

Congress completes spending cuts

By Alan Fram
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — Congress granted its long-delayed final approval Friday to a bill chopping \$16.3 billion from housing, jobs and other programs, while a House panel voted to limit federal abortion aid to the poor.

In a day that shone a spotlight on the ascendancy of the conservative agenda in Washington, the Senate voted 90-7 to whittle scores of already enacted social programs. President Clinton, who had negotiated an easing of some of the cuts with congressional

leaders, was ready to sign the measure, even though it slashes national service, education reform and some of his other domestic priorities.

"I am pleased that bipartisan leaders of Congress worked with me to produce a good bill," Clinton said in a written statement. "Working together, we can continue to produce good legislation for the American people."

The bill contained \$7.2 billion in new spending for California and other disaster-stricken states, anti-terrorism efforts and aid to Jordan. That made it more palat-

able for Clinton to sign, and brought its net deficit reduction to about \$9 billion.

The Senate vote ended five grueling months of congressional labors on the legislation, which Republicans authored as an initial step in their planned seven-year journey toward a balanced budget.

The last delay evaporated after the Senate rejected two amendments by liberal Sens. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., and Carol Moseley-Braun, D-Ill., aimed at restoring funds for education, job training and home-heating aid for the poor.

At the same time, the House Appropriations Committee voted 29-23 to let states refuse to use federal Medicaid funds to finance abortions for poor women who are victims of rape or incest. States would be required to continue using the money for abortions for women whose pregnancies are endangering their lives.

Several states have legally challenged the 1993 law requiring the use of Medicaid funds for abortion. Before the 1993 law, 30 states forbade the use of government money for the procedure and six others allowed its use for only those rape and incest victims who have reported the crimes to authorities.



Associated Press photo

Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, according to his doctors, is in excellent health and shape, despite his age. Dole is trying to dispel the rumors that he is not fit to run for president in 1996.

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Of Helmets and Hamburger

Congress: Deciding what you eat and breathe

SOON AFTER LORI MADDY moved into her Sedgwick County, Kans., farmhouse in 1982, she noticed that wind blowing from the direction of the nearby Vulcan Chemicals plant carried a smell like "the inside of an inner tube." So Maddy joined with neighbors to ask Vulcan what, exactly, it was venting. None of your business, Vulcan replied. Then came a 1986 law requiring companies to report—not stop, just report—their toxic releases. Vulcan turned out to be spewing 50 percent of Sedgwick's total emissions, including carcinogens. Spurred by local outrage, Vulcan voluntarily reduced its pollution by 90 percent. "We felt obligated," says plant manager Paul Tobias, "to win back the public's trust."

The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) seems to be a smart way to reduce pollution, but Congress has put TRI and every other federal health, safety and environment rule in the crosshairs. The House passed a strong regulatory-rollback bill in February. Last week the Senate fought over whether it, too, would (pick one) "wage a full frontal assault on the American people and their environment," as Environmental Protection Agency chief Carol Browner put it, or "take the heavy hand of the federal government out of people's lives," as GOP Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine said.

Washington is already well down the road to deregulation. Congress is moving to free the states to raise speed limits and eliminate the requirement that motorcyclists wear helmets (table). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wants to exempt small-property owners from the Endangered Species Act so they can build on their land even if that damages the habitat of a rare breed. EPA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration no longer fine first offenders. But the House's anti-reg bill, and now the leading Senate version, are much broader, affecting anyone who eats meat, drinks water or breathes:

■ **Meat:** Bob Dole, sponsor of the Senate bill, wants to deliver regulatory relief this year. But smack in the middle of the Senate debate came news that five children in Tennessee had gotten *E. coli* poisoning, which comes from contaminated hamburger. Such outbreaks, say consumer groups, will become ever more common if Dole gets his way. In its current form, they charge, the



Downing-Newsweek
Rolling back: Dole

Dole bill requires federal agencies to prove by extensive analysis that any proposed rule—including better meat inspection—is the cheapest way to protect the public. Showing that the rule's benefits (avoiding 4,000 deaths, 5 million illnesses and up to \$3.7 billion in medical costs a year) are greater than its cost to industry (\$245 million a year) wouldn't automatically be good enough. Dole disputes

this, but there's no doubt that under his plan industry could sue to overturn the rules on much weaker grounds than current law allows. Dole, says Adam Babich of the Environmental Law Institute, is trying to solve "the problem of too much bureaucracy by adding bureaucracy. It would flunk its own cost-benefit test."

■ **Air and water pollution:** If the GOP proposals had been law in the 1970s, some

regulations on air and water quality might never have made it. The cost-benefit analysis of banning lead in gasoline, for example, didn't clearly show that it would spare children much neurological damage. EPA went ahead anyway, and subsequent research shows that the lead phaseout cut blood lead levels far more than EPA expected. The GOP's new plan would also affect existing regs on how much pesticide and fecal bacteria can be in drinking water. Rules would automatically expire every five to 10 years unless an agency reanalyzed (and, possibly, relitigated) them.

Republicans respond with horror stories of regulators run amok. Some are hyped, but many are not. Limits on how much chloroform from paper mills may pollute drinking water, they say, cost \$99 billion per year-of-life saved. Even Clinton has a bit of regulation-cutting religion; he's eliminated hundreds of silly federal rules. But more rollback seems inevitable. Ironically, it's coming at a time when GOP budget cutting—EPA is looking at a 40 percent hit—will make it even tougher for agencies to meet the stiffer requirements for justifying rules. But maybe that's the idea.

SHARON BEGLEY with RICH THOMAS, CHARLES S. LEE and FRITZ PULLERITS in Washington and LESLIE KAUFMAN-ROSEN in Sedgwick

ON POLITICS

BY MICHAEL BARONE

One, two, many Republicans

Asking who will be the Republican nominee for president in 1996 is an intellectually trivial exercise: No one knows the answer now, but everyone will know it by next April 1. What is more interesting is what the contest reveals about the candidates and the Republican Party. One way to understand what's going on is to examine each candidate's strategy in the light of the seven new voter groups defined by a *U.S. News* poll and described in the July 10 cover story, "Divided We Stand."

Bob Dole, for example, has been doing a brilliant job of appealing to Conservative Activists (young, affluent, ac-

rights and gun control. But Wilson also hopes to appeal to Conservative Activists with tough stands against crime and illegal immigration. Richard Lugar speaks with a civility that appeals to Stewards and Agnostics and has a platform that's acceptable to most Conservative Activists. But it is not clear whether Wilson's and Lugar's attempts to fashion broad coalitions will unite Conservative Activists and more moderate groups behind them—or turn everybody off. Arlen Specter has been taking a road less traveled, but his in-your-face challenge to the religious right makes it hard for him to win when 64 percent of Republican voters belong to groups that lean to the right on cultural issues.

The happiest warrior on the campaign trail is Pat Buchanan. His proposals to restrict free trade, cut immigration 74 percent and stay out of Bosnia in effect revive the conservatism of Robert Taft, dormant now for 40 years, with its tendencies toward isolationism, protectionism and nativism. Buchanan may be striking a chord with anti-institutional Populist Traditionalists and perhaps Ethnic Conservatives. But he is challenging the internationalist and free-trade credo of Conservative Activists. In contrast, Robert Dornan and Alan Keyes seek to arouse the enthusiasm of antiabortion Conservative Activists but do little to attract others, and Conservative Activists are still only 29 percent of Republicans.

"I'm keeping all my options open," Colin Powell tells people, with a beaming smile, as he makes inspirational speeches touching many political bases around the country. Could he assemble a majority of Republicans? Conservative Activists, the largest single bloc, doubt that he shares their views on issues such as abortion and affirmative action. But his presumed moderate views on these issues, plus his reputation as a common-sense leader, could appeal to Stewards, Ethnic Conservatives and Agnostics, who—together with Dowagers (elderly women) and Liberal Activists—make up 58 percent of Republicans.

Assembling a Powell coalition with the opposition of the largest and most active group of Republicans would be tricky, and probably impossible, unless Dole's campaign founders. But Dole's rivals now are also counting on him to fade. The bottom line is that many outcomes are still possible, from the anointing of the front-runner to the creation of a new coalition replacing the Conservative Activists who have dominated the Republican Party for years. ■



Diversity. Buchanan, Dole, Keyes, Gramm

'The bottom line is that many outcomes are still possible.'

Coalition building. Candidates Phil Gramm and Lamar Alexander are also targeting Conservative Activists. Gramm is stressing his free-market economics; he refuses to "preach" on moral values, which has left some religious conservatives unsatisfied but has enabled him to appeal to Stewards and even Agnostics (older, higher education, skeptical of religion; 10 percent of Republicans). Although some reporters are already writing him off, he still has a chance of winning. So has Lamar Alexander. His walk across New Hampshire may direct attention to his power-away-from-Washington platform, which could appeal to Conservative Activists and Populist Traditionalists (young, lower education, religious, anti-institutional; 14 percent of Republicans). His soothing tone is designed to reassure Stewards and Agnostics.

Pete Wilson and Arlen Specter are trying to appeal to Stewards, Agnostics and the few Liberal Activist Republican voters (9 percent of Republicans) who support abortion