



Report on the 110th Session of Congress

October 29, 2008

Reports have given Congress its lowest approval rating ever, around 9%; far lower than President Bush's approval rating. This low rating exists despite the fact that Congress can affect the President more than he can affect them. Congress can override his vetoes, stop his nominations, refuse to pass laws he considers important and block treaties. Why is their rating so low? Perhaps the Democrats in Congress have gone too far.

Congress has been busy writing and talking. They have introduced over 13,000 pieces of legislation, not counting the amendments.

Now let us talk about efficiency. 448 of their proposals became law, but that number is misleading. 146 of those bills were to name post offices or other buildings and parks. That leaves 302. Many others were extensions of previous law, changes of staffing, reauthorizations or appropriations, leaving the number of actual laws at about 40. All this is from a total of 13,500 proposals.

A lot of work in congress goes nowhere; we should be thankful for that.

If you run the numbers, you will see that their success rate is 3% on all bills. Where else in the world can you get a job where you are 97% inefficient, earn close to \$200,000 per year with full benefits and have a retirement program that fully vests you in five years?

Details:

Rather than reporting the votes that are covered by the newspapers and traditional services, I believed it would be a good idea to study a different area: the House Resolutions. These do not receive Senate action and are not well reported by the press. The subjects of those resolutions may eventually become genuine attempts at lawmaking; they are sort of a glimpse into the future; keep this in mind.

The House Resolutions provided two areas of specific interest: African-American legislation and actions against President Bush.

There were nearly thirty measures concerning race. A few of those subjects include the Minority Bill of Rights, Apology for slavery in United States, Black History Month, Black Arts Festival, USS Constitution helping the slave trade, recognition of racism directed against African-Americans in Europe, Anti-Slavery Day, commemorating the end of the ban on interracial marriages, recognizing the plight of Afro-Columbians, recognition of African-American scientists, recognition of the first black astronaut, and the commission to study slavery reparations. There was one resolution concerning Hispanics.

The reparations bill is very important. The proposal for the commission has been repeated for almost twenty years; it has the same sponsor, Rep. John Conyers, and always has the same bill number, H.R. 40. It seeks to study the possibility of paying survivors of slavery for the bondage of their ancestors. Imagine the lawsuits that would run concerning the proofs of lineage alone. The studies could run into billions of dollars and the reparations billions more. Yet, the press is not talking about this proposal and they are not asking either candidate about their opinions on this legislation.

The bills attacking the Executive were of note. Several were official motions for the impeachment of the President, one was for the impeachment of the Vice President; one to reverse the damage caused by the Executive and on and on. In one impeachment bill (which is over 60 pages in length), the writer blamed the President for injuries suffered by the workers who were cleaning up the debris of the collapsed World Trade Center. Another sought to hold two officers of the Executive in contempt for refusal to comply with subpoenas issued by the House.

The contempt legislation is fully political, it stands in contradiction to the separation of powers designed by our Founding Fathers. James Madison noted that such blatant abuse constituted the worst sort of tyranny. In Federalist 51 he wrote: *“But the great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department, consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others.”* The purpose of this legislation did not concern legalities; they sought to malign the Executive in every way possible.

There was one glaring omission on the legislative scorecard: immigration reform. Not one of the bills passed into law, but there were hundreds introduced.

Senator Obama’s Proposed Legislation:

General: In his three plus years in the Senate, Barack Obama has proposed 137 bills. This figure does not include his proposed amendments to other bills; he has 58 in this session of congress alone.



Of his bills in this session, 14% concern African Americans or Civil Rights issues.

Only one of his bills became law, S.906, to prohibit the sale, distribution, etc., of elemental mercury. This seems strange when you consider that he has introduced bills to suspend tariffs on N-6 Benzyladenine, MCPB acid and MCPB sodium salt, 2-Methyl-4-chlorophenoxyacetic acid, gibberellic acid, triphenyltin hydroxide, sebacic acid and eight other chemicals.

International Relations:

The Senator has a couple of proposals addressing our involvement in Iraq and one concerning Zimbabwe. Most importantly, Senator Obama has proposed that the United States develop a comprehensive strategy for our nation to fund the reduction of global poverty. Some believe this could cost trillions of dollars; he feels it is worth it.

Notable:

Sen. Obama voted to make oil-producing cartels a violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act; but, these cartels are not under the laws of the United States. (Amendment to HR 6)

One of the most anti-gun members of Congress. Endorsed the Illinois handgun ban, restricted concealed carry permits to law enforcement officers only, backed Clinton’s assault weapons ban, believes gun manufacturers should be open to lawsuits in cases involving their products; wants to ban sales and possession of semi-automatic weapons.

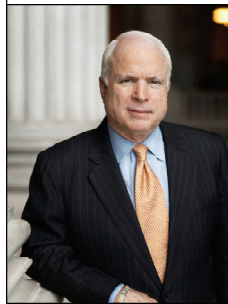
Believes in higher capital gains taxes because it is fair—not for the tax revenue. Has voted against every tax cut presented in

his short time in Congress. Voted against a cut of the Alternative Minimum Tax and again against its repeal, voted against a raise in the death tax exemption and again on its repeal. Has opposed cuts in taxes on dividends.

Opposed the surge of troops in Iraq, believes the our war has made us more vulnerable to attacks. Wants out troops out of Iraq in 2009. No Military Experience

Senator McCain’s Proposed Legislation:

General: Although he has served in the Senate for 22 years, only the data from the last four years will be cited, in fairness to his opponent’s few years in Congress. Senator McCain has sponsored only 22 proposals for this Congress, a third of his



previous session. He does have a couple of proposals that address Native Americans and Hispanics. His bill concerning Cesar Chavez was folded into other legislation and became law this year, as did his bill to fight child pornography.

In the previous congress, Senator McCain had 77 legislative proposals. Five were statements or positions that were “agreed to” and 11 became law on their own or were folded into law with other legislation. So there are 16 successes in 77 attempts, a 20% success rate.

International Relations:

Senator McCain has sponsored several proposals that address international relations in Burma, the Russian Federation, Bulgaria, Georgia (Eastern Europe) Ukraine and Central Asia. His proposed Senate Resolution 70 expressed “the sense of the Senate that the Commander of Multinational Forces – Iraq and all United States personnel under his command should receive from Congress the full support necessary to carry out the United States mission in Iraq;” it received only nine cosponsors but was not voted on in this session.

Notable:

Believes the government taxes enough, it needs to become more efficient. Voted for cuts, then repeals of the Alternative Minimum Tax and the Estate Tax. Agrees with cuts on capital gains and dividend taxes

Opposes lawsuits against gun makers. Opposed Clinton’s assault weapons ban. Penalize criminal use of guns.

Deport 2 million illegal immigrants who have committed crimes; Voted to have English the Official Language of the U.S. Believes in fighting terrorism, supports the surge of troops in Iraq. Win, do not pull troops out until the mission is complete.

Supports private Social Security accounts. Believes in using more nuclear power for our cities.