

Chapter 9 – Intersession

With five months out of Washington, members of Congress were faced in July 1947 with a number of questions. How do I relocate my family back to my district? Or, if the family did not follow the member to Washington, how do I reintegrate myself with my family? What do I do with my lodgings in Washington? If the family has been in Washington for seven months, how do I reprovision my district home? What do I do with my congressional staff? How do I open a district office? How do I reintroduce myself to my constituents? How much of a vacation can I take? What kind of activity will be required of me over the recess in Washington? Can I make some money over the recess? How did I do?

How do I relocate my family back to my district?

The first session of the 80th Congress adjourned on July 26. A member with school-age children, who may have brought them to Washington for the spring semester, now needed to enroll them for the fall back in the district. For children, often the most conservative members of their families, this back and forth could be unwelcome and stressful.

Only somewhat less stressful was the semiannual dislocation for spouses, and perhaps even more so for spouses when children were involved. Of the 89 married members who came early to the first session in 1947, 77 of the spouses were recorded as accompanying their partner in Washington. Only twelve stayed back, presumably, in the local district. The rest were currently unmarried.¹

Carl Albert had no children in 1946, but he later wrote that in the future his daughter would spend spring in school in DC and fall in school in Oklahoma with her mother, but as congressional sessions began lasting into the fall, the family would stay in DC year-round. The disruptions of relocations between the two districts eventually resulted in placing the daughters of Joe Evins of Tennessee in private school. Forty-two of the Class of '46 had children of school age in 1947 and for thirty-two of those members the children were younger than high school age. Charles and Mary Kersten alone had four children in lower school and another in high school.²

How do I reintegrate myself with my family?

For a family that did not relocate to Washington for the session, the absent member, in all but two cases male, returned to take up his usual role in the family, finding that that role had been usually filled by his wife. Who now took care of the quotidian chores? Who filled the role of disciplinarian?

In an era of more traditional gender roles, there was some likelihood that the absent father was also relatively absent in childcare and domestic matters in general before his removal to Washington. For the members who were away recently, usually for years, in the military, the scrambling of traditional family roles may have become old hat. For others, not so much so.

Nevertheless, he was now back more and likely to have somewhat disrupted the household dynamic that developed over the past seven months. In a confidential interview, one child of a member, whose mother remained in the local district, remembered that her father when home was “very dictatorial” early on.

¹ It is unclear about one member, that of Russell Mack. Accompaniment was recorded in the *Congressional Directory*.

² Albert with Goble, 188-9. Graves, 81. US Public Records Index at FamilySearch.org. *The Janesville Daily Gazette*, April 18, 1950. List of In-Bound Passengers, December 31, 1952.

The two women members of the class no longer had children at home, and Georgia Lusk of New Mexico was long widowed. Katharine St. George of New York, however, was still very much married and operating a business with her husband.

What do I do with my lodgings in Washington?

Surrendering a domicile if not constrained by leases raised the specter of a return to the search for the second session, which was so frustrating for many in January. Sub-leasing the apartment or renting out the house may have been possible but not inevitable. The burden of paying for two residences, one in Washington and one in the local district has been a long-time complaint of members; so, relinquishing the Washington address was tempting.

Of the 98 members in the first session, 11 changed addresses between the first and second sessions, 56 did not. It could not be determined from the information that they provided to the *Congressional Directory* whether the other 31 changed or not.

One constraint on parting with the Washington address during the intersession was the fact that some congressional work did occur during that period. Some committees met. An attention to constituent concerns might have required visits to Washington to deal personally with agencies or other actors.

How do I reprovision my district home?

Travel was slower in 1947, and members distant from their home districts visited infrequently. If the family moved to Washington during the session, who was looking after the district home? Home ownership is one of those matters in life that requires constant attention. At least in 1947 there were few who worried whether the air conditioning still worked when they returned in July.

Some did not maintain an actual home in their district. George and Elizabeth MacKinnon apparently shed their Bedford Street home in Minneapolis and occupied a loaner from the Valentine Wurteles, Valentine being the president of Minnesota Paints, Inc. Charles and Marjorie Russell disposed of their home in Ely, Nevada, and moved in with her father, after Charles was elected to the House. The British Consul and his wife occupied the Claude Bakewell home in St. Louis throughout the 80th Congress. It is unclear where the Bakewells bunked while in that city.³

What do I do with my congressional staff?

The normal practice was to keep at least one clerk in Washington; much of the mail, after all, would keep coming there. This situation was one of those reasons the member would need, at least occasionally, to return to Washington during the intersession, although one practice was to have one of the staff ferry back and forth those matters that required it.

Another clerk and the secretary usually moved to the district. These were the staff members who were normally from the district and had homes there, while the Washington professional remained in DC. This relocation enabled a higher level of constituent involvement for the member during the intersession, but also presented the same problems for the staff – family and domicile – that the member encountered.

How do I open a district office?

District offices were uncommon during the session, but the relocation of secretary and clerk provided the staffing for one in the intersession. This did not solve the issue, since a district office also required,

³ *The Minneapolis Star*, October 3, 1948; March 8, 1972. *Reno Evening Gazette*, December 20, 1946. *Mason Valley News*, January 21, 1949; July 21, 1950. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 5, 1947.

well, an office and its accoutrements – furnishings, telephone, utilities. This was often provided in a local postal facility, and the staff were now in the district to handle acquiring the appurtenances.

It should not be overlooked that staff also could be called upon to handle more personal matters for the member. Was the vacant home in Washington secure? Did the sublessor pay the monthly fee to the Washington office on time? Could the relocating staff help provision the district home before the member arrived? The line between public and private service for the staff could be very fine.

How do I reintroduce myself to my constituents?

Many members sent regular reports, often in the form of publishable columns, to the many district newspapers that used to yearn for product. Richard Nixon of California did. Don Wheeler of Georgia wrote weekly letters to the newspapers in his District. These kept citizens somewhat informed of the activities of the House as well as keeping their representative before them.⁴

Members whose districts were relatively accessible from Washington could keep in touch during the session through the innumerable opportunities to speak to civic clubs, celebrate public events, and meet individually with constituents.

Those with good rail connections could use the accessibility to become a “Tuesday-to-Thursday” member, spending the weekend with family and constituents, as Frederic Coudert of Manhattan did. Watkins Abbitt of Virginia returned “to Appomattox nearly every Thursday” for 24 years, whether that was by rail or a 200-mile drive. Albert of Oklahoma would write, “Through the year, I ... made just as many trips home as possible. They were long railroad trips that a congressman paid for out of pocket back then....” “Typical was one stay when I made it a point to visit every house on the east side of Ardmore.”⁵

Reva Beck Bosone, elected to the 81st Congress from Utah, would say:

I was never the member of Congress who kept chasing back to her district. In the first place I was too busy, in the second place I couldn't afford it, and in the third place I thought then as now that a good record in one's job should be sufficient recommendation for being reelected.⁶

Mitchell Jenkins during the first session was reported as speaking to three veterans gatherings, a chamber of commerce, two ethnic clubs, an airport dedication, a church, a manufacturer's association, a company dinner, two civic clubs, two Memorial Day events, a new fire company headquarters, and a fire company anniversary, and starting a radio report, all in his northeastern Pennsylvania District. This is likely not a full accounting.⁷

For those, like Albert, whose districts were more remote, the intersession offered an opportunity for a whirlwind of club meetings, public events, and open office hours. A common practice for those with larger districts geographically was traveling office hours, usually from county to county, and thus normally from post office to post office. Those members who were home more frequently during the session also found the traveling office hours to be recommended as the short breaks during the session did not often allow for such an activity.

Herbert Meyer of Kansas made a tour of 105 towns in his District during the recess. Caleb Boggs of Delaware spoke over radio, to seven civic clubs, to a reserve officers association, to an ethnic club, to a VFW meeting, to a Naval Reserve board, at the opening of a preparedness center, at an Armistice Day

⁴ *The Covina Argus-Citizen*, May 16, 1947. *The Atlanta Constitution*, June 4, 1947.

⁵ Coudert, Jones, and Klepp, 82. Laurant, 51. Albert with Goble, 74-7.

⁶ Clopton, 177.

⁷ *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, January 24; March 26; April 9, 10, 19, 21; May 7, 13, 26, 28, 31; June 16; September 11, 1947. *The Plain Speaker*, April 3, July 9, 1947.

observance, attended a National Guard review, a young Republican meeting, a funeral for an “active” Republican, a dinner honoring the governor, a college homecoming, a reserve officers gathering, served on a Wilmington event planning committee, presented a trophy at a horse show, and toured a General Motors plant, all in his State. Once again, the completeness of the accounting is suspect. It was reported that Frank Wilson of Texas gave 38 speeches in a single month.⁸

Democrat Glen Johnson of Oklahoma used the recess to campaign through his District against moves by the State to reduce aid to dependent children, and he lambasted the Veterans’ Administration over its limited utilization of an available hospital in Norman.⁹

One might observe that these district activities also served to keep the member away from home and family during the intersession, not with the same concentration as living in Washington but still either avoiding the issue of reintegration with family or complicating it.

Many members were joiners, which established a connection with many in their district, even if the member could not always be present at organization events. We have already seen in Chapter Four a partial list of bodies to which Carroll Kearns of Pennsylvania belonged, to which we can add at least the following: Army Ordnance Association, American Association of School Administrators, National Education Association, Pennsylvania Education Association, Boothbay Harbor Yacht Club, Conneaut Lake Yacht Club, Mercer County Public Health Society, Pennsylvania Tuberculosis Society, Committee for Veterans Hospital, Technical Institution of the Shenango Valley for Veterans Education, Western Reserve Fish and Game Protective Association, Mercer County Historical Society, Mercer County Boy Scout Council, Sharon Volunteer Fire Department, Northwestern Pennsylvania Sportsmen’s Association.¹⁰

An exception was Francis Love of West Virginia. Years later he would tell *Congressional Quarterly* that his only membership was his church. “I’m not a joiner,” he said.¹¹

Given that members are selling a product, themselves, to their constituents, a more concerted effort may well be needed than this list of visits, appearances, and memberships. When Republican Jacob Javits of New York first ran in the Twenty-first District, his pollster found that 8% of adults could name their representative, and not necessarily accurately. Two years later, the same pollster found that 30% could correctly name Javits. How so? By such actions as: “I run what are called congressional rent clinics in my district, of which there are three located in different areas. They are staffed by volunteers – young lawyers in the Republican or Liberal parties to whom this is a ladder to political advancement – and these clinics give free advice on the State rent law.”¹²

Still, former Rep. Clifford Hope (R KS) would write in 1958 that, “Now, as then, the fundamental weapon of the campaigner is the handshake.”¹³

How much of a vacation can I take?

This depended both on how politically secure the member felt about the district and how anal the member was. It probably also depended on the member’s spouse. Most everyone needs a period of rest and relaxation, and members were no different. On the other hand, new members were inclined to be

⁸ *Joplin Globe*, October 29, 1947. *Wilmington Morning News*, August 7, 10, 13, 15; September 9, 25, 30; October 10, 13, 20, 21, 27, 28, 30, 31; November 3, 5, 6, 12, 15, 1947. *The Austin American*, November 3, 1947.

⁹ Burke and Franks, 36, 44-6.

¹⁰ These are the ones he listed in the *Congressional Directory*, 80th Congress, First Session. Others may be found in other sources.

¹¹ *CQWR*, September 30, 1966, 2293.

¹² Moos, 130-1.

¹³ Hope, 59.

more worried, both about their political security and their job performance, and less likely to achieve the work-life balance that came with experience.

Jenkins and his wife and friends took a week-long fishing trip to Canada in September. John Bell Williams of Mississippi flew to Guatemala and toured Costa Rica and Nicaragua as well thanks to the International Relations Club of New Orleans. John Kennedy of Massachusetts went to England but was hospitalized there, and Addison's disease was diagnosed. The rest of his life he would be dependent on injections of cortisone.¹⁴

A different kind of vacation was the trip that John Davis Lodge of Connecticut, Olin Teague of Texas, Donald Jackson of California, and members of the Foreign Affairs Committee took to the Old World to study political trends and the State Department's cultural and information programs. They sailed on the Cunard liner *Queen Elizabeth* and visited London, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest, Sofia, Istanbul, Athens, Kavalla, Drama, Rome, Naples, Salerno, Milan, Turin, Trieste, Warsaw, Berlin, Paris, and Brussels and sailed home on the *Queen Mary* after six weeks. Democrats Otto Passman of Louisiana, Williams, and two other representatives made a six-day "goodwill and inspection tour" of Central America.¹⁵

Members did not necessarily wait until the summer to take a junket. Members of the Merchant Marine Committee, including Franklin Maloney of Pennsylvania and David Potts of New York, took a twelve-day trip to Panama to inspect the canal at the spring break.¹⁶

Can I make some money over the recess?

Most members were semi- or fully self-employed. Many were attorneys. Many had their own businesses. Few came from the employee class. This means that most of them continued to work at their private vocations during the session, attorneys dealing with cases and clients, business people with partners and employees and customers, though at a less intense level than possible during the intersession.

Congressional salaries were lower than many members were used to in their private occupations, and the need to earn from the latter during the intersession could be compelling and an enemy of the constituent work necessary for good public service and reelection. Congressional staff was important in assuming much of the constituent contact the members could not find time for, but for many constituents there was no substitute for the real handshake.

Attorney Abbitt kept his law office open on weekends while in Congress. His law partner was his brother George. Wallace Chadwick of Pennsylvania was actively representing Westinghouse Electric Corporation during the recess.¹⁷

Those with their own businesses, such as Deane, Raymond Burke of Ohio, and Franklin Lichtenwalter of Pennsylvania with insurance, Gregory McMahon of New York with his accounting firm, Charles Fletcher of California in banking, Porter Hardy of Virginia, Ralph Harvey of Indiana, and Horace Seely-Brown of Connecticut in agriculture, E.A. Mitchell of Indiana, Walter Riehlman of New York, and James Scoblick of Pennsylvania in food distribution, and Edward Jenison of Illinois, Russell Mack of Washington, and

¹⁴ *The Wilkes-Barre Record*, September 27, 1947. *Clarion-Ledger*, August 16, 1947. Dallek. Sorensen, 41.

¹⁵ *The Bridgeport Post*, September 19, 1947. DeLong, 135-8. *Monroe Morning World*, August 17, 1947. It is unclear if Williams made two such trips or one.

¹⁶ *The Pittsburgh Press*, March 27, 1947. List of US Citizens for the Immigration Authorities, April 10, 1947.

¹⁷ Grose, 63. *The Washington Post*, February 19, 1948. *Chester Times*, August 20, 1947.

Kingsland Macy of New York with their newspapers, often managed from afar. On the other hand, Charles Russell sold his *Ely Record* on election to the House “to make ends meet.”¹⁸

How did I do?

What is the measure of a successful member of Congress?

Columnist Drew Pearson wrote his own summary of the performance of members of the Class of '46 at the end of the first session of the 80th Congress.¹⁹ There were eight Democrats he felt showed promise: Albert, John Blatnik of Minnesota, Omar Bureson of Texas, John Carroll of Colorado, Robert Jones of Alabama, Frank Karsten of Missouri, Kennedy, and George Smathers of Florida; and seven Republicans: Glenn Davis of Wisconsin, Jackson, Javits, Lodge, Thruston Morton of Kentucky, James Patterson of Connecticut, and St. George.

Pearson also singled out sixteen Republicans he labeled “duds:” Parke Banta of Missouri, Boggs, William Crow of Pennsylvania, Paul Dague of Pennsylvania, Fletcher, Jenison, Robert McGarvey of Pennsylvania, Maloney, Meyer, Edward Miller of Maryland, Thomas Owens of Illinois, Albert Reeves of Missouri, John Sanborn of Idaho, George Sarbacher of Pennsylvania, Wint Smith of Kansas, and Richard Vail of Illinois; and two Democrats: Williams and Wilson.

Pearson was not a disinterested observer. Not only was Congress his beat but he was a supporter of the New Deal, which biased him in favor of Democrats, as the balance in the above lists indicates.

The bottom line is the contentment of the member's constituents with his or her performance, which will be expressed in their financial and volunteer work and ultimately the district vote to retain him or her. But what contributes to that?²⁰

Sheer likeability may be the most important measure for voters. Is the member perceived as a good person who resonates with the individual voter? As political scientist Lawrence Chamberlain wrote of Sen. William Borah of Idaho, “Neither the ebb and flow of party fortunes nor the ever-changing complexion of national and state issues seemed to have any effect upon his popularity with people.”²¹ This discernment depends on personal contact between member and voter and how the member is seen by other people whom the voter is respectful of. But since most voters never came in intimate contact with the member and at most had a brief encounter or saw the member at a remove during a public appearance, how the member was portrayed by the news media, which in 1947 meant newspapers and radio, was crucial.

Given that turnout in primary elections was often quite low, it was mathematically possible that a candidate could be personally perceived, either by direct contact or observation, by most of those who would nominate him. Fourteen of the Class received fewer than 10,000 votes each in competitive primaries, with William Dawson of Utah having the lowest bar in that respect, receiving 3353 votes. Miller was close behind with his 4127 votes. As far as nominations, much less contact was needed by the 25 chosen by uncompetitive primary or party convention or committee. On the other hand, the intensity of the contact in this latter case was greater.

Winning the November election in a competitive race required more voters, and possibly more contact. Edward Garmatz of Maryland had the fewest votes at 12,179, but this was a special election in

¹⁸ *Reno Gazette-Journal*, October 1, 1989.

¹⁹ Drew Pearson, July 29, 1947.

²⁰ A member's constituents are not solely those in the district but also those who look to the member to support their desires on issues.

²¹ Quoted in Moos, 111.

July. The lowest received by a Class winner in November was Wilson at 12,267, getting 76% of the vote, arguably non-competitive. Wilson received more votes in the primary. In a truly competitive general election, in which the winner received less than 55% of the vote, Garmatz received the fewest votes, but Hamilton Jones of North Carolina had the fewest in a regular contest for the Class at 24,614.

At the other extreme were Republican Hardie Scott of Pennsylvania with 46,663 votes in the non-competitive primary and Democrat James Davis of Georgia with 43,162 in a competitive primary. That was not enough for Davis to win on popular vote; he won via the State's county-unit system. In the general election, Antoni Sadlak of Connecticut required 377,972 votes, getting 56%, but this was in a statewide At-large district. Thomas Owens of Illinois took 252,931 votes and 55% in the country's largest (mal) apportioned district.

Clearly, personal contact could only take a candidate so far in most if not all cases.

The responsiveness of the member to contacts by constituents on personal issues was and is critical, not only for the constituent at hand but for what that person would tell his or her friends. A positive performance depended heavily on how well the office staff performed as well as the activity of the member. Did a contact in person or by phone, wire, or letter yield a prompt and positive response? Not all requests could be honored, but the member and staff needed to demonstrate an appreciation of the request and a reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

Deane would write his secretary about a constituent who came to see him about one thousand bales of cotton his ancestor lost in a New York warehouse "when the Yankees took over." "Lets [sic] make as good a check as we can and write him a letter. Call him Henry ... send him copy of the New Year Book."²²

Republican Bakewell introduced a bill to authorize the President to designate a national wear-a-flower week on request of garden clubs and florists. The DC press "headlined it 'bills that bloom in the spring, tra la.'" This gentle ridicule was nothing compared to reactions to Sadlak's resolution to issue a commemorative three-cent stamp for the 100th anniversary of the poultry industry in the country. Sadlak was subjected to "sarcastic editorials, critical letters from taxpayers, and a good deal of merciless kidding from associates" over the chicken stamp. Rob Haeseler, an author for *Linn's Stamp News* would write much later that this stamp with a light brahma rooster on it was most often mentioned as the least necessary stamp ever issued.²³

The member wants to show that he or she can bring good things to the district. For most members this meant projects – flood control, irrigation works, a hospital for veterans, crop subsidies, a new post office, and so on. The frustrations a member could encounter trying to accomplish this were legion – getting the constituents to agree on what they wanted, getting the funds appropriated, getting the bureaucracy to spend the funds, and fighting off the second thoughts of everyone who used to support the goal. New members had a distinct advantage in being able to claim credit, if in no other way than showing up at the dedication, for all the efforts of the previous incumbent.

Seely-Brown introduced HR 3333 to transfer the ship *Joseph Conrad* to what would eventually become Mystic Seaport in his District, and he sponsored HR 3539 to authorize construction of a chapel at the Coast Guard Academy in New London. Both bills were enacted in 1947, a rare bifecta for a new member. Amendment of a bill is also a path to constituent service, but Jenkins over-exerted himself in trying to get a new anthracite research laboratory sited in his District rather than in the neighboring district. The debate

²² Charles Deane to John A. Lang, September 13, 1952, Deane Papers.

²³ *The St. Louis Star and Times*, May 27, 1948. *CQ Almanac 1947*, 3rd ed., on-line. *The Decatur Herald*, August 11, 1948. In particular, see the January 10, 1949, issue of *Life*. Rod. Haeseler

between the two members grew so testy that Kenneth Keating of New York solved the problem with a successful amendment to eliminate all funding for the lab.

Much legislation introduced by members were private bills, 44% of the bills that members of the Class introduced in the first session. These almost always are for the benefit of a district constituent.²⁴

Constituent service was not limited to bills. International Falls, Minnesota, during a cold spell found that “unscrupulous oil dealers brought in fresh supplies and jacked up their prices. Rather than pay black-market rates many citizens ... doubled up with relatives and neighbors. One angry group threatened to overturn an incoming truck, and the nervous dealer started arming his trucks. Other citizens wrote their Congressman, John Blatnik, who in turn went to see the President.” Truman “has promised to send an emergency cargo to the rescue – at regular prices.” Boggs testified in executive session before a House Appropriations subcommittee on the need for an air-weather station in Delaware, the only state without such a service.²⁵

Constituent representation could be complicated. Republican Ernest Bramblett appeared before a House Interior sub-committee to support an appropriation for water projects in Santa Barbara County, including two dams, Cachuma on the Santa Ynez River and Vaquero on the Cuyama River. He then had to back out his support of the Cachuma project when local opposition worsened.²⁶

Constituents also looked for a congruence between their political and policy concerns and those of the member. The constituent might directly contact the member or the office about a particular public matter, but for most constituents few specific issues rose to this level of concern, and few constituents monitored their member on individual votes or positions. News media available to the constituent might do so, and how the media presented member actions on policies that often are more complicated than a simple yea or nay could have an effect not always exactly accurate as to the desired congruence. In 1947 most newspapers were overtly partisan, more so than later, and national radio commentators were and have remained so. In reality, partisanship trumped individual policies, both for the media and for the constituent, in the general election. Primaries were more flexible but the power of dominant party establishments or factional organizations within the parties also often exceeded matters of policy in nominations.

Being well-thought-of by colleagues in the House or by persons preeminent or relevant to the personal perceptions of the member was important to self-evaluation of performance. If those persons were relevant to constituents, the appraisal was even more important. Many such endorsements, however, would be discounted. Members liked to say good things about each other, even through clenched teeth because, after all, there was such a thing as reciprocity. But if your minister liked the member, that may have been important. According to a survey in 1952, 22% of people valued a political judgement by a church official. The American Legion was even more important. Also influential were the League of Women Voters, the AFL-CIO, certain farm organizations, the NAACP, and the National

²⁴ Private bills in this work are those that provide benefits to a non-governmental individual or corporation. Congress provides a Private Calendar for such bills, but this work does not strictly define such bills as only those submitted to that Calendar and does not assume that every such bill in that Calendar is a private bill. If the organization to be benefitted was a public entity, such as a municipality, this work does not classify that as a private bill. Similarly, bills to grant charters to voluntary organizations are considered public bills in this work. Occasionally members would submit private bills to the public calendar in error.

²⁵ Drew Pearson, February 3, 1948. *Wilmington Morning News*, April 4 1947.

²⁶ *Santa Maria Times*, March 31, 1948. *Santa Ynez Valley News*, April 30, 1948.

Association of Manufacturers. Although an endorsement by Representative Doe may be ignored, both by the member and the constituent, if the President or the Speaker or the man likely to be President went out of the way to praise the member, the member might have felt empowered and the constituent might have been impressed.²⁷

A recurring tactic in election contests has been and still is to criticize the incumbent for a failure to pass legislation. While it would have been a rare constituent who kept track, a challenger for renomination or reelection often did. Apart from that worry, the self-perception of most members was that they should legislate, and so they kept their own score card. Members of the Class of '46 were widely varied on such a measure.

Collectively, members of the Class of '46 introduced 539 public bills and 74 resolutions during the regular first session. Of these, 32 bills and 5 resolutions became law by the end of that session. Bills and resolutions still outstanding could continue to be considered in the next session of the same congress.

Unsurprisingly, members of the majority party were more successful with their bills than were Democrats. Republicans saw 6.8% of their bills become law. The figure for Democrats was 3.5%. The disparity was even greater for public bills – 8.7% for Republicans versus 3.4% for Democrats. Democrat Smathers of Florida would later opine, however, that the party of the member did not make much difference when that member was a first term. “Oh, you’re down at the tail end either way.”²⁸

F. Edward Hébert, a Democrat who served in the House from 1941 to 1977, offered one explanation, specific to the Republican-led House of 1947, for the greater Republican success in getting bills approved. He claimed his bills were stolen by Republican committee chairs. “The chairman usually steals the bills when the committee rewrites them. It is customary for the chairman to introduce the measure, but these bills were not rewritten. They were my bills, and I hit the ceiling.” Hébert said his chair was instructed by the leadership to take that action.²⁹

A remembrance, however, by Republican Morton from his “first effort on the floor of the House” provides a counterpoint. He offered an amendment to a bill that involved the privatization of government rubber plants. There was one in his District that was not being addressed, and he sought to remedy that. Morton said he could get no help from the Republican leadership, but that the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee that handled the bill “listened to my case and he got up and says, ‘So far as we’re concerned, we’ll take it to conference and see what we can do,’” and the amendment became law. This anecdote illustrates (1) the failure of Morton to get his leadership on board before offering the amendment – a rookie mistake, (2) that making laws was not necessarily limited by partisanship, and (3) that an astute representative such as the Democrat, who was Lyndon Johnson, appreciated the future power of current favors.³⁰

A total of 14.7% of all Class-introduced bills were reported by committee in the first regular session, 16.4% for Republican bills and 9.8% for Democratic ones. Curiously, private bills submitted by Democrats, though less likely to be enacted than if introduced by Republicans, were more likely to be reported by committee – 16.7% for Democrats and 12.4% for Republicans. The Judiciary Committee handled virtually all private bills.

²⁷ Cited in Moos, 125-6.

²⁸ Smathers, August 15, 1989, 30.

²⁹ Hébert and McMillan, 255-6.

³⁰ Morton, 2.

With respect to public bills, those introduced by members of the committees to which the bills would be referred, and the referral was predictable given the rules of the House, were far more successful than those introduced by nonmembers. This would be expected as result of comity, the greater knowledge the member should be able to bring to the area of their committee's competence, and committee egotism. The statistics within the first regular session for public bills of Class members are as follows:

% of introduced public bills		Reported	Passed House	Pass Congress	Enacted
All bills	Total	14.9%	8.7%	7.1%	6.8%
	Republicans	18.6%	11.2%	8.8%	8.4%
	Democrats	6.5%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%
Introduced by Committee Member	Total	39.5%	23.3%	17.4%	17.4%
	Republicans	41.0%	24.4%	17.9%	17.9%
	Democrats	25.0%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
Introduced by Non-committee Member	Total	5.4%	3.1%	3.1%	2.7%
	Republicans	5.8%	3.6%	3.6%	2.9%
	Democrats	4.7%	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%

Most bills did not become law and most members of the Class did not have a bill enacted in the first regular session, but 23 did. Five members had only private bills enacted – Democrat Hugh Meade of Maryland and Republicans Bakewell, Fletcher, Jackson, and Scott with two successful bills each. Republicans John Allen of California, Bramblett and Love also were successful with private bills and with public bills.

Allen of California succeeded in seeing both HR 3598 and HR 3744 enacted. The former provided for an interstate fishing compact among Pacific states. The latter authorized a railroad siding in the District of Columbia. He had seats on both the Merchant Marine and Fisheries and the District of Columbia committees.

Republican Homer Jones of Washington was also successful with two public bills: HR 1995 extending the time limit for a retired civil servant to receive a return of retirement contributions and HR 3075 granting compensatory time to Postal Service supervisors. Jones served on the Post Office and Civil Service Committee.

We have already mentioned Seely-Brown's two enacted bills. Both bills were referred to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee on which Seely-Brown served.

The Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee was a relative hotbed of enacted laws for Republicans in the Class who served on the Committee. Robert Nodar of New York was successful through HR 3672 in creating an academic advisory board for the Merchant Marine Academy in New York. Thor Tollefson of Washington, thanks to a hard push by Democrat Warren Magnuson in the Senate, accomplished enactment of a sockeye salmon fishing convention with Canada via HR 3767 just in time for the opening of the season.

Republican Class members of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee also produced two other laws. Love sponsored HR 3513, which transferred the pension fund of the Panama Railroad to the civil service system. St. George used HR 1203 to provide pay for substitutes for fourth class postmasters.

Four successful bills came out of the Public Lands Committee, two sponsored by member Republicans and one each by a non-committee member, Democrat and Republican. Charles Russell succeeded in transferring 49.93 acres of Federal land, including water rights, to the town (not quite a city yet) of Las Vegas with HR 3151. Sanborn of Idaho used HR 1584 to get \$85,000 for a museum and shop at the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. Non-member Morton sponsored HR 2852, which added 394.5 acres of Federal

lands to the Otter Creek Recreational Demonstration Area in Kentucky. Democrat Burr Harrison of Virginia introduced HR 729 to provide that the Federal court of western Virginia appoint the commissioner of Shenandoah National Park.³¹

Harrison was one of three Class Democrats to get a bill enacted. Wheeler was another. Sitting on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, he got his HR 2181 concerning farm training for veterans through the process. Republican Mitchell, also on the Committee, was successful with HR 3546 that allowed veterans to represent veterans organizations before the Veterans' Administration.

Hardy was the third Democrat to get a bill enacted. HR 4124 changed the peanut marketing quota and the penalty for excess production, important to his District. Hardy was not a member of the Agriculture Committee, but Republican Bramblett was. HR 4254 was Bramblett's contribution to the statute books, providing for disposal of farm labor camps to public agencies or nonprofit associations.

No members of the Class of '46 served on the Armed Services Committee, but Keating succeeded in getting HR 1544 through the Committee to law. This was his Gold Star lapel button bill.

More impressive was the ability of Republicans MacKinnon and Patterson in winning approval of the Committee on Ways and Means for, respectively, HR 4011 and HR 2404. The former allowed voluntary contributions to state unemployment funds to offset Federal contributions. The latter suspended the copper import excise tax for two years. Of all the bills that members of the Class managed to get enacted, HR 2404 was the most hard-fought in the House. Patterson wanted a three-year suspension on the grounds that domestic copper was in too short supply for the industries of Connecticut, and imports were too expensive due to the excise tax. Representatives of western mining states opposed the bill, but the Connecticut delegation, all Republican in House and Senate, prevailed.

If it seems that most of the successful bills were local in scope, the fact is that most bills are. This is true not only of private bills, which are virtually so by definition and in 1947 were one-fourth of all Class enacted legislation. Most bills of a major national scope did not and do not originate in what the British call "back-benchers" but rather in party or committee leadership and bear the sponsorship of prominent legislators. It may be that when it comes to re-election, it is the local bills and the local service that are the most important for the legislator apart from the normal partisanship of the district. In re-nomination the local bills and the local service would figure large.

Two Republicans of the Class of '46 were also successful in enacting joint resolutions. Willis Bradley of California introduced HJRes 245 to restrict employment of aliens on American merchant ships. Bradley served on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. Frederick Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania sponsored HJRes 218 to create the United States – Reading Bicentennial Commission. He did not serve on the House Administration Committee that handled the bill, but Reading was the major city in his District.

Members of the Class introduced 29 joint resolutions (three made it out of committee and two passed the House), 36 concurrent resolutions (none being reported), and eight House resolutions. Two of the last were accepted by the House, which is as far as House resolutions go: Blatnik's HRes 8, observing the death of a former representative, and Morton's HRes 182, making a gift of money to the widow of a House employee. None of the rest were reported.

Thus far in their careers, the Class of '46 overall was not appearing too legislatively productive, locally or otherwise, but this was not for lack of trying as the 613 measures introduced attest. On the other hand, the number of measures sponsored by individuals varied greatly.

³¹ Harrison's bill was a transfer of authority from the Secretary of the Interior on justification that the commissioner's salary was no longer paid by the Department of the Interior but by the Department of Justice. *Congressional Record*, March 17, 1947, 3707.

Republicans Banta, Norris Cotton of New Hampshire, Dague, Jenison, and Glenn Davis (who did not enter the House until April 22) and Democrat Robert Jones sponsored no bills or resolutions in the first regular session. Republicans Chadwick, Jenkins, Kearns, Smith, and Robert Twyman of Illinois and Democrats Deane, Wingate Lucas of Texas, and Thomas Stanley of Virginia introduced only one bill or resolution. Republicans Burke, Howard Coffin of Michigan, and Meyer and Democrats Burleson, Carroll, Bryan Dorn of South Carolina, Hardy, Harrison, Johnson, and Hamilton Jones sponsored only two.

On the other hand, Keating introduced 28 bills and resolutions in the first regular session, 18 being public. Patterson sponsored 21, 12 public. Democrat Smathers introduced 17, also 12 public. Republican Potts sponsored 15 but only 6 were public. In fifth place was Republican Coudert, who introduced 14 bills, all private.

These five men might also lead the frustration races. Only two of Coudert's bill were even reported by the end of the first regular session. Potts had one public bill reported, as did Smathers, though the latter had also a private bill pass Congress only to have the President veto it. One of Patterson's public bills became law, and one passed the House. Keating was batting .036 on enactment (one public bill) and .071 on reporting (one private bill plus the public bill) of his 28 plate appearances.

It may be that supporters of bills and resolutions are happy that at least the representative tried but presumably would be happier still if the representative succeeded. An open question would be how much the member tried. It is a low level of effort to toss a bill in the hopper and a much higher level to work for passage – to tailor the bill with an eye to success, to line up other members to support the bill or at least to not oppose it, to horse trade for success.

Smathers' partial success points to an even higher level of effort required. Fellow representatives and the other house agreed to his bill to provide relief to Harry V. Ball, but the President did not. Three other members, Boggs, Fletcher, and Morton, all Republicans, had bills vetoed. Fletcher's and Morton's were private bills. Boggs' was public, a bill to allow part-time referees in bankruptcy to prosecute claims against the United States. Truman's veto message objected that such a law would allow the practice or appearance of government agents taking advantage of their positions.

Smathers' vetoed bill illustrates the nature of a private bill, and the President's message reveals administrative concerns. HR 2432 as introduced would have paid Mr. Ball \$3923.68 as reimbursement for salary he would have received from the Navy as a civilian from April 1, 1945, to April 1, 1946. He had worked at Pearl Harbor, suffered from volcanic dust, separated for that medical reason, and was told he would be transferred to Navy work at Tampa, Florida. The Navy did not transfer him; the bill said he was unable to find other work due to regulations of the War Manpower Commission, which were to ensure a supply of labor for the war effort. The House Judiciary Committee, which usually considered private bills, reported the bill with the recommendation that the reimbursement be reduced to \$1634.68, covering pay only from September 1, 1945. The House accordingly amended the bill, and the Senate passed it as well. Truman's message pointed out that Mr. Ball could have presented himself to a Federal employment office and asked for release from the War Manpower Commission restriction, which was often granted, and thus he vetoed the bill.

One assumes that Mr. Ball and his friends were thankful for Rep. Smathers' bill, but perhaps not so happy with Pres. Truman.

Members presumably wanted to legislate, though in varying degrees. Similarly, members wanted to debate, or at least some did, and some much more than others.

The Senate has historically considered itself to be a premier debating institution, while the House has had the reputation of being constrained by more restrictive rules necessitated by its large membership. Resolutions introduced by the House Rules Committee limited debate time and the nature of amendments that may be considered on a bill or resolution, though the House itself sometimes has acted to loosen those rules. There also existed and exists a mechanism for members to address the House outside of debate, and permission was usually given for members to address the House for one minute and occasionally for longer. Nevertheless, floor time was and is limited, though some members of the Class of '46 made extensive use of it.

Republican Owens was the most active participant in floor debate among the Class of '46, though his contributions were usually brief questions. He was often persistent in this, to the point that Charles Eaton, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, snapped at him, "No, I will not yield. You ask too many questions." Owens also led the Class in addressing the House outside of debate, making nineteen one-minute talks in the first regular session. His first address, though not his first participation in debate, was on February 5, when he complained (1) that France and the Netherlands were still holding German prisoners, (2) that the "decadent French empire" and the Dutch were suppressing nationalist movements in Indo-China and Indonesia, using the "brave Japanese" in the latter, and (3) that the British "heel" was on Palestine.³²

Republicans Javits and Keating of New York were close behind Owens in their floor participation, tending to make lengthier contributions on the floor than did Owens. Apart from debate, Javits made 17 addresses and Keating 10. Javits' first contribution on the floor was an address on January 20, recounting his travel to Europe and Palestine between election and the convening of Congress. He reported that Greece was in very bad shape and needed American aid. Keating followed Javits by three days to address the House, trumpeting his introduction of HJRes 82, which would designate November 19 as Dedication Day. Dedication Day did not get traction, but American aid to Greece would be forthcoming.

Somewhat less active on the floor than Javits and Keating was MacKinnon. While active in debate, he made only three addresses. Rounding out the top ten were Bradley, Carroll, Williams, Lodge, Toby Morris (D OK), and Charles Kersten (R WI).

On the other hand, ten members of the Class, all Republicans, appear to have spoken no words other than "yea" and "nay" on the floor of the 80th House in its first regular session: Bramblett, Dague, Jenison, Russell Mack of Washington, Macy, Maloney, Nodar, Sanborn, Scott, and Tollefson. Neither did Democrat Garmatz of Maryland, but he joined the House only two days before adjournment. We also should cut Mack some slack as well since he joined the House only one month earlier. All these men were not totally absent as they introduced bills and resolutions – all that is except Dague and Jenison (and Garmatz). Sanborn and Tollefson introduced twelve each. It must also be remembered that "the work of Congress is done in committee," that that activity is much less public, and Mr. Dague may have been a committee workhorse.

There were seven more members whose floor activity consisted of one incidence of debate or address: Republicans Cotton, Kearns, Riehlman, Sarbacher, Smith, and Scoblick, and Democrat Stanley. Six more had two incidences of debate or address.

At the risk of oversimplification, here follows a table incorporating an activity measure for each member of the Class of '46. This is simply a summation of incidences of debate, address, objection,

³² *Congressional Record*, May 7, 1947, 4697; February 5, 1947, 804-6. It must be remembered that the House allowed members to "correct and extend" any remarks on the floor and it is impossible to be certain from the *Congressional Record* what a member said on the floor and what the member added later in the *Record*.

quorum calls, amendments introduced, bills and resolutions introduced, and miscellaneous other floor activities. It is not to be taken too seriously.

Activity Metric. *Serving less than the full 80 th Congress, 1 st regular session.							
Keating (R NY)	116	Albert (D OK)	24	Howes Meade (R KY)	14	Passman (D LA)	7
Owens (R IL)	115	Fletcher (R CA)	24	Nixon (R CA)	14	Peden (D OH)	7
Javits (R NY)	107	Seely-Brown (R CT)	24	Teague (D TX)	14	Banta (R MO)	6
MacKinnon (R MN)	79	Boggs (R DE)	23	Wheeler (D GA)	14	Sarbacher (R PA)	6
Carroll (D CO)	64	Johnson (D OK)	23	Bakewell (R MO)	13	Scoblick (R PA)	6
Bradley (R CA)	61	Jones (D AL)*	23	Sadlak (R CT)	13	Mack (R WA)*	5
Potts (R NY)	59	Blatnik (D MN)	22	Battle (D AL)	12	Meyer (R KS)	5
Lodge (R CT)	54	Karsten (D MO)	21	McGarvey (R NY)	12	Riehlman (R NY)	5
Morris (D OK)	44	Reeves (R MO)	21	Morton (R KY)	12	Scott (R PA)	5
Williams (D MS)	42	Phillips (R TN)	20	Sanborn (R ID)	12	Coffin (R MI)	4
Smathers (D FL)	40	Ross (R NY)	20	Tollefson (R WA)	12	Davis (R WI)*	4
Kersten (R WI)	38	Russell (R NV)	20	Burleson (D TX)	11	Lucas (D TX)	4
Jackson (R CA)	37	Youngblood (R MI)	19	Lusk (D NM)	11	Nodar (R NY)	4
Coudert (R NY)	35	Dawson (R UT)	18	Jenkins (R PA)	11	Harrison (D VA)	3
Davis (D GA)	35	Twyman (R IL)	18	Jones (D NC)	11	Maloney (R PA)	3
Deane (D NC)	32	Jones (R WA)	17	Lanham (D GA)	11	Kearns (R PA)	2
Devitt (R MN)	30	Foote (R CT)	16	Chadwick (R PA)	10	Macy (R NY)	2
Kennedy (D MA)	30	Hardy (D VA)	16	Wilson (D TX)	10	Smith (R KS)	2
St. George (R NY)	28	Preston (D GA)	16	Brophy (R WI)	9	Stanley (D VA)	2
Muhlenberg (R PA)	27	Snyder (R WV)	15	Miller (R MD)	9	Cotton (R NH)	1
Dorn (D SC)	26	Redden (D NC)	15	Vail (R IL)	9	Garmatz (D MD)	1
Patterson (R CT)	26	Donohue (D MA)	15	Love (R WV)	8	Dague (R PA)	0
Allen (R CA)	25	Evins (D TN)	15	McMahon (R NY)	8	Jenison (R IL)	0
Goff (R ID)	25	Hugh Meade (D MD)	15	Burke (R OH)	7		
Mitchell (R IN)	25	Bramblett (R CA)	14	Crow (R PA)	7		

The activity levels of Carroll, Deane, and Potts were elevated due to their roles as objectors, that is a member tasked by his party's leadership to monitor bills brought to the floor under suspension of the rules. Such supposedly non-controversial and often insignificant legislation could be approved as long as no member objected. The task of an objector was to delay the train so that concerns, if any, could be addressed.

This metric does not allow us to say with any level of confidence that Keating was 4.8 times as active as Albert. But it does allow us to say Keating was significantly more active – at least within the public view. Kennedy has been the subject of more assessment, knowledgeable and otherwise, of his House performance. Classmate Robert Jones said later, “I accused him of being lazy.” “Sometimes he acted as if he were bored, and sometimes indifferent.” Kennedy outperformed five-sixths of his classmates on our jackleg metric.³³

How the various members of the Class of '46 would perform over the next session of the 80th Congress would have more to do with the arc of their congressional careers than did this first session.

³³ Jones interview.