

Spending Vote Threatens GOP Unity

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House Leaders Face Moderates' Revolt on Education, Health, Labor Issues

By Dan Morgan
Washington Post Staff Writer

House Republican leaders sought yesterday to preserve the unity that has been a hallmark of their success in the face of mini-rebellions from warring blocs of moderates and conservatives over spending legislation.

Their immediate problem was a threat by moderates to block House consideration next week of a \$60 billion education, health and labor funding bill, unless they were given a chance to knock out provisions supported by antiabortion forces.

After meeting with Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) Wednesday night, moderate GOP members said it appeared that the House would be allowed to vote on resurrecting the government's family planning program. The Nixon era "Title X" program was eliminated in committee at the urging of the Christian right in part because a major recipient of funds, Planned Parenthood, also performs abortions.

But the possibility remained that conservatives themselves would torpedo the bill unless moderates were precluded by parliamentary rules from debating and voting on the committee's action.

Rep. James C. Greenwood (R-Pa.), a member of the moderate "Tuesday Lunch Bunch," said he would be hard-pressed to vote for the spending bill if he was blocked from offering his amendment to restore the Title X program.

But even if the leadership finds a way to placate the two groups on the volatile abortion and family issues in the bill, other divisions have emerged this week over social policy, labor and environmental issues.

A protest by another moderate GOP faction led by Rep. Rick Lazio (R-N.Y.) produced significant changes in a housing appropriations bill that went to the floor yesterday. The final deal, hammered out in a meeting with Gingrich on Tuesday night, restored more than \$600 million in housing funds for the elderly, sick and disabled, and eliminated rent increases for public housing tenants.

Rep. Marge Roukema (R-N.J.) said this restored "humaneness" to

the bill, and the changes were adopted by voice vote. But the housing concessions did not allay moderates' concerns about riders in the same bill easing environmental restrictions. Rep. Sherwood L. Boehlert (R-N.Y.) planned to introduce an amendment eliminating riders curbing enforcement of Clean Water Act provisions. "I'm not disappointed" about the riders, Boehlert told a reporter. "I'm offended."

Trouble for the GOP could also be brewing over provisions easing enforcement of job safety and labor laws. Rep. Jack Quinn (R-N.Y.), from the old-line labor town of Buffalo, said he and a group of like-minded Republicans were "taking a serious look" at whether to support the labor, health and education appropriations bill because of anti-labor provisions.

Nonetheless, the Republicans representing more radically conservative fiscal and social views have also been scoring victories. Members of one sub-group, the Conservative Action Team, agreed this week to postpone an effort to kill the Legal Services Corp. in a bill funding the Commerce Department, but only on condition that the Judiciary Committee would move swiftly to consider its fate, based on keeping it on a path to termination.

Conservatives also extracted a leadership pledge that legislation to dismantle the Commerce Department would be wrapped into the catch-all budget bill addressing Medicare and Medicaid cuts in the fall.

While legislative bargaining on social issues and government reorganization went on behind the scenes, hardware issues took center stage. The House voted against cutting \$1.6 billion from the space station. Across the Capitol, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to keep alive support for General Atomics Inc.'s helium-cooled graphite reactor.

The House had eliminated federal support, but Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) rounded up support for \$5 million to "evaluate" the project, in which Bechtel Corp., Stone & Webster, Allied Signal and Asea Brown Boveri also have an interest. Although the sum is small, the stakes are huge. Ultimately at issue is the

type of nuclear reactor that becomes the model for the 21st century, when energy supplies of oil and gas begin to run low. A House-Senate conference committee last night approved a \$2.1 billion appropriations bill for the legislative branch that shuts down the Office of Technology Assessment as of Oct. 1. Conferees accepted the Senate proposal to abolish the office that does scientific research for Congress. The House version would have scaled the office down and merged it with the Congressional Research Service.

Staff writer Kenneth J. Cooper contributed to this report.
