

MINNESOTA RADIO TAPE OF FEBRUARY 8, 1963

FOR BROADCAST WEEK BEGINNING FEBRUARY 10, 1963

Ladies and gentlemen and fellow-Minnesotans---

This is your Senator, Hubert Humphrey, reporting to you from my office on Capitol Hill in Washington, D. C.

Last week, the progressive forces in the Senate---both Democrats and Republicans---lost one battle in their effort to modify the Senate rule which allows small minorities to filibuster legislation to death.

This is what we call "Rule 22." It is an old rule which has been much abused by minorities in the Senate not just to protect their rights to debate issues, but to control the whole Senate and the total process of legislation and government action.

I was and am a part of a growing group of Senators who believe that the Senate filibuster is not consistent with good government. Our amendment to Rule 22 was modest and reasonable. We sought to reduce

from 67 to 60 the number of votes necessary to stop debate on an issue and bring it to a vote of decision in the Senate. Our amendment was not---as some of our opponents suggested---an effort to "gag" the Senate. It specifically allowed at least four weeks of debate on any legislative issues before a vote would be taken to end discussion and bring the issue to a final vote.

For the past three weeks, the Senate was tied up with consideration of this issue. The tragedy is that---because of Rule 22 in its present form---we were never allowed to bring our amendment to an actual vote. A willful minority refused even to let the amendment be placed before the Senate as official business.

Instead, on Thursday of last week, the issue was decided by a vote to halt debate---after three full weeks---and bring the issue up for a basic decision one way or the other.

The result of last week's vote was 54 to 42. We won 54 votes for the side which wanted to face the issue ⁹squarely, and of course, to modify Rule 22.

Despite this decisive majority, we lost the vote. Under the same rule which we were seeking to change, 64 votes were required to bring the issue to a head.

I was disappointed that we did not succeed this time in bringing the Senate to a final decision on this issue. But I was encouraged by the real and solid progress we made this year. You may have read or heard through news media that the liberal forces in the Senate were--- and I quote this word---"Defeated" on this issue. This was not a defeat, and I'll explain why.

Fifty-four votes for the group seeking to amend Rule 22 was a decisive majority. This was the first time in the history of the Senate that a majority of its members went on record in support of a change in the rule allowing filibusters. Just ten years ago---in 1953---liberals in the Senate could muster only 19 votes of support. Each year, we have picked up new strength. We have moved from a small nucleus of 19 votes to a solid majority of 54 votes.

Last week's vote was a sign of progress, not defeat. I am confident

that our next attempt to end the tyranny of the filibuster will reach final and complete success.

A majority of the Senate wants the change. The American people--- expecting responsible and efficient government---deserve the change. And the Nation's need to meet domestic and international challenges through progressive legislation demand the change.

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