

Why do these votes matter?

1. Embryonic Stem-Cell Research

This bill (H.R. 810) would allow federal funds to be used for research on embryonic stem-cell lines, which can be created only by cannibalizing and destroying human embryos -- innocent human life. Proponents contend that the research is needed to combat various diseases, but stem cells from sources other than embryos may provide more promising results, without killing some human beings for the supposed benefit of others.

The research on embryonic stem-cell lines would violate the right to life.

2. WTO Withdrawal

Representatives Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Ron Paul (R-Texas) sponsored this measure (House Joint Resolution 27) to withdraw the United States from the World Trade Organization. The WTO is often portrayed as a "free trade" arrangement by its supporters, but it is actually an international bureaucracy that manages trade and imposes its rulings on member nations including the United States—even when those rulings are contrary to U.S. laws. In fact, U.S. membership in the WTO is unconstitutional, since under our Constitution, Congress—not an international body—"shall have the power ... to regulate foreign commerce." That power cannot be transferred short of a constitutional amendment.

Our participation in the WTO is unconstitutional and threatens our sovereignty.

3. U.S. Treasury Borrowing

During consideration of a bill to overhaul the regulation of government-sponsored enterprises, Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) offered this amendment to "eliminate the ability of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board to borrow from the Treasury." During floor debate on his amendment, Paul stated, "I hope my colleagues join me in protecting taxpayers from having to bail out Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac when the housing bubble bursts."

Paul's amendment would (in Paul's words) seek to end a "massive unconstitutional and immoral" transfer of income from working Americans to government-sponsored enterprises.

4. Border Security

The House immigration bill (H.R. 4437) would improve border security by authorizing 700 miles of security fence to be built along parts of the U.S.-Mexican border, making unlawful entry into the United States a criminal rather than a civil offense, and increasing penalties for immigrant-related crimes. It would also require employers to verify immigrant status of new employees. It does not include the guest-worker/amnesty provisions found in the Senate bill (see Senate vote #29).

This bill would improve border security.

5. Gun Seizure

The Disaster Recovery Personal Protection Act of 2006 (H.R. 5013) would prohibit the confiscation of firearms in the wake of a natural disaster. This bill is a response to the illegal confiscating of firearms from the victims of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005.

Confiscating firearms from law-abiding citizens is a clear violation of the Constitution -- the Second Amendment guarantees that our "right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

6. Electronic Surveillance

The warrantless electronic surveillance bill (H.R. 5825) would allow electronic surveillance of communications with suspected terrorists without first obtaining approval from the secret courts established by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978. Furthermore, the bill would authorize unwarranted surveillance for up to 90 days in some instances if a threat was considered "imminent." Intelligence agencies would be allowed to conduct warrantless surveillance for seven days prior to gaining court approval if the threat was considered an "emergency situation." This controversial bill had full support of the Bush administration as a means to provide greater national security in a post-9/11 world.

Such a law would violate the Fourth Amendment by subjecting U.S. citizens to unreasonable searches and seizures.