

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT

The 1980 presidential contest left many observers complaining that the major parties had lost their distinguishing features.



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Yet Auspitz is skeptical of the current round of general reform proposals. Efforts to cut the "costs" of campaigns—by shortening the primary season and creating regional primaries—may favor established politicians too much. "Parties were once used to make sure that citizen pressures did not get out of hand," he concludes. "Now we may need them to make sure they are felt at all."

### Congressional Dropouts

"Voluntary Retirement From the U.S. House: The Costs of Congressional Service" by John R. Hibbing, in *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (February 1982), Comparative Legislative Research Center, 304 Schaeffer Hall, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

More U.S. Congressmen are voluntarily leaving office these days. Between 1962 and 1970, only 81 Representatives renounced public life completely; 153 left between 1972 and 1980. Hibbing, who teaches political science at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, writes that the exodus may reflect a "malady" in our political system.

Hibbing interviewed 24 of the 31 Congressmen, young and old, who retired in 1978. One of the most common reasons they gave for leaving: "Raising a family and serving in Congress do not mix." One retiree recalled that while presenting an award at a soccer match in his district, "I realized that I should have been watching my own kid play soccer." A related cause was "the fishbowl factor": Congressmen are subjected to constant media scrutiny—hard on them, but harder on their families. "People seem to feel public officials should not be al-

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lowed to have private lives," one retiree complained. The public holds officialdom in generally low regard, especially since Watergate, and that also takes away from job satisfaction. "Imagine living under a cloud of suspicion all the time," one ex-Representative remarked.

Many of the ex-politicians said that they enjoyed campaigning but found fund-raising "degrading." Moreover, congressional pay (\$60,662) has not kept pace with private sector salaries. Lobbying, law, and other likely jobs for former Congressmen are now far more lucrative.

The job itself is less rewarding. It is harder to "do good" amid what seems to many to be a "legislative deadlock," fostered by time-consuming quorum calls and votes on meaningless issues (such as choosing the National Dance), by a new breed of Congressman intent on posturing for the media, and by a fragmented subcommittee system. The congressional reforms of the 1970s are partly to blame. Now that committee chairmanships are not awarded by seniority, there is less incentive to stay in office.

Older retirees (over age 60) were more likely to cite the diminished advantages of seniority or the desire to try something new "before it was too late" as the cause of their decisions; younger retirees more frequently cited the strains on family life. Hibbing concludes that since the percentage of older Congressmen is declining, the total number of voluntary retirements will drop off as well. But younger Congressmen will still face the same pressures and will probably quit at the same or higher rates as they have in the past.

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**FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE**

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*Why NATO  
Is in Trouble*

"The Dilemma of the West: A Transatlantic Parting of the Ways?" by Theodore Draper, in *Encounter* (March 1982), 59 St. Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS, United Kingdom.

The NATO alliance is in trouble, torn by dissension over proposals ranging from new trade sanctions against the Soviet Union to the deployment of new medium-range missiles in Western Europe. Draper, an author and former member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., writes that the tensions stem from fundamental shifts in the balance of power since the 1950s and from Washington's attempts to make the alliance into something that it is not.

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed in 1949, when Western Europe, devastated by war, was nearly defenseless and the United States enjoyed a monopoly on atomic weapons. The NATO treaty provided for the mutual defense of Western Europe and carried the implicit promise of massive U.S. atomic retaliation for any Soviet attack on the region. The American "nuclear umbrella" left the Europeans relatively free to