

Bob Kerrey Legislation 1995-2000: Key Votes

1995: 104th Cong., 1st Sess.

S. 4

On March 23, 1995, Bob Kerrey voted “Nay” to Senate Bill 4: Line-Item Veto. Kerrey also voted against the Targeted Tax Breaks and Deficit Reduction sections of the bill. The Line-Item Veto Bill of 1995 was passed 69-29 and provides separate enrollment of each individual spending item in an appropriations bill, targeted tax breaks, or new entitlement spending, thus allowing the president to veto each item and require Congress to have $\frac{2}{3}$ vote in each House to override the veto. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 896, March 25, 1995)

S. 652

The Telecommunications Bill was intended to promote competition and deregulation in the broadcasting, cable, and telephone industries by requiring local phone companies to open their own returns to competitors, easy ownership and liability restrictions on broadcasting. It also reduces price controls on cable companies. Kerrey voted for Broadcast Ownership Limits section, Motion to Reconsider that section, and Reconsideration of Broadcast Ownership Limits, but eventually voted “Nay” to the bill as a whole. The bill was passed 81-18 on June 15, 1995. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 1784-7 June 17, 1995)

H.R. 4

Kerrey voted “Nay” to the House’s Welfare Overhaul Bill (HR 4). This bill saved about \$65.8 billion over 7 years by ending entitlement status of welfare programs. Kerrey voted for the Medicaid Overhaul, Legal Challenges, Work Force Cuts, and Extended Child Aid portions of the bill but was opposed to the Child Care, State Expenditure Requirement, and Welfare Work Force cut portions. The bill passed 87-12 on Sept. 19, 1995. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 2935-6 Sept. 23, 1995)

H.R. 2491

This bill was the 1996 Budget Reconciliation. This was brought about after President Clinton rejected the original budget plan. It cuts spending by \$900 billion and taxes by \$245 billion in order to balance the budget by 2002. It reduced spending on Medicare, Medicaid, welfare, earned-income tax credit, and agriculture programs. Kerrey opposed the bill and voted with a “Nay”, but the bill passed 52-47 on Oct. 28, 1995. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 3333 Oct. 28, 1995)

H.R. 1833

On Dec. 7, 1995, the Senate voted on this bill, which imposed penalties on doctors who perform certain late-term abortions in which the fetus is partially delivered before completing the abortion. The bill was passed 54-44 but Kerrey voted Nay. Kerrey was for Adverse Health Exception and Prescription Drug portions of Bill. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 3769 Dec. 9, 1995)

1996: 104th Cong., 2nd Sess.

S. 1541

In 1996, the first major bill passed by the Senate was the Farm Bill. This bill reauthorized all major federal farm programs through 2002, overhauling certain programs to give payment regardless of market condition rather than traditional subsidies. It also gave more flexibility in deciding what to plant. This bill was passed 64-32 on Feb. 7, but Kerrey voted against the bill. He supported the Northeast Dairy Compact and Planting Requirements in this bill. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 369-370 Feb. 10, 1996)

H.J.Res. 1

On June 6, 1996, the Balanced Budget Amendment of 1996 was brought to the Senate floor. It proposed a constitutional amendment to balance the budget by the year 2002 or two years after ratification by three-fourths of the states, whichever was later. Three-fifths of the entire House and Senate would be required to approve default spending or increase the public debt limit with this bill. Kerrey voted "Nay" and the measure was rejected 64-31. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 1627 June 8, 1996)

S. 1936

This bill was called the Nuclear Waste Storage Act. This bill established temporary nuclear waste storage site at Yucca Mountain, 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Nevada. The bill was passed 63-37 on July 31, 1996 but Bob Kerrey voted against the bill. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 2231, Aug. 3, 1996)

S. 2056

A very important civil rights bill came before the Senate on Sept. 10, 1996. This was the Sexual Orientation Non-Discrimination Bill. The bill prohibited job discrimination based on sexual orientation by extending remedies of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to sexual orientation. Kerrey voted for the bill, but it was rejected in a very close 49-50 vote. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 2634, Sept. 14, 1996)

1997: 105th Cong., 1st Sess.

S.J.Res. 1

One of the first important bills of this year was the Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment. Kerrey voted "nay." This bill would have created a constitutional amendment requiring the United States to have a balanced budget. On March 4, 1997, the bill was rejected by a 66-34 vote. A two-thirds majority would have been needed for passage. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, Dec. 20, 1997, page 3140; <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d105:S.J.Res1:>)

S.Res. 75

Kerrey voted for this resolution which was for the approval of the Chemical Weapons Treaty. The worldwide treaty would limit chemical weapon usage and create an international oversight committee. The treaty passed the Senate on April 24, 1997, by a 74-26 vote. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, Dec. 20, 1997, page 3140; <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d105:S.RES.75:>)

H.R. 1122

Kerrey opposed this bill, called the Abortion Procedure Ban Bill. This bill imposed penalties on doctors who performed late-term or “partial birth” abortions. It passed the Senate on May 20, 1997, but was vetoed by President Clinton. The Senate failed an override, 64-36, on Sept. 18, 1998. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, Dec. 20, 1997, page 3140; <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d105:H.R.1122.>)

S. 1292

The Line-Item Disapproval Bill was another measure Kerrey opposed. The bill passed 69-30 on Oct. 30, 1997. The bill disapproved the Line-Item Veto Law, and all of the actions that President Clinton took using the law, which allowed him to veto individual lines of passed bills. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Reports, Dec. 20, 1997, page 3140; <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c105:3:./temp/~c105jEUH2s:..>)

1998: 105th Cong., 2nd Sess.

Treaty Doc. 105-36

This treaty provision dealt with the proposed expansion of NATO in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. This measure revised the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty to admit Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into NATO. It was adopted 80-19 and Kerrey voted “yea.” The president supported this position. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 1172, May 2, 1998)

S. 1723

This bill was called Expanding Immigration for Skilled Workers. In this case, Kerrey voted for the bill, which President Clinton opposed. This bill increased the number of H-1B visas to allow highly skilled immigrants to work in the United States for six years from the current cap of 65,000 per year to 95,000 for the remainder of fiscal 1998. It also increased visa cap to 115,00 for following three fiscal years, but would sunset the cap at end of fiscal year 2002. The bill also increased authorization for educational grant, funding for Internet job bank, and funding to provide training opportunities in information technology. On May 18, 1998, the bill passed 78-20. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 1406, May 23, 1998)

H.R. 2646

This measure, Expanding Education Savings Accounts, allows individuals to contribute up to \$2,000 a year of after-tax funds in tax-sheltered savings accounts to pay for educational expenses. Bob Kerrey voted against the measure, which was also the president’s position, but the bill passed the Senate and was sent to the president with a 59-36 vote. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report pg. 1794 June 27, 1998)

S. 2057

The Fiscal 1999 Defense Authorization Bill was passed 88-4 on June 25, 1998, authorizing 3.6 percent raise in military pay with Kerrey’s support, but there were many controversial parts of the bill. Kerrey voted against Base Closures and Realignment (adopted 48-45) and for Overseas Military Hospital Abortions (rejected 44-49). Kerrey

also voted “nay” to Same-Sex Barrack and Training Amendment to prohibit the armed forces from housing male and female recruits in the same barracks and from conducting gender-integrated basic training. This amendment was rejected 39-53. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 1795, June 27, 1998)

H.R. 1122

On Sept. 18, 1998, the Senate voted on the House’s Abortion Procedure Ban Veto Override. Kerrey voted against this override of President Clinton’s veto. A two-thirds majority of those present and voting (67 in this case) was needed to override the veto, so it was rejected with a 64-36 vote. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 2618, Sept. 26, 1998)

1999: 106th Cong., 1st Sess.

Clinton Impeachment

In 1999, Senate had a turbulent start with the debate over the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. On Feb. 12, 1999, there was finally a vote. Article I of the Impeachment of President Clinton accused Clinton of “perjurious, false, and misleading testimony” during his federal grand jury testimony about his relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky in August 1998. Kerrey voted “nay” and Clinton was acquitted 45-55. Article II accused the president of obstruction of justice, concealing evidence, and delaying proceedings in the Paula Jones federal sexual harassment civil lawsuit. Kerrey again voted “nay” and Clinton was acquitted 50-50. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 409, Feb. 13, 1999)

S. 1344

The Managed Care Revisions Bill of 1999 was to provide federal protections, such as emergency care, continuing care, and approved clinical cancer trials, primarily for the 48 million Americans in self-insured health plans. The bill would also establish an internal and external appeals process, prohibit denials based on predictive genetic information, allow self-employed individuals to deduct the full cost of their health care and expand the availability of medical savings accounts. Kerrey sponsored the amendment to require plans to provide at least a 90-day extension of coverage for patients undergoing treatment if their plan changes or their doctor’s contract with the plan is terminated. It was rejected 48-52. Kerrey supported the Primary Physician clause (rejected 48-52) as well as the Emergency Room Coverage portion (rejected 47-53), Scope of Provisions (rejected 48-52) and Access to Specialists (rejected 47-53). Kerrey opposed Appeals Process and Medical Necessity (adopted 52-48), Cost Increases (adopted 52-48), Bill Scope, and Deduction for Self-Employed (adopted 53-47). Eventually the bill as a whole was passed 53-47 on July 15, 1999, but Kerrey voted against it. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 1745-66, July 17, 1999)

S. 1429

The bill was the 1999 tax package. Kerrey voted against Sunset Entire Bill (rejected 51-48) and voted for Veteran’s Health Care portion (rejected 58-42) and Pension Plans (rejected 48-52). Kerrey also voted to pass the entire bill to reduce federal taxes by \$792

billion over 10 years. The bill was passed 57-43 on July 30, 1999, in spite of opposition by President Clinton. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 1966-67, Aug. 7, 1999)

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

The Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was rejected in the Senate on Oct. 13, 1999. This treaty would ban nuclear weapons testing six months after the pact was ratified by 44 nations that have either nuclear power plants or nuclear research reactors. Kerrey voted the treaty, but the treaty was not ratified because of a 48-51 vote. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 2476, Oct. 16, 1999)

2000: 106th Cong., 2nd Sess.
H.Con.Res. 290

In April 2000, the Senate worked on the Fiscal 2001 Budget Resolution. This measure, the conference report, called for cutting taxes by \$150 billion over five years and creating a “reverse fund” of \$25 billion that could also be used for tax cuts. It established a \$40 billion reserve fund to overhaul Medicare and provide prescription drug coverage to seniors. The plan called for \$600.3 billion in discretionary spending and allowed for \$310.8 billion in defense appropriations. Kerrey voted against it, but the report was adopted 50-48 on April 13, 2000 (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 917-19, April 15, 2000)

H.R. 4516

A final major financial decision Kerrey voted on in 2000 was the Fiscal 2001 Legislative Branch, Treasury-Postal Service Appropriations Bill. This measure would appropriate \$2.5 billion in fiscal 2001 for the legislative branch, \$30.4 billion for the Treasury Department, Postal Service, executive office of president, and certain independent agencies. It would repeal the 3 percent federal exercise tax on telecommunications services by the end of 2002. Kerrey voted “Nay” on Sept. 20, 2000, and the report was rejected 28-69. (Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, pg. 2234, Sept. 23, 2000)