

61 Senators Cosponsor Voting Rights Extension Helms-East Refrain

On December 16, 1981, Senators Charles McC. Mathias (R-MD) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) introduced S. 1992, a bill to extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Sixty-one senators cosponsored the bill, identical to H.R. 3112, which passed the House on October 5 by a vote of 389-24.

Twenty-one Republicans — including eight committee chairmen — joined forty Democrats in cosponsoring the legislation. A good number of Southern Democrats were included. Senator Russell Long (D-LA) told National Public Radio correspondent Nina Totenberg, "I think it's good legislation. If the law has the effect of denying people their right to vote, it should be stricken down and people should be protected. I think the way the House bill passed is correct, and I support that position."

Senator Mathias told a packed press conference on December 16 that "this legislation has the enthusiastic support of the majority of the Senate. We have the determination to carry the effort through...to provide an electoral process of which discrimination has no part."

Noting that some members would actually "prefer stronger guarantees," Senator Kennedy told the press conference that he felt sure "this legislation will satisfy the goal of full voting rights for all American people."

Kennedy also pointed out that the list of cosponsors is double the number of cosponsors of an extension bill introduced earlier. "This indicates that the people across the country feel that the Voting Rights

Act is a fundamental, national legislative commitment," he said.

S. 1992, like its House-passed counterpart, H.R. 3112, provides for:

1. Continuation of the preclearance provision of the Act while providing reasonable incentives for states and counties to "bail out" from the preclearance requirement.

2. Continuation until August 6, 1992 of requirement for bilingual election materials and voting assistance.

3. Strengthening of criteria for voter discrimination charges under Section 2 to allow the examination of the result of each violation, not just the intent.

Ralph G. Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, said that civil rights organizations were quite pleased that 61 Senators had cosponsored S. 1992. Ms. Antonia Hernandez,

Associate Legal Counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, said that "our overwhelming victory in October in the House paved the way for today's introduction and strong support in the Senate." Nevertheless, Neas cautioned that 61 cosponsors is not necessarily equivalent to 61 votes for S. 1992 in the exact form that it was introduced. "The fact that 61 Senators signed on to S. 1992 is clearly a reflection of widespread and deep grass-roots support for extension of a strong and effective Voting Rights Act," said Neas. "But our success in maintaining this support through attempts to amend the bill in committee and on the Senate floor depends to an enormous degree on continued, sustained demonstrations of support from grass-roots organizations in every state."

Coming Senate Action
 Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, has scheduled hearings to begin January 20 and run through the end of February. Sen. Hatch

continues to advocate quite energetically an amendment requiring specific proof of discriminatory intent in voting discrimination cases. Supporters of the Act maintain that such an amendment would cripple the Act. Senate

critics of the VRA are also expected to try to weaken the bail-out provisions included in H.R. 3112 and S. 1992 and may try to revive nationwide extension of the Act as an issue.

In addition to substantive issues, civil rights

organizations are carefully monitoring procedural actions. "There is more than one way to filibuster a bill," a reporter commented at the Mathias-Kennedy press conference. VRA proponents, working to avert delaying tactics at

the committee level, have urged that S. 1992 be considered on the Senate floor, by early spring. Senator Kennedy noted that Senate Majority Leader Howard Baker (R-TN) "has considerable interest in moving forward."

61 SENATORS COSPONSOR VRA EXTENSION BILL

The following Senators cosponsored S. 1992, a Senate bill identical to the House-passed extension bill:

DEMOCRATS

Kennedy (MA)
 Metzenbaum (OH)
 Biden (DE)
 Moynihan (NY)
 Cranston (CA)
 Hart (CO)
 Proxmire (WI)
 Bradley (NJ)
 Matsunaga (HI)
 Glenn (OH)
 Cannon (NV)

Sasser (TN)
 Bentsen (TX)
 Sarbanes (MD)
 Ford (KY)
 DeConcini (AZ)
 Eagleton (MO)
 Dixon (IL)
 Riegle (MI)
 Levin (MI)
 Burdick (ND)
 Leahy (VT)
 Melcher (MT)
 Huddleston (KY)

Byrd (VA)
 Johnston (LA)
 Dodd (CT)
 Tsongas (MA)
 Mitchell (ME)
 Williams (NJ)
 Inouye (HI)
 Chiles (FL)
 Baucus (MT)
 Pell (RI)
 Pryor (AR)
 Jackson (WA)
 Bumpers (AR)

Hollings (SC)
 Long (LA)
 Boren (OK)

REPUBLICANS

Mathias (MD)
 Weicker (CT)
 Chafee (RI)
 Hatfield (OR)
 Durenberger (MN)
 Domenici (NM)
 Danforth (MO)
 Specter (PA)

Percy (IL)
 Heinz (PA)
 Cohen (ME)
 Stafford (VT)
 Packwood (OR)
 Boschwitz (MN)
 Kassebaum (KS)
 Pressler (SD)
 Hawkins (FL)
 Andrews (ND)
 Quayle (IN)
 Roth (DE)
 Stevens (AK)

FNMA Loan Limits Up 8.65 Percent

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Federal National Mortgage Association raised the maximum mortgage amount of conventional loans eligible for purchase by the corporation to reflect increases in house prices nationally effective January 1.

Fannie Mae, the corporation raised its conventional mortgage limits by 8.65 per cent to: \$107,000 (from \$98,500) for single-family homes; to \$136,800 (from \$120,000) for two-family homes; to \$165,000 (from \$145,000) for three-family dwellings; and to \$205,300 (from \$180,000) for four-family houses. Limits are fifty per cent higher in Alaska and Hawaii.

The new loan limits will pertain to both first and second mortgages purchased by the corporation (When the corporation purchases both the first and second mortgages on a property, the new limits will apply to FNMA's combined investment.)

Although Fannie Mae is a shareholder-owned corporation, its loan limits are governed by federal statute. Under the statute the corporation may increase its conventional mortgage limits each year by the percentage increase recorded the previous year in national house prices, based on surveys by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board.

The Federal National Mortgage Association is a federally chartered, shareholder-owned, and privately managed corporation. The nation's largest single supplier of home mortgage funds FNMA purchases mortgage loans from local lenders, thereby replenishing those institutions' supply of mortgage money. The corporation's stock, with approximately 59 million shares outstanding, is publicly traded on the New York Stock Exchange and other stock exchanges.

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