

HOUSE DEMOCRATS' BIPARTISANSHIP LEADS TO PROGRESS

Democrats Keep Promise to Run House in a More Bipartisan, Fair and Civil Manner

Democrats are operating the House of Representatives in a more bipartisan, fair, and civil manner than it was run during 12 years of Republican rule. As legislation moves from committee, to the Rules Committee, to the Floor, Democrats are allowing greater debate, and providing Republicans more opportunities to express their views and affect legislation. The more bipartisan, fair and civil manner at all steps in the legislative process helps ensure that progress is made on the American people's agenda.

COMMITTEES MAKE HOUSE MORE BIPARTISAN

Committee Chairmen have worked to make their committees fair and bipartisan for all members to contribute their opinions and affect legislation. Many Chairmen are crafting legislation with the ranking Republican on their committee, which leads to compromise legislation with broad support from Members. A few examples of renewed civility in committees:

Agriculture:

Under the leadership of Chairman Collin Peterson, the House Agriculture Committee is writing the Farm Bill under regular order for the first time since 1990, allowing for debate and amendments at both the Subcommittee and full Committee level. Members of both parties have been involved in developing preliminary drafts that the Subcommittees are considering, and all Subcommittee members are allowed to submit amendments during the markups of these drafts. During the full Committee hearing, all Committee members will have the opportunity to submit amendments as well. The Farm Bill's development is an open and public process that will allow all of the important issues included in this legislation to be fully considered.

Education:

Chairman George Miller and Ranking Member Buck McKeon worked closely together to produce the Pell Grant Equity Act, the Student Loan Sunshine Act, and the Head Start Reauthorization, all of which passed the House with broad, bipartisan support – the Pell Grant Equity Act passed by a voice vote, the Student Loan Sunshine Act passed 414-3, and Head Start passed 365-48. The Committee has also held a bipartisan briefing on No Child Left Behind where any Member of the House could come before Chairman Miller to share feedback and recommendations on how to improve the program.

Energy & Commerce:

Before marking up the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, Ranking Republican Joe Barton told Chairman John Dingell that Republicans were unhappy with the legislation. Rather than going forward with the markup, Chairman Dingell postponed the markup so his staff could work with Committee Republicans overnight to reach an agreement. The bill was passed out of Committee the next morning by a unanimous voice vote.

Judiciary:

Before the Judiciary Committee voted on granting immunity to Monica Goodling, Ranking Republican Lamar Smith asked Chairman John Conyers to postpone the vote in order for Republicans to have

more time to think the matter over. Chairman Conyers postponed the vote for one week, at which point the Committee voted overwhelmingly, by a 32-6 margin, to grant immunity.

Science & Technology:

Because the Science & Technology Committee has operated in a bipartisan fashion, it has been roughly 150% more productive than the Committee was at this point in the 109th Congress in terms of hearings held, full committee markups held, subcommittee markups held, reports filed, and bills passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. Working in a bipartisan fashion, the Committee quickly cleared five major legislative pieces of the House Democrats' Innovation Agenda. This follows through on a commitment Democrats made to the American people – and puts Congress one step closer – to insuring U.S. students, teachers, businesses and workers are prepared to continue leading the world in innovation, research and technology well into the future.

Transportation & Infrastructure:

The Water Resources Development Act was a bipartisan product of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. When problems emerged with certifications for Republican projects, Chairman Jim Oberstar assured the Republicans that the issue would be fixed before the bill was brought to the Floor, which it was.

Ways & Means:

H.R. 976, the Small Business Tax Relief Act, was crafted with cooperation between Chairman Charles Rangel and Ranking Member Jim McCrery, as well as the Democratic and Republican Committee Staffs. This could have been a controversial and partisan bill, but as a result of working closely together in the drafting process, the final bill passed the House with an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 360-45.

RULES COMMITTEE MAKES HOUSE MORE FAIR

Democrats Allow Greater Debate with More Amendments, Quadruple the Number of Open Rules

During the first five months under Democrats (through May 15), the House Rules Committee processed significantly more legislation and reported out many more rules than the 109th Congress in the same period. In this short time, Democrats have quadrupled the number of open rules Republicans reported out.

<u>109th (through May 15, 2005)</u>	<u>110th (May 15, 2007)</u>
29 total rules	43 total rules
2 open rules (includes 1 appropriation bill)	8 open rules
15 structured rules	20 structured rules
51 - Democratic/minority amendments in order	60 – Republican/minority amendments in order

In addition, Republicans reported out 3 open Rules during the entire 109th Congress (excluding appropriations measures, which are by tradition always open) compared with 8 open rules issued by Democrats in just four-and-a-half months.

Some open rules during the 110th Congress have required that amendments must be pre-printed before the bill is brought to the House Floor for consideration. These rules are still considered “open” because every amendment that a Member wants to put forward will be considered, unlike under structured rules whereby some amendments will not be allowed to come up for debate. Open rules with pre-printing requirements actually further increase openness and transparency in the House by providing Members have sufficient time to read and understand the amendments being offered before having to vote on them.

A Rules Process Which Takes Place in the Light of Day Makes House More Transparent

The Republican Rules Committee of the 109th Congress was notorious for meeting late in the afternoon and reporting out rules late at night. While some such meetings are inevitable, Republicans in the 109th Congress reported a significant number of their rules after 8 p.m. Such meeting and reporting hours made the Committee difficult to cover for most reporters, and therefore less transparent, and made its sessions less accessible to Members of Congress:

- 53 of the 111 total rules reported from the Rules Committee (47 percent) were reported after 8:00 p.m.
- 14 of those rules were reported after midnight.
- 9 of the 14 were reported after 6:00 a.m. on the day that they were to be considered on the floor.

By comparison, the Democratic Rules Committee has thus far reported out only 8 rules (out of 47) after 8 p.m. (17 percent). Democrats have worked to conduct the business of the Rules Committee during the light of day, so that the process is accessible to reporters, the public, and Members.

HOUSE FLOOR IS MORE BIPARTISAN, FAIR, AND CIVIL

On the House Floor:

Iraq Debate – Democrats held an exceptionally open debate on a resolution opposing the President’s Iraq escalation, with every single Member – Republicans and Democrats – given five minutes to speak on the Floor. Debate lasted for 44 hours and 55 minutes over the course of four days, with 392 Members speaking.

Fair Floor Votes – At the beginning of this Congress, House Democrats enacted a rules change that ended the Republican practice of keeping votes open solely in order to change the outcome.

A BIPARTISAN, FAIR, AND CIVIL PROCESS HELPS THE AMERICAN PEOPLE’S AGENDA MOVE FORWARD

Democrats’ commitment to a bipartisan process and its positive results can be seen in a number of key pieces of legislation that stalled in the last Congress or were given less debate, but have passed the Democratic 110th Congress with broad, bipartisan majorities. After years of inaction on key issues, the New Direction Congress has had significant bipartisan support on 38 measures.

Listed below is some of the important legislation that was stalled or given minimal debate in the last Congress, but that now has seen a more fair process under Democrats:

1. **H.R. 547- Advanced Fuels Research Infrastructure Act – Passed 400 to 3**
 - i. 110th – Open rule – 13 amendments considered
 - ii. 109th – Similar bill considered under suspension - 0 amendments
2. **H.R. 556- National Security Foreign Investment Reform Act – Passed 423 to 0**
 - i. 110th – Open rule – 6 amendments considered
 - ii. 109th – Similar bill considered under suspension, 0 amendments
3. **H.R. 569 – Water Quality Investment Act – Passed 425 to 0**
 - i. 110th – Open rule – 4 amendments considered
 - ii. 109th – Similar bill passed out of committee by voice vote but never received floor consideration
4. **H.R. 700- Healthy Communities Water Supply Act – Passed 368 to 59**
 - i. 110th – Open rule – 5 amendments considered
 - ii. 109th – Similar bill passed out of committee by voice vote but never received floor consideration
5. **H.R. 1427- Federal Housing Finance Reform Act – Passed 313 to 104**
 - i. 110th – Open rule – 36 amendments considered
 - ii. 109th – Similar bill considered under structured rule - 9 amendments (of 28 offered) in order, 4 of which were Democratic

Listed below are some of the important pieces of bipartisan legislation enacted by the 110th Congress:

- **SCHIP Funding: 123 Republicans** supported legislation signed into law that will provide \$650 million in funding to continue providing health insurance to children in low-income families.
- **Katrina Recovery Funding: 123 Republicans** supported legislation signed into law that will provide \$6.4 billion in funding to rebuild the Gulf Coast and help the victims of Katrina and Rita.
- **Joint Continuing Funding Resolution: 57 Republicans** voted to clean up the fiscal mess left behind by the previous Republican Congress, passing 9 out of 11 appropriations bills that were left undone by Republicans, and keeping the federal government working for America through Fiscal Year 2007.
- **Increasing the Minimum Wage: 82 Republicans** supported legislation in January that would give hard-working minimum wage earners a long overdue raise; **123 Republicans** supported an increase in the minimum wage in legislation signed into law in May.