

Region's Congressional Delegation Split On Bailout

POSTED: 6:49 am EDT September 30, 2008
UPDATED: 7:14 am EDT September 30, 2008



GREENVILLE, S.C. -- Each of the votes on the so-called "bailout bill" on Monday represents a U.S. House member who represents an actual district.

In South Carolina, five of six House members voted "Yes" on the bill.

The lone "no" came from 3rd District Rep. Gresham Barrett, who represents the southwest corner of the state, including Pickens, Oconee, Anderson, Abbeville, Greenwood and most of Laurens counties.

Barrett, a Republican, spoke against the bill on the floor of the House, saying it would irreparably damage the American free market.

"I was pushing for a plan that would allow for more free-market principles such as suspension of capital gains and repatriation of earnings to help spur economic growth by helping all Americans whose retirement accounts are invested in the stock market," Barrett said.

Barrett, who is a former small business owner, said he understands the need to act and quickly to restore the flow of credit in the country.

"The people are angry and rightfully so," Barrett said. "I am angry, too, but we must not allow this anger to cloud our judgment and make choices that will divide this country."

Rep. Bob Inglis, a Republican who represents the rest of the Upstate, including Greenville, Spartanburg, Cherokee and Union counties, voted for the plan and said he was disappointed it did not pass Monday, but is confident some form of the bill will ultimately be approved.

"I think that it is going to help bring stability to the financial markets and that's going to help all of us," Inglis said. "It's going to help us continue to get credit when we need it. It's also going to hopefully stabilize people's retirement accounts."

Inglis said he's ready to get back to work on a plan a majority of his colleagues can agree on.

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"We need to act, and I'm disappointed that we didn't, because we saw what happened to the market," he said.

South Carolina's U.S. Senators are divided on the issue – Sen. Lindsey Graham has backed the plan that came out of meetings over the weekend while Sen. Jim DeMint spoke out against it last week.

Graham spoke out after Monday's vote.

"I have never been more disappointed in the Congress than I am today," Graham said in a statement. "I hope every member of the House of Representatives -- Republican and Democrat -- who voted against this legislation will work in the next 24 hours to improve the bill. Now is the time to put the national interest above the self interest."

Only four of North Carolina's 13 U.S. Representatives, all Democrats, voted for the bill. Rep. Heath Shuler, who represents the western part of the state including the Asheville area, was one of the two North Carolina Democrats who voted "no."

Eleven of Georgia's 13 U.S. Representatives voted against the bill, including 10th District Rep. Paul Broun, who represents the Northeast part of the state.

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