new revenues could be used only to reduce the deficit.

Both House and Senate budgets are on a collision course with President Reagan's proposed 1987 budget, which calls for defense spending of \$320 billion, sharper cuts in domestic spending, and lower tax hikes.

Supporter George Miller, D-Calif., said, "There is something terribly wrong when the defenseless must sacrifice food, education and housing so that the Defense Department can spend \$800 million of our tax money every day."

Opponent Jack Kemp, R-N.Y., said, "We are making a mistake in cutting defense and letting deficits drive public policy, instead of the other way around."

Members voting yes favored the Democratic master plan for the fiscal 1987 budget.

Voting yes: Dennis Hertel, D-Harper Woods, William Ford, D-Taylor, Sander Levin, D-Southfield. Voting no: Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, William Broomfield, R-Birmingham.

GOP SUBSTITUTE — By a vote of 145 for and 280 against, the House rejected the alternative fiscal 1987 budget offered by the Republican minority. The House then approved the Democratic plan (above).

The GOP plan called for defense spending of \$293 billion, which was \$9 billion above the Democratic figure, but \$8 billion below President Reagan's military request. It reduced domestic spending by \$22.3 billion, some \$5 billion more than the Democratic budget's domestic cuts.

It provided \$5.7 billion in new fiscal 1987 revenue, roughly the sum requested by the president but well below the amounts recommended by both the GOP-led Senate and the Democratic majority in the House. It anticipated a fiscal 1987 deficit of \$144 billion, slightly higher than the figure later approved by the House but within the statutory limit of the Gramm-Rudman-Itolings balanced-budget law.

Voting yes: Pursell, Broomfield. Voting no: Hertel, William Ford, Levin.

SENATE

EXPORTING DRUGS — By a vote of 62 for and 29 against, the Senate tabled (killed) an amendment to make it more difficult for American pharmaceutical companies to export certain drugs to developing countries.

The amendment was offered to a bill permitting American-made

drugs to be sold abroad before they have received Food and Drug Administration clearance for sale in the United States. The drugs affected by the legislation are those awaiting FDA approval. Drugs rejected by the agency as unsafe could not be exported.

As later passed by a wide margin and sent to the House, the bill (S. 1848) permits sale to 15 countries having advanced procedures for monitoring the safety of pharmaceuticals. Also, American-made drugs that are close to receiving final FDA approval could be sold to developing countries, which presumably have less effective drug safety agencies.

The bill was a top priority of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association, which says it will prevent American drug companies from shipping overseas.

This amendment was primarily designed to insure that the American drugs sold in the Third World are accurately labeled by the receiving country. It required U.S. embassies and the congressional Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to keep track of the various labeling practices in these countries.

Orlin Hatch, R-Utah, who voted to kill the amendment, said it amounted to "dripping foreign governments in the face and, at the same time, creating a loss of U.S. jobs."

Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio, who sponsored the amendment, said "We would not wish to engage in mislabeling which threatens the

health and safety of consumers abroad."

Senators voting no favored the amendment.

Voting no: Carl Levin, Donald Riegle.

MILITARY RETIREES — By a vote of 64 for and 29 against, the Senate tabled (killed) an amendment in behalf of higher cost-of-living adjustments (COLAS) for certain military retirees who are at least 58 years of age.

The vote occurred during debate on a bill curtailing military pension benefits for people who join the armed services in the future. For example, for new inductees who eventually retire after 20 years of service, the bill lowers the pension from the present 50 percent to 44 percent of base pay.

The bill (S. 2395) was sent to conference with the House by a 93-1 margin, with Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., casting the negative vote.

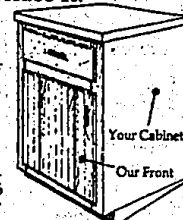
The amendment killed by this vote dealt with the annual COLA increases available to retirees upon the 40th anniversary of their entry into military service. It sought to guarantee those persons a pension increase equal to the full cost-of-living hike as reflected by the Consumer Price Index. Its failure left intact the bill's provision for a hike equivalent to the CPI less one percentage point.

Senators voting yes were opposed to the higher COLA for certain military retirees.

Voting yes: Levin, Riegle.

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60% of state businesses don't pay tax

A new Michigan Treasury Department survey shows most small businesses in Michigan do not pay the state's single business tax (SBT).

"Sixty percent of the businesses in Michigan — that's 120,000 companies — pay no SBT at all," State Treasurer Robert A. Bowman said.

Gov. James J. Blanchard has issued an executive declaration setting aside the week of May 25-31 as Michigan Small Business and Entrepreneur Week, to recognize those who create new jobs and opportunity in Michigan.

The Treasury survey shows various exemptions, deductions and credits make SBT structure progressive. For example, a business with a tax base less than \$40,000 pays a rate of effective tax at one-tenth the rate of a business with a tax base of at least \$5 million.

The SBT has a special feature called the small business credit that benefits more than 40,000 businesses in the state, providing \$40 million in tax relief for small businesses.

"The facts show that Michigan's tax structure is good for small businesses," Bowman said.

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