

Thursday, March 22, 2007

House Meets At...	Votes Predicted At...
10:00 a.m. For Legislative Business Ten "One-Minutes" per side	Last Vote . . . Evening

Any anticipated Member absences for votes this week should be reported to the Office of the Majority Whip at 226-3210.

Floor Schedule and Procedure

- **H. Res. 260—Rule to provide for consideration of H.R. 1433, the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2007 (Rep. Arcuri-Rules):** The House will consider a closed rule for consideration of H.R. 1433. The rule provides 80 minutes of general debate, with one hour equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on the Judiciary and 20 minutes equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except for clause 9 or 10 of Rule XXI, provides [that the amendment in the Rules Committee report shall be considered as adopted](#), and waives all points of order against the bill, as amended, and provides that the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Debate on the rule will be managed by Rep. Arcuri and will proceed in the following order:
 - One hour of debate on the rule.
 - Possible vote on the Democratic motion to move the previous question.
Democrats are urged to vote YES.
 - Vote on adoption of the rule. **Democrats are urged to vote YES.**
- **H. Res. 261—Rule to provide for consideration of H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act of 2007 (Rep. Slaughter-Rules):** The House will consider a closed rule for consideration of H.R. 1591. The rule provides 4 hours of general debate equally divided and controlled by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Appropriations. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill except for clause 9 or 10 of Rule XXI, provides that the amendment in the Rules Committee report shall be considered as adopted, and waives all points of

order against the bill, as amended, and provides that the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. Finally, the rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Debate on the rule will be managed by Rules Committee Chairwoman Slaughter and will proceed in the following order:

- One hour of debate on the rule.
 - Possible vote on the Democratic motion to move the previous question. **Democrats are urged to vote YES.**
 - Vote on adoption of the rule. **Democrats are urged to vote YES.**
- **H.R. 1433, the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2007 (Rep. Norton – Judiciary, Oversight and Government Reform):** One hour of debate on the bill will be managed by Judiciary Committee Chair John Conyers, or his designee, and twenty minutes of debate will be managed by Oversight and Government Reform Chair Henry Waxman, or his designee, and consideration will proceed in the following order:
 - One hour and twenty minutes of debate on the bill.
 - Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
 - Vote on final passage of the bill. **Democrats are urged to vote YES on final passage.**
- **H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act of 2007 (Rep. Obey—Appropriations):** Four hours of debate on the bill will be managed by Appropriations Committee Chair David Obey, or his designee, and consideration will proceed in the following order:
 - Four hours of debate on the bill.
 - Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
 - Vote on final passage of the bill. **Democrats are urged to vote YES on final passage.**
- **Postponed Suspension Votes (2 bills):** At some point during legislative business today, the House will take recorded votes on the following two suspensions:
 - **H.R. 545 - Native American Methamphetamine Enforcement and Treatment Act of 2007 (Rep. Udall (NM) - Judiciary, Energy and Commerce)**
 - **H.Con.Res. 66 - Permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony as part of the commemoration of the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust (Rep. Waxman – House Administration)**

Bill Summary and Key Issues

H.R. 1433, the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2007

H.R. 1433, the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2007, will provide the District of Columbia with full representation in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill permanently expands the U.S. House of Representatives from 435 to 437 seats. The two-seat increase will provide a vote to the District of Columbia and a new, at-large seat through the One Hundred Twelfth Congress to the State next entitled to increase its congressional representation. Based on the 2000 Census, Utah is the State next entitled to increase its congressional representation.

Over half a million people living in the District of Columbia lack direct voting representation in the House of Representatives and Senate..

For over 200 years, the District has been denied this voting representation in Congress--the very entity that has ultimate authority over all aspects of the city's legislative, executive, and judicial functions. The United States is the only democracy in the world that deprives the residents of its capital city voting representation in the national legislature.

Essentially, citizens of every State have a vote regarding the laws that govern the District, while those living in the District itself do not.

Residents of the District of Columbia serve in the military, pay billions of dollars in Federal taxes each year, serve on juries, and assume other responsibilities of U.S. citizenship, yet they lack a voice in Congress. The current situation is entirely undemocratic.

The Constitution is completely silent on the question of congressional representation for District residents; it neither provides nor denies representation for them. While there is no evidence that the Framers intended to deny voting representation for District residents, the Framers did provide the Congress with absolute authority over the District to rectify such a problem. Professor Viet Dinh explains, "[t]here are no indications, textual or otherwise, to suggest that the Framers intended that congressional authority under the District Clause, extraordinary and plenary in all respects, would not extend also to grant District residents representation in Congress."

H.R. 1433 also contains a nonseverability clause providing that if a court holds one section of this bill invalid or unenforceable, all other sections will be invalid or unenforceable. This is an important safeguard because it means that a court can not enjoin or strike down the bill's provision creating a new seat in the District of Columbia without also enjoining or striking down the new at-large seat for Utah.

H.R. 1433 is an important step toward bringing democracy to the District of Columbia.

H.R. 1591, the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act of 2007

This bill will support our troops and veterans, hold the Bush Administration and Iraqi government accountable and bring our soldiers home by August 2008 or sooner. In addition, the bill would address urgent unmet domestic needs that the Republican 109th Congress neglected.

For the full Appropriations Committee summary of the bill, [click here](#).

Expand funding for veterans' health care and hospitals

- The bill provides funding so the Veterans Administration can meet the obligations of a new generation of veterans.
- Bush Administration must meet military standards for troop readiness
- The bill fully supports our troops and ensures they have the tools and resources they need to do the job they have been asked to do.
- The legislation prohibits the deployment of troops who are not “fully mission capable” as defined by the Department of Defense – in other words, troops who are fully trained, equipped and protected. This is a reaffirmation of current Department of Defense standards.
- The President can only deploy “unprepared troops” if he certifies, in writing, to Congress, that deploying those troops is in the national interest.

Iraqi government must meet Bush benchmarks for reform

- The bill requires the Iraqi government to meet the key security, political and economic benchmarks established by the President in his January 10 address.
- The Iraqis failure to meet these benchmarks will mean the beginning of U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and will restrict economic aid to the Iraqis.

Strategic redeployment of U.S. combat troops by 2008

- If progress toward meeting key benchmarks is not made by July 1, 2007, a redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq begins immediately and must be completed within 180 days.
- If key benchmarks are not met by October 1, 2007, a redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq begins immediately and must be completed within 180 days.
- If key benchmarks are met by October 1, 2007, a redeployment of U.S. troops must begin by no later than March 1, 2008, and be completed within 180 days.
- Following redeployment, U.S. troops remaining in Iraq may only be used for diplomatic protection, counterterrorism operations, and training of Iraqi Security Forces.

Refocus military efforts on Afghanistan and fighting terrorism

- Al Qaeda is reconstituting, and the Taliban has grown stronger in Afghanistan.
- The bill significantly increases funding to defeat al Qaeda and terrorists in Afghanistan.

Quote of the Day

“The House of Representatives now has a chance to lead the nation toward a wiser, more responsible Iraq policy. It is scheduled to vote this week on whether to impose benchmarks for much-needed political progress on the Iraqi government — and link them to the continued presence of American combat forces. The bill also seeks to lessen the intolerable strains on American forces, requiring President Bush to certify that units are fit for battle before sending any troops to Iraq. Both of these requirements are long overdue. The House should vote yes, by an overwhelming, bipartisan margin.”—[New York Times, March 22, 2007](#)

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