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# AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

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President

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TO: CSPAN

FROM:

ATTN: BRIAN LAMB

TO: FAX PHONE #: 2027373323

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TIME: Tue Aug 24 15:23:09 1993

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## CONGRESSIONAL CHRONICLE

RICHARD E. COHEN

## THE DEMOCRATS' MIDSUMMER BAD DREAM

When freshman Democratic Rep. Don Johnson hosted a town hall meeting at the Grovetown (Ga.) elementary school on Aug. 16, a raucous crowd of 350 people provided strong evidence that the recently enacted deficit reduction plan has not played well in the suburban Augusta area of his district. Johnson was repeatedly booed and shouted down with catcalls as he sought to explain his support for the package.

"I've never had anything like this before," Johnson said in an interview. "People have a strong cynicism about what's happening in Washington."

Johnson is one of several House Democrats who made last-minute decisions to support the bill. Now, they are carrying the burden of that vote with them as they travel through their districts during the August recess.

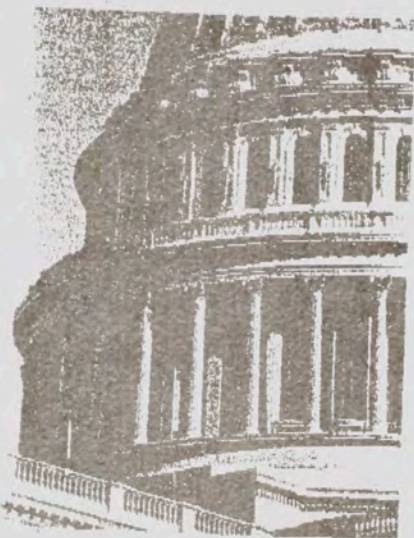
The political consequences of the House's 218-216 vote on Aug. 5 are already weighing heavily on the minds of many Democrats who sided with their President. Many of the late-deciding Democrats were freshmen in vulnerable seats who are now being portrayed as having abandoned their grass-roots appeal to become freshly minted Washington insiders.

Like Johnson, first-term Democratic Rep. Eric D. Fingerhut of Ohio has faced that music during the recess. "The level of misunderstanding of what we did and didn't do is astounding," he said. "The positive aspects got overwhelmed by the painful parts."

Johnson and Fingerhut both represent districts that, while previously held by a Democrat, gained more of a Republican tilt following last year's redistricting. Each was elected by a narrow margin and is already in the GOP line of sight for next year's election.

Like their fellow freshman Democrat Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky of Pennsylvania, they decided to support the package at the 11th hour, after extensive private discussions with President Clinton and other top Democrats. But people back home don't seem to be impressed by their agonized deliberations or by their high-level friends.

"What is most disappointing about Fingerhut is that he talks a great game about being in favor of change and heading in new directions, but his votes reveal the fundamental hypocrisy of his words," said an editorial in the *The News Herald* of



Lake County, the largest newspaper published in his district along Lake Erie.

*The Augusta Chronicle*, the largest newspaper in Johnson's district, was even more biting. "In the end, the House vote had nothing to do with the economy," its editorial said. "It was all about political horse-trading and party loyalty. Johnson and his fellow Democratic 'conservatives' apparently horse-traded away their vow to fight the deficit for empty promises." The editorial ended by saying that *The Chronicle* "regrets" its endorsement of him, which was probably vital to Johnson's 54-46 per cent victory last year.

What may have been most damaging to Johnson—as with Margolies-Mezvinsky—is that he had told colleagues and reporters a few hours before the vote that he would oppose the bill because it did not cut enough federal spending. Desperate House Democratic leaders and White House vote-counters, who would not take no for an answer, continued to pursue him, literally until the last minute.

As Speaker Thomas S. Foley, D-Wash., was delivering the final speech of the debate, a page handed a scribbled note to Johnson, who was seated in the House chamber. Clinton was waiting to speak with him on a Democratic cloakroom telephone. The President "committed to legislation to control growth in entitlement spending, a cap on federal health care spending in his health care package and \$10 billion in additional spending cuts," Johnson said later. The lawmaker, who took notes during their 10-minute

conversation, said that those pledges persuaded him to change his mind.

At a press conference immediately after the vote, House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., seized on Johnson's about-face. "A newspaper editor in Augusta told me that Don Johnson lied to him," Gingrich said. Philip A. Kent, the *Chronicle* editorial page editor, confirmed Gingrich's account. "There would have been less damage politically if [Johnson] had stated a position and kept it," Kent said in an interview. "He is in deep political trouble in the district."

Johnson responded that Kent was a "master of the cheap shot" and that the newspaper's coverage of him had been "reprehensible in its unfairness." And, he said, the "demagoguery" of closing floor statements by Gingrich and other Republicans helped persuade him that there was no chance of negotiating a better bill with the GOP.

Former Rep. Doug Barnard Jr., Johnson's Democratic predecessor, said in an interview that Johnson's change of heart "compounded his problem" politically, especially given strong local opposition to Clinton. Barnard said that he has had several recent chats with the worried Johnson, in which he urged him to "come home and be confident that he did the right thing."

Fingerhut, Johnson and some other freshman Democrats operated as something of a team before the vote. "They were coming as a package," a senior White House aide said. The afternoon of the vote, they and some others—including Jay R. Inslee of Washington and Herbert C. Klein of New Jersey—told Majority Leader Richard A. Gephardt, D-Mo., they would vote against the bill. (Inslee and Klein later voted no.)

Fingerhut said that the freshmen cooperated because "people like us tend to not get listened to until the rubber hits the road." If they had gotten the attention of House leaders and White House officials earlier, he added, they might not have had to wait until the final moment to make up their minds. Referring to meetings with top Democrats earlier in the year, Fingerhut complained, "There is a difference between being talked to and listened to."

For House Republican campaign strategists, the Democrats' woes are a mid-summer's dream. For now, at least, they can sit back happily and watch.

# Athens Daily News

## ATHENS BANNER-HERALD

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ATHENS, GEORGIA 30613

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 1993

## Johnson booted in Hartwell

### Congressman defends vote on deficit plan

An analysis, charts explain tax plan's impact. **Page 1D**

**By Joe Edwards**  
Staff Writer

**HARTWELL** - U.S. Rep. Don Johnson, facing the most controversial period of his political career, stepped into a hostile arena Saturday as he pleaded with constituents to understand his last-minute support of President Clinton's deficit-reduction plan.

The public hearing got off to a stormy start as many of the 100 audience members booed the Georgia Democrat when he said that questions would not be taken from the floor. In the interest of time, he said, only a few written questions would be answered from those submitted by the audience.

"It limits the number of questions people can ask because they often want to start giving speeches," Johnson said. "This is not the time for speeches. They can give a speech at someone else's meeting."

He added that the format of the meeting was designed to enable him to answer questions in a "more controlled environment" and that he would speak to people individually afterward.

The atmosphere became charged, however, when a representative from the Georgia Association of Taxpayers repeatedly interrupted Johnson's attempts to defend his vote. The man was escorted out of the room after heckling continuously for about 30 minutes. Other outbursts continued throughout Johnson's slide presentation and half-hour monologue as several angry constituents waged verbal warfare against the congressman.

Johnson persisted, saying that most of the negative feedback that his office has received is due to misinformation. A series of radio commercials, for example, stated that most Americans' taxes would increase \$471 a year, he said. He stressed that the advertisements were false because most of the people in the 10th District won't see a tax increase.

Johnson said that only 1,000 people in the entire district will be hit by

Please turn to JOHNSON on Page 12A

## Johnson

### From Page 1A

tax increases, while 51,000 families may qualify for tax deductions.

"A lot of the calls that we get clearly indicate that people have been misled as to what is in the bill," Johnson said. "Once you get the correct information you may still be against it, but I feel like I've been elected to go up there and look at the options and make the best judgment possible."

An outbreak of applause came when Johnson told the crowd that Americans need real leaders in Washington rather than ones who are simply guided by the way the political wind blows.

"If you want weather vanes you can put one up on your house," the congressman said. "What you want, I hope, is somebody who will exercise the best judgment and would act as I think you would if you were in my shoes."

Because of the Clinton plan, Johnson noted, the federal deficit will be reduced by \$496 billion during the next five years. He conceded that the national debt - the combination of all annual deficits - will increase by \$1 trillion but argued that the amount would rise ever higher if nothing were done.

Johnson vigorously reminded the audience that Clinton had promised an additional \$10 billion in budget cuts, as well as caps on health care entitlements and government benefits. The bottom line, he declared, is that a stronger bill could not have been put back together in a bipartisan way if he had voted against it.

Johnson added that a freeze on domestic spending and the inclusion of the deficit reduction trust fund also prompted his support of the final plan. The trust fund will allow money from spending cuts to be used toward paying off government debts, he said, pointing out that domestic spending, except for entitlement programs, will be kept at current 1993 levels.

Despite Johnson's sometimes emotional address, many people left the meeting shaking their heads in discouragement. Rick Heimerich, who said he voted for Johnson last year, clutched a handful of literature as he walked to the front of the auditorium.

"I'm going to give him this stuff back and tell him to take me off the mailing list," Heimerich said. "That'll save him some money, because I've made a big mistake."

Tom Branch, another Hart County resident, said the gathering was more town lecture than town meeting.

"If he was actually trying to respond to the concerns of his constituents, there would have been more discussing and less one-sided lecturing," Branch said.

Several other people, however, said they believe Johnson is the victim of unfair attacks.

Carl Miller said he is proud of Johnson: "Not anybody could stand in front of a critical group like this and survive. I think he's doing a wonderful job."

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Gordon Ziegler/Plainview Daily Herald

# Lawmaker faces hostile audience

By PHILLIP L. HAMILTON  
Herald Staff Writer

Plainview residents packed the Chamber of Commerce Building Tuesday hoping to ask U.S. Rep. Bill Sarpalius (D-Amarillo) why he switched his vote on President Clinton's economic package, but most of them left the hour-long meeting frustrated.

The crowd became hostile when Sarpalius spoke more than 45 minutes and then took only a few questions before being whisked away to speak to the Plainview Rotary Club.

The usual format of the congressman's town hall meetings is for him to speak for about 20 minutes and then field questions for the remainder of the hour. Sarpalius took only seven questions, including some that were interruptions as he discussed other questions.

**THE CONGRESSMAN** said he voted for Clinton's economic package after learning only 1,469 of his constituents — less than 1 percent — would pay higher taxes and that a majority of District 13 residents would benefit from the Earned Income Tax Credit provision.

"I was shocked to see how it affected my district," he said.

Sarpalius distributed Ross Perestyle charts showing 42 percent of his constituents would qualify for the credits. He also held up a chart showing the difference in what the rate of deficit growth would have been without the plan.

He also said he would not have voted for the plan if the Senate hadn't removed the BTU tax.

"THAT BTU TAX meant awful lot," he said.

He said the bill was one of four packages scheduled to come before the Congress. The other packages will include healthcare reform, welfare reform, and streamlining government.

"The easy vote would have been 'no' vote," Sarpalius said. "It is a responsible vote for my district. I made a responsible vote."

But many in the crowd questioned the congressman's decision.

Sarpalius was asked why Democrats failed to look at more than \$400 billion worth of proposed tax cuts.

"I gave you a list of specific cuts that we made in the

## Under fire

During a town hall meeting at the Plainview Chamber of Commerce Tuesday, U.S. Rep. Bill Sarpalius (D-Amarillo) came under fire for switching his vote on President Clinton's deficit package. Sarpalius, who was scheduled to speak for about 20 minutes and then answer questions, explained his vote for more than 45 minutes and then took only a few questions before leaving to speak to the Plainview Rotary Club.

# Gas tax fuels vote flip-flop

By PHILLIP L. HAMILTON  
Herald Staff Writer

U.S. Rep. Bill Sarpalius (D-Amarillo) appears to have changed his position on using gasoline taxes to cut the deficit.

After having voted against President Clinton's economic package in May, Sarpalius switched his vote on the measure, which includes a gaso-

line tax that goes into effect in October.

The measure passed 218-216, which means Sarpalius' switched vote may have made the difference in the passage of the bill.

"I've always said that if it was dedicated to deficit reduction, I'd support it. That's what this tax does," Sarpalius said Tuesday in an interview with

The Herald.

**BUT HE TOOK** a different position on gasoline taxes in January 1989, when he co-sponsored a resolution against using such taxes to reduce the deficit.

"It would be inequitable for individuals to contribute to federal deficit reduction based on the number of

See GAS, Page 2

see HOSTILE, Page 2

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Page 5

## HOSTILE

From Page 1

appropriation bills," he said.

**THE CROWD** became irritated when Sarpalius gave an unsuitable answer to the question, "When do the taxes start?"

"Oct. 1," he said.

But the crowd knew he hadn't addressed the retroactive tax increase and quickly let him know it.

"There is an exception," he quickly added. "The gasoline tax will start Oct. 1. Now, let me explain how the retroactive tax works. It is only on the higher income level I mentioned to you, which in this district is less than 1 percent. It is retroactive to Jan. 1, 1993. The information that wasn't put out is that anybody whose taxes went up has three years to pay that tax."

**THE QUESTIONING** then turned to the calls Sarpalius' office received before the vote, with the questioner saying U.S. Rep. Larry Combest (R-Lubbock) received 1,058 against the bill and 114 in favor and the calls to U.S. Rep. Charles Stenholm (D-Stamford) running 7-1 in opposition.

The crowd laughed when Sarpalius said, "The calls I got in my office were very hard to judge."

The congressman appeared to take offense to the laughter.

"If you don't mind, please give me the courtesy to answer the gentleman's question," he said.

"We found people were calling us over and over and over again," he continued. "How can you accurately judge how your constituents feel by counting the number of calls? The number of calls don't mean that much when you have the same person calling over and over again."

**HE CHARGED** that the Republican Party had "targeted our office."

"They had our office flooded with phone calls from people all over the country," he said.

And he indicated that callers didn't know what was in the bill.

"The information that was available to me on basing

this decision on the Earned Income Tax Credit was not available to most people in my district," he said. "Once this information became available to me, it had a tremendous amount of bearing on my decision."

**ASKED IN WHAT** year spending cuts will be made, the congressman responded that the list handed out was the cuts for this year.

"The additional cuts are staggered throughout the five years," he said. "The biggest bulk of those cuts come three years out, which occur in Medicaid and Medicare. The reason why those cuts were staggered out is because you have to have an opportunity for the healthcare reform bill to come into play."

"If we are successful in passing healthcare reform, then we will be in a position to make those cuts. If you do the cuts in Medicare and Medicaid today, it would impact every hospital throughout this country. It would be something we just couldn't deal with."

**IN AN INTERVIEW** following the meeting, Sarpalius said he knew he wasn't going to change anyone's mind.

"I knew what I was up against in Plainview, but I came here anyway," he said. "It would have been easy for me to skip Plainview and go on to somewhere else, but that's not the responsible thing to do. I'm not ashamed of my vote."

"I think that for a lot of the people in that crowd there was no way I was going to change their mind," Sarpalius said.

Asked why he left little time for questions, the congressman said, "It is a very complicated plan and I think I covered it pretty well."

**HE SAID HE** wasn't trying to avoid questions.

"For anybody that had any questions, I left my staff at the meeting to try to answer them," he said. "I wasn't trying to avoid questions. I thought it was just as important for me to explain what this package is."

Sarpalius also said he wouldn't mind answering more questions at another time.

"I will continue to do town hall meetings," he said. "I'll come back and if anyone wants to write a letter, they can. Or if they have a question and want to call my office, they can do that now."

## PAY

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# County's tax hearing draws

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# RECORD NEWS

Vol. 57, No. 102

Wichita Falls, Texas

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## Sarpalius faces hostile audience

By Russell L. Hutchison  
SIAM WHITE

No ropes or torches were seen, but the packed town meeting here Wednesday night at times had the feel of a lynching.

U.S. Rep. Bill Sarpalius faced about 300 people — many of them visibly angry — to try to explain his vote for the deficit-reduction package passed by Congress earlier this month. At times yelling so loud that the amplified voice of Sarpalius was drowned out, the crowd deplored Congress' willingness to tax first and cut spending later, and blasted Sarpalius for going along with it.

Even before Sarpalius arrived, it was easily apparent that the crowd was more in the mood for talking — complaining, really — about Sarpalius' vote than to listen to his explanation for it. A package of charts and graphs and other information placed by Sarpalius' office under seats in Midwestern State University's Fine Arts Theater was greeted by several people with comments like "more propaganda" and "here are more lies."

And as Sarpalius began to wind down a 25-minute presentation on why he voted for the bill and what future steps Congress is likely to take on health care, welfare and other issues, the crowd got restless. Sarpalius' claim that the Republicans in Congress had offered no opposing plan was met with a thundering

cuts need to be made. But he was met with shouts of "but you voted for it" on most of those occasions.

By far, the biggest crowd-pleaser of the evening was a call for term limits, which was supported with almost thunderous applause. Sarpalius' call for a balanced budget amendment drew crowd support, as did a list-item veto.

Sarpalius did have a vocal minority of backers in the crowd. More than one speaker lauded Sarpalius for having "the guts to make the call" in voting for the plan, while others applauded his courage for coming back to the district at all.

In between the shouted comments, several audience members made even-tempered remarks about how badly government regulations were hampering business and how the taxes within the deficit-reduction bill would hurt the economy. "I do not see how a tax increase is going to stimulate the economy," one man said, recalling that the country's growth dropped in half within a year of the 1980 budget deal that raised taxes.

Sarpalius at times tried to make peace with the hostile audience by telling them that he agreed with them that regulations are overbearing and more

said he didn't place much faith in phone calls because he had been targeted by opposing groups whose out-of-state members flooded his office with calls, he was met with the resounding "ahs" of sarcastic sympathy.

For the next hour, Sarpalius was pelted with negative comments flying from the crowd. One lady began her comments about the security of Social Security with "It's a well-known fact that no one is above the law except Congress" and ended with "I do not want to live in the United States Socialist States of America."

### Continued

From page one

zero a month in gasoline taxes was worth trying to cut the federal debt.

When the first audience member to speak congratulated Sarpalius for having the courage to vote for an unpopular, but coded, package of taxes and said he was overwhelmed by such shouting for him to sit down and let them speak.

The next man asked how many home calls Sarpalius got on each day of the issue. When Sarpalius

## Crowd full of questions for Sarpalius

A R I Z O N A

# Daily Sun

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INSIDE

Leupp parents  
feeling ignored

SEE PAGE 2

WEDNESDAY

August 25, 1963

## English hears friends, foes

## Protesters blast plan for deficit

By ANDREW FAUGHT

Staff Reporter

Carrying signs condemning U.S. Rep. Karen English for supporting a recently adopted federal deficit plan, about 20 people held a peaceable demonstration in front of her Flagstaff office Tuesday.

English, a Democrat from Flagstaff, left her office moments before the protest, reading for a reception, staffers said.

One sign read: "In plain English, you blew it." Another said, "We can't afford Karen English." Messages offered to the congresswoman's support of increased gasoline taxes and greater taxation of the wealthy to generate \$496 billion in government savings over five years.

The federal deficit is about \$4 billion.

The budget plan narrowly passed the House of Representatives 218-216. Vice President Al Gore cast the decisive vote in the Senate earlier this month, a 51-50 victory for plan backers.

"(English) was just part of the same old network back there," argued Sydney Hays, protest organizer and president of the Phoenix-based Lincoln Caucus, a taxpayer watchdog group. "The truth of this budget package is bad news. The future looks very grim."

Hays said President Clinton's plan will increase spending by \$300 billion, with a 4.3 cent per gallon gasoline tax promoting job losses. Hays said a fuel tax will reduce spending power, creating less demand for products and, consequently, the need for fewer workers.

"We're out here because we have to defend ourselves against bad legislation," protester Gary Fillion said. "This is another example of government think-





Edan Winter/Arizona Daily Sun

Sydney Hays, president of the Lincoln Caucus, talks to protesters Tuesday about her disgust with U.S. Rep. Karan English and other Democrats who voted for President Clinton's deficit-reduction package.

ing they're not the problem. They have a spending problem as an alcoholic has a drinking problem. They have to get their house in order.

Gary Giordano, a legislator in the Arizona House of Representatives from 1983-88, said the federal government in the past has made similar attempts to cut its debt, but in vain.

"Congress has thrown out these ideas throughout the '80s," said Giordano, also president of the watchdog group Arizona Federation of Taxpayers Association. "It's just never materialized.

We've been down this road before. When they get the tax increases they just spend the money.

"This is the worst example of how (English) goes along with the Democratic leadership."

Democrats say the budget package will raise taxes by \$241 billion over the next five years, coupled with spending cuts of \$255 billion.

Another demonstrator, Samantha Omsy, called for English's resignation, angry at what she called taxation without representation. Omsy represented the

National Federation of Independent Business, a small business advocacy group.

But English spokesman Mark Grisham said the congresswoman was being representative of her District 6 constituency, which extends from the Navajo Reservation through Flagstaff and Maricopa County, eastward to Coconino County.

"A lot of people are instinctively opposed to any new taxes," Grisham said. "We had a lot of calls that were supportive."

*Minot Daily News, Page B1, Aug. 12, 1993*

# Conservatives blast Dorgan's vote in favor of budget bill

## Senator says bill will help reduce federal deficit

By JILL SCHRAMM  
Staff Writer

Political conservatives let Democrat Sen. Byron Dorgan know how they feel about taxes Wednesday.

**Dorgan speaks in Rugby:  
Page B4**

Although they don't often frequent Dorgan's public forums, they attended one in Minot to blast the senator's vote for a budget bill. The bill includes a 4.3-cent gas tax and higher taxes on higher income groups.

### A farmer's perspective

Max farmer Jim Lea said the tax will cost farmers every time they haul  
See DORGAN — Page B4

### Highlights

Here's what Sen. Byron Dorgan had to say Wednesday:

**On TV violence:** "Give people information and let people apply pressure in the market place." He's asked Attorney General Janet Reno to take action and suggests the Federal Communications Commission develop a survey detailing violence in shows and listing the shows' sponsors.

**On government spending:** "Congress has not voted to increase spending ... It was a case of Medicaid and Medicare ballooning out of control. If we don't solve the health-care pricing problem, we are not going to solve the deficit problem."

**On the Corps of Engineers Missouri River plan:** "I am not encouraged by the master manual draft at this point ... The draft doesn't look much different than the old system of managing the river."

## □ Dorgan

(Continued from Page B1)

wheat to market, go to church or to the doctor. He criticized Dorgan for not using the leverage he had in the close Senate vote to amend the bill.

"You had an opportunity to do something and you blew it," Lee said. "You really failed us as North Dakotans."

### Dorgan's defense

Dorgan said the gas tax is bad because it hits rural areas hardest. However, he added it amounts to about \$40 a year for the average family driving 14,000 miles a year.

"I don't think you ever increase productivity with a tax," Dorgan said, prompting a constituent to ask why he then voted for a tax increase.

"The deficit," Dorgan replied.

"This is a tough choice, but the fact is we have even tougher choices ahead of us to reduce the deficit," he added. "My popularity is a whole lot less important than the future of my kids."

### Tax conservatives

Tax watchdog Earl Allen of Minot estimated a third of the crowd of about 185 people were tax conservatives.

"You have really disappointed us on this vote," Allen told Dorgan. "Clinton has had it, and we don't want to see you go down with a sinking ship."

Allen's group brought picket signs reading "Clinton kills North Dakota small business" and "Tax the dead." The signs stayed outside the forum room

at the request of Dorgan's office staff.

Spending cuts alone aren't the answer to the deficit, Dorgan said.

"In order to do this you have to be prepared to deal with entitlements in a significant way," he said.

Dorgan received a message from some to cut the entitlements, such as Medicare. Others praised him for voting for the tax increase.

"I commend you, senator, for taking the step," Jon Morrison of Minot said. "Somebody's got to pay for this."

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**Reds rally in 6th**

3-run homer ends Phils' comeback. Sports.

**Keeping Cunningham happy**

Eagles' off-season changes designed to help QB succeed. Sports.

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

Sunday, August 29, 1993

## Congresswoman faces district's music

*Margolies-Mezvinsky defended her budget switch. Voters gave her an earful pro and con.***By David Zucchino**  
INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Lying in wait for the congresswoman nicknamed Three M — Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky — Bill Hillman held up a placard that said what Three M meant to him:

"More Taxes. More Spending. More Waste." Each "M" was underlined.

Hillman, 25, said he was outraged by Margolies-Mezvinsky's eleventh-hour vote switch that was instrumental in passing President Clinton's budget package Aug. 5. He hoped to confront her at the site of a

public meeting she had scheduled in Lansdale yesterday.

Suddenly the congresswoman arrived, smiling and waving. Hillman struck.

"Look! Here comes the list!" he screamed.

Margolies-Mezvinsky barely glanced at him and said: "Hi! Nice to see you."

"What promise you going to break next?" Hillman shot back.

The congresswoman kept smiling and walked inside to face a meeting hall overflowing with hostile voters.

People were backed up into hallways and peering through windows. A few of them aimed video cameras and tape recorders ominously at their elected representative. Even 15 young Villanova College Republicans showed up, placards ready.

It was Margolies-Mezvinsky's first public meeting with constituents in her conservative district since she cast her swing budget vote — after first saying she opposed the plan. It wasn't pretty.

People heckled her. They tried to shout her down. They called her two-

faced, cynical, wispy-waspy, a liar, a cheater and, worst of all, just another politician.

The congresswoman tried to fight them off with the ultimate political weapon of the '90s: a rack full of Ross Perot-style charts with bars and graphs and pie charts.

Patiently, she slogged through the charts, trying to show how important it was to get a handle on budget deficits and entitlement programs. She explained that Clinton, who made a personal appeal for her vote, See CONGRESSWOMAN on A8



U.S. Rep. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky stands in one of two town

Sunday, August 28, 1993

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER



For The Inquirer / CHERIE KEMPER-STALNER

An overflow crowd turned out for Rep. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky at the Elkins Park Library. There, and at an earlier meeting in Lansdale, she defended her vote for President Clinton's budget proposal.

## Back in district, facing the music

CONGRESSWOMAN from A1 had promised to hold in her district a national "entitlement conference" to reform and control entitlements. It should be held by December, she said.

But when Margolies-Mezvinsky listed Social Security as an entitlement, boos rang out. At least half the white, middle-class crowd of about 200 people was only a congressional election or two away from Social Security age, if not beyond it.

"You want to steal our Social Security!" an elderly woman cried out.

Not so, Margolies-Mezvinsky told her. In fact, she said, Social Security would run dry early in the next century unless politicians revamped the system and made sure there is enough money to cover today's working people.

There were more shouts, more angry tirades. The congresswoman waited until the ruckus died down, and then told the crowd that she had no regrets about her last-minute vote switch.

"I did exactly what politicians do not do: sacrifice my job for principle," she said. "If my political career is sacrificed in an effort to get Washington to talk straight to the American people, I will proudly accept that fate."

Nearly everyone in the hall shouted and cheered. It was not clear how many were her supporters and

how many were agitating for a premature end to her political career.

One voter, who identified himself as a World War II veteran, was not mollified. He tried to do to the congresswoman what Lloyd Bentsen did to Dan Quayle:

"I know a leader when I see one," the man told her. "And Miss Mezvinsky, you're no leader."

Unfazed, Margolies-Mezvinsky plowed ahead with her message of the day: America needs to take a hard look at Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, welfare, veterans' pensions and other entitlement programs that cost billions of dollars a year and are not subject to annual cost controls.

"Mandated spending programs, which we call entitlements, simply aren't being addressed, because it's political death," she said. She added moments later: "If you try to have any serious conversation about Social Security, people bring out the Uxis."

At the 90-minute session in Lansdale and at a second public meeting later yesterday in Elkins Park, Margolies-Mezvinsky was trailed by supporters who waged placard duels with alienated voters. She is a first-term Democrat elected from a Republican stronghold, a "freshman who was fed to the beast" during the budget vote, in the opinion of Newsweek magazine.

"MMM is A Profile in Courage," one supporter's placard read. Others read: "Just Another Attack On A Woman" and "Average America Wins With Marjorie."

Joe Ferraro, 32, of Audubon, said he showed up to defend Margolies-Mezvinsky.

"She made the right decision on the budget," he said. "I didn't like the way she stepped to the plate or worked the count, but when she swung, she connected."

Bill Hillman, miffed that the congresswoman had breezed by him without answering his taunts, was frustrated. He earned a degree from Penn State last year in labor and industrial economics, he said, but the only job he could find was mowing golf greens for \$13,000 a year.

Votes like Margolies-Mezvinsky's, he said, didn't brighten his prospects.

"She's just another lying politician," he said.

So it went for Margolies-Mezvinsky on a long, hot Saturday with steamed voters. But finally, toward the end of the first meeting, a woman rose and asked the sort of softball question that politicians live for:

"What can we do to help?"

The congresswoman's aides brightened. Margolies-Mezvinsky let her mouth drop open.

"Oh!" she said at last. "Oh, thank you!"