



The Architect of the Capitol has begun the final phase of the Dome Restoration Project.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

## Voting Record for the 114th Congress First Session

BY SISTER MARGE CLARK, NETWORK LOBBYIST

It seems that every year ends in a mix of wins and losses when considering the accomplishments of the House and the Senate. In 2015, the mix was more positive than we had anticipated. Several bills sent to the President for his signature evidenced the desire of members of Congress to work together and bridge divides, such as the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act, Bipartisan Budget Act, Iran Nuclear Agreement Review, and Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. While others only passed one chamber, such as the Federal Employee Antidiscrimination Act and the Homes for Heroes Act, we still see evidence of a willingness to come together to find policy solutions for complex problems.

As usual, Congress pushed difficult decisions on taxes and funding of the government to the last possible moment. In weeks prior to the release, we heard little about the negotiations, particularly on the funding bill, as staff and members worked behind closed doors. It is to their advantage to keep it quiet, as it limits the time others have to raise opposition. We heard speculation that hundreds of “poison pill” riders were proposed, which would have affected immigrants, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), the environment, Syrian refugees, and more. Despite the closed-door negotiations, we did our best to lobby against these harmful provisions to insure the legislation worked for the 100%.

Just before midnight, two days before the temporary continuing resolution expired, the tax and funding bills were re-

leased to the House and the Senate. The deadline forced an additional short term continuing resolution to provide time for floor work and bringing each bill to a vote. NETWORK is pleased with both bills. Certainly, the budget is far from what we would want it to be, but it is equally as far from how damaging it might have been. Attention was given to the needs of those at the margins through increased funding to human needs programs above the sequester level. In addition, almost all the poison pill riders vanished.

NETWORK’s major concern in the tax extender bill was the permanence of the improvements to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and to the Child Tax Credit (CTC), which were set to expire in a very uncertain 2017. We were pleased this, and several other credits to help working families, were included for permanency. Months earlier, the committee had only planned to include tax breaks for businesses. The advocacy of NETWORK, our members, friends, and partners helped to change hearts and minds, bringing the consideration of the common good to this bill.

The voting record charts will give you a sense of the values and decisions of Senators and Representatives—and where they stand in relation to the issues you, and we, have worked on throughout this year.

With hope, we look forward to 2016, that even in a Presidential election year, legislation will pass. The criminal

justice reform bill is ready and has momentum, but given the shortened calendar, it must move quickly. Bills related to family and personal medical leave, and those requiring adaptations for women who are pregnant or with a young infant, may also be discussed. Focused on their campaigns, members will use legislation and votes for messaging purposes.

This might not result in ideas becoming law, but we hope this year will build the groundwork for a strong transition to the next Congress and some progress toward justice for those living on the margins. Congress needs to continue hearing your voice. We saw some positive legislation last year. Help us be able to say the same a year from now.

### Senate Voting Record 2015

#### 1. Immigration Rule of Law Act of 2015 • Vote #63 (S. 534)

NETWORK opposed this bill, which prohibits funds from being used to carry out certain executive actions related to immigration, including DACA and DAPA.

*Cloture was not invoked, disallowing further consideration 57–42 (1 not voting), February 27, 2015*

#### 2. Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 • Vote #144 (H.R. 2)

NETWORK supported this bill. The two-year reauthorization will improve children’s healthcare through providing child-focused health insurance that covers all of their medical needs.

*Passed 92–8, April 14, 2015  
Became law April 16, 2015*

#### 3. The Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 • Vote #219 (Amendment to H.R. 2146)

*(Official Bill Title: To amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers to make penalty-free withdrawals from governmental plans after age 50, and for other purposes)*

NETWORK opposed this bill. The law provides an expedited legislative procedure for the consideration and approval of trade agreements known as “fast track.” Under the rule, a trade agreement cannot be amended, must receive a vote in both houses, cannot be filibustered in the Senate, and is passed by a simple majority rather than the 2/3rd standard (Article 2, Section 2) required for treaties.

*Passed 60–38 (2 not voting), June 24, 2015  
Became law June 29, 2015*

#### 4. To repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 entirely • Vote #253 (S. Amdt. 2328 to S. Amdt. 2327 to S. Amdt. 2266 to H.R. 22)

NETWORK opposed this amendment, and all other measures that attempted to repeal or dismantle the Affordable Care Act.

*Cloture was not invoked, disallowing further consideration 49–43 (8 not voting), July 26, 2015*

#### 5. National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 • Vote #277 (H.R. 1735)

NETWORK opposed this bill, which would have broken parity by significantly increasing the amount of money the Pentagon receives through the unmonitored Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund. A significant increase to the OCO was obtained through the Defense Appropriations bill, but half the increase in funding went to Foreign Operations, therefore not breaking the parity principle.

*Agreed to 70–27 (3 not voting), October 7, 2015  
Vetoed October 22, 2015*

#### 6. Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act • Vote #280 (S. 2146)

NETWORK opposed this bill, which would penalize hundreds of cities and counties for adopting policies that work to restore community trust with police by limiting police involvement in immigration enforcement. The legislation would deny these jurisdictions federal funding for housing and create mandatory minimums and increase the maximum penalty for undocumented immigrants.

*Cloture was not invoked, disallowing further consideration 54–45 (1 not voting), October 20, 2015*

#### 7. Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 • Vote #294 (H.R. 1314)

NETWORK supported this budget agreement, which was a compromise that raised revenue and budget caps. Furthermore, the budget caps were raised equally between defense and nondefense spending. While the deal did not achieve all of NETWORK’s objectives, it was a better option for our nation than a budget that adheres to sequester caps.

*Passed 64–35 (1 not voting), October 30, 2015  
Became law November 2, 2015*

#### 8. Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 • Vote #339 (H.R. 2029)

NETWORK supported this bill, which combined the tax and budget legislation passed as separate bills in the House (House Voting Record #10 and #11). The tax portion of the bill made permanent the 2009 expansions to the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit. The deal also provided increased funding for human needs programs with amounts above the sequester level.

*Passed 65–33 (2 not voting), December 18, 2015  
Became law December 18, 2015*

*There were no changes in the Senate during this Session.*





114th CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

HOW THEY VOTED IN THE HOUSE

Table with 12 columns (1-11 and %) and rows for ALABAMA, ALASKA, ARIZONA, ARKANSAS, CALIFORNIA, etc., showing voting records for various bills.

Key to votes:

- Voted with NETWORK +
Voted against NETWORK -
Did not vote o
Inactive/not in office I

CALIFORNIA, continued

Table with 12 columns (1-11 and %) and rows for California legislators (37-53), showing voting records for various bills.

114th CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

HOW THEY VOTED IN THE HOUSE

Table with 12 columns (1-11 and %) and rows for GEORGIA, HAWAII, IDAHO, ILLINOIS, INDIANA, IOWA, KANSAS, etc., showing voting records for various bills.

Key to votes:

- Voted with NETWORK +
Voted against NETWORK -
Did not vote o
Inactive/not in office I

KENTUCKY

Table with 12 columns (1-11 and %) and rows for Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, etc., showing voting records for various bills.

\*Percentage with asterisk (\*) signifies that legislator did not vote on all relevant bills.

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114th CONGRESS FIRST SESSION HOW THEY VOTED IN THE HOUSE

Table showing voting records for 114th Congress First Session across various states including Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, and New York. Includes columns for legislative topics and percentage of votes cast.

Key to votes:

Key to votes table explaining symbols: Voted with NETWORK (+), Voted against NETWORK (-), Did not vote (o), Inactive/not in office (I). Includes a color-coded bar for 'Of votes cast, percentage voted with NETWORK'.

NEW YORK, continued

Continuation of voting records for New York legislators, including names like Joseph Crowley, Jose Serrano, Eliot Engel, and others, with their respective voting patterns and percentages.

114th CONGRESS FIRST SESSION HOW THEY VOTED IN THE HOUSE

Table showing voting records for 114th Congress First Session across various states including Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia. Includes columns for legislative topics and percentage of votes cast.

Key to votes:

Key to votes table explaining symbols: Voted with NETWORK (+), Voted against NETWORK (-), Did not vote (o), Inactive/not in office (I). Includes a color-coded bar for 'Of votes cast, percentage voted with NETWORK'.

TEXAS, continued

Continuation of voting records for Texas legislators, including names like Lamar Smith, Pete Olson, Will Hurd, and others, with their respective voting patterns and percentages.

\*Percentage with asterisk (\*) signifies that legislator did not vote on all relevant bills.

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## Bridging Divides

Despite a tumultuous year of politicking on Capitol Hill, we saw several additional instances where Congress worked across the aisle to tackle important social issues.

### 1. Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015 (H.R. 1191)

NETWORK applauds this compromise bill, which ensures that Iran's nuclear activities will not constitute an unreasonable defense and security risk, and ensures that Iran's permitted nuclear activities won't be used to further any nuclear-related military or nuclear explosive purpose including any related research.

*Passed Senate 98-1 (1 not voting),*

*May 7, 2015, Vote #174*

*Passed House 400-25 (7 not voting),*

*May 14, 2015, Vote # 226*

*Became Law May 22, 2015*

### 2. Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (S. 178)

NETWORK applauds Congress for working together to pass this act, which aims to end sex trafficking crimes and provides funding for victims of trafficking.

*Passed Senate 99-0 (1 not voting),*

*April 22, 2015, Vote #163*

*Passed House 420-3 (9 not voting),*

*May 19, 2015, Vote #244*

*Became law May 29, 2015*

### 3. Federal Employee Anti-discrimination Act (H.R. 1557)

NETWORK applauds the House of Representatives for coming together to pass this act, which would expand disclosure and create accountability regarding acts of discrimination.

*Passed House 403-0 (30 not voting),*

*July 21, 2015, Vote #448*

### 4. Homes for Heroes Act of 2015 (H.R. 251)

NETWORK applauds the House of Representatives for working together to create a plan to end veteran homelessness.

*Passed House 412-1 (20 not voting),*

*July 14, 2015, Vote #435*

### 5. Portman Amendment No. 349 to S.Con.Res 11

NETWORK applauds the Senate for agreeing to an amendment which would establish a deficit-neutral reserve fund to lower the costs of raising medically complex children in Medicaid.

*Agreed to by Senate 96-0 (4 not*

*voting), March 24, 2015, Vote #80*

## An Open Letter to Our Members from the NETWORK and NETWORK Education Boards of Directors

January, 2016

Dear Members,

Marge Piercy in her poem "To Be of Use" acclaims her favorite kind of people:

I love people who harness themselves, an ox to a heavy cart,  
who pull like water buffalo, with massive patience,  
who strain in the mud and the muck to move things forward,  
who do what has to be done, again and again.

Most of us, perhaps, would hope for comparisons to animals more majestic or elegant than oxen or water buffalo. Fortunately, since its beginnings in 1971, NETWORK has been blessed with Board members who are dedicated to moving things forward and to doing what has to be done again and again. The current boards of our organizations—the 501(c)(3) NETWORK Education Program and the 501(c)(4) NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby—build on that tradition of imagination, commitment, and creativity.

One of the strengths of NETWORK has been its ability to respond nimbly to changing and sometimes challenging circumstances in the world and in the church. We continue as a Board our ongoing process of adapting our structures and procedures in ways that make our organizations more faithful to our mission and more able to achieve it. We have recently completed a major revision of our bylaws to more accurately reflect our current reality. We have a number of board committees that meet monthly by conference call in order to tend the implementation of the directions we set at our biannual face to face meetings.

We have also recently established a system for an orderly cycling of members on and off the boards to ensure that we maintain the right balance between experience and new energy and perspective. Toward the end of 2016 we will begin again the discernment process for new members for our boards. You might want to begin reflecting whether you or someone you know might be sensing a call to serve on one of our boards.

Truly the work of advocating for a more just, peaceful and verdant world requires the "massive patience" that Piercy mentions. Let's continue to support and pray for one another as NETWORK and NETWORK Education Program work, "to move things forward...to do what has to be done, again and again."

*Patricia Mejia, Board Chair, NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby*  
*Dean Manternach, Board Chair, NETWORK Education Program*