

1951-1956

CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON CIVIL RIGHTS LEGISLATION AND MEASURES OF INTEREST,

1951

JANUARY 1, 1951

House defeats motion to recommit the Railway Labor Act with instructions to insert an anti-discrimination and states rights amendment.

JANUARY 4, 1951

Senate considers S. 349, Defense Housing and Community Facilities Services Act of 1951.

JANUARY 4, 1951

Senate considers S.J. Res. 52, Senator Lodge's measure calling for the election of the President and the Vice President by direct vote, and sends it to the Senate Judiciary Committee (8/31/51 report).

JANUARY 4, 1951

Sen. Pat McCarran (R-Nev.) sponsors S. 2055, a bill that would control immigration to the United States and the status of naturalized American citizens.

JANUARY 4, 1951

House considers H.J. Res. 19, Congressman Gossett's measure calling for the election of the President and the Vice President direct vote, and sends it to the House Judiciary Committee (8/31/51 report).

JANUARY 10, 1951

Railway Labor Act signed into law.

JANUARY 18, 1951

Senate considers S. 1976, a home rule bill for the District of Columbia, calling for a mayor, appointed by the President; a District Council and a non-voting delegate to the House, elected by residents of the District. The measure was sent to the Senate District Committee.

JANUARY 20, 1951

House considers H.R. 2118, which proposed to amend various sections of the United States Code to prohibit attempts to commit slavery and peonage, sending it to the House Judiciary Committee, where it will not be reported out.

JANUARY 23, 1951

Senate proposals to change Senate Rule XXII (calling for a change in the Senate rules limiting debate)--S. Res. 41, S. Res. 52, S. Res. 105, S. Res. 203—are offered and referred to the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

APRIL 12, 1951

House strikes out a provision of the Universal Military Training and Service Act (Winstead Amendment) that would have given draftees a choice of serving in racially segregated or integrated units.

APRIL 19, 1951

Senate rejects nondiscrimination amendments to S. 349; the measure subsequently passes the Senate and is sent to the House (8/31/51 report).

APRIL 21, 1951

Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee reports out H.J. Res. 19 and sends it to the full Committee.

JUNE 6, 1951

House kills legislation (H.R. 314) calling for the construction of a veterans' hospital for blacks in Franklin County, Virginia.

JULY 24, 1951

House Judiciary Committee reports out H.J. Res. 19 and sends it to the House Rules Committee.

JULY 30, 1951

Senate Judiciary Committee reports out S.J. Res. 52, but no further action is taken on the measure.

AUGUST 6, 1951

Senate District Committee reports out S. 1976.

AUGUST 15, 1951

House passes S. 349 and sends it to the Senate for conference.

AUGUST 20, 1951

Conference report on S. 349 is agreed to by the Senate and the n House agrees to the report the next day. President Truman signs it into law September 1.

OCTOBER 17, 1951

House Rules Committee reports out H.J. Res. 19, but no further action is taken on the measure.

OCTOBER 23, 1951

Senate Committee on Rules and Administration closes hearings on S. Res. 41, S. Res. 52, S. Res. 105, and S. Res. 203.

1952

JANUARY 22, 1952

Senate passes S. 1976 and sends it to the House.

JANUARY 23, 1952

House considers S. 1976 and sends it to the House District of Columbia Committee; the Committee fails to approve the bill.

JANUARY 29, 1952

Senate Judiciary Committee reports out S. 2550, a revised version of S. 2055, despite a minority report (dated March 13) claiming that it “would inject new racial discrimination into our law, establish many new vague and highly abusable requirement for admission, impede the admission of refugees from totalitarian oppression, incorporate into law vague standards for deportation and denaturalization, and deprive persons within our borders of fundamental judicial protections.”

JANUARY 29, 1952

Senate Committee on Rules and Administration reports out S. Res. 203, but the Senate adjourned without taking any action on the measure. The other measures died in committee.

FEBRUARY 14, 1952

House Judiciary Committee reports out H.R. 5678.

MARCH 12, 1952

Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, Jr. (D-Minn.) and twelve other senators sponsor S. 2842, a bill proposed as a substitute for S. 2550.

APRIL 25, 1952

House passes H.R. 5678, the Walter Immigration bill.

MAY 7, 1952

Senate rejects Sen. Humphrey's motion to recommit S. 2550 to the Senate Judiciary Committee in order to hold hearings on S. 2842.

MAY 22, 1952

Senate passes S. 2550, the McCarran Immigration bill, and gives it the number of the House-passed H.R. 5678, now calling it the McCarran-Walter Immigration bill; the measure is sent to the House for concurrence.

JUNE 10, 1952

House accepts the conference report on H.R. 5678.

JUNE 11, 1952

Senate accepts the conference report on H.R. 5678, and the bill goes to the President who vetoes it on June 25.

JUNE 24, 1952

Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee approves S. 3368, designed to create an Equality of Opportunity in Employment Commission with enforcement powers. Congress would adjourn before acting on it.

JUNE 26, 1952

House overrides President Truman's veto and passes the McCarran-Walter Immigration Bill. The Senate follows suit the next day and the bill becomes law over the President's veto.

JULY 1, 1952

Senate Judiciary Committee reported out S.J. Res. 127, calling for a constitutional amendment lowering the voting age to 18, but the measure was not taken up on the floor.

1953

JANUARY 5, 1953

Sen. Everett M. Dirksen (R-Ill.) introduces S. 1, an attempt to set up an FEPC without enforcement powers. The bill was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee where it was not reported out.

JANUARY 7, 1953

Sen. John W. Bricker (R-Ohio) introduces S.J. Res. 1, a proposed constitutional amendment limiting the treaty-making power of the President. Some of the measure's supporters contend that this legislation is necessary to halt civil rights advances in the United States, as it would have prevented Congress from passing social legislation—such as civil rights bills—on the basis of carrying out the obligations of a treaty.

JANUARY 11, 1953

Senate begins consideration on S. 697, giving the District of Columbia a non-voting delegate to the House and S. 999, another home rule proposal; both measures are sent to the Senate District Committee.

JANUARY 28, 1953

Senators Irving M. Ives (R-N.Y.) and Hubert H. Humphrey, Jr. (D-Minn.) introduce S. 692, the Federal Equality of Opportunity in Employment Act; this is an attempt to set up a strong FEPC, with enforcement powers.

MARCH 4, 1953

Senate District Committee approves (but does not report out) S. 999.

MARCH 4, 1953

Senate District Committee reports out S. 697.

MARCH 11, 1953

Senate passes S. 697 and sends it to the House, who sends it to the House District of Columbia Committee, where the bill is tabled.

MARCH 18, 1953

House passes H.J. Res. 223, endorsing the creation of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

MARCH 30, 1953

Senate, by voice vote, passes H.J. Res. 223. President Eisenhower signs the measure on April 1, to take effect on April 11.

MARCH 30, 1953

Senator Ives introduces S. 1831, an amendment to the Taft-Hartley Act prohibiting discrimination and segregation in unions under the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board. The measure is sent to the Senate Labor Committee, but the legislation that eventually was reported out did not include a nondiscrimination amendment.

JULY 15, 1953

Senate Judiciary Committee reports out S.J. Res. 1.

JULY 16, 1953

Senate passes S. J. Res. 49, a proposed constitutional amendment to guarantee equal rights for women. No action was taken on this measure in the House.

1954

JANUARY 22, 1954

The Constitutional Amendments Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee reported out S. J. Res. 53, a proposed amendment making 18 the legal voting age, but the measure was not reported by the full committee.

FEBRUARY 26, 1954

Senate defeats S. J. Res. 1.

MARCH 3, 1954

The Civil Rights Subcommittee of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee reports out S. 692, designed to prohibit discrimination in employment, and sends it to the full committee.

APRIL 2, 1954

House defeats nondiscrimination amendments to H.R. 7839, the Omnibus Housing Act of 1954.

APRIL 28, 1954

Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee reports S. 692, but the measure never reaches the floor.

MAY 7, 1954

Although anti-discrimination amendments were offered to the Taft-Hartley revision bill in the Senate (S. 2650), the bill was recommitted without any vote taken on the amendments.

MAY 11, 1954

Senate Committee on Labor and Welfare considers S. 2601, a school construction bill, and strikes out "separate but equal" language in the bill. The measure is subsequently reported out and eventually passed by the full Senate and sent to the House, where no action was taken.

MAY 21, 1954

Senate rejects S.J. Res. 53, a proposed constitutional amendment designed to give the vote to eighteen year olds.

JUNE 3, 1954

Senate rejects a motion to delete the public housing feature of the Omnibus Housing Act of 1954 in light of the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

JUNE 14, 1954

Senate passes S. 3378 (designed to revise the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands) and sends it to the House for consideration.

JUNE 20, 1954

Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (D-N.Y.) successfully leads a fight to amend S. 3378 so that the governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands obtains the approval of the Island's legislature before putting reorganization plans into effect, and the bill subsequently passes the House.

JUNE 22, 1954

S. 3378 goes into conference and the Powell Amendment is further amended so the governor was given the power to reorganize the present executive branch in the Islands without the legislature's consent, but in future, all reorganization must be done with the consent of the legislature. The measure with the amendment is approved and is subsequently signed into law. (8/31/54 report)

JULY 10, 1954

Senate passes S. 1611(a measure providing for primary elections in the District of Columbia by which District residents could elect Democratic and Republican National Committeemen and delegates to Presidential conventions) and sends it to the House.

JULY 12, 1954

Senate passes H.R. 8149, designed to amend the Hospital Survey and Construction Act provisions of the Public Health Service, despite the fact that it included no nondiscrimination or nonsegregation provisions.

JULY 23, 1954

House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee reports out H.R. 7304, designed to prohibit segregation or discrimination in interstate transportation; the bill is sent to the House Rules Committee, where its chairman, Rep. Leo E. Allen (R-Ill.), according to Clarence Mitchell, "told his constituents that he could not act on the bill because the leadership of the House thought it was too late in the session."

JULY 26, 1954

House Rules Committee tabled a request for a rule to send to conference H.R. 3575 calling for statehood for Hawaii and Alaska.

AUGUST 9, 1954

House passes S. 1611, but President Eisenhower vetoes the bill, claiming that the provision allowing federal employees to engage in partisan political activity amended the Hatch Act which barred such activity.

AUGUST 9, 1954

Attempts to have House rules suspended so that H.R. 7304 could be voted upon and passed are to no avail and Congress adjourned without any action being taken. S. 2672, the Ives-Butler Anti-Jim Crow Travel Bill, a companion bill, due to the fact that the Senate refused to act until its counterpart passed the House, also dies.

1955

JANUARY 5, 1955

In response to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's ruling that struck down portions of the Pennsylvania Sedition Act in the case of *Pennsylvania v. Nelson*, Rep. Howard W. Smith (D-Va.) introduces H.R. 3, stating that the federal government had preempted that field by the enactment of the 1940 Smith Act. H.R. 3 barred "preemption by implication" on the part of the federal government where state law was concerned, and federal laws were to be construed as intended to invalidate state laws only if Congress had stated specifically that it wished to preempt a field of legislation from state law and jurisdiction. It also specifically ruled out the preemption of state authority in the field of subversion, thus directly reversing the Nelson decision.

MAY 19, 1955

In the face of opposition to an amendment requiring the ending of segregation in National Guard Units as a condition for participating in the National Reserve Training program, the House votes to cease consideration of (H.R. 5297) the program. (n. 4, 6/6/55 report)

MAY 19, 1955

Over the NAACP's strong opposition, the Senate Judiciary Committee reports out S.J. Res. 31 (the resolution sponsored by Senators Hubert H. Humphrey, Estes Kefauver and Price Daniel), which would divide each state's votes for president and vice president in the Electoral College in proportion to the popular vote received by the respective candidates. (A similar bill sponsored by Congressman Ed Lee Gossett (D-Tex.) was defeated in a previous congress on July 17, 1950 as a result of the NAACP's strong opposition)(9/8/55 report). Report of the Executive Secretary June 13, 1955.

MAY 25, 1955

The Senate Judiciary Committee Action: a resolution introduced by Senator James Eastland (D, Miss.) on May 25, 1955, that called for the investigation of the Supreme Court was not acted on as a result of strong opposition from the NAACP Report of the Executive Secretary to the Board for the Month of May, 1955. June 13, 1955. [ed. note: did not find this]

JUNE 29, 1955

Senate passes a bill (S. 669) to give Home Rule to the District of Columbia, providing for an elected mayor and city council, as well as a non-voting delegate to the House. No action on this measure was taken in the House. (9/8/55 report)

JULY 14, 1955

Senate passes the Reserve Training Bill; it subsequently dies in the House. - (9/8/55 report)

JULY 18, 1955

House passes Social Security Bill designed to revise and expand provisions of the Social Security Act, including reducing the age of eligibility for women from 65 to 62. No action on this measure was taken by the Senate. - (9/8/55 report)

JULY 20, 1955

On the floor of the Senate, Senator Thomas C. Hennings, Jr. (D., Mo.) offered an amendment that removed the repeal feature from H.R. 4048, a bill to provide a standard system of absentee voting and to encourage states to extend absentee voting. One of its features repealed Sections 301 and 302 of Title 50, U.S. Code, that provided in time of war servicemen would be relieved of the requirements of paying poll taxes and registering under state laws. The bill with this repeal provision in it had passed the House and had been reported favorably by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. The Hennings amendment was adopted and the bill passed (9/8/55 report).

JULY 28, 1955

House defeats an anti-segregation amendment to a school construction bill (9/8/55 report)

JULY 29, 1955

House defeats an anti-segregation amendment to a Housing bill. (9/8/55 report)

1956

MARCH 12, 1956

82 Southern congressmen, led by Rep. Howard W. Smith (D-Va.), and 19 Southern senators, led by Sen. Walter F. George (D-Ga.), present a "Declaration of Constitutional Principles" (otherwise known as the "Southern Manifesto"), criticizing the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

MARCH 21, 1956

House Judiciary Subcommittee No. 2 reports out H.R. 627, introduced by Rep. Emanuel Celler (D-N.Y.)

MARCH 27, 1956

Senate recommits S. J. Res. 31 to the Judiciary Committee, effectively killing it (4/5/56 report)

APRIL 9, 1956

Justice Department submits to Congress a draft civil rights program calling for: (a) a six-member, bipartisan commission to investigate civil rights grievances; (b) creation of the Civil Rights Division in the Justice Department, headed by an assistant Attorney General; (c) authority for the federal government to use civil procedures for the protection of civil rights, and (d) broader statutes to protect voting rights, including civil remedies for enforcement. and designed to carry out President Eisenhower's civil rights recommendations.

MAY 21, 1956

House Judiciary Committee reports out H.R. 627—the original wording of Rep. Celler's bill was changed to that of the draft program submitted by the Justice Department (7/9/56 report)

MAY 24, 1956

Senate defeats amendment proposed by Sen. John Bricker (R-Ohio) to cut number of proposed public housing units (8/31/56 report)

JUNE 27, 1956

House Rules Committee grants an open rule on H.R. 627.

JULY 3, 1956

House Judiciary Committee reports out H.R. 3 with an amendment that specifically restricts its application to state sedition laws.

JULY 5, 1956

House approves anti-segregation amendment to school construction bill, (H.R. 7535) but subsequently defeats the bill (8/31/56 report)



JULY 10, 1956

House Rules Committee grants an open rule with two hours of debate on H.R. 3, but the measure was not called upon the floor, thus killing it.

JULY 16, 1956

Senate confirms nomination of U. S. Solicitor General Simon E. Sobeloff as judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (8/31/56 report)

JULY 17, 1956

Senate approves amendments to the Social Security Act lowering women's age of eligibility to 62 and that of the totally disabled to 50; Senate then approves Social Security Act. (Report 8/31/56, cq 870).

JULY 23, 1956

House passes Civil Rights Bill (H.R. 627) (8/31/56 report).

JULY 24, 1956

The Senate Judiciary Committee was assigned the Civil Rights Bill (H.R. 627) but failed to act upon it. As the Senate was nearing adjournment, the bill could be acted on only if the Senate adopted a motion to discharge the Judiciary Committee from further consideration of the bill. The parliamentary situation required that a motion to adjourn be adopted to make this possible. Such a motion was offered by Sen. Paul H. Douglas (D-Ill.), but the motion was defeated and the bill died in committee. (8/31/56 report)