

## WAS THE 'CONTRACT' FULFILLED?

**I**n their 1994 campaigns, House Republicans signed a "Contract With America" that committed them to work for revolutionary change in the way Washington conducts business. They promised—and delivered—votes on all the proposals. The House approved everything in the contract except a constitutional amendment to limit congressional terms. But many of the proposals ran into resistance in the Senate and White House. At the end of the contract's first year, few of its provisions have become law. Below, a look at what has become of the contract.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	STATUS
<b>Congressional compliance</b>	Subjects Congress to federal employment laws.	Signed into law.
<b>Unfunded mandates</b>	Curbs mandates on states unless funds are supplied to fulfill the mandates.	Signed into law.
<b>Balanced budget amendment</b>	Amends the Constitution to require a balanced budget by 2002.	House passed; Senate defeated. Both houses passed legislation, now being negotiated with White House, to balance budget by 2002.
<b>Line-item veto</b>	Allows president to cut individual items in congressional appropriations.	Passed both houses in different form. House-Senate negotiators expected to agree on something similar to House version.
<b>Crime</b>	Cuts crime spending while toughening sentencing.	Passed House; no action in the Senate. Both houses approved limits on death-row appeals but stalled on antiterrorism legislation that would have enacted those limits.
<b>Welfare</b>	Ends federal entitlement to welfare. Shifts program to the states, limits benefits and imposes work requirements.	Passed both houses; President Clinton has vowed veto of House-Senate compromise.
<b>Tax cuts</b>	Provides \$500-per-child tax credit, reduces capital gains tax, expands IRA savings, repeals "marriage penalty" for joint returns.	Included in budget reconciliation bill that Clinton vetoed; also included in budget being negotiated between Congress and White House.
<b>Social Security</b>	Raises limit of what can be earned before benefits are reduced and repeals 1993 increase in benefits subject to income tax.	Repeal of benefits increase passed by both houses and dropped in conference. The House and a Senate committee have approved earnings increase.
<b>National security</b>	Increases defense spending, limits U.S. participation in U.N. peacekeeping operations and authorizes new missile defense system.	House and Senate passed, and Clinton approved, \$7 billion increase in defense spending. House and Senate approved missile defense and limits on peacekeeping operations as part of a defense bill Clinton vetoed.

<b>Regulations</b>	Restricts power of government to regulate health, safety and the environment.	Passed the House; stalled in the Senate.
<b>Litigation restraints</b>	Limits punitive damages, overhauls product liability laws and makes loser pay costs of suit. Also limits litigation on securities transactions.	All measures passed the House; the Senate approved only a narrow product liability bill and securities reform. Both houses overrode Clinton's securities veto.
<b>Term limits</b>	Limits terms for members of the House and the Senate.	Rejected by House; Senate action planned for 1996.

*The following issues were not in the "Contract With America" but nonetheless were a key part of the debates that defined the 104th Congress.*

- **Flag-burning:** House approved constitutional amendment to ban desecration of the American flag; Senate rejected it.
- **Terrorism:** Senate approved an antiterrorism bill proposed by Clinton; the bill stalled in the House.
- **Bosnia:** After Clinton requested congressional approval of U.S. troop deployment, the Senate voted to acquiesce to the deployment. The House approved a resolution supporting the troops but opposing Clinton's policy.
- **Abortion:** Both houses approved new constraints, including a ban on a procedure for late-term abortions. That issue is headed to conference and Clinton has threatened a veto.
- **Lobbying and gifts:** Both houses approved and Clinton signed legislation to strengthen lobbyist registration and disclosure laws; both houses approved bans or sharp restrictions on gifts to members of Congress.
- **Telecommunications:** Both houses approved bills overhauling telecommunications laws; a conference agreement is pending. Clinton is said to approve of the final version.