



Senate sitting on 290 bills already passed by House; tension mounts

By J. Taylor Rushing - 02/23/10 06:00 AM ET

Exasperated House Democratic leaders have compiled a list showing that they have passed 290 bills that have stalled in the Senate.

The list is the latest sign that Democrats in the lower chamber are frustrated with their Senate counterparts. An aide to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) says the list is put together during each Congress, but that this year's number is likely the largest ever. However, he said Pelosi blames GOP senators, not Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) or Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.).

“The Speaker believes that the filibuster has its place, but clearly Senate Republicans are taking what was once a rare procedural move and abusing it to the detriment of progress for America’s working families,” said Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill.

But some House Democrats and their aides have shown no reticence in blaming Senate Democrats, who enjoyed a supermajority until Sen. Scott Brown (R-Mass.) was sworn in earlier this month.

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In January, House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-S.C.) suggested the Senate was out of touch with Americans, and did not differentiate between the two parties.

“[Senators] tend to see themselves as a House of Lords and they don’t seem to understand that those of us that go out there every two years stay in touch with the American people,” Clyburn said in an interview with Fox News Radio. “We tend to respond to them a little better.”

Earlier this month in an MSNBC interview, House Democratic Caucus Chairman John Larson (Conn.) said, “There’s a host of things that we’ve passed already, and there needs to be action in the Senate, and people are tired of it,” adding that he was “glad the president cited the House” for making more progress than the Senate in his State of the Union address.

The list of stalled bills includes both major and minor legislation: healthcare reform; climate

change; food safety; financial aid for the U.S. Postal Service; a job security act for wounded veterans; a Civil War battlefield preservation act; **vision care for children**; the naming of a federal courthouse in Iowa after former Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa); a National Historic Park named for President Jimmy Carter; a bill to improve absentee ballot voting; a bill to improve cybersecurity; and the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

Hammill said Pelosi's office also compiled a second list in December of 90 pieces of legislation that have passed the House, more than 60 of them with at least 50 Republican votes.

"There's a perception that the House is really partisan these days, but the actual numbers show otherwise," Hammill said.

Reid, like Pelosi, blames Republicans for the legislative logjam. In a speech late Monday on the Senate floor, he took the GOP to task for opposing a job-growth bill pending before the chamber, and said Republicans are abusing the filibuster.

"We had to file cloture some 70 times last year," Reid said. "Seventy times. That's remarkably bad. Let's change that."

This month, a group of Democratic aides and strategists told The Hill that the party risks losing its majorities if it doesn't stop internal squabbling.

Simon Rosenberg, founder of the NDN and a former candidate for Democratic National Committee chairman, said congressional Democrats are "frustrated" but "need to look inward."

"They have to find a way to work more effectively to do the people's business. There's going to have to be much tighter coordination on major legislation among the White House, Senate and House," Rosenberg said.

A list of the House-passed bills that have stalled in the Senate can be viewed [here](#).

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