

# Congress Shatters Patterns In Its Reaction to Refugees

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Reflecting the nation's ambivalence, Congress' sweet-and-sour reaction to Indochina refugees departs sharply from the usual ideological patterns.

The Senate's welcome refugees resolution, adopted 91 to 1 Thursday, was co-sponsored by one of its most conservative members, James B. Allen (D-Ala.); the only vote against it was cast by the equally conservative William L. Scott (R-Va.).

In the House Judiciary Committee, the only votes against a refugee relief bill were cast by four liberal Democrats.

Most members of Congress adopt the line that America, as a nation founded by refugees, should welcome others. But this occasionally bumps into the economic argument that a recession is no time to bring in thousands of people seeking jobs. And once in a while a member of Congress suggests that perhaps not all the refugees are worthy of help.

Rep. William L. Hungate (D-Mo.) from rural Missouri was one of the four votes against the refugee relief bill. He complained that on the same day President Ford was vetoing the farm bill as too expensive he was asking for more than \$500 million in refugee aid.

Hungate called the request a "hasty emotional decision" that does not distinguish between the "valiant and corrupt . . . the poor or the wealthy" among refugees.

Hungate said he understood that refugees arriving in Guam had \$2 million in gold. "You couldn't find that much gold in my district if you pulled teeth," he said.

Both black members of the House Judiciary Committee voted against the open-ended authorization bill. Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) said he saw no signs of a bloodbath in Vietnam and asked: "What's the peril?" Rep. Barbara Jordan (D-Tex.) had attempted in vain to put a dollar ceiling on the authorization.

The Congressional Black Caucus of 17 liberal House Democrats issued a statement saying: "It is tragic that on the eve of this nation's bicentennial celebration—a nation largely composed of refugees—that the issue of accommodating less than 100,000 is even raised. The Congressional Black Caucus is not debating whether Vietnamese refugees should or should not be accorded our government's assistance. The real issue is how can we apply our enormous resources to effectively service the needs and respond to the priorities of all people in the nation."

The black members of Congress appeared to be saying that the government should not give preferential treatment to a small group of refugees, but should move forward on a broad front to provide jobs for all, American blacks and foreign refugees alike.

Rep. Jack Brooks (D-Tex.) voted against the refugee bill, saying he was concerned about jobs for Americans. Sen. Scott, voting against the "good samaritan" resolution, said, "We have a responsibility to our own people that transcends that which we have to other nations."

The American Conservative Union issued a statement urging "an end to the

animosity toward the refugees" and calling on "all Americans to join in welcoming them as friends and future citizens."

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) said the refugee program probably should be expanded to provide for resettlement of homesick refugees in their homelands later.

Sen. Barry M. Goldwater (R-Ariz.), a conservative leader, said during Senate debate on the resolution of welcome: "I often wonder where I would be today had the attitude that we suspect on the part of some Americans prevailed in this country when my Polish-Jewish grandfather brought his English wife to our shores, and eventually we got Scotch and Irish out of our mother's side. I think I like it better the way it is than the way it might have been."

House Majority Leader Thomas P. O'Neill (D-Mass.) was asked on a recent television interview whether he thought it would create a serious problem to bring large numbers of refugees here during a time of high unemployment. O'Neill said he thought it would not be a problem because:

"The truth of the matter is that there are so many jobs that are available, real lower-echelon jobs of working in a kitchen in a restaurant, probably running an elevator, we know in this day and age that we can't fill jobs because a person can get more by being on welfare."

O'Neill said he expected many would start off, as Cuban refugees did 15 years ago, in "menial jobs" and work their way up.