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October 10, 1974

Senator Edward DLG Pangelinan  
 Chairman  
 Marianas Political Status Commission  
 P. O. Box 977  
 Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Mr. Chairman:

You may recall that we have previously corresponded concerning the proposed reorganization of the committees of the U.S. House of Representatives. The House has recently made certain changes in its rules and procedures, but has decided not to make any significant changes in the jurisdiction of its existing committees. Accordingly, the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs retains jurisdiction over territorial matters, and Congressman Burton retains his authority with respect to the Marianas Status Agreement.

We have not yet received a copy of the text of resolutions passed by the House, but a summary of the decisions made by the House appears in the enclosed article from the Washington Post.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Helfer

Enclosure

cc: Howard P. Willens, Esq.

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# House Reform Vote Leaves Committees Intact

By Mary Russell  
Washington Post Staff Writer

When the House finished six tortuous days of debate on reforming its committee system and procedures Tuesday night one thing was clear—why it's been 28 years since the last time the House tried to reform itself.

House members had wrestled for months with the issue, not wanting to appear to be against reform in an election year, but not wanting to hurt themselves by taking jurisdiction and power away from committees on which they serve.

In the end, the House settled for the mildest proposals, which change some procedures but generally leave committees intact.

By a 203-to-165 vote the members rejected extensive

and sweeping reforms proposed by a select committee headed by Rep. Richard Bolling (D-Mo.) which had worked a year and a half on the matter. They adopted instead a milder proposal put forth by a committee of the Democratic Caucus headed by Rep. Julia Butler Hansen (D-Wash.).

(A final vote of 359 to 7 approved the package. No further congressional action is needed since each body sets its own rules.)

While leaving most committees intact, the House did vote to establish a new Select Committee on the Aging that will oversee the problems of the elderly but can't write legislation.

It also upgraded the Select Committee on Small

Business to legislative status, although its bill writing jurisdiction will be narrowly limited.

The powerful Ways and Means Committee would be forced to form at least four subcommittees, but it would lose only minor jurisdictions such as revenue sharing. Without subcommittees, Ways and Means had often been criticized for being able to handle only one bill at a time although many important issues—health insurance, foreign trade, unemployment compensation as well as taxes—come under its umbrella.

The Hansen proposal will also consolidate some health jurisdiction in Commerce and transportation legislation, except for railroads, in

Members divided over the reforms not along conservative-liberal lines, or even as Democrats and Republicans, but over who got hurt and who had the most to lose.

For instance, only two committee chairmen, George H. Mahon (D-Tex.) of Appropriations and Thomas E. Morgan (D-Pa.) of Foreign Affairs, supported the Bolling proposal. Appropriations lost nothing under Bolling, and Foreign Affairs would have acquired trade legislation from Ways and Means.

Freshmen, who have no seniority and less at stake, voted against the Hansen proposal by a 44-to-24 margin. And all members of Ways and Means who were present (the chairman and three others were absent) voted for the Hansen bill except one—Barber B. Conable Jr. of New York, a member of the Republican House leadership, which had endorsed the Bolling package because it would have split the liberal Education and Labor Committee, given the GOP one-third of committee staff and ended proxy voting.

Ironically, the end to proxy voting and the one-third staffing provisions were grafted onto the Hansen proposal, making it attractive enough to pick up

Public Works. But major Hansen proposals to abolish the Internal Security Committee, weaken the Rules Committee and give oversight over nonmilitary nuclear energy to the Interior Committee were defeated the House floor.

Procedurally, the Hansen measure gives the Speaker wider latitude referring proposed legislation to committees, orders the House to organize itself before the beginning of a new Congress so the first months aren't wasted, orders 100-word summaries of what a bill contains to be filed after the bill is introduced, and sets up a commission to study the need for better information and more facilities.

It also asks the Joint Committee on Congressional Operations to continue to review committee workloads and report periodically to the Rules Committee.

The Bolling package that the House rejected would have made far wider changes in committee jurisdiction, consolidating health, transportation, energy and environment in a single committee, allowing no member to serve on more than one major committee, requiring each committee to set up a subcommittee to oversee the executive branch and agencies under its jurisdiction, and abolishing both the Post Office Committee and Internal Security, while taking large chunks from Merchant Marine, Ways and Means, and House Administration.

51 Republican votes, although Republicans vigorously attacked the Hansen bill as the product of a partisan Democratic caucus in which they had no voice.

Bolling blamed "enormous lobbying effort" by labor and "vested interests" as a key factor in his measure's defeat. Labor bitterly fought splitting Education and Labor and abolishing the Post Office and Civil Service Committee.

But he predicted that reform would be more reform eventually. "This House doesn't work," he said. He said he was "disappointed" but not "discouraged" and pledged to continue to work for reform—but through the Rules Committee on which he serves and not through another select committee.

"There are a whole lot of things that can't be done. Those are the things I like," he said.

WASHINGTON POST, Thursday,  
October 10, 1974