

# CRS Report for Congress

Received through the CRS Web

## Suspension of Rules in the House: Measure Sponsorship by Party

Thomas P. Carr  
Analyst in American National Government  
Government and Finance Division

### Summary

From the 100<sup>th</sup> through the 105<sup>th</sup> Congresses (1987-1998), the House of Representatives acted on measures through a motion to suspend the rules an average of 549 times per Congress. Measures so acted on were sponsored by Members of the minority party, on average, 17.3% of the time (15.9% if sponsors of House measures only are counted). Figures for the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress, and preliminary figures for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, are significantly above these averages.

### Measures Sponsored by Members of Each Party<sup>1</sup> Acted on by Suspension of the Rules in the House

During the past decade, the House of Representatives has made frequent use of its procedure for acting expeditiously on measures through a motion to suspend the rules. The procedure is regarded as well adapted for this purpose, because it limits debate to 40 minutes, permits no floor amendments, and requires two-thirds of Members present and voting (a quorum being present) to pass the measure.<sup>2</sup>

The procedure is frequently used for measures not involving great complexity or controversy. It is most commonly used for initial House action on measures, in the form of a motion to suspend the rules and pass a bill, or to suspend the rules and adopt a joint, concurrent, or House resolution. Suspension of the rules is sometimes also used for action to resolve differences with the Senate, in the form of a motion to suspend the rules and concur with Senate amendments (either with or without further amendment) or,

---

<sup>1</sup> Previous versions of this report were prepared by Faye M. Bullock, Technical Information Specialist and Richard S. Beth, Specialist in the Legislative Process, Government and Finance Division; and Jennifer Manning, Senior Research Librarian, Information Research Division.

<sup>2</sup> For fuller information on the procedure and its use, see CRS Report 98-796, *Suspension of the Rules in the House of Representatives*, by Stanley Bach.

occasionally, to suspend the rules and adopt a conference report. This report examines all action by suspension of the rules, whether for initial passage or final action. It also includes all motions to suspend the rules, whether or not the motions were adopted.

The two tables that follow present data on the number of times measures were acted on by suspension of the rules in the House of Representatives during the 100<sup>th</sup> through 106<sup>th</sup> Congresses, and partial data for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress. **Table 1** provides the number and percent of such measures originally sponsored by members of each party. It includes action on both House and Senate measures, with Senate measures counted under the party of their Senate sponsor. **Table 2** offers similar information for only those measures introduced by House Members. The data for the 100<sup>th</sup> through the 105<sup>th</sup> Congresses were obtained through the legislative status data bases maintained by LEGI-SLATE.<sup>3</sup> Data for the 106<sup>th</sup> and 107<sup>th</sup> Congresses were compiled using the Legislative Information System (LIS).<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1. Motions to Suspend the Rules in the House,  
by Party of Sponsor, 1987-2001**

Congress and (Years)	Measure Sponsored by <sup>a</sup>				Total
	Democrat		Republican		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
100 (1987-1988)	512	83.4	102	16.6	614
101 (1989-1990)	468	80.3	115	19.7	583
102 (1991-1992)	513	83.4	102	16.6	615
103 (1993-1994)	412	88.2	55	11.8	467
104 (1995-1996)	69	17.2	332	82.8	401
105 (1997-1998)	126	20.4	491	79.6	617
106 (1999-2000)	207	23.2	686	76.8	893
107 (2001- ) <sup>b</sup>	82	24.5	252	75.5	334

**Source:** LEGI-SLATE data base 100<sup>th</sup> -105<sup>th</sup>; Legislative Information System (LIS) 106<sup>th</sup>-107<sup>th</sup>.

- a. Independents are included with the party from which they receive their Committee assignments.  
b. Figures for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress represent action through the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> session.

<sup>3</sup> The LEGI-SLATE database ceased to be maintained in September 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Bach (CRS Report 98-796), *Suspension of the Rules*, p. 7, gives the number of suspension motions from selected earlier Congresses. For the 99<sup>th</sup> through the 101<sup>st</sup> Congresses (1985-1990), those data include only suspension motions for initial House passage of bills and joint resolutions, and to that extent are not comparable with those in this report. Those data are also drawn from several sources, so that differences from those presented here may in part represent variations in the information contained in the different sources.

**Table 2. Motions to Suspend the Rules in the House,  
by Party of Sponsor, 1987-2001 (House Measures Only)**

Congress and (Years)	Measure Sponsored by <sup>a</sup>				Total
	Democrat		Republican		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
100 (1987-1988)	430	84.0	82	16.0	512
101 (1989-1990)	420	83.5	83	16.5	503
102 (1991-1992)	456	85.4	78	14.6	534
103 (1993-1994)	369	90.4	39	9.6	408
104 (1995-1996)	64	17.3	306	82.7	370
105 (1997-1998)	106	20.6	409	79.4	515
106 (1999-2000)	177	23.8	566	76.2	743
107 (2001- ) <sup>b</sup>	73	23.7	235	76.3	308

**Source:** LEGI-SLATE data base 100<sup>th</sup> -105<sup>th</sup>; Legislative Information System (LIS) 106<sup>th</sup> -107<sup>th</sup> .

a. Independents are included with the party from which they receive their Committee assignments.

b. Figures for the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress represent action through the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> session.