

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS

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Congress Becoming More Pro-Senior, Advocates Say

Retiree Group Releases Annual Voting Record

Washington, DC – To mark Older Americans Month, the Alliance for Retired Americans today released a new report detailing the voting record of every U.S. Senator and Representative on key issues affecting current and future retirees. The document is available at www.retiredamericans.org.

“The 2008 voting record showed a continuation of a pro-senior trend in America, one which began with the 2006 midterm elections and culminated with the historic elections of 2008,” said Alliance President Barbara J. Easterling. “There were more perfect scores on the voting record this year, and fewer zeroes,” continued Easterling.

“Higher scores show a commitment to improve health care, strengthen Medicare, and put seniors ahead of drug and insurance companies,” Easterling said.

The Alliance voting record examines 10 key Senate votes and 10 key House votes in 2008, showing the roll calls on issues such as stopping Social Security privatization and fully funding the low-income energy assistance program. Several votes addressed Medicare, including overriding then-President Bush’s veto of a Medicare bill that made improvements to the program. The legislation adjusted the asset tests so that more low income beneficiaries can now receive help, and also added preventive and mental health benefits.

According to the Alliance, 259 U.S. House members received passing grades (higher than 60 percent), with 197 achieving perfect scores of 100 percent. 175 received failing grades (60 percent or lower), with 14 receiving scores of zero. One seat was vacant during these votes.

In the Senate, 58 members received passing grades (higher than 60 percent), with 47 achieving perfect scores of 100 percent. 42 received failing grades (60 percent or lower), with only Sen. Jim Bunning (R-KY) receiving a score of zero.

President Barack Obama, a senator last year, received a perfect score, participating in seven of the votes scored by the Alliance in 2008 despite the rigors of the campaign trail. His opponent in the 2008 presidential general election, Senator John McCain, missed all ten of the votes evaluated by the Alliance in 2008.

Unlike in recent years, senior advocates now see a reason to believe that positive change can be voted on by a senior-friendly Congress and passed into law by a senior-friendly president.

“The voting record tells seniors and those who follow senior issues who our friends are in Congress,” Easterling said. “It is a powerful educational tool that keeps our elected officials on their toes.”

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The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well being of over 3.5 million retirees and their families.