

Roll Call

Here's how Observer & Eccentric area members of Congress were recorded on major roll call votes in the week ending Nov. 3.

HOUSE

MINIMUM WAGE HIKE — By a vote of 382 for and 37 against, the House sent to the Senate a bill (HR 2710) increasing the minimum wage for the first time since 1981, raising it from \$3.35 an hour to \$3.80 next April and \$4.25 in April 1991. About 4 million workers now receive the federal minimum.

Included in the bill (HR 2710) is a new sub-minimum wage for youths advocated by businesses but disliked

by labor. The "training wage" set at \$3.35 an hour next April and \$3.61 a year later, can be paid for up to 90 days to youths aged 16-19 who are new to the work force. The bill is a compromise between President Bush and Democratic leaders, drafted after the House failed last June to override Bush's veto of \$4.55-an-hour minimum wage.

Supporter James Traficant, D-Ohio, said the bill is needed because "it's a sad day in America when people work eight hours a day and still qualify for food stamps and housing vouchers."

Objecting to the new two-tier wage structure that critics say will take jobs away from adults, Carl

Perkins, D-Ky., called the bill "a sellout to the President of the United States."

Members voting yes supported the bill.

Area members voting yes were: Carl Pursell, R-Plymouth, William Ford, D-Taylor, Sander Levin, D-Southfield and William Broomfield, R-Lake Orion.

AIRLINE TAKEOVERS — By a vote of 309 for and 113 against, the House sent to the Senate a bill (HR 2443) enabling the Department of Transportation to prevent the sale of major airlines if the deal would result in foreign control of the carrier of enough of a debt load to jeopardize passenger safety. Parties seeking more than 15 percent of an airline's stock would have to get DOT's prior approval of their plans.

Although foreign control of major carriers is now prohibited, federal officials say the bill is needed to plug loopholes in the existing ban. The safety issue is raised by fears that leveraged buyouts will leave newly-purchased airlines with insufficient cash flow to maintain their fleets.

Supporter J.J. Pickle, D-Tex., said "we cannot sit back while airlines, our national assets, take on billions

of dollars in debt. The risks are too great."

Opponent Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif., said the bill gives government too much power over the marketplace and "is more appropriate for the Soviet airline, Aeroflot, not the American airline industry."

Members voting yes wanted the Department of Transportation to be able to block certain airline buyouts.

Members Ford and Levin voted yes. Pursell and Broomfield voted no. Hertel did not vote.

SENATE

TO DISCLOSE HOUSE MAIL COSTS — By a vote of 64 for and 35 against, the Senate tabled (killed) an amendment requiring House members to publish in the Congressional Record the cost and other details of their mass mailings to constituents. Senators already make such a disclosure, but House members have chosen to keep the data private. The vote occurred during debate on the conference report on the fiscal 1990 legislative branch appropriations bill (HR 2614).

Harry Reid, D-Nev., said the amendment had to be killed because it would bring down the conference report, eliminating major reforms in congressional mailing procedures.

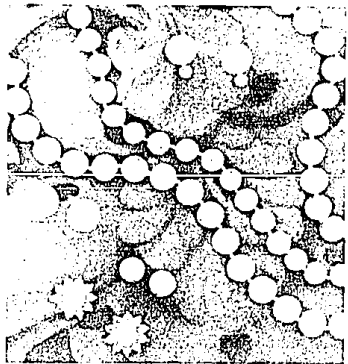
OLIVER NORTH'S PENSION — By a vote of 78 for and 17 against, the Senate sent to the House a bill (S 1816) restoring a military pension of \$23,000 annually to Oliver North, a retired Marine lieutenant colonel.

Though applying broadly to retired officers, the bill's purpose is to guarantee North's pension despite a 1974 law ousting from office persons convicted of shredding sensitive federal documents. North was convicted on a shredding count in his Iran-Contra trial. The bill would keep the required forfeiture from costing North his commission and retirement pay.

Senators voting yes supported the bill. Senators Levin and Riegle voted yes.

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Is spouse vested in advanced degrees?

By Tim Richard
staff writer

A panel of state legislators is cool to a bill to give one spouse a vested right in the other's advanced college degree.

Senate Bill 255, sponsored by Gilbert DiNello, D-East Detroit, is designed to aid (say) a divorcing wife who had worked while her husband

studied for a dental degree.

"The chair," said Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, "is inclined to look at anything that increases earnings from day one of the marriage." Nichols thought DiNello's bill too narrow.

SEN. JOHN Kelly, D-Grosse Pointe Farms, thought the bill un-

necessary because courts already can take note of the value of one spouse's advanced degrees.

"There was a woman who got a law degree with help from her family and government loans. They filed for divorce," Kelly said. "The husband asked \$250,000 of her earnings," falsely claiming he supported her while she attended law school. Kelly said, "She had to go back

through 11 years of receipts to disprove his claim.

"This (DiNello's) bill puts into the statute what's already in case law. It's cumbersome. It adds to the burden of the woman."

The bill was endorsed, however, by the Michigan Women's Commission. But only DiNello testified during a short hearing of the Judiciary Committee.

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