

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS

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109th Congress Continued to Disappoint Seniors in 2006, Voting Record Reveals

Seniors Made Their Dissatisfaction Known at the Polls

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For a copy of the Voting Record visit: <http://www.retiredamericans.org>

Washington, D.C.— Many of the lawmakers who did the most damage to the health and economic well-being of America's seniors during the second session of the 109th Congress no longer hold office, according to the results of the **Alliance for Retired Americans' 2006 Voting Record** released today.

The Alliance has been monitoring the senior-issue votes in the House and Senate for six years, and the **2006 Voting Record** may mark the end of a disturbing trend of anti-senior sentiment in Congress.

Two of the six Senate seats that changed from Republican to Democratic hands in the 2006 mid-term elections were held by Senators who scored zero on the 2006 voting record. Those two were Senators George Allen (VA) and Rick Santorum (PA). "That is good news for seniors," said George J. Kourpias, President of the Alliance. "Several of the Senators who disappointed retirees the most lost their seats in the 2006 elections. We are hoping for much better results from their successors."

Nine House seats which switched from Republican to Democratic control in November had been held by Representatives who scored zero. Those were the seats of Representatives Bob Beauprez (CO), Henry Bonilla (TX), Chris Chocola (IN), Melissa Hart (PA), Jim Kolbe (AZ), Anne Northup (KY), Jim Ryun (KS), Don Sherwood (PA), and Charles Taylor (NC).

The **2006 Voting Record** reports that overall, 54% of the Senate and 55% of the House received a failing score. The Alliance concluded that many unhappy seniors made their feelings known at the polls. With 54% of House Republicans and 40% of Senate Republicans scoring zero, but no Democrats scoring zero in either chamber, Republicans would have some catching up to do to be considered a friend to seniors.

Thirty-six percent of both Senators and House members scored a perfect 100% for their senior-issue votes.

“The **Voting Record** is a report card for seniors,” stated Mr. Kourpias. “It affords an opportunity for seniors to evaluate and judge their lawmakers’ votes on issues of importance to older Americans and, if necessary, put a politician on notice. The **Voting Record** is the ultimate reality check for who is – and isn’t – a true advocate for seniors.”

“This past year, retirees saw Congress enact legislation that contributed to record level spending deficits and deepened the nation’s budget and fiscal crisis,” said Edward F. Coyle, the Alliance’s Executive Director. “Congress also failed to alleviate the confusion caused by the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit. But there was one bright spot: Alliance members and all older Americans did manage to stop Social Security privatization in its tracks.”

As a result of the November 2006 elections, the U.S. House of Representatives earlier this year passed legislation to allow Medicare to negotiate bulk discounts from drug manufacturers. A majority of U.S. Senators now support a similar bill, but allies of the pharmaceutical industry have so far been able to obstruct this effort to lower drug prices for seniors.

The Alliance, which is a nationwide grassroots organization that advocates on behalf of seniors, assessed how Members of Congress voted on ten House and ten Senate votes that were important to the welfare of seniors, including Medicare, Social Security, tax breaks and pensions.

Edward F. Coyle, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, is available for interviews and comments.

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The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well being of 3 million retirees and their families.