

COQ's
Politics in
America
2008
THE 110TH CONGRESS

**By Congressional Quarterly Staff
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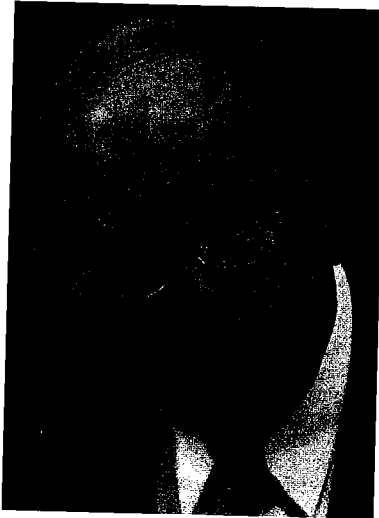


**In-depth Profiles of Members of Congress
Biographical Data and Key Votes
Election Results and District Snapshots**



Rep. John M. Spratt Jr. (D)

Elected 1982; 13th term



CAPITOL OFFICE
225-5501
www.house.gov/spratt
1401 Longworth 20515-4005; fax 225-0464

COMMITTEES
Armed Services
Budget - chairman

RESIDENCE
York

BORN
Nov. 1, 1942, Charlotte, N.C.

RELIGION
Presbyterian

FAMILY
Wife, Jane Spratt; three children

EDUCATION
Davidson College, A.B. 1964 (history); Oxford U., M.A. 1966 (philosophy, politics & economics; Marshall scholar); Yale U., LL.B. 1969

MILITARY SERVICE
Army, 1969-71

CAREER
Lawyer; insurance agency owner

POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS
No previous office

ELECTION RESULTS

2006 GENERAL

John M. Spratt Jr. (D)	99,669	56.9%
Ralph Norman (R)	75,422	43.1%

2006 PRIMARY

John M. Spratt Jr. (D)	unopposed	
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2004 GENERAL

John M. Spratt Jr. (D)	152,867	63.0%
Albert F. Spencer (R)	89,568	36.9%

PREVIOUS WINNING PERCENTAGES
2002 (86%); 2000 (59%); 1998 (58%); 1996 (54%);
1994 (52%); 1992 (61%); 1990 (100%); 1988 (70%);
1986 (100%); 1984 (92%); 1982 (68%)

In an era of partisan venom and political showboating, Spratt stands apart. His office walls are lined with books, not self-important photographs of himself. He does not indulge in snappy sound bites or cheap shots. He is a policy wonk and exudes gravitas, but he is no stuffed shirt.

During almost a quarter-century in office, he has become one of the leading experts in Congress on both the federal budget and defense, which consumes the lion's share of that budget. The top-ranking Democrat on the Budget Committee since 1997, he stepped confidently into the chairmanship after his party took control in the 110th Congress (2007-08).

In January 2007, he led Democrats in the speedy adoption of pay-as-you-go budget rules requiring all new tax cuts or entitlement program spending to be offset. Republicans had allowed such rules to lapse so they could push through tax cuts without regard to their impact on the deficit.

Spratt then set to work building a consensus within the Democratic Caucus on a plan to balance the budget within five years, which he steered through the House in March 2007. Erasing the deficit, he says, is essential in order to stop the expansion of the national debt. Interest payments on that debt are eating up a growing share of the annual budget. "As long as that wedge in the budget is widening each year, it's squeezing out other priorities and our ability to address Social Security and Medicare," he says.

Spratt has repeatedly called on President Bush to convene a budget summit like the one in 1997 that led to the balanced-budget deal between President Bill Clinton and the GOP-run Congress. Spratt was a lead negotiator on that legislation, which he calls "the biggest achievement that I can lay any claim to." The pact turned big deficits into a budget surplus by the time Bush replaced Clinton in 2001. But once Republicans allowed the pay-as-you-go rules to lapse, deficits returned as security spending arising from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the war in Iraq drove up spending and tax cuts drained revenue.

Spratt and Senate Budget Committee Chairman Kent Conrad of North Dakota, another deficit "hawk," began meeting early in 2007 with Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr. and White House budget director Rob Portman, a former Ohio GOP House member, in a preliminary quest for a broad agreement. But Democrats were awaiting signs that Bush was prepared to put tax increases, as well as spending cuts, on the table.

Meanwhile, Spratt continued to worry about the strain on the military and the drain on the budget from the war in Iraq. He is the No. 2 Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, where he has served since he arrived in the House in 1983. He is pro-defense but with an eye toward fiscal consequences. In 2002, when Bush asked Congress for the authority to invade Iraq, Spratt backed him, but also commissioned the Congressional Budget Office to study the costs. As the costs of the war escalated, Spratt in 2004 called on the administration to request additional money to cover them before the November election that year. Bush waited until after he won his second term to send Congress an \$82 billion supplemental spending request to finance military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to provide aid to the victims of the 2004 Asian tsunami.

Spratt is more conservative than the typical House Democrat, and not just on fiscal policy. In 2006, he was one of just 18 Democrats voting to authorize warrantless electronic surveillance of communications involving terrorist suspects. In both 2004 and 2006, he supported a constitu-

tional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, and he voted in 2003 to outlaw a procedure that opponents call "partial birth" abortion.

Spratt has been a leading advocate for the textile industry, which helps fuel the 5th District's economy. He voted for the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 after Clinton got the Philippines and some other developing countries to accept a longer phaseout of U.S. quotas limiting textile imports. He voted against the 2002 law giving the president authority to negotiate fast-track trade deals that would be subject to a vote by Congress, but not open to amendment. And he opposed the 2005 Central American Free Trade Agreement.

Besides textiles, the 5th District used to depend heavily on tobacco farming, especially in the eastern counties, which tend to slightly favor Republican candidates. Spratt's fiscal discipline took a back seat to supporting tobacco farmers in 2004, when he voted for a \$137 billion corporate tax bill that included a \$10 billion buyout of tobacco farmers.

Spratt has often had to work to convince his conservative-leaning constituents that he understands and defends their interests. With his lofty academic credentials — he holds degrees from Davidson, Oxford and Yale — and his background as a lawyer, banker and insurance agency owner, Spratt is not the obvious choice to represent voters from poor textile towns.

He grew up in York, where he still lives. His father was a lawyer who owned a small community bank. His older sister married Hugh L. McColl Jr., who later became chairman and CEO of Bank of America. Spratt views McColl, who retired from the bank in 2001, as a mentor.

After law school, Spratt served two years in the Army, working in the comptroller's office at the Pentagon. The job gave him insights into how the Defense Department operates, which he draws upon to this day. When he left, his place was taken by Paulson — now Bush's Treasury secretary.

Spratt returned to South Carolina, joined his father's law firm and became president of the bank. "It's not hard to become president when your family owns 89 percent and your brother-in-law [McColl] has a better job," he jokes.

Spratt won his first House race in 1982 by arguing that his work with small-town law clients and bank depositors gave him an understanding of their circumstances. He trounced a longtime friend and legal client, Republican John Wilkerson, by 36 percentage points, and he won re-election with ease throughout the 1980s. But in the 1990s, he was targeted by the national GOP. He survived the GOP sweep of 1994 by just 4 percentage points and did not win more than 60 percent of the vote in the next three elections. After an easier ride in 2002 and 2004, he won with just 57 percent in 2006.

SOUTH CAROLINA 5

North central — Rock Hill

The expansive 5th covers all or part of 14 mostly rural counties in the north-central part of the state, stretching from near Charlotte, N.C., to the Columbia suburbs, while also spreading west to Newberry County and east to Dillon County. Tobacco farmers, white-collar Charlotte commuters and textile workers make this a conservative district, although it still clings to traditional Southern Democrat roots.

Lee, Darlington, Marlboro and Dillon counties grow wheat, as well as cotton for the textile mills that historically have dominated the region's economy. Labor costs have forced many companies to downsize or close textile plants in the area, which struggles with unemployment rates above the national average. Local officials face the challenge of retaining existing textile mills while also diversifying the local economy. Darlington and Dillon also depend heavily on tobacco farming.

Rock Hill, although still dependent on textiles, now serves as a home for white-collar commuters and Winthrop University. Rock Hill's plan to attract diversified business interests and lure new residents is based in

the 250-acre redesigned downtown area known as the "Textile Corridor."

The city of Sumter, once the center of a large agricultural area, is shifting toward industry. Seven miles west, Shaw Air Force Base supports a large portion of the area's economy, and more than 800 new jobs are expected to move to the base by 2011 as part of the 2005 BRAC round.

The 5th tends to favor Republicans slightly in federal races, but conservative Democratic candidates who appeal to the district's numerous poor and rural residents can win here. Democrats also are helped by the district's 32 percent black population, the largest of any South Carolina district except the black-majority 6th.

MAJOR INDUSTRY

Agriculture, textiles, military, tobacco

MILITARY BASES

Shaw Air Force Base, 6,114 military, 766 civilian (2006)

CITIES

Rock Hill, 49,765; Sumter (pt.), 20,518; Gaffney, 12,968

NOTABLE

The Lee County Cotton Festival, held every October, celebrates the agricultural history of "King Cotton."

KEY VOTES

2006

- No Stop broadband companies from favoring select Internet traffic
- Yes Affirm U.S. commitment to war in Iraq and reject setting a withdrawal date for troops
- No Repeal requirement for bilingual ballots at the polls
- Yes Permit U.S. sale of civilian nuclear technology to India
- Yes Build a 700-mile fence on the U.S.-Mexico border to curb illegal crossings
- Yes Permit warrantless wiretaps of suspected terrorists

2005

- No Intervene in the life-support case of Terri Schiavo
- Yes Lift President Bush's restrictions on stem cell research funding
- Yes Prohibit FBI access to library and bookstore records
- No Approve free-trade pact with five Central American countries
- Yes Pass energy policy overhaul favored by President Bush emphasizing domestic oil and gas production
- No End mandatory preservation of habitat of endangered animal and plant species
- Yes Ban torture of prisoners in U.S. custody

CQ VOTE STUDIES

	PARTY UNITY		PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
2006	84%	16%	44%	56%
2005	88%	12%	27%	73%
2004	86%	14%	41%	59%
2003	90%	10%	25%	75%
2002	88%	12%	42%	58%

INTEREST GROUPS

	AFL-CIO	ADA	CCUS	ACU
2006	100%	75%	50%	44%
2005	100%	90%	52%	12%
2004	93%	80%	48%	20%
2003	100%	95%	32%	33%
2002	100%	80%	55%	16%