

Chapter 7 – Lonely and Useless

“A new congressman always feels so unalterably lonely and useless,” said Sam Rayburn.¹

The two parties now run what are essentially boot camps for incoming members of the House, but not so for the Class of '46. Then, those with contacts - and all had some kind of contact - could touch base and ask questions and get unsolicited advice as well. An ancient ex-congressman, whom Norris Cotton of New Hampshire consulted, told him, “If you keep your damn mouth shut, they won’t realize how little you know.” Cotton would appear to have taken the advice. Under-secretary of the treasury O. Max Gardner, a former Governor of North Carolina who would soon be designated as the Ambassador to Great Britain, wrote Hamilton Jones of the State that Gardner had “already talked with some of the leaders of the House about you.” Once he arrived, Ralph Harvey of Indiana reported that all his new colleagues were helpful in showing him the ropes. Ones with previous experience as staff with Congress, Cotton, Charles Deane of North Carolina, Caleb Boggs of Delaware, Omar Burleson and Wingate Lucas of Texas, Glen Johnson of Oklahoma, Frank Karsten of Missouri, Antoni Sadlak of Connecticut, and Robert Twyman of Illinois, had a head start. But most everyone had a lot to learn, how to get an office and hire staff, how to get on a committee and how they worked, and how the House itself functioned.²

One source of guidance for members was state caucuses. Harvey noted the “infrequent meetings” of the Indiana Republican delegation, ten of the State’s eleven representatives in the 80th Congress, “in a small hideaway room within the Capitol, called ‘the Clinic.’” Charles Halleck, the Majority Leader and a Hoosier, would chair, “keep us abreast of pending legislation and fill us in so that we could assist if necessary in the achievement of our party position when there was action on the Floor.” Boggs, the only representative of Delaware, and Edward Miller along with the other Republican from Maryland were members of the Pennsylvania Republican caucus. They met once a week at lunch in the Speaker’s dining room and once a month at dinner and were headed by Richard Simpson, chair of the Party’s Committee on Committees. There were 31 participants, 14 of whom were new to the House by the end of the 80th Congress.³

The first step was done for new representatives; certification of their election by their state secretary of state or other official body had been sent to the Clerk of the House. In 1946 that in itself was more complicated than it had been since 1931. South Trimble, the chosen Clerk of the now outgoing Democrats, died on November 23, 1946. The new majority Republicans would get to pick a new Clerk, but not until they officially took over on January 3, when it would be John Andrews. Harry Newlin McGill, the assistant clerk, had become acting Clerk on August 2 in Trimble’s illness, and his office processed the certifications.⁴

The coming turnover from Democratic staffers to Republican staffers would be much more far reaching. Columnist Drew Pearson estimated, “600 Democratic guards, ushers, clerks, stenographers, stationery room workers, sergeant-at-arms [sic] et al will get their walking papers, and 600 Republicans will take their places.” Chief Page Joe Bartlett, a rare leading staff Republican, would report that he got a

¹ Hardeman and Bacon, 61.

² Cotton, 16-7. On April 11, 1947, Cotton would tell a columnist, “In my opinion, it is a mistake to jump into action immediately on the floor of the House, because I consider it most important to know where I am heading before I express myself.” *Nashua Telegraph*, April 12, 1947. O. Max Gardner to Hamilton Jones, May 31, 1946, Jones Papers. Gardner would die before taking the ambassadorial post. *Rushville Republican*, February 2, 1948.

³ Harvey, 81. *Chester Times*, January 16, 1947. *Chester Times*, July 3, 1947.

⁴ Joe Bartlett interview.

call right after the election from Republican leader Joseph Martin, who would be the new Speaker, to return to Washington and put together a patronage list. "They were totally unprepared. And Leo Allen was going to be the head of patronage, the Congressman from Galena, Illinois. And he didn't know anything about patronage. That was kind of funny. He said, would you get together a list—sort of like the plum book for the House of Representatives? And here, I'm a kid. I'm 20 years old. I've never voted. ... So I didn't even know where to start."⁵

The major staff offices – clerk, sergeant-at-arms, doorkeeper, Capitol Police captain, but not the Parliamentarian, who would remain Lewis Deschler from 1927 to 1974 – would change, as well as many lower level people, as Pearson noted. A complicating issue was that most of these lower staffing positions were farmed out to individual members of the House. Thus, a future Doorkeeper, William "Fishbait" Miller, would note that he owed his first position in the House post office to a member from Mississippi. Miller also would write that new Rep. John Kennedy of Massachusetts had a patronage slot in the House post office that was filled by "Muggsy," who doubled as Kennedy's bodyguard. E.A. Mitchell from Indiana acquired a doorkeeper position. The partisan turnover replaced chairs of committees and thus the staffs of those committees. This was on top of the even greater effect of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 that reduced the number of standing committees from 48 to 19. The depth and breadth of the staff turnover reportedly contributed to the slow takeoff of the 80th Congress.⁶

The new members also had to hire their own office staff. The Legislative Reorganization Act allowed each to hire as many as six staffers, but the funds allocated to each office for staffing were fixed.⁷ The member thus had to figure out how to divide the pie. Actual staff was usually four with one serving in the congressional district or bouncing between there and Washington. A common pattern was to hire a district person as secretary, that is, the head of the staff and often male, and two or three women, at least one from the professional pool that had already been working in Congress, with the other women from the districts, one of whom would be the local contact. These women were "clerks."

The new secretary was often as ignorant of the House as the new member, but the professional clerks were life-savers. Howes Meade of Kentucky hired Beulah Kent, who had been clerking on the Hill for 23 years. Ken Regan would keep on Kate George, who had served representatives from the District for 24 years and Texans for 28. Mary Haddox, "a winsome brunette" not old enough to vote for her representative, Francis Love of West Virginia, told a columnist about "getting lost, figuratively, spiritually, mentally" in her first months as a clerk in "probably the loneliest experience a girl can have." But don't pass too quick a judgment on Miss Haddox. A year-and-a-half earlier she threw the Sports Writers Association "into a dither" when she asked to be admitted and was. Rita Kress, 22, who Thruston Morton brought to Washington from her Louisville job at the family firm, reported that she worked 9:00 am to 4:30 pm and received a month's vacation. She was living in a boarding house in DC in the first session but hoped to share an apartment with other girls when she returned for the second. Staff could seem almost family to the representative, such as Tillman Snead, who Rep. Carl Vinson (D GA) brought to Washington in 1936 and remained on his staff until 1964, living with the childless Vinson and his wife the entire time.⁸

⁵ Drew Pearson, November 7, 1946. Joe Bartlett interview.

⁶ Miller as told to Leighton, 36-7, 381. Also, see Leonard Ballard's recounting of getting on the Capitol Police force, Ballard interview. *The Indianapolis News*, February 7, 1947. *CQ Almanac 1947* on-line.

⁷ West interview (January 19, 2006).

⁸ *The Courier-Journal*, January 4, August 24, 1947. *Corsicana Daily Sun*, January 26, 1951. *Tucson Daily Citizen*, January 10, February 14, 1947. *The Raleigh Register*, August 19, 1945. Haddox would marry a newspaperman and have twelve children. *The Dominion-News*, June 28, 1968. James Cook, 179.

Though it was necessary to line up office staff as early as possible, those not already on a congressional salary would not be paid with public funds until after the member took the oath on January 3.

A frequently repeated observation of Congress has been that the real work is done in committee. Virtually every bill was referred to committee, which reported or did not report the bill, often altering it if reporting it and sometimes replacing it with its own “clean” committee bill. Committees also investigated, holding hearings in Washington and around the country and reporting their sessions. Committee membership, whether the choice of the representative or the happenstance of assignment would often define the member’s legislative future. That membership could circumscribe his specialization. Wilbur Mills, a member of the House since 1939, who would become one of the most influential members of the body, would describe his take on power:

A conscientious congressman knows he can’t make an adequate personal study of all the complicated bills he’s required to vote on. So when something comes up that’s outside his field, he tries to find somebody he can rely upon to give him straight facts and intelligent judgements. ... After you’ve been here for a while, you’re tabbed as either knowing your subject or not knowing it. I’ve sought to know my subject.⁹

Another perspective on the same thought would be that of political scientist David Mayhew:

Thus the hero of the Hill is not the hero of the airwaves. The member who earns prestige among his peers is the lonely gnome who passes up news conferences, cocktail parties, sometimes even marriage in order to devote his time to legislative homework.¹⁰

For members of the Class of ’46 who desired a major role in the House, the future was a glass darkly of chance and hard work.¹¹

There were three “exclusive” committees of the House that were usually off limits to new members: Ways and Means made tax law; Appropriations made spending law; Rules was the gatekeeper to the floor of the House. Normally before a bill could be considered by the House, it received a “rule” from Rules in the form of a House resolution, which determined the parameters of consideration – the limits of debate and amendment. The resolution had to be approved by the House before the bill to which it referred could be considered. The approval was usually but not always pro forma. There were cumbersome ways of bypassing Rules, but in reality Rules could simply decide to sit on a bill.

Membership on committee was determined within each party. Democratic members of the Ways and Means Committee assigned Democrats to committees. Republicans were assigned by the Party’s Committee on Committees, consisting of a member, usually the most senior, the “dean,” from each state with a Republican delegation, with votes weighted by the number of Party members in the state delegation. Katherine St. George, who would eventually become the New York representative on the Committee on Committees, would comment that the State’s large Republican delegation often placed her in the position of being the decisive vote in committee assignments. At least in theory, Republican members of the Class who were the representatives of their states on the Committee on Committees

⁹ Zelizer (2000), 131.

¹⁰ Mayhew, 147.

¹¹ Rep. Helen Gahagan Douglas, 267-8, would describe the mark-up by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Marshall Plan:

“A clerk read the bill, line by line. Any member of the committee who wanted to make a change could suggest it at that point, and then we would debate. Out of that debate, which could last for hours, would come an amendment on which we would agree. The clerk would read the next line. The process went on for months. ...

“It was my responsibility to round up absent committee members on the double when it was time to vote on an amendment.”

might benefit. Among the Class of '46, that would have been Boggs of Delaware, either Abe Goff or John Sanborn of Idaho, Charles Russell of Nevada, and William Dawson of Utah. Each party's leadership exercised a strong influence on committee assignments. Knowledgeable newbies would start lobbying the leadership early for their desired seats.¹²

The wholesale scrambling of committee assignments for continuing members due to the reduction in number of committees was the major concern of party leaders and assignment committees. The assignment of new members was likely an afterthought. Committee slots were in shorter supply for Democrats because the ratios between the parties on a committee gave the greater number to the majority party, but then there were fewer Democrats.

Committee seating was the first encounter of new members with the seniority system, and not just because they were behind returning members in getting their assignments. Some of the incoming members had more seniority than others. Olin Teague of Texas had the most. He had been elected in a special election on August 24 due to a vacancy. Though he could not take the oath until Congress convened on January 3, he outranked his Classmates. Little good it may have done him. He really wanted the Armed Services Committee, but it was reported that the leadership feared "he might be too 'radical,' as a man just off the battle front. He might know too much that needed to be changed in the military machine." He was assigned to the District of Columbia and the Veterans' Affairs committees, the former considered a backwater, but the latter of importance with so many veterans in the voting population after the War. His seniority placed him 7th of 11 Democrats on the former and 5th of 11 on the latter. Over times this assignment would define his specialty and make him the single most important congressman on veterans issues.¹³

Three other new members had advanced seniority: James Scoblick of Pennsylvania and Thomas Stanley and Burr Harrison of Virginia. Though elected on November 5 with all the rest of the initial class, they were elected to vacant seats and thus nominally to the 79th Congress, which did not meet again.

No new members received assignment to Ways and Means or Rules, but Frederic Coudert of New York City got a seat on Appropriations. John Taber of New York was the new Chair. *Life* labeled Taber "penny-pinching;" he claimed he would cut the budget by nine billion dollars. Widely reported was that his "piercing voice" once restored the hearing of a member deaf since birth. The Committee had 25 Republicans. Richard Fenno, a student of the Appropriations Committee, would note that membership on that Committee was a gateway to a wider influence in the House, beyond the mere scope of the member's position on the Committee itself.¹⁴

House Un-American Activities (HUAC) got Richard Nixon of California and Richard Vail of Illinois. Nixon would write that he did not seek the assignment but that Republican leader Martin wanted a lawyer among the Republicans on the Committee as it had a bad reputation. "I accepted with considerable reluctance, however, because of the dubious reputation the committee had acquired under its former chairman, Martin Dies, a flamboyant and at times demagogic Texas Democrat." Joseph Martin's

¹² St. George interview. Martin as told to Donovan, 181. Miller as told to Leighton, 87. For a detailed first-person recounting of seeking committee seats, albeit from ten years after the exit of the last member of the Class of '46, see Price, 80-7.

¹³ *El Paso Times*, November 6, 1954. F. Edward Hébert would write that he requested the District of Columbia Committee in 1940 because he was told "it was the one committee, where a freshman could 'get himself some action.'" Hébert and McMillan, 163.

¹⁴ Donovan (1977), 239, 260. Goulden, 236. *Life*, November 18, 1946. Fenno (1966), 88-9.

biographer wrote that both Martin and Nixon's first secretary said Nixon sought the appointment, pushed by his California backers. Nixon and Vail were two of the five Republican members on the Committee. The new Chair was J. Parnell Thomas of New Jersey. *Life* labeled him "vindictive, ultra-conservative." Harry Truman biographer David McCullough called him "vile-tempered." Drew Pearson, no fan, described him as a "bald, snappy-dresser and a wordy wrangler."¹⁵

Nixon also was appointed to Education and Labor, along with Republicans Wint Smith of Kansas, Charles Kersten of Wisconsin, George MacKinnon of Minnesota, Thomas Owens of Illinois, and Carroll Kearns of Pennsylvania and Democrats Kennedy and Lucas – in seniority order within their parties, that being determined in the absence of anything else by lot. There were 15 Republicans and 10 Democrats. The new Chair was Fred Hartley of New Jersey. Richard Welch of California had been in line by seniority to assume the chair, but was considered too sympathetic to unions and was convinced to take Public Lands, leaving the way clear for Hartley. The anti-union sentiment of much of the country and most of the Republicans would guarantee that this Committee would become a major battleground.¹⁶

Nixon would say he wanted the Judiciary Committee, as did many of the lawyers, but there were only four places available for new Republican members and many attorneys. Nixon's consolation was two committee slots. Wallace Chadwick of Pennsylvania, Albert Reeves of Missouri, Kenneth Keating of New York, and Edward Devitt of Minnesota were the new Republicans on Judiciary, in seniority order and all lawyers. There were no Democrats on the Committee from the Class of '46. Chadwick had much preferred the Foreign Affairs Committee, but there were already two Pennsylvania Republicans on it. It was considered a success when he got the Judiciary slot, attributed to the fact that the Chair of the Committee on Committees was from Pennsylvania. There were 15 Republicans in total. The new Chair was Earl Michener of Michigan, who enjoyed being called "the watchdog of the Treasury" but is primarily remembered as the man who would sponsor the 22nd Amendment, limiting presidential tenure.¹⁷

Veterans' Affairs had the largest contingent from the Class – 10 Republicans and 7 Democrats out of a total of 15 and 11 respectively. The new Republicans in order were William Crow of Pennsylvania, Howes Meade, Vail (getting a consolation committee like Nixon for HUAC), Herbert Meyer of Kansas, Mitchell, James Patterson of Connecticut, Dayton Phillips of Tennessee, Robert Tripp Ross of New York, Sarbacher, and Claude Bakewell of Missouri. Democrats were Teague, Johnson, Joe Evins of Tennessee, Georgia Lusk of New Mexico, Don Wheeler of Georgia, Hamilton Jones, and Harold Donohue of Massachusetts. All but Meade, Meyer, Ross, Lusk, and Jones were World War Two veterans, and Meade and Meyer were First World War vets. These veterans did not necessarily want this committee. Johnson's preferences were Ways and Means (out of reach for a newbie), Energy and Commerce, Public Works, and Public Lands, but we may note not Veterans' Affairs for the man who had run as the "G.I. candidate." Attorney Evins' preference was for Judiciary. Wheeler and Jones were quoted as wanting the Veterans Committee. The new Chair was Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts. Pearson called her a "hard-working, effective lady."¹⁸

¹⁵ Nixon *Memoirs*, 44-5. Kenneally, 137. *Life*, November 18, 1946. McCullough, 551. Drew Pearson, November 7, 1946.

¹⁶ Kenneally, 140.

¹⁷ Conrad Black, 88-9. *Chester Times*, January 14 & 16, July 24, 1947. *The New York Times*, July 6, 1957.

¹⁸ *Miami Daily News-Record*, November 13 & 15, 1946. Frisch and Kelly. *Kingsport Times*, July 6, 1947. *The Atlanta Constitution*, January 5, 1947. *The Daily Times-News* (Burlington), January 3, 1947. Drew Pearson, November 7, 1946.

The Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee was important to a limited group of coastal representatives; so, there were many slots for new members. New Republicans were David Potts of New York, Willis Bradley of California, Franklin Maloney of Pennsylvania, Thor Tollefson of Washington, Raymond Burke of Ohio, John Allen of California, Horace Seely-Brown of Connecticut, John Brophy of Wisconsin, Robert Nodar of New York, and Edward Miller of Maryland. Ten of the 14 Republicans were Class of '46. The one new Democrat among eleven was Prince Preston of Georgia. Brophy tried to get the seat that fellow Wisconsinite Alvin O'Konski relinquished on Public Works but failed. The Chair of Merchant Marine was Frederick Bradley of Michigan, but he would die in May, moving Alvin Weichel of Ohio into the chair in his third term in the House. A Republican colleague from Ohio described Weichel as "an outspoken critic of anything he viewed as compromise and vacillation." Pearson called him "two-fisted."¹⁹

Next was the Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, essentially an investigatory group. Boggs, Melvin Snyder of West Virginia, Walter Riehlman of New York, and Mitchell Jenkins of Pennsylvania were the new Republicans. Karsten, Henderson Lanham of Georgia, Bryan Dorn of South Carolina, Porter Hardy of Virginia, and Frank Wilson of Texas were the new Democrats. Lanham's first choices were Judiciary and Public Works. There were 15 Republicans and 10 Democrats total. The new Chair was Clare Hoffman of Michigan, who "promised a 'wholesale investigation' of all government departments and bureaus." Democrat Carl Albert of Oklahoma would describe him as "a most contemptible member." Dorn's description would be "irascible, some said cantankerous." Dorn, in his autobiography much later, would contend that his placement on this "hot" committee was an indication that the Party leadership saw him as a possible national leader. The Democratic leadership was certainly concerned about the Committee. Deane, originally assigned to the Committee, was replaced on February 26 by John McCormack of Massachusetts, the Minority Whip. United Press carried a story that explained this was because the leadership felt that they needed a tough "battler" to ride herd on Republican investigations.²⁰

Eight members of the Class were assigned to the Committee on House Administration, which tried to ride herd on the House staff, who were often protected by their patrons, and dealt with members in testy matters of meeting rooms, offices, supplies, and salaries. This committee was no way to make a positive public name for oneself. Riehlman, Boggs, and Gregory McMahon of New York all got it as a second assignment and were joined by a fourth new Republican, Howard Coffin of Michigan. New Democrats were Stanley, Harrison, Burleson, Otto Passman of Louisiana, Hugh Meade of Maryland, Toby Morris of Oklahoma, George Smathers of Florida, John Bell Williams of Mississippi, and Deane, who swapped with McCormack. Harrison had listed his desired committees as Public Lands, Public Works, and Banking and Currency. Passman wanted Commerce. Morris wanted Agriculture. Smathers was so invested in this committee that years later he forgot that he was on it. There were a total of 14 Republican and 11 Democrats; the Committee was so unpopular with continuing members that nine of the 11 Democrats were brand new. The new Chair was Karl Le Compte of Iowa. *The New York Times* labeled Le Compte "progressive."²¹

¹⁹ *The La Crosse Tribune*, January 15, 1947. *Congressional Record*, January 24, 1957, 934. Drew Pearson, June 15, 1947.

²⁰ *The Atlanta Constitution*, January 5, 1947. *The Austin American*, January 19, 1947. Albert with Goble, 166-7. Dorn and Derks, 74. *The Courier* (Connellsville), March 1, 1947.

²¹ Frisch and Kelly. *Weekly Town Talk*, January 9, 1947. Smathers, 17. *The New York Times*, October 3, 1972.

The Post Office and Civil Service Committee would have once been a desirable posting when civil servants were patronage positions. The Pendleton Act of 1883 had incorporated most postal positions within the professional civil service, though this was tardily applied until the 1910s. Even then, the flexibility in allowing any one of top three finishers in the civil service test to be offered a job still allowed a certain amount of patronage. The Hatch Act of 1939 that forbid political activity by civil servants finally ended much of this. Nevertheless, the postal service remained a major concern of members of Congress because it was the one government service that touched every home on nearly a daily basis. Service on this committee thus provided an opportunity to help constituents as well as an opportunity to fail at achieving that help. Scoblick, Twyman, St. George, Morton, Sadlak, Love, Harold Youngblood of Michigan, and Homer Jones of Washington were the lucky Republicans, while Albert, Laurie Battle of Alabama, and James Davis of Georgia were the fortunate Democrats. St. George had requested Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, and Armed Services in that order. Albert, with overweening ambition, would report that he wanted Rules, Appropriations, and Ways and Means, but would take Public Works. Committee request data collected by Scott Frisch and Sean Kelly indicate that Albert was actually more realistic, requesting Interstate and Foreign Commerce, Judiciary, Banking and Currency, and Public Lands. Battle and Davis asked for Interstate and Foreign Commerce. Homer Jones wanted Armed Services. Fifteen Republicans and ten Democrats were chaired by Edward Rees of Kansas. Fishbait Miller called Rees one of the top “do-gooders” on the Hill, putting a stop to staffers’ accommodations to members’ vices. Rees’ minority report from the Committee in 1946 had demanded “an immediate and thorough housecleaning of all those of doubtful loyalty” in government employment, but he is better remembered for sponsoring the Presidential Libraries Act of 1955, which would create that system.²²

The District of Columbia Committee, Washington’s effective city council, counted nine from the Class. Political scientist Garrison Nelson would opine that the Committee “was invariably filled with segregating southern Democrats who enjoyed ruling over the sizable black population as their own public plantation and with freshmen who were assigned there to learn the norms of congressional deference Once the norms were appropriately learned, more promising committee slots were found.” Representative and critic Richard Bolling would write that this committee was “regarded as a minor and unsatisfactory committee post, to be turned over to newly elected and unsuspecting freshman House Members as soon as possible.” New Republicans were Allen, McMahon, Youngblood, and Robert McGarvey of Pennsylvania. Democrats were Teague, Deane, Kennedy, Robert Jones of Alabama, and James Davis. It was not on Youngblood’s wish list, who wanted Armed Services or Commerce. But Deane said he wanted the DC Committee, perhaps because of his earlier residency. There were a total of 13 Republicans and 10 Democrats on the Committee. The new Chair was Everett Dirksen of Illinois, who would eventually achieve the minority leadership of Senate Republicans. In 1947 Drew Pearson called Dirksen “able, hard-hitting,” “hard-working,” “indefatigable,” and “a powerful figure in the House.” Nelson would label Dirksen “estimable and grandiloquent.”²³

The Committee on Public Lands was an important committee for westerners whose states consisted in large part of Federal lands. Republicans Charles Russell of Nevada, Sanborn of Idaho, Edward Jenison of Illinois, and Dawson of Utah were joined by Democrats Preston Peden of Oklahoma, Monroe Redden

²² Fuller, 86, 157. *The Reporter Dispatch*, January 4, 1947. Albert with Goble, 151. Frisch and Kelly. *The Atlanta Constitution*, January 5, 1947. *Eugene Register-Guard*, January 16, 1947. Miller as told to Leighton, 97-8. Donovan (1977), 234.

²³ Nelson, 363, 418. Bolling (1965), 38. *The News-Palladium*, January 7, 1947. Deane, 79. Drew Pearson, February 8 & 16 & 23, June 27, 1947.

of North Carolina, and John Carroll of Colorado. Peden was reported at the time to be seeking Agriculture, but Frisch and Kelly documented his requests were for Public Lands and Foreign Affairs. Richard Welch of California chaired a committee of 16 Republicans and 12 Democrats. *Life* described Welch as “popular” and wrote, “Some Republicans ... think that he is too close to being a New Dealer....”²⁴

The Public Works Committee was a great identifier of projects for Federal spending, though the funding had to get through the Appropriations Committee. For members who wanted to direct Federal money to their districts (and who did not?) this was a good committee to be on. As such, its complement of new members was limited, only five out of its 17 Republicans and 11 Democrats. Coffin, McGarvey, Kingsland Macy of New York, and Frederick Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania got the Republican nod, while John Blatnik of Minnesota was the sole first-year Democrat. This committee was Blatnik’s second choice, his first being Public Lands. George Dondero of Michigan was the new Chair. Drew Pearson thought him “nice, conservative, harmless.” Patrons of modern art would disagree, given Dondero’s war against what he considered nothing less than a foreign invasion opposed to American democracy. Apart from vilifying aesthetes as communist fellow-travelers, he would be able to restrict State Department efforts to showcase modern art as evidence of American innovation. Dondero is better remembered as the sponsor of the St. Lawrence Seaway.²⁵

The Agriculture Committee landed Republicans Goff, Cotton, Ernest Bramblett of California, and Paul Dague of Pennsylvania but no Democrats. Cotton said that he was lucky to be on the Committee as New England had had no one on it for three sessions. He was one of 17 Republicans. The Chair was Clifford Hope of Kansas. *Life* and Drew Pearson agreed on Hope, the latter calling him “probably the ablest member of congress of either party when it comes to agriculture” and that he “talks little, moves slowly, works hard.”²⁶

The Committee on Banking and Currency also had four new Republicans and no Democrats. Hardie Scott of Pennsylvania, Parke Banta of Missouri, Charles Fletcher of California, and Ellsworth Foote of Connecticut filled the slots among the 16 Republicans there. Jesse Wolcott of Michigan was the Chair. *Life* described him as “knowing in financial matters, conservative, a sharp debater,” and further said, “Wolcott favors removal of all restrictions on installment buying.” Drew Pearson’s characterization was that Wolcott was “sometimes called the ‘General Motors representative in congress,’” and that he was “roly-poly, smart, has a sense of humor, sets policy for members of his party on fiscal affairs.”²⁷

Three Republicans and no Democrats managed to get on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Though not as important as the Senate equivalent, getting a seat on this committee was something of a triumph. Jacob Javits of New York, John Davis Lodge of Connecticut, and Donald Jackson of California were among 14 Republicans. Javits attributed his placement to his brother introducing him to Sam Pryor, “a powerful Connecticut Republican” who was close to Joseph Martin. Pryor introduced Javits to Martin and noted that the New Yorker’s District was heavily Democratic and it would pay to boost him for future Republican prospects there. Lodge was the brother of Henry Cabot Lodge Jr, elected in 1946 to the Senate from Massachusetts. Their grandfather was Lodge Sr, a senator from Massachusetts for 31 years. Jackson’s placement is more mysterious. He was a public relations man from Santa Monica whose election to the House, his first political office, was a bit of a fluke. His father was a newspaper publisher in Ipswich, South

²⁴ *Miami Daily News-Record*, November 13, 1946. *The Salisbury Times*, December 12, 1946. Frisch and Kelly. *Life*, November 18, 1946.

²⁵ Frisch and Kelly. Drew Pearson, November 7, 1946. Birnbaum.

²⁶ *Nashua Telegraph*, April 12, 1947. Drew Pearson, November 7, 1946. *Life*, November 18, 1946.

²⁷ *Life*, November 18, 1946. Drew Pearson, November 7, 1946.

Dakota. The Chair of the Committee was Charles Aubrey Eaton of New Jersey, an internationalist who ran a bipartisan committee.²⁸

Apart from Ways & Means and Rules, the Armed Services Committee and the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee also saw no members of the Class of '46.

There was also a "select," i.e. temporary, Committee on Small Business. Such committees sometimes lasted for a number of sessions and turned into permanent committees. Republican Riehlman was placed on this one.

Which new member won the initial committee lottery? Nine received more than one committee assignment. The Democrats were Deane (District of Columbia and Expenditures in the Executive Departments), Kennedy (District of Columbia and Education & Labor), and Teague (District of Columbia and Veterans' Affairs); it appears that a second committee was a payoff for taking District of Columbia. The Republicans were Nixon (HUAC and Education and Labor), Vail (HUAC and Veterans' Affairs), Riehlman (Executive Departments and House Administration and Small Business), McMahon (District of Columbia and House Administration), and Youngblood (District of Columbia and Post Office & Civil Service). Patterson received Veterans' Affairs and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. This Joint Committee was the only such that could initiate legislation. Since the dawn of the Atomic Age in 1945, the Committee would be prominent in activity and perception. Un-American Affairs and House Administration as well as District of Columbia seem to have necessitated compensation. While two or even three committee assignments meant more work, it also meant more opportunity for the ambitious.

That members might need an incentive to take an unpopular committee is reasonable. A new member is at the bottom of the House totem pole, but he or she still represents a few hundred thousand citizens who may continue to return that member to Congress. That House district constituents vote for other candidates of the party - legislators, governors, senators, and presidents - should not be ignored. Comity is critical in politics and party leaders want to keep their members happy. After all, they need their votes in leadership elections as well as on bills.²⁹

Seniority was no less important within committees as in the House as a whole. Until the 1970s, the chair of a committee and the ranking minority member were the people who had served the longest unbroken stretch on the committee within their party, with very rare exceptions. The chair could and usually did determine what the committee did and what it accomplished. The chair often worked with the ranking member to accomplish that control. The odds of becoming the chair or ranking member of a committee increased with the member's initial placement on the committee.

Among Republicans the Members with the highest seniority were on HUAC, since there were only five Republicans in total. Nixon was fourth and Vail fifth in seniority. Riehlman was the fifth Republican on the

²⁸ Javits with Steinberg, 136, 159. *The Daily Times* (New Philadelphia), April 24, 1947. *Life*, November 18, 1946. Drew Pearson, November 7, 1946.

²⁹ One might argue in the environment of slash and burn partisanship that has been the increasing norm in Congress since 1994 that comity, interparty at least, is no longer a political value, but the scorn of comity is not politics. "...there are two great enemies of politics: indifference to human suffering and the passionate quest for certainty in matters which are essentially political. ... The quest for certainty scorns the political virtues - of prudence, of conciliation, of compromise, of variety, of adaptability, of liveliness - in favour of some pseudo-science of government, some absolute-sounding ethic, or some ideology, some world-picture in terms of either race or economics. ... A free government is one which makes decisions politically, not ideologically." Crick, 160.

Small Business Committee, but this was not a permanent committee and could not initiate legislation. Potts was fifth on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee.

The winner among Democrats was Stanley, who was fourth on House Administration. Harrison was fifth on that committee. Lanham was fifth on Expenditures in the Executive Departments. Teague was fifth on Veterans' Affairs.

All of these, however, were considered minor committees, though Merchant Marine and Veterans' Affairs were critical to their limited constituencies. On Agriculture, on Foreign Affairs, on Judiciary, on Public Works no one cracked the top nine in either party. In Education and Labor Kennedy was ninth. In Public Lands Peden was eighth and Redden ninth.

It was Coudert, with his seat on the Appropriations Committee, who was the clear winner in the committee lottery, though the last of 25 in seniority.

Congressional scholar George B. Galloway ranked "major" committees by "relative importance" in a 1946 publication. While these were the old committees preceding the Legislative Reorganization Act, his major committees continued much as they were. An application of his rankings to the assignments of the Class of '46 gives a rough assessment of how the individuals did.³⁰

Republicans	Democrats
Coudert	
Chadwick, Devitt, Keating, Reeves	
Bramblett, Cotton, Dague, Goff	
Jackson, Javits, Lodge	
Banta, Fletcher, Foote, Scott	
Coffin, McGarvey	
Allen, Macy, Muhlenberg, Youngblood	Blatnik
Boggs, Bradley, Brophy, Burke, Jones, Love, McMahon, Maloney, Miller, Morton, Nodar, Patterson, Potts, Riehlman, Sadlak, St. George, Scoblick, Seely-Brown, Tollefson, Twyman	Albert, Battle, Davis, Deane, Kennedy, Preston, Teague
Bakewell, Crow, Dawson, Jenison, Jenkins, Kearns, Kersten, MacKinnon, Meade, Meyer, Mitchell, Nixon, Owens, Phillips, Ross, Russell, Sanborn, Sarbacher, Smith, Snyder, Vail	Burleson, Carroll, Donohue, Dorn, Evins, Hardy, Harrison, Johnson, Hamilton Jones, Robert Jones, Karsten, Lanham, Lucas, Lusk, Meade, Morris, Passman, Peden, Redden, Smathers, Stanley, Wheeler, Williams, Wilson

One feels that the committee assignment process could be an ego-deflating process for many.

What were the motives for committee assignments? In Javits' telling, his achievement of a "plum" position was in part due to his electoral insecurity, but there is little evidence of that among the Republicans. The average winning percentage of each of the groups is virtually constant from best assignment to worst. Among the Democrats, Blatnik, who took a Republican seat, came out of top, but the other two who won in Republican seats are in the bottom group. At any rate, how little does a constituent follow such matters and how little could a new representative accomplish in matters such as pork-barrel delivery?

The security of the member's seat may have played some role, but perhaps more importantly were personal connections and the mundane matter of state or regional balance on committees. As one

³⁰ Galloway (1946), 90.

example, Coudert from an influential family, with a personal political resumé, and from the largest state membership in the House, was only the second New Yorker on a 25-member committee.

Office assignments were also a matter of seniority, which meant, of course, that the new members got the least desirable offices. Within the same seniority cohort, which meant almost all of the new class, the speed with which the member applied for an office was critical. One columnist described the tasking of the member's clerk to apply as a "nylon stampede."³¹ Fishbait Miller described his gaming of it:

I arrived at 4:30 on the afternoon of December 4, 1946, in order to be ready for the best choices when the office opened at nine o'clock the next morning. I brought with me a sandwich and some orange juice to hold me through the night and eventually some office aides, representing individual congressmen, showed up and they had brought along cards. We played hearts until a fourth came along, an office secretary, and then we switched to bridge. All the others were just interested in one office. I had brought letters of authority from a couple dozen congressmen – I had even sent letters to all new Democratic electees – so when the door opened, I was pretty busy. So busy that I didn't realize that the female among us was getting furious. She raised such a stink about my usurping all the good offices for my gang that two years later, when it again came time for the selection of new offices, the rules had been changed. Metal discs were going to be placed in a bowl, and we would draw for the order in which we would be permitted to pick an office."³²

Almost all new members drew offices in the Old House Office Building, completed in 1908 and remodeled in 1932, mostly in two-room suites. The rotunda of the building was grand, with a coffered ceiling and a glazed oculus. The office rooms were large enough for one to accommodate staff and the other to provide some prestige for the member. Those on the top fifth floor were bigger to make up for the lower ceilings.³³ Helen Gahagan Douglas described the office in the Old Building she acquired for the 79th Congress:

My space was two rooms on the ground floor, and I loved it for its high ceilings and tall windows with a view of a strip of green lawn and the handsome Library of Congress across the way.

The outer office was furnished with three large desks, a long worktable, a few comfortable chairs and a bank of file cabinets. My inner office was equipped with an enormous desk and a swivel chair for me, and a black leather couch and deep armchairs.³⁴

The offices on the first floor had proportionately the largest complement of new members; few had views. The second floor had the smallest proportion of new members; a view and a shorter distance to the entrance. There was no subway to the Capitol. One would be built to the New House Office Building in 1965.

Harrison's slight seniority enabled him to get an office on the third floor of the Old Building that was the old office of his father.³⁵

Some that had drawn offices in the New House Office Building, completed in 1933, had to wait for them. Allen first was given a temporary assignment to the vacant Indian Claims office. Love was temporarily housed in an anteroom of the Post Office Committee. Likewise, Lusk was offered space by her New Mexico comrade Antonio Fernández but moved into a committee room, so as not to inconvenience

³¹ *The Courier-Journal*, December 8, 1946.

³² Miller as told to Leighton, 44-5.

³³ Daniels, 71. Office assignments are in *Congressional Directory*.

³⁴ Helen Gahagan Douglas, 201-2.

³⁵ *The Bee*, December 13, 1946.

him. Bakewell moved into the New Building and scored an office next to George Dondero, Chair of Public Works.³⁶

Proximity could breed friendship, and association bred requests for adjacent offices. Smathers later claimed his friendship with Kennedy was kicked off by adjacent offices in the Old House Office Building, but Kennedy was on the first floor and Smathers on the third.³⁷

Albert much later would complain of his first office, saying, "Every chair needed new upholstery. The carpet was threadbare. The blinds did not work. There was no desk adequate for a congressman...." There was no usable desk or file cabinets for his secretary.³⁸ With time and training on the ropes, the new members would remedy these ills, but the impression one gets is that of first-year college students moving into a dormitory. As with students, the walls would soon be busy with decoration, usually things that sang the joys of their states and districts as well as their personal accomplishments. If the Victorians had had as much access to photography as the Class of '46, the clutter of wall decorations would have been similar.

Despite the would-be grandeur of the office holder, the offices of the new members usually lacked views of the Capitol, and the name tag on the hall door was a piece of paper inserted in a fixed holder.³⁹

Each political party had a leader – Charles Halleck of Indiana was the Majority Leader and former Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas the Minority Leader, each selected by the Party Caucus in the case of the Democrats and the Party Conference for the Republicans. Clarence Brown of Ohio put forth as a challenger to Halleck within the Party, the contest replicating the conflict between New York Governor and former presidential candidate Thomas Dewey, who supported Halleck, and Sen. Robert Taft of Ohio, who also wanted to occupy the White House. Halleck had been Chair of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee and had thus had the job of raising campaign funds for his party's members. Brown had run the Republican National Committee's campaign. After much noise the Brown forces realized they were not going to carry the day and gave up the fight.⁴⁰

Rayburn, dispirited by the loss of the Democratic majority and thus his speakership, at first indicated he would not be minority leader. The potential continuance of John McCormack of Massachusetts in the role caused dissension among most Southern Democrats, including Teague, Wilson, and Lucas, and the emergence of potential Southern candidates. Rayburn eventually bowed to the inevitable and was chosen without fuss.⁴¹

McCormack then moved to the position of Minority Whip, the Party second in command. The Majority Whip was Leslie Arends of Illinois. The Republicans elected their whip in Conference. The Democratic whip was appointed by the majority leader. Each party had a whip structure to count votes and to attempt to get the party members to follow the party leadership.⁴²

³⁶ *Santa Cruz Sentinel-News*, January 9, 1947. *Tucson Daily Citizen*, January 10, 1947. *The Gallup Independent*, January 4 & 10, 1947.

³⁷ Smathers, 16-7.

³⁸ Albert with Goble, 150-1.

³⁹ *Life*, January 14, 1947.

⁴⁰ Reinhard, 18. *Time*, January 6, 1947.

⁴¹ Hardeman and Bacon, 324-5. *El Paso Times*, January 1, 1947.

⁴² Schneider.

Robert's Rules of Order was based on the parliamentary practices of the House of Representatives. New members, through the common use of *Robert's Rules* in civic organizations or their experience in political assemblies would have been familiar with the basics. The House added to this 157 years of actual practice, which generated a huge volume of precedents. Learning these took time; so, the longer the tenure of the member, the more knowledgeable they tended to become. In normal procedure this was not a major problem for new members, but this knowledge could become critical in a narrow, hard-fought conflict. The governor of the rules was the Parliamentarian, Lewis Deschler and his staff. Deschler would say his opinion had been challenged eight times and overturned only once in 47 years.⁴³

The presiding officer, the speaker or the speaker pro tempore in the House of Representatives, or the chair in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, had the power of recognition of members to speak. The Committee of the Whole offered procedural advantages over the House in reducing the requirements for a quorum from a majority of members to 100, cutting the time allocated to an individual member for debate from one hour to five minutes, eliminating the motion of the previous question, and requiring the support of fewer members to record individual votes. The Committee of the Whole did not enact, however, but could only refer bills for enactment to the House. First-term members were not denied recognition but were expected to participate less frequently. Rayburn once observed in consolation to a newer member's relative silence, "The unspoken word never defeats anyone."⁴⁴

Committees normally met in the morning at the call of the chair or at regularly scheduled times. The House met at noon. Calendars normally determined how bills came to the floor, though the chairs of Ways and Means and Appropriations had to be recognized if they wished to bring up a bill from their committees. Bills from the District of Columbia Committee could be called up on second and fourth Mondays. Bills on the consent calendar had precedence under certain conditions. Suspension of the rules could be used two days of each month, usually on Mondays. Private bills were calendared on the first Tuesday of the Month. If two members objected to a private bill, it was recommitted. The private calendar was also called on the third Tuesday as well with preference to bills previously recommitted. Members of a committee managing a bill controlled the general debate times, which were set by the rule issued by the Rules Committee and approved by the House. The rule determined whether and how amendments could be offered to a bill. The House would resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union to debate a bill, in which case a member other than the speaker would assume the chair. Bills could become law. House resolutions (HRes in this work) had effect within the House and offered the opinion of the House; a rule for a bill was a House resolution. Concurrent resolutions (HCRes) offered the opinion of the Congress and affected the Congress as a whole. Joint resolutions (HJRes) could have the effect of law, if signed by the President, and were used for emergency appropriations and commemorations. A constitutional amendment began in Congress as a joint resolution. The majority leader set the agenda of the House. The chair set the agenda of the committee. And so on.⁴⁵

Political scientist David R. Mayhew, in an academic exercise, would posit that the primary goal of members of Congress is reelection. Supporting this theory is that 340 returning members of the 80th House had sought and achieved reelection, and 69 other members of the 79th House had sought and failed at

⁴³ King, 97.

⁴⁴ Wallace, 56.

⁴⁵ Bolling (1965), provides a synopsis, esp. 33-4. Recommitment sends a bill back to committee, sometimes with explicit instructions as to amendment, sometimes not.

reelection – totaling 409 or 94% and not counting five who sought senatorial positions. Mayhew identified “activities” that members of Congress “must constantly engage in ... related to reelection.” These are advertising, credit claiming, and position taking, all of which fit nicely within a definition of “self-aggrandizement.” Given that 107 of the 109 members of the Class of ’46 would seek reelection to the 81st Congress, they would seem to match returning members of the 80th House in self-aggrandizing activities, exceeding them only because the greater age of returning members would have prompted more retirements from office.⁴⁶

Impetuosity might apply to the 44 members of the Class who had not previously sought elective office, there being an aspect of publicly casting one’s fate to the winds in announcing candidacy for the US House. Whether that translated to rashness once in office is another matter. When the modestly-sized but 38-year-old War-veteran Carl Albert was mistaken for a page by a senior member on his first day in the House and told to take papers to a member’s office, he did not respond, “Go fuck yourself! Take them yourself,” as Watergate Baby Thomas Downey of New York did in the same situation in 1975. Albert, rather, took the papers. The generations were different, though Downey did then apologize and offer to comply. Albert would make a career in the House as a conciliator, which future Speaker Thomas O’Neill would invert when writing, “Carl’s problem was that he said yes to everybody.” Albert, himself, verified this characterization: “I seldom saw a teacher without a personal slant, prejudice, or theory. I would instinctively give them and the class their own views when I answered questions. In other words, I told them what they wanted to hear. This was a trait that was to serve me well all my life.” Impetuosity would not describe Carl Albert or many of his cohort.⁴⁷

Dorn, in his own telling, came as close to impetuous as any member of his Class did. In his first term, he remembered, “everybody tells you to stay there, listen and respect the elders – get along with them. Then, some day, you’ll have some influence.” “I just jumped out there after I’d been there about a week and just tore loose. I made a speech against foreign aid because I’d seen so much waste during the war. Then I went on from there....” This kind of activity may better fit under self-aggrandizement than impetuosity, since Dorn had a career schedule to keep.⁴⁸

Lodge was criticized for self-promotion. Referring to his press release touting his tapping by the Speaker to read Washington’s Farewell Address to the House, the “Inside Washington” column claimed “seldom has a freshman congressman praised himself so frankly and resoundingly.” Stunts to make a policy point could also backfire. Preston publicized his purchase of a five-dollar Confederate bill with a five-dollar current note as a criticism that inflation had made the one as worthless as the other. Many people did not agree, sending their Confederate currency in volume to his office for an equivalent payment.⁴⁹

Perhaps it was Jacob Javits of New York who took the impetuosity title of the Class. Later described as having “a personality more arrogant than outgoing,” columnist Drew Pearson characterized him in 1947 as getting in the congressional leaders’ hair. Javits, himself, described being chastised on the floor by a senior Republican, a member of his own party, for his eagerness to amend a Republican bill, but pointedly noted that after all he was from a Democratic district: “Pragmatic politics and my own inclinations thus

⁴⁶ Mayhew, 49-73 *passim*.

⁴⁷ *The New York Times*, February 6, 2000. Lawrence, 2. This oft-repeated story of Albert was not recounted in his autobiography, though he did report that Majority Leader Sam Rayburn’s secretary mistook him for a page. Albert with Goble, 39, 153. O’Neill with Novak, 216.

⁴⁸ *The Index-Journal*, November 11, 1984.

⁴⁹ *The Norwich Sun*, March 8, 1947. *The St. Louis Star and Times*, January 20, 1948.

converged; again and again I had to make the kinds of speeches and offer the types of amendments that ... the old guard disliked.” This also reads like self-aggrandizement in Mayhew’s understanding.⁵⁰

Impetuosity would presumably lead to disdain for “the formal traditions of the House,” but in fact the entire 80th House was in the process of disdaining a certain number of its formal traditions. The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 sought to streamline Congress and reinforce its authority with respect to the executive branch, whose power had grown substantially through Depression and War, as well as with respect to lobbyists, a sort of fourth branch of the government.⁵¹

The reduction in the number of standing committees in the House resulted in an increase in the average size of committees from 19 to 25 members. Though it would often be stated that another result in the limiting of full committees would be an increase in the number of standing subcommittees, this did not happen in the first two congresses after implementation. In the House during this period, the reverse occurred. Standing subcommittee numbers fell from 97 to 65. The number of select committees would expand, though not in the 80th House. This would eventually provide more committee seats and “select” would not necessarily mean *temporary*, as it was supposed to. In addition, the number of House-Senate joint committees expanded. Unchanged was the principle that partisan ratios in committees were to reflect the ratio in the House as a whole, though this varied with two exclusive committees. In the 80th House the ratio was fixed at 15-10 in Ways and Means and 8-4 in Rules, while other committees better reflected the overall House division of about 5:4 Republican in the 80th Congress.

Less troublesome for the leadership, at least initially, was the expansion of staffs. Committee staffing would expand from 356 positions to 673 across both houses within four years. Staffing numbers were increased for legislative offices such as bill drafting and research. The end of the War and the coming of the Republican 80th Congress, ideologically inclined to less government activism, nevertheless did not result in a reduction of workload for members. Rather, the work as measured by bill numbers increased, possibly because greater capacity in staffing encouraged greater production.

One objective of the Act, which would increase the workload of Congress, was to encourage legislative oversight of the executive. That Republicans were in control of the 80th Congress after 16 years and with a Democratic executive much encouraged activist oversight. Incoming Republican Speaker Joseph Martin was quoted as saying, “We’ll open every day with a prayer and close with a probe.”⁵²

The most important provision of the Act with respect to directly enhancing Congress’ position vis-a-vis the executive branch was the provision for development of a legislative national budget rather than simply processing one initiated by the executive. The Act provided that the Ways and Means Committee of the House, the Finance Committee of the Senate, and the Appropriations committees of both houses would meet jointly to evaluate the president’s budget and recommend a legislative budget. Their recommendations were to include a ceiling on appropriations, a limit on expenditures, and a proposal to increase or decrease the public debt. A deadline of February 15 was set for the Joint Committee’s report. “Because of the time taken to organize the Congress and to set up new committees under the Reorganization Act and the shift to Republican control, the joint committee did not meet until a few days

⁵⁰ *The Ocala Star-Banner*, March 8, 1986. Drew Pearson, July 28, 1947. Republican Speaker Joseph Martin told Javits, “As long as you vote Republican for the organization of the House, from then on it is your job to get reelected and to do whatever it takes to get reelected.” Javits with Steinberg, 132-3, 135-6.

⁵¹ The following summary relies primarily on Galloway (1961).

⁵² *The Charlotte News*, November 5, 1946.

before the deadline and held only two sessions.”⁵³ Furthermore, the presentation of budgetary figures without the identification of what programs would be enhanced and what reduced produced a major contretemps. This would be the effective end of the initiative.

The Act also sought to provide Congress with more information about paid lobbyists. Those whose primary activity was trying to influence legislation were required to register and report receipts and expenditures and this information was published in the *Congressional Record*. This gave the legislator more insight into who and what was behind the friendly person giving him information on a subject, but the restriction to “primary activity” and the ease of setting up attractive sounding organizations to funnel funds to the lobbyists meant that registration fell short of its intent. One study found that 835 of 1807 organizations with offices in Washington did not register as lobbyists during the 80th Congress, though many of them were on record testifying before committees.⁵⁴

Attempts by the Act to regularize committee processes, such as meeting schedules, the keeping of records, reporting, and attendance also fell short, being observed sporadically and varying with the attention of the chairs and the staff.

An important sweetener for the passage of the Act was that it increased the salaries of members and provided for a retirement system. As a positive public policy, a larger salary may have attracted better personnel and better insulated members from other financial attractions, and a retirement system may have encouraged departure of the superannuated. Members participating in the retirement system through contribution could draw on it in retirement after six years of service once they had reached the age of 62.

The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 did not accomplish all of its objectives, but nevertheless made major changes in the organization and operation of Congress. In many respects, however, the most significant change was the partisan one. British publisher and author Conrad Black described the coming of the Republicans:

The Republicans came rolling overconfidently into Washington. They assumed that they were just the first wave of a sea change that would push back much of the New Deal. Like Herbert Hoover, they still thought that the Roosevelt presidency was aberrant, a product of the infelicitous combination of an economic depression for which the Republicans were blameless and the demagoguery and political flimflammy of Roosevelt, a consummate trickster. They were convinced that Truman was a lame duck, serving out Roosevelt’s term but clearly not up to being president and unlikely even to be reselected by his own party. They set about unwinding the mutations of the New Deal with a grim sense of stamping out a flickering epidemic, sanitizing the capitol and fumigating or otherwise exterminating bacteria.⁵⁵

Such nihilism did not bode well for the formal traditions of the House. Complicating a conservative approach to governance, as different from government, was the fact that only 22 Republicans in the 80th House had served in the 71st House, the last to be managed by their party. Given the power of seniority, these 22 included the Speaker, the Chair of the Republican Conference, and nine of the chairs of the standing committees. Ten of the chairs of standing committees had never served in the majority. More to the point, 224 Republican members had not served in a Republican-led House of Representatives.

⁵³ *CQ Almanac 1947* online.

⁵⁴ Galloway (1961), p 66.

⁵⁵ Conrad Black, 88.

At noon "An elderly man ascends the dais flanked by flags, and raps his gavel. ... 'The House will be in order.' The chaplain ... gives the customary opening prayer." The Journal is ordered read and approved. "To the Speaker's right is a silver-encrusted black staff called the Mace. Seated below the Speaker at a semicircular desk are employees of the House writing industriously in ledgers. Others, the tally clerk and bill clerk and their assistants, sit looking solemn and wise awaiting their work. Official reporters stand with their stenographic notebooks. Around the Chamber fresh-faced page boys move, carrying messages and running errands for the men and women Members...." Fifty members are present, "reading newspapers, talking to one another, or ... milling about One Member, hands folded across his stomach, appears to be dozing." A quorum is called, three bells sound, Members are summoned, answer to their names either on first or second reading of the roll. Three hundred and sixty-seven have answered but there are still only 50 on the floor. A Member rises from "behind a large rectangular table at the Speaker's right [this would be the left in the 80th Congress] and says, 'Mr. Speaker, I move that the House resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of a bill, H.R. 250.'" The Speaker says the ayes have it and asks another member to take the Chair. "The Speaker steps down and disappears into the adjoining lobby. The Mace ... is removed from its stand to a lower place. The gavel is rapped, discussion begins...."⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Bolling (1965), 17-9.