

Why do these votes matter?

1. Abortion

During consideration of the State Department authorization bill (S. 600), Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) offered an amendment to repeal the rule prohibiting U.S. foreign aid from going to organizations that provide or promote abortions. Known as the "Mexico City" policy, this rule was imposed by President Reagan, lifted by President Clinton, and then reinstated by the second President Bush.

Any federal aid to provide or promote abortions violates the right to life.

2. Patriot Act Reauthorization

This is the final version (conference report) of the Patriot Act reauthorization (H.R. 3199). In the weeks following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Congress quickly passed the so-called Patriot Act, which gave law enforcement and intelligence agencies vast new powers to combat terrorism. The act increased the ability of law enforcement to secretly search home and business records, expanded the FBI's wiretapping and surveillance authority, and expanded the list of crimes deemed terrorist acts. When passed in 2001 the bill included a "sunset" provision under which the new surveillance powers "shall cease to have effect on December 21, 2005." The Patriot Act reauthorization bill (H.R. 3199) considered by Congress last year would make permanent 14 of the 16 provisions included in the bill, and extend for four years the two remaining provisions.

The Patriot Act tramples on the constitutionally protected rights of U.S. citizens.

3. National Debt Limit

This legislation (House Joint Resolution 47) would increase the national debt limit, also known as the federal debt limit, to \$8.97 trillion, a \$781 billion increase in what the federal government is allowed to borrow.

Raising the public debt limit by \$781 billion facilitates a steady increase of gross fiscal irresponsibility.

4. Guest-worker/Amnesty Immigration "Reform"

The Senate version of the so-called immigration reform bill (S. 2611) would effectively grant amnesty to the 12 million illegal immigrants who already reside in the United States and create a guest-worker program for up to 200,000 immigrants a year. Although S. 2611 may provide additional security at the border, it would also reward those who have broken the law by granting them legal status and establish an immigrant verification system managed by the Department of Homeland Security.

This bill would reward those who have unlawfully entered the country with legal status and greatly increase the level of legal immigration through guest-worker programs.

5. Iraq Troop Withdrawal

Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) attached this amendment to the Defense authorization bill (S. 2766) that would require the president to have a complete withdrawal of U.S. troops by July 2007, with the exception of those needed to train Iraqi troops, target terrorists, and protect American citizens.

Our troops should only be sent to war when necessary to defend the United States and her citizens, and only when declared by Congress.

6. Firearm Seizure

During consideration for the Homeland Security appropriations bill (H.R. 5441) Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) offered an amendment that would prohibit any funds in the bill from being used to seize lawfully owned firearms during a state of emergency. Vitter said this amendment was prompted by the confiscation of over 1,000 firearms by law enforcement officials in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Gun confiscation violates the Second Amendment.