

Obstruction **by Filibuster**

How Ohio Senator George Voinovich is Obstructing Progress

August 2007

By
Max Pike
Alex Carter
Robert Gerson
Eric Lotke

Obstruction by Filibuster: How Ohio Senator George Voinovich Is Obstructing Progress

Campaign for America's Future

August 2007

The 2006 election was a repudiation of President Bush and his conservative policies, and a mandate for change. The American people wanted a new course in Iraq. They wanted an increase in the minimum wage. They wanted stem-cell research, increased student aid and investments in renewable energy.

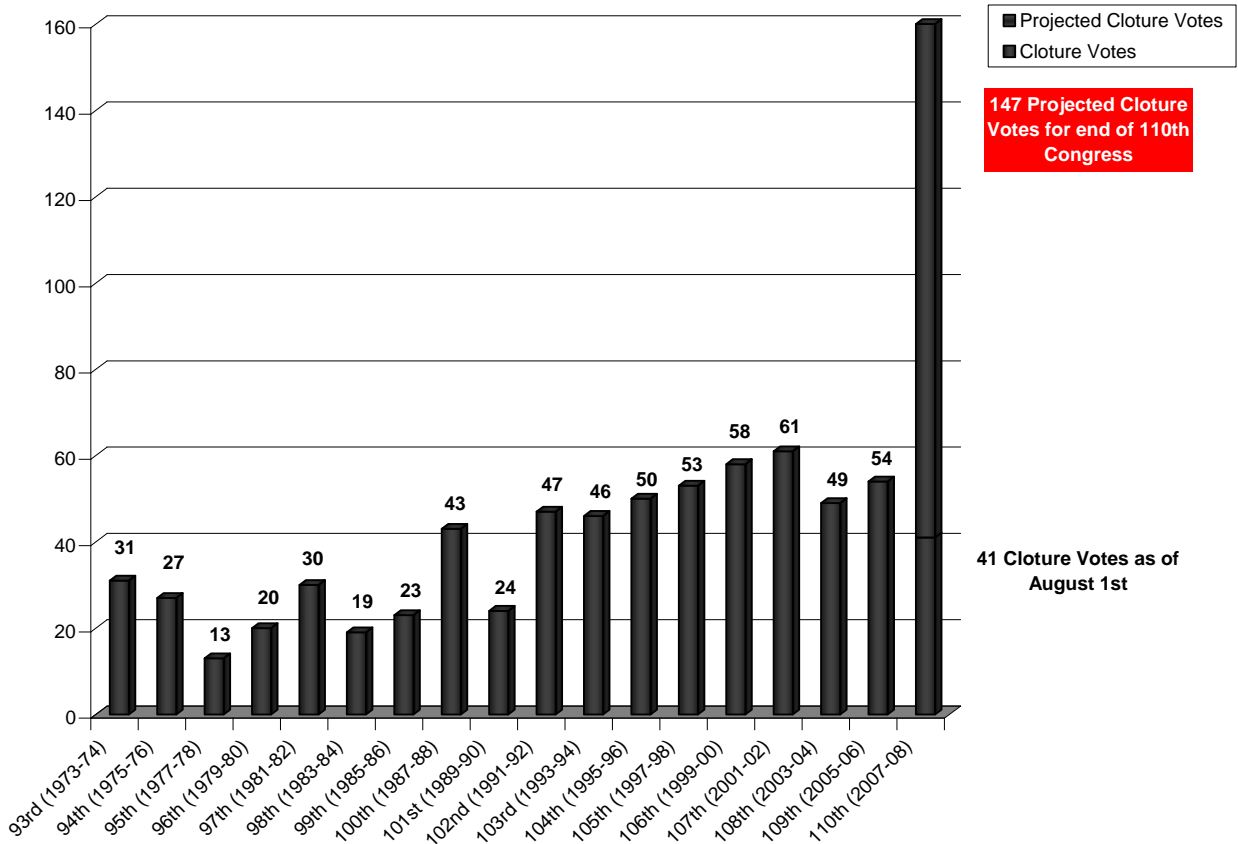
Six months into the new 110th Congress, little has changed. The American people's initial enthusiasm has degenerated into disappointment. Congressional approval ratings are at all-time lows, with 71 percent of Americans disapproving of how Congress is handling its job. The Democrats' approval rating, only fractionally higher than the Republicans', is sinking, especially after Congress was unable to override Bush's veto of the bill that would have ended the war in Iraq. The American people want change. The Democratic Congress has been unable to deliver.

An analysis of voting records, however, makes clear that the problem is not a failure of Democratic leadership; instead, the problem is Republican obstructionism. The Democrats had a remarkably productive first six months. Every single item on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's 100 Hours Agenda passed the House, often by considerable margins.

The Senate and the President, however, stopped progress. The President vetoed the bill that would end the occupation of Iraq. Republican Senators like George Voinovich continually threaten to filibuster, requiring 60 votes for cloture (a limit on debate) to proceed on a wide variety of measures. The first session of the 110th Congress saw 41 cloture votes in seven months,¹ far above historical norms (see the chart on the next page). Republicans are on pace to bring the number of filibuster threats and cloture votes to a level *nearly half again as high as the 108th and 109th Congress put together*.

Ten of the bills that follow were halted by cloture votes that Republican senators decided to block. Of those ten Senator Voinovich voted to obstruct every single time.

This is a deliberate strategy. Republican whip Trent Lott told *Roll Call*, "The strategy of being obstructionist can work or fail... and so far, it's working for us."² Democrats are the ones taking the blame for not getting anything done.



Source: http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/cloture_motions/clotureCounts.htm

Senate Republicans act as if this obstruction is normal. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell told *CNN*, “That’s the ordinary procedure [to force cloture votes], not the unusual.”³ But it is not normal. It is a tactic to stop everything and blame Democrats for not getting anything done.

The American people think the country is heading in the wrong direction; in one poll, 71 percent of participants said they are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States.⁴ This dissatisfaction is based in fact. The country is stuck in Iraq, wages are stagnant, prices for gasoline and college tuition are on the rise, the number of people in poverty and without health insurance are steadily increasing. These figures tell the story:

- Median Household Income: Fell by \$1,273 from 2000 to 2005 when adjusted for inflation.⁵
- Total soldiers killed in the Iraq War as of July 30, 2007: 3,653⁶
- Gas Prices: Up \$1.31 per gallon from April 2000 to April 2007 when adjusted for inflation.⁷
- People in Poverty in 2005: 37 million.⁸
- Families in Poverty in 2005: 7.7 million.⁹
- People without health insurance in 2005: 46.6 million.¹⁰

In Voinovich’s state of Ohio:

- Median Household Income: Fell by \$4,498 from 2000 to 2005 when adjusted for inflation.¹¹
- Ohio soldiers killed in the Iraq War as of July 30, 2007: 156.¹²

- Gas Prices: Increased \$1.12 per gallon from April 2000 to April 2007 when adjusted for inflation.¹³
- People in Poverty in 2004: 1,388,000.¹⁴
- Families in Poverty in 2004: 301,000.¹⁵
- People without health insurance in 2004: 1,282,000¹⁶

The Democrats have introduced legislation that would put the country on a better course. The bills would end the occupation of Iraq, increase investment in renewable energy, raise the minimum wage without giving companies tax breaks and tax loopholes, and increase the ability of workers to unionize so they can bargain collectively for better wages and benefits.

Polls show that these kinds of changes are what the electorate wants. Earlier research by the Campaign for America’s Future shows that the American people want to move in a progressive direction.¹⁷ At the same time, Senator Voinovich’s approval ratings are low and declining.

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Senator George Voinovich is handling his job as Senator?*¹⁸

Date	Approve	Disapprove
July 13 th –15 th , 2007	39%	51%

This report documents the legislation that the Democrats would pass, but that Voinovich and the other Senate Republicans have successfully blocked.

Employee Free Choice Act
H.R. 800

The Employee Free Choice Act of 2007 simplifies the procedures by which members of a workplace can unionize for collective bargaining. At present, workers are typically required to hold formal elections. This Act would allow people to form unions simply upon proof of interest. Workers would be able to use formal elections if they choose, but elections would not be required. As an alternative, workers could check cards and sign their names to indicate their interest in organizing.

To reduce other obstacles to worker organizing, the act provides civil fines of up to \$20,000 per violation against employers found to have willfully violated employees’ rights during an organizing campaign. It provides victims of illegal firing with three times the amount of back pay owed to them. Lastly, the Act gives the option to call in a neutral third party to settle collective bargaining disputes between employers and newly certified unions when a contract is not reached after three months. These provisions are designed to respond to concerns that employers often stretch out or prejudice the unionization process by harassing or intimidating employees and organizers.

The Employee Free Choice Act of 2007 would have made a significant difference in the lives of many Ohio workers. According to the latest census information from 2004, there are 1,282,000 people without health insurance in Ohio. Passage of the bill and the formation of unions would help to ensure that more workers receive the benefits they deserve. The bill would have likely resulted in over 184,000 more people with health insurance as well as over 155,000 more people with pensions¹⁹. 145,000 less workers were represented by unions in 2006 than in 2000.²⁰ The workers of Ohio are in need of better treatment, and would be aided by the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act.

The bill was passed by the House of Representatives by a wide margin, but did not survive Republican opposition in the Senate. A majority vote was achieved, but not the 60-vote supermajority needed for cloture against a filibuster. The Employee Free Choice Act would have improved the quality of life for workers in Ohio, yet George Voinovich obstructed the bill.

Republican Minority Leader Mitch McConnell boasted, “They [Democrats] know the bill will fail. Senate and House Republicans have vowed to block it. The President has vowed to veto it.”²¹

House Vote
Employee Free Choice Act; H.R. 800; Roll Call #118
Passed March 1, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican
Yes	241	228	13
No	185	2	183
Not Voting	8	3	5

Senate Vote
Employee Free Choice Act; H.R. 800; Roll Call #227
Rejected on Cloture Vote, June 26, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	51	48	1	2
No	48	0	48	0
Not Voting	1	1	0	0

Part D – Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act
H.R. 4/S. 3

The 2003 Medicare Modernization and Reauthorization Act, which provides prescription drug coverage to senior citizens, includes a provision that prohibits Medicare from using its bulk-buying power to negotiate lower prices with drug manufacturers. Enterprises ranging from Costco to the Department of Veterans Affairs to health plans in foreign countries negotiate for lower prices; but Medicare can not. Allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices would yield combined estimated savings for seniors and taxpayers of between \$40 billion and \$65 billion a year.²²

The bill passed the House by a wide margin. However, it was unable to overcome Republican opposition in the Senate. While the bill received a simple majority of votes, 60 votes were needed for cloture against a filibuster. Senator Mitch McConnell said, “Today the Senate protected healthcare access for tens of millions of seniors as well as price negotiations to ensure they pay the least amount of money for the prescription drugs they need.”²³ However, his statement is false: for citizens of Ohio, it is estimated that the bill would have saved tax payers \$1.1 billion annually.²⁴ George Voinovich was one of the senators who obstructed the bill and voted against saving Ohio citizens’ tax dollars.

House Vote
Drug Price Negotiation Act; H.R. 4; Roll Call #23
Passed January 12, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican
Yes	255	231	24
No	170	0	170
Not Voting	10	2	8

Senate Vote
Drug Price Negotiation Act; S. 3; Roll Call #132
Rejected on Cloture Vote April 18, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	55	47	6	2
No	42	1	41	0
Not Voting	3	1	2	0

Minimum Wage Act
H.R. 2

Until the Democratic Congress finally passed an increase in July 2007, the federal minimum wage had not risen since 1997 and had its lowest buying power in 50 years.

Responding to 77 percent of Americans' desire for change, one of the new Democratic Congress's first bills was a bill to raise the minimum wage. Democrats drafted a simple, clean bill to increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 over two years. The measure quickly and overwhelmingly passed the House on January 10, 2007, mere days after the new Congress was sworn in.

Workers in Ohio would especially appreciate such an increase. In Ohio poverty is on the rise. From 2000 to 2004, there are now 173,000 more individuals, and 55,000 more families living below the poverty line²⁵. Simultaneously, the average weekly wage has only increased by \$6 from 2000 to 2005 when adjusted for inflation.²⁶

In the Senate, however, the bill was subjected to Republican amendments that included tax breaks and other unrelated provisions that slowed it down. Senate Democrats had a simple majority but they were nonetheless thwarted in their effort to pass a clean bill. Eventually, enough Senate Democrats conceded to the amendments to allow the bill to pass in the chamber. However, the Republican Senate amendments were unacceptable in the House. The bill stalled in conference between the chambers of Congress.

House Vote
Fair Minimum Wage; H.R.2; Roll Call #18
Passed January 10, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican
Yes	315	233	82
No	116	0	116
Not Voting	4	0	4

Senate Vote
Minimum Wage Act, H.R. 2, with tax amendment; Roll Call #42
Passed February 1, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	94	47	45	2
No	3	0	3	0
Not Voting	3	2	1	0

The minimum wage bill remained in a conference committee until it was attached to the war appropriation, described below.

Ending the War in Iraq
H.R. 1591

At the end of March 2007, the House and Senate passed the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act of 2007. The bill provided \$124 billion to fully fund the war, the troops and veterans who returned home. However, unlike past appropriations for the war, it imposed conditions on funding. Specifically, it imposed a timetable for withdrawal of U.S. forces. It started to end the war.

House Vote
Bill to End the War in Iraq; H.R.1591; Roll Call #186
Passed House March 23, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican
Yes	218	216	2
No	212	14	198
Present, Not Voting	1	1	0
Not Voting	3	2	1

Senate Vote
Bill to End the War in Iraq; H.R.1591; Roll Call #126
Passed Senate March 29, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	51	48	2	1
No	47	0	46	1
Not Voting	2	1	1	0

The House and Senate spent a few weeks in April hammering out details and presented the bill to end the war to the President Bush on May 1, 2007. He vetoed it the same day.

On May 2, House Democrats tried to override the veto. They failed, however, to produce the two-thirds majority necessary. In the Senate, the leadership recognized they did not have the votes necessary to override and did not bring the measure to a vote. In the end, the Democrats surrendered on the requirement to end the war and voted to authorize funding for continued military operations without withdrawal provisions. "The debate will go on," Speaker Nancy Pelosi vowed.²⁷ For now, however, the crucial vote is the one that attempted to end the war.

As of July 31, 2007, the Iraq War has cost 156 North Carolinians and an additional 3,501 Americans their lives.²⁸

In the aftermath of the veto over the troop withdrawal, negotiators reconsidered their positions. The Iraq war funding and minimum wage bills were combined, along with funding for Katrina recovery and veterans care. In some cases, the considerations of the Iraq war outweighed consideration of the minimum wage, leading some Democrats to vote against the measure. Finally, at the end of May, the minimum wage increase along with Iraq war funding, without troop removal deadlines, passed in both chambers of Congress and was signed into law.²⁹

House Vote

U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007; H.R.2206; Roll Call #333
Passed March 24, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican
Yes	348	225	123
No	73	1	72
Not Voting	12	6	6

Senate Vote

U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007; H.R.2206: Roll Call # 181
Passed May 24, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	80	37	42	1
No	14	10	3	1
Not Voting	6	2	4	0

Webb Amendment: Rest for the Weary

S. Amdt. 2012

The Webb Amendment, proposed by Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va, would enforce break periods during the deployment of individual U.S. troops in Iraq. Despite unanimous Democratic support, a supermajority of 60 votes was not reached. Thus the threat of a filibuster prevented the amendment from moving forward. Republican obstructionists such as Sen. Voinovich attacked the amendment because they believed legislation would make it next to impossible to reinforce the current troop surge in Iraq.

Senate Vote

Webb Amendment; S.Amdt.2012; Roll Call #241
Rejected on Cloture July 11, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	56	48	7	1
No	41	0	40	1
Not Voting	3	1	2	0

Levin Amendment: Iraq Pullout

S.Amdt.2087

Senate Amendment 2087 to H.R. 1585, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008, would have resulted in the withdrawal of troops 120 days after the bill became a law. Except for some specific exceptions, the measure aimed to withdrawal all troops by April of 2008. The remaining troop activity in Iraq would be primarily related to training Iraqi security forces, conducting counterterrorism operations against al-Qaeda, and protecting U.S. personnel. The amendment failed on a motion to invoke cloture and was not included in the Senate version of H.R.1585 to be considered.

Senate Vote
Iraq Pullout; H.R. 1585; Roll Call #252

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	52	47	4	1
No	47	1	45	1
Not Voting	1	1	0	0

NOTE: Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid voted against cloture for procedural reasons. Otherwise, the vote would have been 53-46.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid fought fiercely to encourage members of both parties to vote on the merits of the bill. He held the Senate in session overnight, and even succeeding in changing one Republican vote. However, in the end there were not enough votes to invoke cloture. Reid ultimately voted against the motion so that under Senate rules he could reintroduce the amendment at a later time. Senator Voinovich voted against withdrawing troops, thwarting the will of the majority of American citizens.

Tax Credit for Wind and Solar
S.Amdt.1704

Since taking control of the House and Senate, Democrats have introduced several bills intended to improve U.S. energy policy. The primary vehicle for change was H.R. 6, the CLEAN Energy Act. This Act rolls back gas and oil subsidies, and taps record profits to fund development of clean new technologies. This act could help in creating alternative energy sources to gas; especially since the cost of a gallon of gasoline in Ohio has increased \$1.12 from April 2000 to April 2007 when adjusted for inflation.³⁰

The House version of the CLEAN Energy Act passed in January. Progress was slower in the Senate, however. A variety of amendments were proposed with the threat of filibusters in the background. Not until a cloture vote passed, 62 to 37, on June 21 was the actual bill considered on its merits. It passed the same evening, 65 to 27, with 20 Republicans joining the nearly unified Democrats.

The Republican minority stymied two crucial provisions of the CLEAN Energy Act. One provision by Senate Energy Committee Chairman Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., would set a national standard of 15 percent of our electricity to come from renewable sources, such as wind, solar and geothermal power. Bingaman appeared to have enough votes to pass the standard on a majority vote but he didn't have the 60 votes needed to overcome the filibuster threat by the committee's ranking minority member, Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M. Republicans would "not let the Bingaman amendment come up for awhile," he declared.³¹

Senator McConnell believes the key is not creating clean energy, but to focus on domestic gas drilling and refining, "We know gas prices go up as supply goes down. Yet this bill [the CLEAN Energy Act of 2007], as written [on June 13, 2007], does nothing either to increase domestic supply or refinery capacity....But we can address all of these dangers responsibly, and we should start with the most immediate concern, which is gas prices."³²

Americans, however, feel differently: 64% of Americans believe U.S. energy policy is better solved by conservation than production.³³ Forward-looking Americans want increased conservation and use of renewable energy sources.

Responding to energy reality and the will of the people, Senate Democrats sought to extend tax credits for solar power and wind energy facilities, with funding derived from taxes on oil and gas production. Again, they had a simple majority but lacked the 60 votes needed to overcome a filibuster. The cloture vote fell shy, 57-36 (S. Amd.1704; Roll Call #223). Eventually Senate Democrats recognized that they would be unable to overcome the Republican filibusters of the provisions for renewable energy sources. H.R. 6 passed without those provisions.

Senate Vote
Tax Credit for Wind and Solar; S.Amd.1704; Roll Call #223
Rejected on Cloture Vote, June 21, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	57	47	8	2
No	36	0	36	0
Not Voting	6	2	4	0

The CLEAN Energy Act is presently in conference. However, the President has threatened to veto it.³⁴ Such a veto would compound the obstruction that already forced compromises to get the legislation out of the Senate in the first place; it would nullify both chambers' efforts to improve U.S. energy policy.

Intelligence Authorization Act
S. 372

S.372 was a bill written to authorize appropriations for fiscal year of 2007 for the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Intelligence Community Management Account, and the CIA Retirement and Disability System. The bill would have authorized funding for the intelligence community, believed to have a budget of approximately \$44 billion (although the actual budget figure is classified). Backers of the legislation hailed its directives to the spy community, such as one to create an inspector general position for the Office of the Director of National Intelligence

“Before the vote, Intelligence Chairman [John D.] Rockefeller called on Republicans to ‘put politics aside’ and vote for cloture...Earlier in the day, the Senate accepted several amendments proposed by Rockefeller to address objections by the White House last week when it threatened to veto the legislation.³⁵”

Again, a majority voted in favor of the bill, but there were an insufficient number of votes to prevent a filibuster. Republican obstructionism, aided by George Voinovich, ruled the day once again.

Senate Vote
Intelligence Authorization Act; S.372; Roll Call #131
Rejected on Cloture Vote, April 17, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	50	46	2	2
No	45	0	45	0
Not Voting	5	3	2	0

Sense of Senate on Alberto Gonzales
S. J. Res. 14

S. J. Res.14 was a joint resolution to reflect the American people and the Senate’s sense of no confidence in Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. The Senate investigation into the firings of nine U.S. attorneys last year led to the resolution, which was an attempt to keep the heat on the Attorney General. Other serious concerns involve Gonzales’s role in the misuse of National Security Letters by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, allowing the National Security Agency to violate the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act in conducting domestic warrantless wiretapping, politicizing the hiring of career attorneys in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, and developing the legal framework for the use of torture and the creation of military commissions.

Gonzales has said he will not resign, and President Bush has refused to fire him, despite bipartisan sentiment on Capitol Hill that Gonzales should be replaced. The bill would not have directly affected Gonzales’ role as attorney general; however, it is likely that upon passage of the resolution the pressure on him to resign or be forcibly removed would have increased. Despite Gonzales’ poor record as attorney general, the resolution was rejected on a cloture vote due to Republican obstructionism.

Despite the majority of Americans’ disapproval of Alberto Gonzales, George Voinovich voted against cloture and helped to obstruct the bill.

Senate Vote
Sense of Senate of Alberto Gonzales; S.J.Res.14; Roll Call #207
Rejected on Cloture June 11, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	53	45	7	1
No	38	0	37	1
Present	1	0	1	0
Not Voting	7	4	3	0

Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act

S. 5

Embryonic stem cell research has the potential to produce cures for different forms of cancer and diabetes, and neurological disorders such as Parkinson’s and Lou Gehrig’s disease. This type of research could make a difference in the life of 23,690 Kentucky residents that are estimated by the American Cancer Society to be diagnosed with cancer in 2006.³⁶ Although all of the uses of stem cells are not yet understood, it is widely considered to be a highly promising therapy for otherwise untreatable diseases. Studies conducted for years have led to the general consensus that embryonic stem cells hold more promise than adult stem cells.

There has been significant bipartisan support for legislation to repeal the order issued by President Bush on August 9, 2001, preventing any federal funding for research on stem cells taken from embryos after that date. The proposed bill would have lifted that federal ban and allowed stem cells to be collected from donated embryos from in vitro fertilization clinics. The embryos collected for further stem cell research would only be taken with the informed consent of the donor, and would otherwise be discarded by the clinic. Embryo donors would not be permitted to receive any inducement, financial or otherwise, to make a donation.

In a poll conducted by *The Washington Post* in January 2007,³⁷ 61 percent of Americans said they favored further embryonic stem cell research, compared to 31 percent who oppose it. Despite

widespread support of the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, President Bush vetoed the bill after it passed the House and the Senate on June 20, 2007.

House Vote
Passed January 11, 2007
Stem Cell Research; H.R.3; Roll Call #44

	Total	Democrat	Republican
Yes	253	216	37
No	174	16	158
Not Voting	8	1	7

Senate Vote
Passed June 7, 2007
Stem Cell Research; S.5; Roll Call #127

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	63	44	17	2
No	34	2	32	0
Not Voting	3	3	0	0

Past efforts to override a Presidential veto on stem cell research have failed. It is unclear at present if and how further efforts will be made, since there do not appear to be sufficient Republican dissenters to overcome the obstruction of the Republican president.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act
S.1348/S.1639

The Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act was first and most significant effort to solve immigration problems in years. The bill was much negotiated, with extensive compromises made by the White House and about a dozen senators from both parties. In the end, the compromises suited almost no one entirely, and the bill was overwhelmed by doubts from all sides.

One of the most controversial provisions in the legislation would allow the approximately 14 million illegal immigrants to stay in America and work their way towards legal status and ultimately citizenship. In addition, the bill would have provided \$4.4 billion in mandatory spending for border security and enforcement, and would create a temporary guest worker program.

Some Democrats expressed dissatisfaction with the guest worker program and provisions that would reduce the role that family ties play in awarding permanent legal resident status. Others in both parties, particularly Republicans, questioned the legalization provision — calling it “amnesty” — and complained that past enforcement promises have yet to be fulfilled. After the first iteration of the bill, introduced by Majority Leader Harry Reid, was unsuccessful, Sen. Edward Kennedy introduced a slightly altered version as S.1639. Although it was closer to pleasing everyone, Republican-led obstructionism stopped the bill from moving forward.

Senate Vote
 Immigration Reform; S. 1348; Roll Call #204
 Rejected on Cloture June 7, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	34	33	0	1
No	61	13	47	1
No Vote	4	3	1	0

Senate Vote
Immigration Reform; S.1639; Roll Call #235
Rejected on Cloture June 28, 2007

	Total	Democrat	Republican	Independent
Yes	46	33	12	1
No	53	15	37	1
No Vote	1	1	0	0

Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act
S. 223

The Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act would end the Senate practice of submitting campaign financial disclosure reports on paper rather than electronically. Currently, Senate candidates print their computerized finance reports on paper and then physically deliver them to the Senate office of public records, where the paper records are scanned into computer files for electronic transmission to the Federal Elections Commission (FEC). The FEC then prints these records on paper and ships them to Virginia, where the information is manually entered into electronic databases. This antiquated process increases the cost and slows the process, defeating the very purpose of disclosure. In the 2006 election cycle, the watchdog group Campaign Finance Institute found that contributions received by candidates five months earlier still were not available online a week before the November 6 elections for six of the 10 most competitive Senate races.³⁸

The House has filed its financial disclosure reports electronically for years, and they are available for scrutiny without delay. The Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act would mandate similar procedures in the Senate.

But it has never come up to a vote.

An anonymous Republican Senator has used an obscure rule to place a “hold” on the bill, preventing it from leaving committee. Nobody knows which Senator placed the hold, although Republican Jim Bunning of Kentucky admitted that the hold originated on the Republican side of the aisle. The Sunlight Foundation reports that it called every single Republican Senator on the committee, and none of them admitted to placing the original hold. “[W]e now know that one or more Senators are lying to their constituents,” the foundation staff concluded.³⁹

Conclusion

The country wants to move forward. The American people want change, and the Democrats in Congress are trying to deliver it. The votes in this report indicate both the direction the country could go and the forces obstructing change.

Yes votes in the House and Senate on key bills		
	House (majority 218)	Senate (majority 51)
Minimum Wage (with tax amendments) H.R.2206	348	80
Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act S.5	253	63
End the War H.R. 1591	222 (284 needed to override veto)	51 (67 needed to override veto)
Employee Free Choice Act H.R.800	241	51
Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act H.R.4/S.3	255	55
Tax Credit for Wind and Solar S.Amd.1704	N/A	57
Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act	N/A	Unnamed Republican placed hold on bill, blocking vote
Intelligence Authorization Act S.372	N/A	50
Sense of Senate – Alberto Gonzales S.J.Res.14	N/A	53
Webb Amendment S.Amdt.2012	N/A	56
Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act S.1348	N/A	34
Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act S.1639	N/A	46
Levin Amendment S.Amdt.2087	397	52

In the nearly every one of these votes, the Democrats had a majority. In a functioning democracy, this would be enough to pass these bills and send them to the President to be signed into law. But it isn't happening. This report identifies the reason for the delay in moving America forward.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ As of July 23, 2007.
- ² Emily Pierce. "GOP Complains Reid Filing Cloture Too Often." *Roll Call*. 18 April 2007. http://www.rollcall.com/issues/52_110/news/18024-1.html.
- ³ Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. *CNN*. "Late Edition," 14 January 2007.
- ⁴ Gallup Poll. "In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States at this time." 12-15 July 2007. <http://www.pollingreport.com/right.htm>.
- ⁵ United States Census Bureau. *Table H-8: Median Household Income by State: 1984 to 2005*. Last Modified: 7 March 2007. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/h08.html>.
- ⁶ Iraq Coalition Casualty Count. "Military Fatalities." Accessed: 2 August 2007. <http://icasualties.org/oif/>.
- ⁷ Energy Information Administration. "U.S. Total Gasoline Retail Sales by All R&G (Cents per Gallon)." *Petroleum Navigator*. Last Modified: 27 June 2007. <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/hist/a103600002m.htm>.
- ⁸ Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Cheryl Hill Lee. *Current Population Reports: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005*. United States Census Bureau. August 2006. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p60-231.pdf>.
- ⁹ Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Cheryl Hill Lee. *Current Population Reports: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005*. United States Census Bureau. August 2006. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p60-231.pdf>.
- ¹⁰ Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Cheryl Hill Lee. *Current Population Reports: Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005*. United States Census Bureau. August 2006. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p60-231.pdf>.
- ¹¹ United States Census Bureau. *Table H-8: Median Household Income by State: 1984 to 2005*. Last Modified: 7 March 2007. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/histinc/h08.html>.
- ¹² Iraq Coalition Casualty Count. "Military Fatalities: By State." Accessed: 2 August 2007. <http://icasualties.org/oif/Statecity.aspx>.
- ¹³ Energy Information Administration. "U.S. Total Gasoline Retail Sales by All R&G (Cents per Gallon)." *Petroleum Navigator*. Last Modified: 27 June 2007. <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/hist/a103600002m.htm>.
- ¹⁴ United States Census Bureau. *Table 690. Individuals and Families Below Poverty Level--Number and Rate by State: 2000 and 2004*. 25 January 2006. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s0690.xls>
- ¹⁵ United States Census Bureau. *Table 690. Individuals and Families Below Poverty Level--Number and Rate by State: 2000 and 2004*. 25 January 2006. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s0690.xls>.
- ¹⁶ United States Census Bureau. *Table 145. Persons With and Without Health Insurance Coverage by State: 2004*. 2005. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s0145.xls>.
- ¹⁷ Eric Lotke, Robert Gerson, Paul Waldman, and Andrew Seifter. *The Progressive Majority: Why a Conservative America is a Myth*. Campaign for America's Future and Media Matters. June 2007. http://home.ourfuture.org/assets/20070612_theprogressivemajority_report.pdf.
- ¹⁸ Survey USA. "Do you approve or disapprove of the job George Voinovich is doing as United States Senator?" 16 July 2007. <http://www.surveysusa.com/client/PollReport.aspx?g=7ccddac8-5c28-4c16-92fb-0c4a0c86577a>.
- ¹⁹ Alex Carter and Eric Lotke. *The Employee Free Choice Act: Impacts on Health Care and Pension Benefits*. Institute for America's Future. April 2007. <http://cdncon.vo.llnwd.net/o2/fotf/EFCA/Ohio.pdf>.

-
- ²⁰ United States Department of Labor. "Union Members in 2001." *Bureau of Labor Statistics*. 17 January 2002. <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/news.release/History/union2.01172002.news>. United States Department of Labor. "Union Members in 2006." *Bureau of Labor Statistics*. 25 January 2007. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf>.
- ²¹ Nathan Burchfiel. "Republicans Block Union Organizing Bill." *CNSnews.com*. 26 June 2007. <http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewNation.asp?Page=/Nation/archive/200706/NAT20070626c.html>.
- ²² Dean Baker. *The Excess Cost of the Medicare Drug Benefit*. Center for Economic and Policy Research and Institute for America's Future. February 2006. <http://www.ourfuture.org/docUploads/Excess%20Cost%20-%20Med%20Drug%20Benefit.pdf>.
- ²³ Klaus Marre. "Senate GOP Blocks Medicare Part D Negotiation Bill." *The Hill*. 18 April 2007. <http://thehill.com/leading-the-news/senate-gop-blocks-medicare-part-d-negotiation-bill-2007-04-18.html>.
- ²⁴ Roger Hickey and Jeff Cruz. *Waste and Inefficiency in the Bush Medicare Prescription Drug Plan*. Institute for America's Future. April 2007. <http://cdncon.vo.llnwd.net/o2/fotf/medicare/states/Ohio.pdf>.
- ²⁵ United States Census Bureau. *Table 690. Individuals and Families Below Poverty Level--Number and Rate by State: 2000 and 2004*. 25 January 2006. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/07s0690.xls>.
- ²⁶ United States Department of Labor. "Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages." *Bureau of Labor Statistics*. Accessed: 29 July 2007. <http://www.bls.gov/cew/home.htm#data>.
- ²⁷ Carl Hulse. "The Struggle for Iraq." *New York Times*. 25 May 2007.
- ²⁸ Iraq Coalition Casualty Count. "Military Fatalities." Accessed: 31 July 2007. <http://icasualties.org/oif/>. Iraq Coalition Casualty Count. "Military Fatalities: By State." Accessed: 31 July 2007. <http://icasualties.org/oif/Statecity.aspx>.
- ²⁹ Public Law 110-028. 25 May 2007.
- ³⁰ Energy Information Administration. "U.S. Total Gasoline Retail Sales by All R&G (Cents per Gallon)." *Petroleum Navigator*. Last Modified: 27 June 2007. <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/hist/a103600002m.htm>.
- ³¹ Jeff Toolefson. "Renewable-Power Dispute Slows Progress on Senate Energy Legislation." *Congressional Quarterly*. 14 June 2007. <http://www.cq.com/display.do?docid=2532014&sourcetype=6>.
- ³² Senator Mitch McConnell. "McConnell: Increase in Domestic Production Key to Energy Independence." *Office of Senator Mitch McConnell*. 13 June 2007. <http://mcconnell.senate.gov/record.cfm?id=276715&start=1>.
- ³³ Eric Lotke, Robert Gerson, Paul Waldman, and Andrew Seifter. *The Progressive Majority: Why a Conservative America is a Myth*. Campaign for America's Future and Media Matters. June 2007. http://home.ourfuture.org/assets/20070612_theprogressivemajority_report.pdf.
- ³⁴ Ben Geman and Darren Samuelsohn. "Energy Policy: Senate Adds Climate Amendments to Sweeping Energy Bill." *Energy Policy and Markets*. Vol.10. No.9. 22 June 2007.
- ³⁵ National Journal Congress Daily. "Senate Republicans Blocked Funding for the Intelligence Community...." 18 April 2007. <http://democrats.senate.gov/journal/entry.cfm?id=277868&>.
- ³⁶ American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts and Figures: 2006*. 2006. <http://www.cancer.org/downloads/STT/CAFF2006PWSecured.pdf>.
- ³⁷ Washington Post—ABC News Poll. "Do You Approve or Disapprove of the way George W. Bush is Handling his Job as President?" 20 January 2006. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/postpoll_012007.htm.
- ³⁸ Michael Malbin. "Washington Times: Stop Papering the Senate." *Campaign Finance Institute*. 17 May 2007. <http://www.cfinst.org/pr/prRelease.aspx?ReleaseID=148>.

³⁹Paul Blumenthal. “Another Objection! S.223 Still Blocked.” 26 April 2007. *Sunlight Foundation*.
<http://www.sunlightfoundation.com/node/2486>.