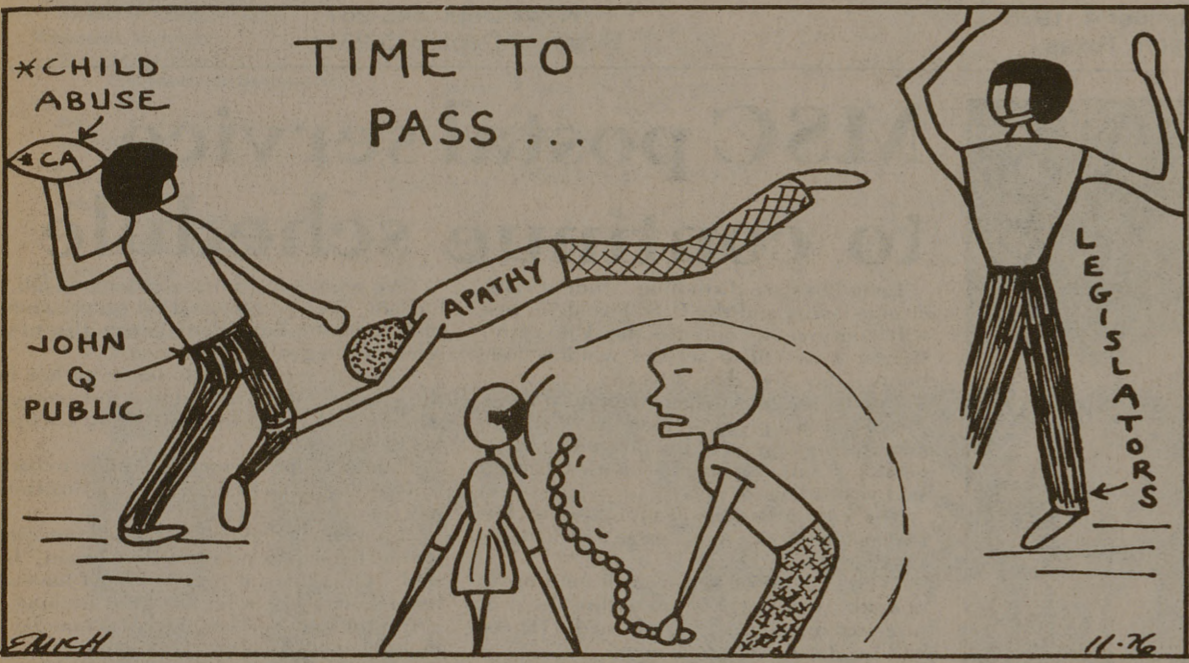


Opinion/Commentary/Letters



Congress seeking leaders

The second biggest story in the 1976 election — ranking right behind the selection of the president — is the further consolidation of Democratic power on Capitol Hill.

Once again, as has been the case for all but four of the past 44 years, the Democrats will organize the Congress, elect its leaders and committee chairmen and set its agenda of legislation, investigation and oversight. No such nearly continuous period of one-party control has been seen in the post-Civil War period.

Not only have the Democrats had control, but they have enjoyed it by large margins. The Senate has had close to a 3-to-2 Democratic ratio since the election of 1958 — when a recession sparked a 17-seat Democrat gain and ended the old "conservative coalition" control of Republicans and Southern Democrats with an infusion of younger Northern liberals. Since then, the ratio has bobbed a bit, but the Senate power has been securely in the hands of a



David S. Broder

different bipartisan coalition — of Northern liberal and younger Southern and Western moderate Democrats, allied with a strategic handful of progressive Republicans. This group passed the civil rights laws, expanded domestic spending and spearheaded the fight to bring the Vietnam War to a close.

For most of the past 18 years, the House was the more conservative body, with Democrats only rarely enjoying so large a majority that the blocking power of the "conservative coalition" was eliminated. Northern liberal Democrats won a working majority in the 1964 landslide, used it to legislate the "Great Society," and then lost effective control in 1966.

They regained that power in the Watergate election year of 1974 and they retained that control on Tuesday.

The institutionalization of liberal majorities in both the House and Senate is of enormous consequence. Senate control is securely with the Democrats for at least four years. The power of incumbency makes a twice-elected House member almost proof from defeat in future years, so the Democrats may now operate as if they had a long-term mandate for what Rep. John Brademas, D-Ind., one of their leaders, says can honestly be described by the Wilsonian phrase, "congressional government."

The Democrats have been preparing for that kind of government during the years of conflict with Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford. They have steadily improved the institutional capability of Congress. They have given Congress its own budget-making process, and seen that process work well in its first tests. They

have asserted an ever-greater role for Congress in foreign affairs and strengthened the membership and capacity of the relevant committees, particularly in the House.

They have begun to move — although too timidly — on reforming the overall committee structure, in order to focus attention on key issues of energy, economic and resource policy.

But if "congressional government" is, indeed, what we have in store, then it is terribly important who is going to be doing the governing. And that is why, as voters may be with political campaigns, attention will have to be paid to the coming contests for the leadership positions in the House and Senate.

With House Majority Leader Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill of Massachusetts moving up to succeed retiring House Speaker Carl Albert, there will be a battle among four claimants to the important post of majority floor leader.

With the retirement of Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana, there is an equally important struggle to see who takes over that responsibility.

The personalities involved, except for Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, are not well-known national figures. But Sens. Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia and Ernest F. Hollings of South Carolina represent very different styles and policies from Humphrey's. And there could not be more diverse legislators than the rivals in the House contest, Reps. Phillip Burton of California, Richard Bolling of Missouri, Jim Wright of Texas and John McFall of California.

Those contests will be settled by secret-ballot voting of the Democratic members of the new Senate and House before Congress returns next January. And the outcome could be as important as the decision the voters have just made, for the power will be exercised at least as much on the Capitol Hill end of Pennsylvania Avenue as in the White House for the next four years.

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Parking system needs revisions

Editor:

In the beginning there were rules, regulations and laws developed to protect the innocent, regulate society and punish the guilty. Everyone was to be treated equally under this system. Then came college students and automobiles and as you are aware the system broke down and only the favored were exempt from the rules.

Lately there have been some letters in the Battalion complaining about what the students felt were unjust traffic tickets. And rightly so the students are to complain as they fall into the above category of the unfavored. Just think that without all of those students and their automobiles the campus police would not have a job or a source of funds.

In the paper, a motorcycleist was complaining about receiving a ticket while parked at the Rudder Center (Lot 60) because he did not have a "Nite Permit." According to the regulations the students receive when they buy a hunting license for on campus parking (and God only knows why we only get an abridged addition of the Holy book kept in Maddox's office) lot 60 is designated as a "Visitors Parking Area." First priority goes to off campus patrons of the university center facilities. However, day students may park at random in unreserved portions of the lot. Since when does a university give more priority to off campus persons who only come on campus occasionally to use the facilities. For whom does the Aggie cinema show their films? Students or visitors?

The regulations specifically state NO PARKING ON ANY CURB, SIDEWALK AND LAWN and in any place marked NO PARKING. How many cars during home football games are seen violating this law and do not get ticketed for it? Equal and fair?

Heavens no! We can not afford to offend any alumni, distinguished or otherwise, which might be a lucrative source of funds for the athletic department or the alumni center.

Furthermore, all of you students that pay for the privilege of being able to park across the railroad tracks in never never land and are THEN WARNED TO MOVE YOUR VEHICLE SO VISITORS CAN PARK, by warning or order of Chief O. L.

Luther are getting slapped in the face. Have you ever thought of what would happen if all the students parked in those lots, forcing the "visitors" to park in Lot 50 and walk to the game.

Has it ever crossed your mind as to why a university charges \$5.00 for a parking ticket while the local city charges only a few dollars?

An article written by the campus police chief of Georgia Tech stated that any time a university gave out more tickets than 10 per cent of the total vehicle population on campus then something is wrong with the system. Agreed? In this election year with all the candidates making promises, wouldn't it be nice if somehow, somewhere a group of people, knowledgeable in traffic situations and problems, would get together and upgrade the traffic regulations at this university.

Allan Stern

Ever-present student rip-off

Editor:

The time has come for Texas A&M University students to be reimbursed.

With Texas A&M now bursting its seams with 28,000 students, it would seem to be the case that the surrounding community would attempt to provide outside activities and fair prices for the students.

In a September 16 Battalion article, Texas A&M students are listed as contributing \$39 million to the area's economy for 1975 alone.

But where are the community's contributions to the contentment of its inhabitants?

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