

ADA TODAY

A Newsletter for Liberal Activists

Unfinished Business: The First Session of the 101st Congress

Inside you will find ADA's 1989 Voting Record which details for you how each Member of Congress voted during the first session of the 101st Congress. This 42nd annual edition will look at twenty different votes in the House and the Senate dealing with critical issues facing the nation in 1989.

Congress Dares to be Cautious

A review of the 1989 Congressional voting record shows that this Congress failed to live up to its promise and potential. Beset by death, ethics probes and resignations, the 101st Congress kept one eye on Presidential approval ratings, charted a cautious course and moved — slightly — to the right of its 1988 predecessor. The first session of the 101st Congress was often spent in wrangling, frequently ugly debate, on issues that had little to do with its real business — passing laws. A few examples will illustrate the point.

* New Senate Leadership

Senator George Mitchell (D-ME) took over as Senate Majority Leader. Although he took over quickly and competently, the transition from the leadership of Sen. Robert Byrd (D-VA) took time — and time was important.

* The Tower Nomination

The protracted fight over the nomination of John Tower as Secretary of Defense resulted both in his defeat, which ADA hailed, and bitter, partisan fallout which — for a while — cast a pall over later Congressional deliberations.

* The Congressional Pay Raise

The debate over the proposed 51 percent congressional pay increase resulted in further delay and more ill will.

* House in Disarray

Charges of ethics violations resulted in a paralyzing, rancorous debate in the House and the eventual resignations of Speaker Jim Wright (D-TX) and Majority Whip Tony Coelho (D-CA). The new leadership - Speaker Tom Foley (D-WA), Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO), Whip Bill Gray (D-PA) and Steny Hoyer (D-MD) as Democratic Caucus Chair - proved to be vigorous and competent but they were badly crippled by missed opportunities. Had they been able to assume their leadership roles earlier, the story might have been different.

Bush: Kinder, Gentler Vetoes

Following the initial turmoil, Congress began to move but still proved unable to pass even moderate legislation over President Bush's vetoes. Bush, in pursuit of his version of a "kinder and gentler" world, used his veto ten times — almost twice as often as any former President in his first year in office. The result was that the efforts of liberals in Congress to improve legislation often failed. The truly liberal proposals simply made no progress. While Bush showed weakness and little ability to pass his own legislative agenda, Republican Party loyalty still made it possible to force compromise as Republican Senators and Representatives often changed their votes to support the President on veto overrides.

Congressional Courage

Despite these general trends, there were flashes of Congressional courage which deserve to be highlighted. These include record pro-choice votes taken in the post-Webster environment, refusal to vote for an anti-flag-desecration Constitutional amendment and refusal — despite unprecedented Administration pressure — to enact a capital gains tax cut.

The Second Session: A Look Ahead

We hope and will work to ensure that — with the troubles of 1989 behind them — Congress will begin to seize the initiative, take advantage of the rapidly changing world situation and begin to address aggressively the multitude of domestic and international challenges facing the nation in the 1990s:

The FY 1991 Federal Budget and spending priorities; the Budget for a Strong America to redirect at least \$20 billion from military spending, child care legislation, campaign finance reform, universal health care, the Family and Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disability Act, legislation controlling assault weapons and handguns, immigration and trade legislation, reproductive rights including family planning, civil rights and a review of U.S. foreign policy in the rapidly changing international environment.

Liberal Heroes in 1989

Members of Congress Who Scored 100%

HOUSE

C. Atkins (MA)	B. Boxer (CA)
W. Coyne (PA)	R. Dellums (CA)
D. Edwards (CA)	L. Evans (IL)
S. Gedjenson (CT)	C. Hayes (IL)
J. Jontz (IN)	R. Kastenmeier (WI)
J. Lewis (GA)	E. Markey (MA)
S. Morrison (CT)	G. Miller (CA)
M. Owens (NY)	G. Savage (IL)
P. Schroeder (CO)	G. Sikorski (MN)
G. Studds (MA)	J. Unsoeld (WA)
B. Vento (MN)	P. Visclosky (IN)
H. Waxman (CA)	H. Wolpe (MI)
S. Yates (IL)	

SENATE

Patrick Leahy (VT)	Paul Simon (IL)
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from Americans for Democratic Action, Inc.

Key to Descriptions: LQ Vote #/
Short Title/Bill #/Description/
Resolution/Vote - ADA position in
bold/Date

SENATE DOMESTIC & SOCIAL POLICY VOTES

1. MINIMUM WAGE (S 4)

Dole (R-KS) motion to adopt the President's bill which would set minimum wage at \$4.25/hour and provide a 6-month training wage.

REJECTED 43-56 [N=+] 4/12/89

2. BUDGET RESOLUTION

(S Con Res 30)

Mitchell (D-ME) motion to table (kill) the Simon (D-IL) amendment which would rechannel \$3 billion in defense spending authority to education programs.

PASSED 64-31 [N=+] 5/3/89

3. CHILD CARE (S 5)

Dole (R-KS) substitute to the Mitchell (D-ME) amendment that would pay for child care through tax credits rather than subsidies.

REJECTED 44-56 [N=+] 6/22/89

4. PLUTONIUM PRODUCTION

(S 1352)

Warner (R-VA) motion to table (kill) the Kennedy (D-MA) amendment blocking the start of site preparations at the Special Isotope Separation plant in Idaho. The plan would convert spent nuclear reactor fuel into materials for nuclear warheads.

PASSED 50-49 [N=+] 7/31/89

5. OIL SPILL LIABILITY (S 686)

Baucus (D-MT) motion to table (kill) the Gorton (R-WA) amendment to strike the liability limits for oil spills from tankers, barges, and on-off-shore facilities.

PASSED 52-48 [N=+] 8/3/89

6. DAVIS-BACON (HR 2916)

Mikulski (D-MD) motion to table (kill) the Nickles (R-OK) amendment to allow contractors working on federally-subsidized homes or shelters to hire poor tenants and homeless people at pay below the prevailing wage.

PASSED 58-42 [Y=+] 9/19/89

7. CENSORSHIP (HR 2788)

Byrd (D-WV) motion to table (kill) the Helms (R-NC) amendment which would prohibit the National Endowment for the Arts from using federal funds on works that could be considered obscene.

PASSED 62-35 [Y=+] 10/7/89

8. ANTI-FLAG DESECRATION/ PASSAGE (S J Res 180)

Joint resolution to propose a constitutional amendment to grant Congress and the states the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the U.S. flag (66 votes needed).

REJECTED 51-48 [N=+] 10/19/89

9. EASTERN AIRLINES STRIKE RESOLUTION (HR 1231)

Mitchell (D-ME) motion to invoke cloture on the Mitchell substitute to set up a commission to resolve the Eastern Airlines labor dispute (60 votes needed).

PASSED 62-38 [Y=+] 10/26/89

10. TERRORIST DEATH PENALTY (S 1798)

Hatfield (R-OR) amendment to make life in prison without parole instead of the death penalty, the maximum penalty for terrorists found guilty of murdering US citizens abroad.

REJECTED 29-70 [Y=+] 10/26/89

11. CAPITAL GAINS (HR 3628)

Motion to invoke cloture on the Packwood (R-OR) substitute which would issue a capital gains tax cut (60 votes needed).

REJECTED 51-47 [N=+] 11/15/89

SENATE FOREIGN & MILITARY POLICY VOTES

12. TRADE (S J Res 113)

Dixon (D-IL) amendment to bar transferring to Japanese firms design data on the F-16 fighter plane for joint development by U.S. and Japanese firms.

REJECTED 47-52 [Y=+] 5/16/89

13. CAMBODIAN MILITARY AID (S 1160)

Robb (D-VA) substitute for the Murkowski (R-AK) amendment to allow the President to seek authorization for military aid for non-communist resistance forces in Cambodia.

PASSED 59-39 [N=+] 7/20/89

14. STAR WARS (S 1352)

Nunn (D-GA) motion to table (kill) the Johnston (D-LA) amendment to reduce appropriations for the SDI program to \$3.95 billion.

PASSED 50-47 [N=+] 7/27/89

15. MX RAIL PROGRAM (S 1352)

Exon (D-NE) motion to table (kill) the Levin (D-MI) amendment to reduce to \$600 million the amount authorized for development of a rail mobile version of the MX missile.

PASSED 61-39 [N=+] 8/1/89

16. FAMILY PLANNING (HR 2939)

Mikulski (D-MD) motion to table (kill) the Kasten (R-WI) amendment to prohibit US contributions to the UN Population Fund unless the President certified that the fund was not participating in programs in China involving forced sterilization and abortion.

PASSED 52-48 [Y=+] 9/20/89

17. EL SALVADOR MILITARY AID (HR 2939)

Kasten (R-WI) motion to table (kill) the Appropriations Committee amendment to set a \$85 million limit on military aid to El Salvador.

PASSED 68-32 [N=+] 9/20/89

18. STEALTH BOMBER (HR 3072)

Leahy (D-VT) amendment to delete all funds for procurement of additional B-2 bombers.

REJECTED 29-71 [Y=+] 9/26/89

19. STAR WARS (HR 3072)

Stevens (R-AK) amendment to increase to \$4.3 billion the amount authorized for the Defense Department share of SDI.

PASSED 53-47 [N=+] 9/28/89

20. STEALTH BOMBER (HR 3072)

Cranston (D-CA) motion to delete all funds to procure B-2 "stealth" bombers.

REJECTED 29-68 [Y=+] 11/17/89

