

*NCLA's Help! I'm an Accidental Government
Information Librarian presents ...*

Keeping Up With Congress

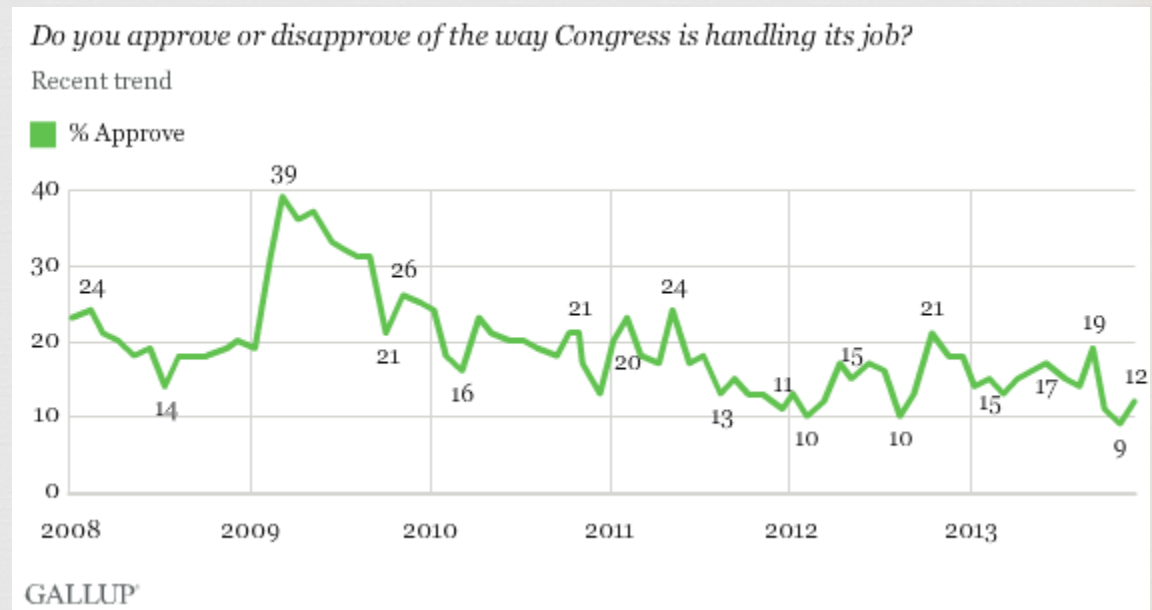


Jeremy Darrington
Politics Librarian, Princeton University
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Why bother?



- Widespread disillusionment
- Partisan rancor and gridlock: fewer than 75 laws passed in first session of the 113th Congress

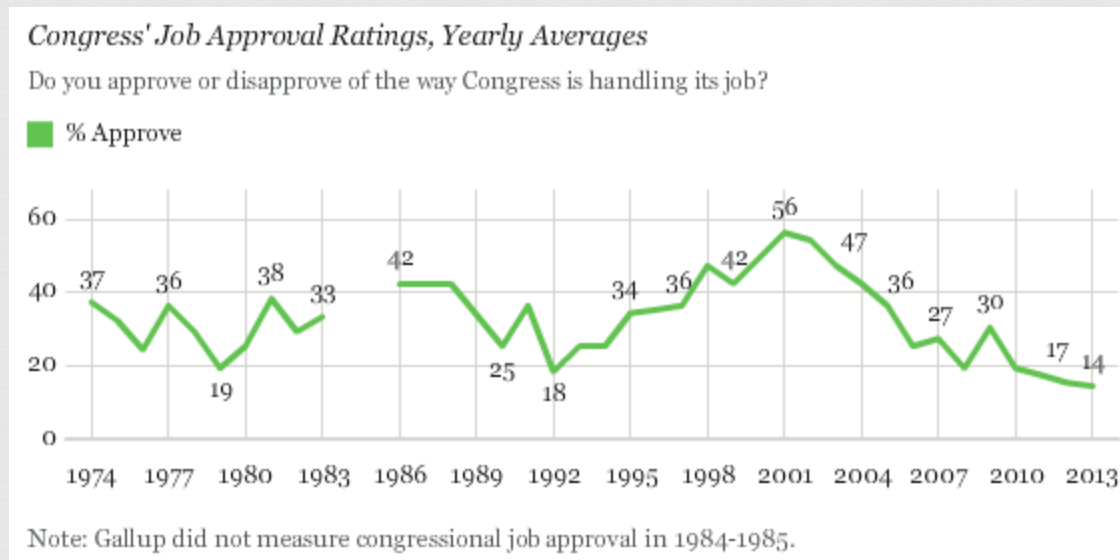


Source: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/166196/congress-job-approval-drops-time-low-2013.aspx>

Some perspective...



- Low expectations are the norm



Source: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/166196/congress-job-approval-drops-time-low-2013.aspx>

Some perspective...



- Partisan rancor isn't new either



Some perspective...



News



- ❧ CQ Roll Call: <http://www.rollcall.com/>
 - ❧ Detailed reporting of all the doings on the Hill. Coverage of numerous policy areas, influential staffers, lobbying, and more. Some nice reference material on member seniority, fundraising, and media appearances. Can register to set up various email alerts.
- ❧ CQ Weekly: <http://library.cqpress.com/cqweekly/>
 - ❧ Weekly news and analysis of prominent figures and events in Congress. Tables track key votes, presidential support votes, party unity, status of appropriations bills and other legislation.
- ❧ National Journal: <http://www.nationaljournal.com>
 - ❧ Good news coverage of Congress and US politics and some key sectors like Defense, Energy, and Health Care. Also hosts the Almanac of American Politics (requires subscription), a useful source for info on members and staffers, their districts, committees, and ideological vote rankings
- ❧ Politico: <http://www.politico.com/>
 - ❧ Good source for news on Congress and Capitol Hill
- ❧ NYT, Washington Post, and other news sites with good political coverage

Legislation:

finding, tracking, advocating



⌘ <http://beta.congress.gov/>

⌘ Replacement for THOMAS legislative system. Contains all legislation from 1973-present and the Congressional Record and committee reports from 1995-present. Can search or browse for legislation by category, member, or committee. No tracking options.

⌘ Note: THOMAS is still available until end of 2014 at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php>

⌘ <https://www.govtrack.us/>

⌘ Contains all legislation from 1973-present, some limited info on bills from earlier periods, roll call votes from 1789-present, and much more. Best source for tracking bills, members, and committees. Open API and bulk data downloads for data reuse.

Legislation: finding, tracking, advocating



☞ <http://www.opencongress.org/>

☞ Sunlight Foundation project for tracking legislation and members. Data from 109th Congress (2005)-present. Track bills, members, and committees; compare members voting records; get permalinks to individual lines of bill text; create tracking widgets. Interactive message builder for contacting all 3 reps at once. Open API for data reuse.

☞ <http://scout.sunlightfoundation.com/>

☞ Uses open data to create email or SMS alerts for bills in Congress, court opinions, federal regulations, state bills, GAO reports, and speeches in Congress. Can also add RSS feeds from any source to customize alerts.

Legislation:

finding, tracking, advocating



🌀 Popvox: <https://www.popvox.com/>

🌀 Tool for easily contacting Members of Congress. Open API and several interesting widgets for visualizing and mobilizing support/opposition to bills

🌀 <http://politics.nytimes.com/congress>

🌀 Covers major bills, votes, and nominations. Provides recent actions and links to bill full text. Can browse by subject category and get feeds for all their trackers

Committees



- ⌘ Govtrack and OpenCongress good for tracking committee bills and activity
- ⌘ Senate: https://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/committees/d_three_sections_with_teasers/committees_home.htm
- ⌘ House: <http://www.house.gov/committees/>
- ⌘ Committee sites can have lots of useful info – reports, press releases, hearing video and transcripts, etc. – but there is no uniformity
- ⌘ Many committees have subcommittees with their own websites as well as sites for the minority party (the link is often buried in the footer)

Votes



- ❧ Roll call votes (also linked from Congress.gov):
 - ❧ House (1990-present):
<http://clerk.house.gov/legislative/legvotes.aspx>
 - ❧ Senate (1989-present):
https://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/votes.htm
 - ❧ Senate cloture votes (1917-present):
https://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/reference/cloture_motions/clotureCounts.htm
- ❧ Govtrack has roll call votes back to 1789

113th Congress - 2nd Session (2014)

as compiled through the electronic voting machine
by the House Tally Clerks under the direction of the Clerk of the House

(Result designators are **P** for Passed, **F** for Failed, and **A** for Agreed To)

Roll	Date	Issue	Question	Result	Title/Description
62	11-Feb	H R 3448	On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended	P	To amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide for an optional pilot program allowing certain emerging growth companies to increase the tick sizes of their stocks
61	11-Feb	S 540	On Passage	P	To designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center
60	11-Feb	S 25	On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended	P	To direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain Federal features of the electric distribution system to the South Utah Valley Electric Service District, and for other purposes
59	11-Feb	H RES 475	On Agreeing to the Resolution	P	Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3193) to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, providing for proceedings from Feb. 13, 2014 - Feb. 24, 2014.
58	11-Feb	H RES 475	On Ordering the Previous Question	P	Providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3193) to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, providing for proceedings from Feb. 13, 2014 - Feb. 24, 2014.
57	10-Feb	JOURNAL	On Approving the Journal	P	
56	10-Feb	H RES 447	On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree, as Amended	P	Supporting the democratic and European aspirations of the people of the Ukraine, and their right to choose their own future free of intimidation and fear.
55	10-Feb	H R 2431	On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, as Amended	P	National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2013

FINAL VOTE RESULTS FOR ROLL CALL 61

(Republicans in roman; Democrats in *italic*; Independents underlined)

S 540 YEA-AND-NAY 11-Feb-2014 5:27 PM

QUESTION: On Passage

BILL TITLE: To designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the "Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center"

	<u>YEAS</u>	<u>NAYS</u>	PRES	<u>NV</u>
REPUBLICAN	28	199		5
DEMOCRATIC	193	2		5
INDEPENDENT				
TOTALS	221	201		10

— YEAS 221 —

<i>Andrews</i>	<i>Grayson</i>	<i>Negrete McLeod</i>
<i>Barber</i>	<i>Green, Al</i>	<i>Nolan</i>
<i>Bass</i>	<i>Green, Gene</i>	<i>Nunes</i>
<i>Beatty</i>	<i>Grijalva</i>	<i>O'Rourke</i>
<i>Becerra</i>	<i>Grimm</i>	<i>Owens</i>
<i>Bera (CA)</i>	<i>Gutiérrez</i>	<i>Pallone</i>
<i>Bishop (GA)</i>	<i>Hahn</i>	<i>Pascrell</i>
<i>Bishop (NY)</i>	<i>Hanabusa</i>	<i>Payne</i>
<i>Blumenauer</i>	<i>Hanna</i>	<i>Pelosi</i>
<i>Boehner</i>	<i>Hastings (FL)</i>	<i>Perlmutter</i>

S. 540: A bill to designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the "Patricia ...

On Passage of the Bill in the House

Number: House Vote #61 [primary source: [house.gov](#)]

Date: Feb 11, 2014 (113th Congress)

Result: Passed

TRACK VOTES

This was a vote to pass a bill.

Bill: [S. 540: A bill to designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the "Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center".](#)

Introduced by [Sen. Jeanne Shaheen \[D-NH\]](#) on March 12, 2013

	TOTALS		REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRAT
YEA	221	51%	28	193
NAY	201	47%	199	2
NOT VOTING	10	2%	5	5
REQUIRED:	Simple Majority			



Seat position based on our [ideology score](#).

VOTE DETAILS

Download as [CSV](#) | [XML](#) | [JSON](#)

VOTE	PARTY	REPRESENTATIVE	DISTRICT
Alabama			
NAY	R	Byrne, Bradley	AL 1 st

VOTE	PARTY	REPRESENTATIVE	DISTRICT
Indiana			
YEA	D	Visclosky, Peter	IN 1 st

VOTE	PARTY	REPRESENTATIVE	DISTRICT
NAY	R	Hudson, Richard	NC 8 th
NAY	R	Pittenger, Robert	NC 9 th

Calendars & Schedules: House

☞ House floor schedule:

<http://majorityleader.gov/Floor/>

☞ House committee hearings schedule:

<http://docs.house.gov/committee/>

☞ House bills to be considered:

<http://docs.house.gov/floor/>

☞ House floor summary for the day:

<http://clerk.house.gov/floorsummary/floor.aspx>

☞ Today's House calendar and history of legislation:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/getTodaysHouseCalendar.action>

1. UNION CALENDAR

Rule XIII, clause 1(a):

“(1) A Calendar of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, to which shall be referred public bills and public resolutions raising revenue, involving a tax or charge on the people, directly or indirectly making appropriations of money or property or requiring such appropriations to be made, authorizing payments out of appropriations already made, releasing any liability to the United States for money or property, or referring a claim to the Court of Claims.”

2013 Feb. 12	Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union. (H. Doc. 113-1)	Message of the President of the United States to the Congress on the subject of the state of the Union.	No. 6
Rept. 113-11 Mar. 5	Mr. Issa (Oversight and Government Reform).	Billions of Federal Tax Dollars Misspent on New York's Medicaid Program.	7
Rept. 113-23 Mar. 25	Mr. Issa (Oversight and Government Reform).	Oversight Plans for all House Committees.	11
H.R. 249 Apr. 12 Part I	Mr. Issa (Oversight and Government Reform). Rept. 113-38	To amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that persons having seriously delinquent tax debts shall be ineligible for Federal employment. (Failed of passage under suspension of the rules Apr. 15, 2013.)	24
Apr. 12 House Administration discharged			
H.R. 1549 Apr. 19	Mr. Upton (Energy and Commerce). Rept. 113-45	To amend Public Law 111-148 to transfer fiscal year 2013 through fiscal year 2016 funds from the Prevention and Public Health Fund to carry out the temporary high risk health insurance pool program for individuals with preexisting conditions, and to extend access to such program to such individuals who have had creditable coverage during the 6 months prior to application for coverage through such program.	28
H.R. 1208 May 17	Mr. Hastings of Washington (Natural Resources). Rept. 113-66	To establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Los Alamos, New Mexico, and Hanford, Washington, and for other purposes.	42

3:47:34 P.M.	H. Res. 478	Considered as privileged matter. H. Res. 478 — "Providing for consideration of the bill (S. 540), to designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the "Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center", and for other purposes."
3:48:40 P.M.	H. Res. 478	DEBATE - The House proceeded with one hour of debate on H. Res. 478 .
4:14:11 P.M.	H. Res. 478	The previous question was ordered without objection.
4:14:18 P.M.	H. Res. 478	On agreeing to the resolution Agreed to by voice vote.
4:14:28 P.M.	H. Res. 478	Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
4:15:00 P.M.	S. 540	Considered under the provisions of rule H. Res. 478. S. 540 — "To designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the "Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center"."
4:15:05 P.M.	S. 540	Rule provides for consideration of S. 540 with 1 hour of general debate. Previous question shall be considered as ordered without intervening motions except motion to recommit with or without instructions. Measure will be considered read. Bill is closed to amendments.
4:16:21 P.M.	S. 540	DEBATE - The House proceeded with one hour of debate on S. 540 .
4:57:41 P.M.	S. 540	The previous question was ordered pursuant to the rule.
5:28:18 P.M.	S. 540	On passage Passed by the Yeas and Nays: 221 - 201 (Roll no. 61).
5:28:18 P.M.	S. 540	Motion to reconsider laid on the table Agreed to without objection.
5:28:30 P.M.	H.R. 3448	Considered as unfinished business. H.R. 3448 — "To amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide for an optional pilot program allowing certain emerging growth companies to increase the tick sizes of their stocks."
5:36:47 P.M.	H.R. 3448	On motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended Agreed to by the Yeas and Nays: (2/3 required): 412 - 4 (Roll no. 62).

House floor summary

There are 4 versions of Bill Number S.540 for the 113th Congress. **Usually, the last item is the most recent.**

- 1 . To designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the `Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center'. (Introduced in Senate - IS)[[S.540.IS](#)][[PDF](#)]
- 2 . To designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the `Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center'. (Engrossed in Senate [Passed Senate] - ES)[[S.540.ES](#)][[PDF](#)]
- 3 . To designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the `Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center'. (Referred in House - RFH)[[S.540.RFH](#)][[PDF](#)]
- 4 . Temporary Debt Limit Extension Act (Engrossed Amendment House - EAH)[[S.540.EAH](#)][[PDF](#)]

In the House of Representatives, U. S.,

February 11, 2014.

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 540) entitled `An Act to designate the air route traffic control center located in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the `Patricia Clark Boston Air Route Traffic Control Center'.', do pass with the following

AMENDMENT:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the `Temporary Debt Limit Extension Act'.

SEC. 2. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF PUBLIC DEBT LIMIT.

(a) In General- Section 3101(b) of title 31, United States Code, shall not apply for the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on March 15, 2015.


Calendars & Schedules:

Senate

- ☞ Senate floor schedule:
https://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/d_three_sections_with_teasers/calendars.htm
- ☞ Senate committee hearings schedule:
https://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/committees/b_three_sections_with_teasers/committee_hearings.htm
- ☞ Today's Senate Legislative Calendar:
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/getTodaysSenateCalendar.action>
- ☞ Today's Senate Executive Calendar:
https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/executive_calendar/xcalv.pdf
- ☞ CR Daily Digest for what happened during the day:
<http://beta.congress.gov/congressional-record>

Video



- ⌘ House floor proceedings: <http://houselive.gov>
 - ⌘ Covers proceedings back to 2009; also allows you to search the floor summary and closed caption text and then click right to that portion of the video
- ⌘ House committee live streams: <http://thomas.loc.gov/video/house-committee>
 - ⌘ Has previous hearings from 2012-present. Can also find video through committee sites; some have archives going back to 1997.
- ⌘ Senate doesn't require committees to live stream, so no central location for Senate video. Go through each committee's site to find what's available
- ⌘ Senate floor proceedings: <https://www.senate.gov/floor/index.htm>
 - ⌘ Note: links only appear in IE and by accepting the "unsecure" content; can also see in FF by clicking on the  symbol next to the URL and choosing "Disable protection on this page"
- ⌘ Live coverage of Congress from C-SPAN: <http://www.c-span.org/live/>
- ⌘ C-SPAN Video Library: <http://www.c-span.org/about/videoLibrary/>
 - ⌘ More than 200,000 hours of video going back to 1986. Can browse for video by member, committee, or vote and create clips from video to save or share

Other tools



- ☞ Sunlight's Congress app:
<http://congress.sunlightfoundation.com/>
- ☞ View deleted tweets of politicians:
<http://politwoops.sunlightfoundation.com/>
- ☞ Search and visualization of Congressional speeches:
<http://capitolwords.org/>

Final thoughts



- ☞ Support open government and open data movements and organizations
- ☞ Make your voice heard, but be civil
- ☞ Questions or comments?

Jeremy Darrington

jdarring@princeton.edu

