

ROLL CALL REPORT

Reps tow party lines on spending issue

Here's how Observer & Eccentric-area members of Congress voted recorded on major roll call votes in the week ending April 30

hope and promise to the tribes that so badly need our help with environmental problems."

A yes vote was to keep Congress from requiring an assistant secretary for Indian land in the proposed Department of the Environment. Michigan Sens. Carl Levin, D, voted yes and Donald Riegle,

D, voted no.

Regulatory Costs: By a vote of 70 for and 28 against, the Senate tabled (killed) an amendment requiring the government to offset the cost of new environmental regulations with corresponding cuts in

the cost of existing measures such as the Clean Air Act. The vote occurred during debate on legislation establishing a Department of the Environment (S 171).

Max Baucus, D-Mont., said the amendment would virtually block the new department from imposing regulations.

Sponsor Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said his amendment "will prevent the pile-on mentality that small businesses, cities and counties have suffered" under environmental laws.

A yes vote was to kill the amendment. Levin and Riegle voted yes.

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HOUSE

Line-Item Spending Issue: By a vote of 258 for and 157 against, the House sent the Senate a bill (HR 1578) bolstering presidential power to challenge line-item spending by Congress. Democratic sponsors touted the bill as a tool against waste. But Republicans denounced it as a weak imitation of the line-item veto long sought by fiscal conservatives (below).

The bill allows presidents to "veto" specific appropriations, with Congress required to vote to affirm the cuts before they can take effect. If Congress rebuts the president, it can vote on its own cuts in the same accounts targeted by the president. If the congressional austerity bid also fails, the disputed spending would go forward as originally voted by Congress.

Sponsor John Spratt, D-S.C., said the bill will "strengthen the budget process and the public's respect for how we spend their money."

Opponent Gerald Solomon, R-N.J., said "compared to a true line-item veto, this bill is little more than a wet noodle on a fast track to nowhere."

A yes vote supported the Democratic proposal. Area representatives voting yes were: Dale Kildee, D-Flint, Sanford Levin, D-Southfield, Voting no: Carr, D-Pontiac, Joseph Knollenberg, R-Birmingham and William Ford, D-Ypsilanti.

GOP Plan: The House rejected, 198 for and 219 against, the GOP line-item veto plan, which differed from the Democratic approach (above) by making it much easier for a president to cancel specific appropriations sought by Congress.

Republicans wanted presidential cuts to become law unless blocked by two-thirds majorities of both houses. The Democratic bill allows presidential cuts to be defeated by a simple majority of either house.

Supporter Steven Schiff, R-N.M., said "the president (in his campaign) said that he wanted the line-item veto. I think we should give it to him."

Opponent John Spratt, D-S.C., said "if you want a line-item veto, do it the right way, amend the Constitution. Don't pass a bill that won't pass constitutional muster." A yes vote supported the GOP's line-item veto proposal. Area representatives voting yes were: Knollenberg, Voting no: Carr, Kildee, Levin and Ford.

Tax Breaks: By a vote of 257 for and 157 against, the House amended the GOP line-item veto measure (above) to give presidents power to cancel tax breaks as well as specific appropriations desired by Congress. However, the authority was later rejected along with the overall Republican proposal.

A yes vote was to empower presidents to cancel special-interest tax breaks unless two-thirds majorities of both houses override the cancellation. Area representatives voting yes were: Carr and Knollenberg. Voting no: Kildee, Levin and Ford.

SENATE

Department of Environment: The Senate required the proposed Department of the Environment to include an assistant secretary for Indian land. An attempt to block the designation was defeated 16-79. The bill (S 171) elevating the Environmental Protection Agency to Cabinet level remained in debate.

John Glenn, D-Ohio, said it was wrong for senators to "start dictating" the duties of the department's 12 assistant secretaries. Sponsor John McCain, R-Ariz., said his proposal would "give both

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