



The Divided Do-Less-Than-Do-Nothing Congress

Republicans control the White House, the House and the Senate, but they cannot control themselves. Republicans are bickering over everything from the nation's budget to immigration to energy independence, while the American people wait for action. So what do Republicans do? On track to meet fewer days than the infamous "Do-Nothing Congress" of fifty years ago (108 days versus 93 days), Republicans break for the fourth recess this year.

The "Do-Less than the Do-Nothing Congress"

- "We haven't done anything worth a toot in three months."
[Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), CQ, 5/8/06]
- "The House schedule for 2006, the second session of the 109th Congress, has a grand total of 71 days when votes are scheduled to take place, along with an additional 26 when no votes will occur before 6:30 p.m. The total of 97 (sic) calendar days, counted generously, is the smallest number in 60 years and the days of what Harry Truman derided as that 'do-nothing 80th Congress.'" [Norm Ornstein, "Part Time Congress," Washington Post, 3/7/06]

Today, May 23rd, is the 143rd day of the 2006.

Today is the 36th voting day.

Only 57 voting days remain until the target adjournment.

The House is on track to meet 93 days this year.

Mounting Republican Divisions

2007 APPROPRIATIONS: During Floor debate on the FY07 Military Quality of Life Appropriations Bill, Republicans knocked out several projects important to American troops at a time of war that were requested by the White House. Republican appropriators included the projects as emergency spending so as not to break the budget cap on the bill. “Rep. James Walsh, R-N.Y., chairman of the subcommittee that wrote the bill, slammed [Rep.] Hensarling [one of the responsible Republicans], saying, ‘He does not understand that we are at war.’ ‘Please don't come out here and lecture us,’ Rep. Ray LaHood of Illinois, another GOP member of the Appropriations Committee, told the conservatives. ‘Pick another bill, not this one.’” This development “could make for difficult conference negotiations on a final version of the measure with the Senate later this year.” [[Associated Press](#), 5/20/06, [CQ](#), 5/22/06]

SUPPLEMENTAL: House and Senate Republicans are at an impasse over the supplemental spending bill for war costs and hurricane recovery. The Senate version, according to Speaker Hastert, is “dead on arrival.” [[Washington Post](#), 5/5/06]

BUDGET: Despite House passage of a FY07 budget, chances are extremely slim of a conference agreement being reached with the Senate, due to the vast differences in the two proposals. [[CQ](#), 5/11/06]

IMMIGRATION: Even after President Bush’s Oval Office address on immigration, Republicans remain extremely divided. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI), “who is likely to lead the House side in negotiations with the Senate,” said in reaction to the speech that he “was very disappointed in the speech” and that “[the president] doesn't get it.” He went on to say that “the White House has irritated him and others by seemingly ‘running away’ from the immigration bill that the House passed in December,” and that “he has not talked to Bush about the issue in many months... ‘I had hoped that he would have called me a long time ago.’” In addition to Chairman Sensenbrenner, “Bush's biggest obstacle is the House GOP leadership team, including Majority Leader John A. Boehner (Ohio) and Whip Roy Blunt (Mo.), who are cool to the Bush plan.” [[Milwaukee Journal Sentinel](#), 5/17/06, [Washington Post](#), 5/21/06]

ENERGY: House Republicans mocked Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist’s idea to provide consumers with a \$100 rebate for gas as “desperate” and “stupid.” [[Bloomberg](#), 5/12/06, [LA Times](#), 5/3/06]

LOBBYING REFORM: House and Senate Republicans remain divided over language curbing 527 organizations, banning gifts to Members, and restrictions on the so-called revolving door between Congress and lobbying firms. [[Congress Daily](#), 5/15/06]

STEM CELL RESEARCH: One year after 50 House Republicans broke ranks to help pass a bill to increase federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, some Senate Republicans are pushing for a vote on similar legislation this summer. The White House, however, is holding tight to President Bush’s threat to veto the legislation. [[Associated Press](#), 5/15/06]

PENSIONS: “Disagreement over credit-rating language, an unenthusiastic reception from the business community and even the negotiating styles of key conferees have stymied the rewrite of the nation's pension laws... Conferees emerging from a meeting last Thursday offered different takes on how far the talks have come. Senate Finance Chairman Grassley said the talks have yielded ‘tremendous progress,’ and McKeon said an agreement might be in place by the time Congress breaks for Memorial Day, although drafting and votes would come after the recess. But House Majority Leader Boehner, the chief sponsor of the House bill when he headed up the Education and the Workforce panel, appeared less optimistic. ‘These are complicated issues,’ he said.” [[Congress Daily](#), 5/22/06]