

004428 OCT 10 91



POUGHKEEPSIE, NY 12603

C-SPAN

10/8/91

Friends:

OCT 22 AM '91

In view of the attention paid to the issue of the Congressional "perks", I thought it might be of interest to note the coverage occurring in a minor "local" paper.

The two items "Congress arrogance" and the editorial focus on Rostenkowski as a lead. The pollster's article on the consequences (potential). Of course, one perspective, may be that the issue is small enough to give the appearance of being understandable. An example (in very local or small organizations) is the ability to argue vigorously over the "cost of light bulbs" while glossing over more complex and expensive issues are glossed over lightly.

I note here that this issue, with 3 articles in one issue of this paper, was more coverage than more major items of local concern such as a \$1,00 Million budget.

I refrain from belaboring the obvious consequences but suggest, if this perspective is common, the next election may well be full of surprises.

I thank you

Washington

Pollsters find voter confidence gap

By **CHUCK RAASCH**
Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — Politics 1992 could be an Alice in Wonderland experience, with not even the re-election of popular President Bush a certainty, warn top pollsters and party strategists.

"Nothing is as it seems," pollster Gordon Black told journalists at a political conference this week.

Democratic strategist Paul Tully agreed.

"Voters are very frustrated and very angry and prepared to do all sorts of extraordinary things," he said.

"I generally do not consider George Bush invincible next year, based on the reality out there," added veteran GOP consultant Eddie Mahe, addressing the potentially "corrosive" effects of polls showing

most Americans think the country is on the wrong track.

Prevailing wisdom has Bush capping a fourth straight GOP presidential victory against a Democratic opponent from his party's second string, with Democrats retaining control of the Senate and House.

But pollsters and strategists talk of a yawning confidence gap between citizens and elected officials that throws huge questions into that formula. It is an atmosphere fraught with powerful anti-politician symbols like bouncing checks for congressmen, federal pay raises amid record deficits.

"I have this theory that there are two parties now, the elected officials and the rest of us," said Mary Ann Best, of the term-limit group Citizens for Congressional Reform. "In a sense, it is the insiders and the out-

siders, and the time has come when the outsiders will say, 'This is it, this is enough.'"

Voters "feel like no one is talking to them," said Democratic pollster Peter Hart.

Meanwhile, members of Congress "don't understand what they have done to deserve" the growing anger, said Susan Manes, vice president of the citizens lobby Common Cause.

Democratic focus group interviews show an "alarming degree of public alienation toward all of our social institutions," said Leslie Francis, head of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Tom Cole, his Republican counterpart, said one GOP member recently described the mood of his district as: " 'Nasty, nasty. People are just mad.' I said, 'Are they mad at you?' And he said, 'They're just mad.'"

"This old idea of, 'I like my congressman but dislike the Congress' is beginning to dissipate," Cole said.

Tully, a veteran of presidential campaigns back to in 1964, predicted "a very ugly '92 election," with Republicans pursuing "mean and obfuscating tactics," including race-based attacks on things such as hiring quo-

tas. "They cannot contain themselves on racial division," he said.

But Republicans say Tully is firing pre-emptive strikes to cover anticipated attacks on Bush, who is a different candidate than in 1988 because he has a record to defend.

All the analysts agreed the economy will be a crucial factor.



**Hair Replacement
Specialist**

SPECIAL OFFER: 2 For the Price of 1

Call: 724-3021 or 297-1362
7 Days a Week 9am-9pm

Washington

Right-leaning Supreme Court has full c

Thomas will miss opening

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court opens its 1991-92 term Monday with a crowded docket expected to test the resolve of the court's conservative majority. Absent will be Clarence Thomas, still awaiting confirmation as the newest justice.

Over the next nine months, the court will decide high-profile cases on school prayer and school desegregation, the prosecution of hate crimes and abortion protesters, and lawsuits over the dangers of smoking.

The Senate appeared likely to confirm Thomas this week, but the black federal judge picked by President Bush to become history's 106th high court member likely won't start working as a justice until the term's second week.

schools overwhelmingly black or white.

The justices are expected to use the Georgia case to specify how judges are to determine whether full integration has occurred.

"The court is eager to establish a clear rule on when desegregation orders end," said Susan Bloch, a

Georgetown University law professor.

In case, the court must decide whether Mississippi is unlawfully operating a racially segregated system of state universities.

The court's ruling will affect the future vitality of predominantly black colleges and universities in

other states as well.

In a politically sensitive free-speech case, the court is studying whether St. Paul, Minn., and other communities may outlaw cross burnings and other hate crimes.

The court must decide in a Virginia case what authority federal courts have over anti-abortion pro-

testers who block access to abortion clinics.

The court's changing cast and its abortion rulings in recent years has placed in doubt its 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortion. But no direct challenge to that ruling is expected to reach the justices in time for a decision during the 1991-

**Finance for 1 Year'
No Interest Charges**

**Furniture Show and
Hundreds of New Introductions a**

Sunday
Oct. 6, 1991

Congress' arrogance account overflows

By JAMES P. GANNON

The Detroit News

WASHINGTON — "It's none of your damned business!"

That was the response Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, one of the most powerful members of Congress, gave last week to reporters asking if he had bounced any checks at the private bank operated by the House of Representatives.

The Chicago Democrat's brush-off was a perfect example of the arrogance of power that has corrupted Congress and precipitated a crisis of public confidence in the nation's lawmakers.

Big Dan is a 33-year House veteran, courted by lobbyists

Analysis

and showered with campaign money by people seeking favor with the man who controls tax legislation. He apparently is too important and too powerful to be bothered by piddling questions about bouncing checks, and he is not afraid to say so.

From his lofty perch on Capitol Hill, it may be impossible for Rostenkowski — and other lords of the legislature — to see that the foundation of public confidence is crumbling beneath them.

As scandals go, "Rubber-gate," the check-bouncing story, is piddling stuff. It pales in comparison to the real corruption of power that pervades Congress — the grubbing for special-interest political money, the abuse of power exemplified in the Keating Five scandal, the dereliction of duty in permitting the savings and loan disaster.

But those are all too abstract and complicated for most people to understand. However, when voters learn that congressmen can bounce checks without penalty and have their private bank cover for them, or eat in House dining rooms without paying their bills, they don't need lawyers or accountants to explain. They instantly get it — and get mad.

For once, this wasn't an inside-the-Beltway story stirred by the Washington Post or The New York Times. This was a firestorm from grass-roots America, fanned by radio talk shows, that took Washington by surprise in its heat and intensity. It was a furor better understood by congressional freshmen than by the barons of Capitol Hill like Rostenkowski, who are too far above their constituents to comprehend.

Coming atop congressional sex scandals, ethics abuses and other outrages of recent months and years, the stories of bouncing checks and free lunches are sure to spur the grass-roots movement that Congress fears most — the campaign to limit congressional terms.

The leaders of the term-limitation drive can scarcely believe their luck. Lawmakers have handed them a loaded weapon, and they'll use it.

James Coyne, a former Republican congressman who heads Americans to Limit Congressional Terms, said the mood on Capitol Hill last week was "really one of fear — fear that the straw has been placed on the back of the camel. The public now is about to revolt."

docket

2 term.

The court will use a case from New Jersey to resolve conflicting rulings over this question: Does the federal law requiring health warnings on all cigarette packages shield manufacturers from accusations that they have misled smokers about health hazards linked to smoking?

d Sale t j.d. cohen

leepers

emporary queen
sleeper is available
large selection of
fabrics.



Dinette Set



\$279

Library Bookstacks

72" \$299

60" \$279



droom Set



Sunday Oct 6, 1991

Poughkeepsie Journal

Richard K. Wager, publisher

Mitzi Bainbridge, systems director
R.E. Betros, circulation director
Karen Kokiko, marketing services director
Sheila Parker, advertising director

Dolores Pinto, personnel director
Barry Rothfeld, executive editor
James Schumacher, production director
Randy Sutherland, controller



Page 10A—

Editorials

House specialty: Making a bad situation worse

Members of the House of Representatives fume with unrighteous indignation because reporters want to know which of them bounced checks on the House bank or ran up bills at the House restaurant.

"None of your business," Rep. Dan Rostenkowski of Illinois said to an inquiry last week. Speaker of the House Thomas Foley used the word "hysteria" when referring to the media interest.

These are the same people who order people to appear before them, and the television cameras, to respond to some public crisis, and whose questions can probe much more deeply, and injuriously, than any that have been raised about overdrawn accounts or unpaid restaurant tabs.

These congressmen just don't get it. People are tired of watching their representatives in Washington acting as if election elevated them to the royal playhouse, where normal probities about bills and bank accounts no longer apply.

The media are interested because the people who read their newspapers or watch their TV stations are interested. You'd think Congress would have figured this one out by now.

Foley changed his tune once it became clear that the public wasn't cashing his blame-the-media check. He correctly has closed the bank and ordered an audit. Would that he had done it without being hit over the head with a two-by-four.

The next thing is for each member to disclose whether he or she kited checks or has a outstanding restaurant bill. These are public officials, paid by the taxpayers, using a bank supported by the taxpayers. Standards of conduct are justifiably high. Some members have come clean; none from the mid-Hudson Valley, from what is known so far, is involved.

If House members have written bad checks, the public has a right to know who did it and for how much, in the same way a bank president has a right to know which of his depositors is in arrears.

This isn't the BCCI scandal, admittedly, but neither is it nickel-and-dime. Nearly one-third of the House, according to a USA Today report, last year bounced a total of 581 checks for \$1,000 or more. There were 4,325 overdrafts in six months at the bank. A comparable private bank reported about that many in a year.

One bounced check, written by Rep. Peter Kostmayer of Pennsylvania, was for \$23,000. He didn't want to talk about it at first and later denied it. Also not talking was the person who oversees the bank, House sergeant-at-arms Jack Russ. But then he's no stranger to rubber money, either — he reportedly wrote a bad \$10,000 check in 1989.

As for the restaurant, the amount of overdue bills is over \$300,000. Some of the debts go back 20 years. These are United States congressmen and congresswomen we're talking about.

If Joe Average didn't paid a bill for 20 months, much less years, his credit pool would quickly be as dry as a desert gulch.

But Congress keeps on ticking, immune, it seems, from the usual consequences of sloppy bookkeeping. Next time, and there will surely be one, let's hope our representatives come clean, make amends and forgo the no-not-me charade.

WHY

DO YOU STILL WEARING GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES?

Glasses and contact lenses, then you should
ways to correct near sightedness and far

Procedures are now performed at the Central New
York Eye Center to be able to correct your vision.

Only a short time under local anesthesia and
in the center's own facilities, so there's no need for a

Learn more about new answers to vision
to know whether these procedures are right
New York Eye Center today.

SEE THE DIFFERENCE



NEW YORK EYE CENTER

A. Schneider, M.D., P.C.
F.A.C.S. Lawrence K. Fox, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 471-3720
Fishkill, NY 12524 897-EYES
Toll Free 1-800-242-EYES

BEHAVING!

FOR EVENT OCTOBER 6

CLERIA

