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THE U.S. CONGRESS
..... **Votes Database**

The following list shows votes on the most important bills, nominations and resolutions that have come before Congress. The list is based on an analysis of the potential impact of the legislation on policy and politics. Post editors have compiled these key votes from the 109th Congress onward.

Place a check mark in the position of the candidate that you agree with and add up the totals to see where you stand.

| Date | Key Vote | McCain Position | GOP opinion | DEM opinion | Obama Position |
|---------|--|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| 8/3/07 | <p>Vote 309: S 1927: This amendment to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 passed 60-28 on August 3. The bill gives U.S. spy agencies expanded power to eavesdrop on foreign suspects without a court order. The bill gives the Director of National Intelligence and the Attorney General authorization for periods up to one year, to information concerning suspected terrorists outside the United States. The existing Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act contained a 30-year-old statute requiring a warrant to monitor calls intercepted in the United States, regardless of their origin. The new Protect America Act amends this stipulation, allowing U.S. intelligence officials to monitor suspicious communication originating inside the U.S. The Bush administration argued that it needs the expanded power to confront terrorist threats. Civil liberties and privacy advocates argue the bill jeopardizes the Fourth Amendment privacy rights and allows for the warrantless monitoring of virtually any form of communication originating in the United States. Democrats managed a minor victory requiring a sunset clause effective 180 days after the bill is signed. In place of a court's approval, the National Security Agency plans to institute a system of internal bureaucratic controls. The bill passed in the House 227-183, and was sent to the White House soon after to be signed into law.</p> | Not Voting | Yes | No | No |
| 8/2/07 | <p>Vote 307: H R 976: In this 68 to 31 vote the Senate passed an expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. The bill also passed the House by a vote of 265 to 159. The bill increases total funding for the program to \$60 billion over the next five years and provides health insurance for 9 million currently uninsured American children. The \$7 billion yearly expansions were a major sticking point for the White House and ultimately lead to the fourth presidential veto from the Bush administration. The measure is a key agenda item for the Democratic majority in Congress, and Democratic leaders have vowed to push for a veto override, which would require a two-thirds vote. White House press secretary Dana Perino criticized Democrats for sending the president a bill she said they knew would be dead on arrival. "They made their political point," Perino said. The White House contended that the 61-cent increase in the federal tobacco tax would not be able to recoup the required funds needed to fund the bill. White House officials also argued the measure would push millions of children already covered by private health insurance into publicly financed health care program</p> | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| 7/26/07 | <p>Vote 284: H R 1: This amendment to the Homeland Security Act of 2002 was made in order to implement the recommendations made by the 9/11 commission. Different versions of the bill were passed in the House on Jan. 9 and in the Senate on July 9. A modified version of the bill, with conference report changes, was revisited on July 27 and passed by a vote of 85-8. The bill requires the inspection of all cargo traveling on passenger aircrafts and establishes the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. This panel, suggested by the 9/11 commission, is responsible for advising the president and senior White House officials maintaining respect for privacy laws and civil liberties. Other provisions of the bill include grants to states, urban</p> | Not Voting | Yes | Yes | Not Voting |

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| | <p>areas, regions, or directly eligible tribes to be used to improve the ability for first responders to react to and prevent terrorist attacks, according to the Congressional Research Service. The bill also outlined details regarding the detention and treatment of captured terrorists. The bill was signed into law by President Bush on August 3.</p> | | | | |
| 6/11/07 | <p>Vote 207: On the Cloture Motion: With this vote Democrats and some Republicans in the Senate sought to move forward on a measure that would have registered the Senate's official opposition to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, whose tenure was plagued by controversy. The Washington Post reported that "Democrats fell seven votes short of the 60 needed to invoke cloture and begin the debate on a resolution condemning Gonzales." Seven Republicans distanced themselves from the Bush administration and refused to support the attorney general who had been a target of sharp criticism for five months. Gonzales came under fire for his involvement in administration policies such as harsh interrogation policies, secret overseas prisons, and a domestic surveillance program. But his most controversial action was the firings of nine U.S. attorneys last year. The attorney general's critics claimed he fired the prosecutors for political reasons. If passed, the resolution would have done nothing more than send a public rebuke to Bush and Gonzales. But enough Republicans were able to oppose "cloture," effectively killing the measure. As the Post reported, "Democrats were aware that victory on the vote was unlikely, but they claimed a symbolic triumph in getting more than a handful of Republicans to join the effort to publicly shame the attorney general." Gonzales, who initially claimed he would not step down amid the controversies, announced his resignation on August 27.</p> | Not Voting | No | Yes | Not Voting |
| 6/7/07 | <p>Vote 204: On the Cloture Motion: This cloture vote would have moved the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007 forward to an "up or down" vote on the Senate floor. But the cloture vote failed, 34 to 61, leaving the bill subject to unlimited debate and effectively killing it. The bill set forth border security measures and enforcement provisions which were seen as controversial on both sides of the aisle. The bill called for a crack down on the hiring of illegal immigrants and would have required \$10-15 billion in total spending, GOP aides told The Washington Post. If passed, the bill would have, "tightened border security, cracked down on the hiring of illegal immigrants and provided a path for such immigrants to stay and work legally in the United States," reported the Washington Post. The bill also allowed for a guest-worker program to be established after five years and explicitly made it "unlawful to knowingly hire, recruit, or refer for a fee an unauthorized alien" according to the Congressional Research Service. The bill was defeated by opposition from conservative and liberal causes alike. From the Democratic side, labor unions protested the guest-worker program as a threat to American jobs. For conservatives of both parties, the path-to-citizenship provision was interpreted as "amnesty" for lawbreakers. President Bush threw his full support behind this bill, even making a rare visit to Capitol Hill in hopes of bolstering support after it appeared doomed. Despite his attempts, Bush found his major domestic initiative blocked by most members of his own party as well as a few Democrats.</p> | Not Voting | No | Yes | Yes |
| 5/24/07 | <p>Vote 181: On the Motion: This \$120 billion dollar package was passed in the Senate by an 80-14 vote on May 24. The bill primarily focuses on funding for the Iraq war but also addresses other unrelated topics.</p> <p>A previous war funding bill was vetoed by the president because it included troop withdrawal deadlines, which were largely supported by anti-war Democrats.</p> <p>Ten Democrats opposed this new bill with no withdrawal deadlines, while 37 supported its passage. Congress had to act to replace war funding that would have ended May 28.</p> <p>According to the Washington Post, this bill includes 18 "benchmarks that the Iraqi government must meet to continue receiving reconstruction aid." One hundred billion dollars in funding is slated to support continuing military</p> | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |

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| | <p>operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The bill says that the President and Congress must not take any action that will endanger the troops and that they provide any funds necessary for training, equipment and other types of support to ensure their safety and the effectiveness of their missions. The president is required to give a first report on the Iraqis' progress in meeting the benchmarks to Congress on July 15.</p> <p>Seventeen billion dollars in the package is for domestic spending. Out of this funding, \$6.4 billion is for Gulf Coast hurricane relief efforts, \$3 billion in emergency aid for farmers, \$1 billion to upgrade port and mass transit security, \$3 billion towards converting closing U.S. military bases to other uses, and \$650 million to increase funding for children's health care. A Congressional Research Service summary states that the "other domestic beneficiaries include state HIV grant programs, mine safety research, youth violence prevention activities, and pandemic flu protection."</p> <p>Sens. Barack Obama (Ill.) and Hilary Clinton (N.Y.) were among the 14 who opposed the bill.</p> | | | | |
| 4/26/07 | <p>Vote 147: H R 1591:</p> <p>House and Senate conferees approved this legislation providing \$124.2 billion primarily for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and setting benchmarks and a timetable for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, but President Bush vetoed the bill on May 1.</p> <p>The measure, which also addresses a wide variety of unrelated issues, makes emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending Sept. 30.</p> <p>The conference agreement on H.R. 1591 also aims to improve health care for returning soldiers and veterans. It addresses needs related to hurricane recovery for the Gulf Coast, bolsters homeland security programs and provides emergency drought relief for farmers.</p> <p>The legislation says that troops in Iraq would not have their service extended beyond a year for any tour of duty. It also mandates that the president must certify that the Iraqi government is meeting certain diplomatic and security benchmarks. If that certification is made, deployment would begin no later than Oct. 1, 2007, with a goal of completing the redeployment by within 180 days. Some U.S. forces could remain in Iraq for special counterterrorism efforts along with protection, training and equipping Iraqi troops.</p> <p>According to a bill summary provided by the House Appropriations Committee, the legislation seeks to make it possible for the U.S. military to focus resources on al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and to destroy his base of operations in Afghanistan.</p> <p>The conference report also provides \$3 billion for special vehicles designed to withstand roadside bombs, and it increases from 20 to 270 the number of heavy and light armored vehicles authorized to be purchased for force protection purposes in Iraq and Afghanistan. It prohibits government funds from being used to establish any military installation or base for a permanent stationing of U.S. armed forces in Iraq and does not allow funds to be used to exercise U.S. control over any Iraqi oil resource.</p> <p>It does not fund two Joint Strike fighters and five of six electronic attack airplanes because lawmakers say they are not urgent.</p> <p>The conference agreement provides \$268 million for the FBI, that's about \$150 million above the president's request. The agency's budget includes</p> | Not Voting | No | Yes | Yes |

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| | <p>\$10 million for the FBI to implement the Office of Inspector General's recommendations about the use of special secret subpoenas called national security letters.</p> <p>On the homeland security front, it provides funding for port and mass transit security as well as other similar investments for a total of \$2.25 billion.</p> <p>Meanwhile, farmers and ranchers would get \$3.5 billion to help ameliorate agricultural disasters. The agreement also includes emergency funding for forest firefighting, low-income home energy assistance and pandemic flu preparations.</p> <p>The legislation includes \$5 billion for health care for returning troops and veterans, \$8.9 billion for victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. It also offers approximately \$650 million for a children's state health insurance program.</p> <p>It phases in a federal minimum wage increase to \$7.25 an hour and applies the increase to the Northern Mariana Islands. It also amends tax law to allow certain benefits for small businesses that were not included in the House or Senate bills.</p> <p>It provides an additional \$17 million for domestic violence programs.</p> <p>Among many other things, it makes additional fiscal 2008 appropriations for the U.S. Agency for International Development along with funding for a program aiding Africa, and monies for international narcotics control and enforcement, refugee assistance and international broadcasting operations.</p> | | | | |
| 3/29/07 | <p>Vote 126: H R 1591:</p> <p>This \$122 billion war spending bill calls for combat troops to begin withdrawing from Iraq this summer. The 51-47 vote fell mostly along party lines. Two Republicans -- Sens. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska and Gordon Smith of Oregon -- joined Democrats in support of the package, which would fund U.S. military activity in Iraq and Afghanistan. But Democrats also attached language that would start troop withdrawals within 120 days of passage, with a March 31, 2008, goal for completing the process.</p> <p>The bill addresses many unrelated issues. It offers funds for disaster relief and recovery stemming from hurricanes Katrina and Rita, funds influenza pandemic response programs, offers disaster assistance for livestock and crops, and makes appropriations to bolster Medicare and Medicaid.</p> <p>It also requires the secretary of Defense to inspect military medical treatment facilities and housing. It prohibits the use of funds in this or any other act to change essential services at Walter Reed Army Medical Center until certain requirements are met.</p> <p>It requires the Congressional Budget Office to report to appropriators on anticipated funds necessary for the departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to continue providing health care to Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans.</p> <p>It also requires the Coast Guard to exercise competition for contracts related to the Integrated Deepwater System Program.</p> <p>Lastly, among many other things, it provides funds to assist Liberia, Jordan and Lebanon.</p> | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| 3/15/07 | <p>Vote 75: S J RES 9: This non-binding resolution would have revised U.S. policy on Iraq. However, it was defeated 48-50. The measure had directed</p> | Not | No | Yes | Yes |

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| | the president to begin a phased redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq within 120 days of the resolution's enactment. The measure's main sponsor, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, sought redeployment by Mar. 31, 2008, of all U.S. combat forces from Iraq. It included exceptions for certain forces charged with protecting coalition members as well as those who support infrastructure, conduct training, equip Iraqi forces and conduct counter-terrorism operations. The resolution also had directed the president to report to Congress on the progress of the suggested plan. Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) did not vote. | Voting | | | |
| 2/1/07 | Vote 42: H R 2 : This bill would increase the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour over two years. It would increase the minimum wage in three increments. Sixty days after enactment, the minimum wage is to be raised to \$5.85. A year after that it will be \$6.55, and a year after that it will be \$7.25. This would be the first change to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 since 1997 when the federal minimum wage was increased from \$4.75 to \$5.15 an hour. The bill would also apply the federal minimum wage to the Northern Mariana Islands, a territory of the United States. The legislation passed in the Senate on Feb. 1, 2007, on a 94-3 vote. The Senate measure includes about \$8 billion over 10 years in tax breaks for businesses like restaurants, which is likely to be a sticking point when the chamber tries to reconcile its version with the House. The House passed its version of the bill on Jan. 10, 2007, with a vote of 315-116. Every House Democrat voted in favor of the proposal along with 82 Republicans. | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 1/18/07 | Vote 19: S 1 : The measure is designed to provide greater transparency in the legislative process and is commonly known as the "ethics reform" bill. The bill amends Senate rules in an effort to make more transparent legislative earmarks. It also aims to make clearer the relationship of lobbyists and lawmakers by changing rules governing meals and travel that lobbyists provide to lawmakers and their staff. The bill also makes some restrictions on post-employment for members and staff. For example, the bill amends a current rule so that if a member's spouse or immediate family member is a registered lobbyist or works for a lobbyist, that the lawmaker's staff is not allowed to have any official contact with the lawmaker's spouse or immediate family member. Among other things, the measure requires all Senate bills or conference reports to include a list of earmarks in the measure, to list the lawmaker who introduced the earmark, and to explain why the earmark is essential. It also requires public disclosure of a senator's intent to object to proceeding to a measure or matter. The bill also requires that conference reports be posted on the Internet for at least 48 hours before the Senate considers the report. | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 9/29/06 | Vote 262: H R 6061 : H.R. 6061; Secure Fence Act of 2006 | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 9/28/06 | Vote 259: S 3930 : S. 3930 As Amended; Military Commissions Act of 2006 | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 8/3/06 | Vote 229: On the Cloture Motion : Motion to Invoke Cloture on the Motion to Proceed to Consider H.R.5970; Estate Tax and Extension of Tax Relief Act of 2006 | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 7/18/06 | Vote 206: H R 810 : This legislation would allow federal funding for research on stem cell lines derived from embryos that would otherwise be destroyed. | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| 6/27/06 | Vote 189: S J RES 12 : This vote would have given Senate approval to a proposed constitutional amendment that would give Congress the authority to ban 'desecration of the American flag.' | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 6/22/06 | Vote 182: S 2766 : This amendment called on the president to withdraw | No | No | Yes | Yes |

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| | troops from Iraq, but set no firm deadline. | | | | |
| 6/22/06 | Vote 181: S 2766 : This amendment to the annual defense appropriations bill would have set a firm deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. | No | No | No | No |
| 6/7/06 | Vote 163: On the Cloture Motion : A Senate cloture vote on the gay marriage amendment failed, effectively killing the amendment. | No | Yes | No | No |
| 5/25/06 | Vote 157: S 2611 : Would tighten border security and establish guest worker and "path to citizenship" programs | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| 5/11/06 | Vote 118: H R 4297 : Extended the Bush tax cuts. | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 3/2/06 | Vote 29: H R 3199 : Reauthorized a slightly modified version of the 2001 USA Patriot Act. | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 1/31/06 | Vote 2: On the Nomination : Confirmation of Samuel A. Alito, Jr. to be an Associate Supreme Court Justice. | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 12/21/05 | Vote 363: On the Motion : Cut nearly \$40 billion from the federal budget by imposing substantial changes on welfare, child support and student lending programs. | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 10/5/05 | Vote 249: H R 2863 : Supported a ban on cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees held by U.S. forces and to requires the military to follow the Army field manual for interrogations. | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 9/29/05 | Vote 245: On the Nomination : Confirmation of John G. Roberts, Jr., to be Chief Justice of the United States. | Yes | Yes | | No |
| 7/29/05 | Vote 213: H R 6 : Offered tax breaks and incentives in what supporters said was an effort to spur oil and gas companies to provide innovative way to reduce the nation's dependence on foreign oil, conserve resources and reduce pollution. | No | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| 6/30/05 | Vote 170: S 1307 : Established a free trade zone between the United States, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua; a separate agreement with the Dominican Republic was also included in the measure. | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 6/20/05 | Vote 142: On the Cloture Motion : Blocked, for the second time, the confirmation President Bush's choice for U.N. Ambassador, John Bolton. Those opposed to the confirmation voted "no" on a measure to limit debate. Those in favor of the confirmation fell short of the 60 votes needed to limit debate and move the nomination process forward. | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 3/10/05 | Vote 44: S 256 : Made it harder for people to erase debt by declaring bankruptcy. | Yes | Yes | No | No |
| 2/10/05 | Vote 9: S 5 : Sought to curtail the ability of plaintiffs to file class-action lawsuits against corporations by making cases that were filed in multiple states the responsibility of federal courts. | Yes | Yes | No | Yes |