

# Joyful GOP opens Senate

WASHINGTON (AP) — The 97th Congress, opening a new conservative era on Capitol Hill, was convened Monday with Republicans controlling the Senate for the first time in 26 years.

"This will be a fine time, a fun time," said Sen. Pete Domenici, of New Mexico, a veteran Republican, reflecting an almost jubilant mood among old and new GOP members of the Senate.

In the House, where Republicans picked up 33 seats but still fell short of taking control in

last November's election, there was nonetheless a flexing of conservative muscle by GOP leaders.

Democrat Thomas P. O'Neill was easily re-elected speaker of the House in an unusual member-by-member roll call vote. House Republicans pledged an opening day fight over limiting the size of the federal budget.

Rep. Robert Michel of Illinois was easily elected House Republican leader, and is expected to play a much more active role than his predecessor,

Rep. John Rhodes of Ohio.

In the new Congress, there are 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats in the Senate and 243 Democrats and 192 Republicans in the House.

Vice President Walter F. Mondale, with 15 days remaining in office, swore in the 18 new and 16 re-elected members of the Senate as one of his last official acts.

The new Senate majority leader, Howard Baker of Tennessee, predicted that President Ronald Reagan's Cabinet nominees would be approved by Senate committees by Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, then be confirmed by the Senate shortly thereafter.

Then, Baker said, the Senate would turn to a detailed plan to rejuvenate the American economy.

Robert Byrd, now the Senate minority leader, said Democrats would "cooperate when we can, when the new administration's programs make sense ... and when we differ, differ constructively."

Among the new Senate members were John P. East, R-N.C., a polio victim who took the oath of office in a wheelchair, Paula Hawkins, R-Fla., who becomes the second woman senator, and Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., a former Navy admiral and prisoner of war in Vietnam.

The Senate did no substantive work Monday except official opening ceremonies.

On Friday, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is scheduled to open hearings on the nomination of Alexander M. Haig to be Reagan's secretary of state.

Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, the senior Republican, was elected president pro tempore of the Senate, replacing Warren Magnuson, the senior Democrat in the 96th Congress.

## making the news

From Associated Press Reports

**SALEM — Oregon courts don't have authority to order arrest records expunged** that involve people who have been arrested but not convicted of crimes, the state Court of Appeals said Monday.

A divided appeals court rejected a constitutional challenge to a state law allowing judges to order criminal conviction records sealed in some cases but having no similar provision for arrest records.

The Court of Appeals also:

- Said the driver's license of a drunken driving suspect who refuses to take a breath test can be suspended even though it may turn out that the person wasn't driving prior to the arrest.

- Upheld a state regulation governing operation of logging equipment across streams.

In a case from Multnomah County, Charles Springer was arrested and accused by Portland police of criminal mischief but was freed after no formal charges were filed in court.

Circuit Judge Charles Crookham ordered the record of the arrest expunged. But a Court of appeals panel, in a 2-1 decision, overturned Crookham's ruling on grounds that a state law permitting sealing of conviction records doesn't apply to arrest records in cases that never go to trial.

Springer contended that the statute violates constitutional rights of equal protection by depriving people arrested but never convicted of the same right to have records sealed as those who are convicted.

In the majority opinion by Judge William Richardson, the appeals court said the Legislature didn't intend that the law apply also to arrest records.

**WASHINGTON — Pres. Carter will travel to Plains, Ga., on Thursday to search for office space** to use when he returns to his hometown to live on Jan. 20, the White House said Monday.

The president was scheduled to remain in Plains from Thursday to Sunday, getting a head start on setting up an office so it will be ready when he arrives home after he leaves office.

During his Christmas visit to Plains, the president looked at the mainly unused home of his mother, Lillian Carter, with an eye toward using that as an office.

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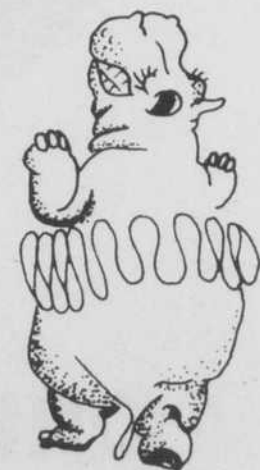
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