

Suspension of the Rules: House Practice in the 118th Congress (2023-2024)

August 27, 2025

Congressional Research Service

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R48650



R48650

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Suspension of the rules is the most commonly used procedure to call up measures on the floor of the House of Representatives. As the name suggests, the procedure allows the House to suspend its standing and statutory rules in order to consider broadly supported legislation in an expedited manner. More specifically, the House temporarily sets aside its rules that govern the raising and consideration of measures and assumes a new set of constraints particular to the suspension procedure.

The suspension of the rules procedure has several parliamentary advantages: (1) it allows non-privileged measures to be raised on the House floor without the need for a special rule, (2) it enables the consideration of a measure that would otherwise be subject to a point of order, and (3) it streamlines floor action by limiting debate and prohibiting floor amendments. Given these features, as well as the required two-thirds supermajority vote for passage, suspension motions are generally used to process less controversial legislation.

In the 118th Congress (2023-2024), measures considered under suspension made up 66% of the bills and resolutions that received floor action in the House (681 out of 1,032 measures). The majority of suspension measures were House bills (80%), followed by Senate bills (14%), House resolutions (5%), and House concurrent resolutions (1%). The measures covered a variety of policy areas but most often addressed government operations, such as the designation of federal facilities or amending administrative policies. However, suspension procedure also governed the consideration of some major appropriations bills, which are commonly considered pursuant to a special rule.

Most suspension measures are referred to at least one House committee before their consideration on the floor. The House Committee on Oversight and Accountability served as the committee of primary jurisdiction for the most suspension measures in the 118th Congress. Additional committees—such as Foreign Affairs, Energy and Commerce, Natural Resources, and Financial Services—were also referred a large number of measures later considered under suspension.

Suspension motions are debatable for up to 40 minutes. In most cases, a fraction of that debate time is actually used. In the 118th Congress, the average amount of time spent considering a motion to suspend the rules was about 12 minutes.

The House adopted nearly every suspension motion considered in 2023 and 2024. Approval by the House, however, did not guarantee final approval in the 118th Congress. The Senate agreed to five of the House concurrent resolutions considered under suspension of the rules and passed 172 of the 545 House bills initially considered under suspension (32%). The President signed 261 suspension measures into law, including 89 Senate bills that were presented to the President after passage in the House.

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Introduction

The House of Representatives has well-established standing rules that govern how bills and resolutions are to be taken up and considered on the floor. To expedite legislation receiving floor action, the House may temporarily set aside these rules for measures that are not otherwise privileged for consideration.¹ This can be done by agreeing to a special order of business resolution (special rule) or by adopting a motion to suspend the rules and pass the underlying measure.²

In general, special rules enable the consideration of complex or contentious legislation, such as major appropriations or reauthorizations, while the suspension of the rules procedure is usually applied to measures that are perceived to have broad bipartisan support and can be approved without the need for floor amendments or extensive debate in the chamber.³ However, in the 118th Congress, the House also used suspension motions to raise and consider legislation usually considered under a special rule, including consolidated and continuing appropriations.

Most bills and resolutions that receive floor action in the House are called up and considered under suspension of the rules.⁴ Suspension procedure allows otherwise non-privileged measures to be considered on the floor while also waiving points of order, limiting debate, and prohibiting floor amendments to the measure. Motions to suspend the rules require a two-thirds vote, so the procedure is typically reserved for bills and resolutions that enjoy broad bipartisan support.⁵

Decisions to schedule bills for consideration under suspension are generally based on how widely supported the measures are, how long Members wish to debate them, and whether they want to propose floor amendments. Measures brought up under suspension cover a wide range of policy areas but most often address government operations, such as the designation of federal facilities.

This report describes suspension procedure, which is defined in clause 1 of House Rule XV, and provides an analysis of measures considered under suspension during the 118th Congress (2023-2024). **Figures 1-8** display statistical data, including the prevalence and form of suspension measures, sponsors of measures, committee consideration, length of floor debate, method of

¹ Privileged business has precedence over the regular order of business. Measures and motions that are privileged include general appropriation bills, conference reports, order of business resolutions (special rules), resolutions providing for adjournment, questions of the privileges of the House, and bills returned following a veto by the President. See John V. Sullivan et al., *House Practice: A Guide to the Rules, Precedents, and Procedures of the House* (GPO, 2024) (hereinafter *House Practice*), ch. 36, §§ 6-7.

² The House may also take up and consider non-privileged legislation by unanimous consent or under procedures associated with clause 2 of Rule XV, the House discharge rule. In the 118th Congress, the House initially considered 66% of all measures receiving floor action under the suspension of the rules procedure, 13% of all measures receiving floor action were privileged under House rules and precedents (being special rules or other privileged measures), 16% were raised by special rules reported by the Committee on Rules and agreed to by the House, and 4% were raised by unanimous consent. No measures were considered under discharge procedure (clause 2 of House Rule XV). However, two measures that were considered by suspension were previously targets of efforts to discharge the Committee on Rules from the consideration of special rules that would govern the measures' consideration on the House floor: H.Res. 1410 (targeting H.R. 82) and H.Res. 961 (targeting H.R. 5863).

³ *House Practice*, ch. 53, §2.

⁴ The statistics for use of suspension procedures in the 118th Congress do not differ in significant ways from those in the 114th-117th Congresses. See CRS Report R45545, *Suspension of the Rules: House Practice in the 114th Congress (2015-2016)*; CRS Report R46364, *Suspension of the Rules: House Practice in the 115th Congress (2017-2018)*; CRS Report R47327, *Suspension of the Rules: House Practice in the 116th Congress (2019-2020)*; and CRS Report R48591, *Suspension of the Rules: House Practice in the 117th Congress (2021-2022)*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

⁵ For additional information on the suspension of the rules procedure, see *House Practice*, ch. 53, and CRS Report 98-314, *Suspension of the Rules in the House: Principal Features*, by Elizabeth Rybicki.

voting, and resolution of differences between the chambers.⁶ **Table 1** summarizes the final legislative status of measures initially considered in the House under the suspension of the rules. **Figure A-1** depicts the use of the suspension procedure from the 114th through the 118th Congresses (2015-2024).

House Rule XV (Clause 1)

The suspension of the rules procedure is established by clause 1 of House Rule XV. Bills, resolutions, House amendments to Senate bills, amendments to the Constitution, conference reports, and other types of business may be considered under suspension, even those “that would otherwise be subject to a point of order ... [or have] not been reported or referred to any calendar or previously introduced.”⁷

A motion to suspend the rules is a compound motion to suspend the House rules and pass a bill or agree to a resolution. When considering such a motion, the House is voting on the two questions simultaneously. Once recognized, the Member making the motion will say, “Mr. [or Madam] Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass [bill or resolution ____].”⁸ The House rules that are suspended under this procedure include those that “would impede an immediate vote on passage of a measure.” For instance, suspension measures are not subject to votes on the previous question (commonly used to close debate on a special rule) or motions to recommit.⁹

A measure considered under the suspension procedure is not open to floor amendment.¹⁰ The motion to suspend and pass the measure, though, may provide for passage of the measure in an amended form—that is, the text to be approved may be presented in a form that includes committee amendments or language arrived at through informal negotiations. Suspension measures that are passed with changes incorporated into the text are passed “as amended.” There are no separate votes on the floor approving such amendments.¹¹

Suspension motions are “debatable for 40 minutes, one-half in favor of the motion and one-half in opposition thereto.”¹² However, in most instances, a true opponent never claims half the time, and most speakers come to the floor to express support for the measure.¹³ Debate time is controlled by two floor managers, one from each party, who usually sit on a committee of jurisdiction. The managers make opening statements and may yield increments of the 20 minutes they control to other Members to debate the measure. Although rare, the time for debate on a motion to suspend

⁶ Congress.gov provided the data presented in this report, including the legislative status of all measures initially considered on the House floor under the suspension of the rules procedure during the 118th Congress.

⁷ *House Practice*, ch. 53, §2.

⁸ U.S. Congress, House, *Constitution, Jefferson’s Manual and the Rules of the House One Hundred Eighteenth Congress*, 117th Cong., 2nd sess., 117-161 (GPO, 2021) (hereinafter *House Manual*), §886a.

⁹ *House Practice*, ch. 53, §2.

¹⁰ The House can alter the suspension of the rules procedure by unanimous consent or under the terms of a special rule reported by the Rules Committee and agreed to by the House. By unanimous consent, the House allowed the consideration of a floor amendment to H.R. 5860 (118th Congress).

¹¹ If the measure considered under the suspension procedure contains text that is different from the introduced version, the question is on “the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill [resolution], as amended.”

¹² Rule XV, clause 1(c). See also *House Manual*, §891.

¹³ See footnotes 19 and 20 of this report for more information on claiming time in opposition to a suspension of the rules motion.

the rules may be extended by unanimous consent or by agreement to a House resolution providing additional time.¹⁴

Once debate has concluded or all time has been yielded back, a single vote is held on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the measure. The motion requires approval by “two-thirds of the Members voting, a quorum being present.”¹⁵ Should the vote fall short of the two-thirds required for passage (290, if all Members vote), the measure is not permanently rejected. Before the end of the Congress, the House may consider the measure again under suspension, perhaps in a modified form, or the Committee on Rules may report a special rule that provides for floor consideration of the measure.¹⁶

Appropriations Bills Considered by Suspension in the 118th Congress

Given the required two-thirds supermajority vote to pass, suspension motions are generally used to process less complex or controversial legislation, while special rules commonly govern the consideration of major authorization and appropriations measures.¹⁷ However, in the 118th Congress, the House more often used suspension motions to raise and consider consolidated, continuing, and supplemental funding measures than in previous Congresses.¹⁸ The consideration of some of these appropriations measures varied from the suspension practices that are outlined in this report.

Usually, both the majority and minority bill managers support the motion to suspend the rules, so there is no “true opponent” in debate.¹⁹ However, multiple appropriations measures were opposed by either the minority bill manager or another true opponent,²⁰ and one measure garnered more

¹⁴ By unanimous consent, the House agreed to extend debate on H.R. 5860 (118th Congress).

¹⁵ *House Manual*, §885.

¹⁶ *House Practice*, ch. 53, §1.

¹⁷ For information regarding the strategic use of the suspension procedure to consider major appropriations measures, see Emily Brooks and Mychael Schnell, “House GOP Swerves Around Conservative Opposition for Stopgap Spending Bill,” *The Hill*, September 23, 2024, <https://thehill.com/homenews/4895487-house-gop-stopgap-spending-bill-democrats/>.

¹⁸ Pursuant to motions to suspend the rules, the House considered five bills (H.R. 6363, H.R. 7463, H.R. 9468, H.R. 9747, and H.R. 10545) and two resolutions (H.Res. 1061 and H.Res. 1102) that contained appropriations text upon initial consideration. Three bills (H.R. 815, H.R. 2872, and H.R. 2882) did not pertain to appropriations when they were first considered under suspension procedure but were later amended to include appropriations when the House agreed to a Senate amendment with or without a further House amendment. The House approved a Senate amendment to H.R. 2872 by suspension procedure and Senate amendments to the other two bills via special rules.

¹⁹ In the event that a true opponent claims the time in opposition, the true opponent and the majority bill manager each control 20 minutes of debate time, but either individual may yield a portion of his or her time (commonly, 10 minutes) to the minority bill manager.

²⁰ CRS identified four instances in which a Member not acting as the majority or minority bill manager claimed time in true opposition to a motion to suspend the rules on an appropriations measure (or a resolution providing for the concurrence in an amendment containing appropriations) during the measure’s initial consideration in the House (H.R. 9747, H.R. 7463, H.Res. 1061, and H.Res. 1102). Another bill (H.R. 2872) was initially considered in the House under suspension without a true opponent. However, a true opponent claimed time in opposition to a subsequent suspension motion that provided for the House’s concurrence in a Senate amendment to the measure, which contained appropriations. On two occasions, the minority bill manager claimed opposition to an appropriations measure before voting against the motion to suspend the rules (H.R. 7217 and H.R. 10515). On three occasions, the minority bill manager did not state support for the appropriations measures (H.R. 10545, H.R. 5860, and H.R. 6363) but voted for the motions to suspend the rules. In addition, there were true opponents to three non-appropriations measures (H.R. (continued...))

“nay” votes than “yea” votes from the majority party.²¹ Two motions to pass appropriations measures via suspension failed by roll call vote.²²

In the 118th Congress, motions to suspend the rules were in order on any day of the week, but most were considered on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays.²³ In comparison to authorization bills considered under suspension, the appropriations measures had a higher proportion of motions considered on Thursdays (one measure), Fridays (two measures), or Saturdays (one measure), reflecting the urgent nature of the underlying measures.²⁴

Pursuant to clause 1 of House Rule XV, suspension motions are to be debated no more than 40 minutes, and they are not subject to floor amendments. However, by unanimous consent, the House agreed to extend debate on H.R. 5860 and allow for the consideration of a floor amendment.

Most of the suspension motions not related to appropriations were considered in the typical manner, meaning debate was limited to under 40 minutes, there were no true opponents, and any roll call votes reflected broad bipartisan support. Two notable exceptions were H.R. 7024, the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024, which featured a true opponent and a unanimous consent request for additional debate time that was objected to, and H.R. 1631, the Pro Codes Act, which had a true opponent and failed to achieve House passage by a roll call vote.

Prevalence and Form of Suspension Measures, 118th Congress

As illustrated in **Figure 1**, the majority of measures considered on the House floor during the 118th Congress were initially called up under the suspension of the rules procedure. Sixty-six percent of all measures that received floor action were initially considered under suspension (681 out of the 1032) compared to those that were considered under the terms of special rules (16%) or by unanimous consent (4%), or they were special rules or other privileged business (13%).

1631, H.R. 7024, and H.R. 8333). For information about opposition to a measure that provided for consolidated appropriations (H.Res. 1102), see Aidan Quigley, “House Passes Sweeping Fiscal 2024 Spending Package,” *Roll Call*, March 22, 2024, <https://rollcall.com/2024/03/22/house-passes-sweeping-fiscal-2024-spending-package/>.

²¹ H.Res. 1102, which provided for a House amendment to H.R. 2882, the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, passed the House by a 286-134 vote. The Republican vote was 101-112; the Democratic vote was 185-22. Other appropriations measures garnered a relatively large number of majority party “nay” votes on the motion to suspend the rules, including H.R. 7463 (97 Republican nay votes), H.R. 6363 (93), H.Res. 1061 (83), H.R. 9747 (82), and H.R. 2882 (58).

²² H.R. 10515 and H.R. 7217 failed by roll call vote and were not considered again in the 118th Congress.

²³ In the second session of the 117th Congress, the House, pursuant to H.Res. 1230, amended clause 1(a) of Rule XV to remove the limitation on when the Speaker could entertain motions to suspend the rules. Prior to that change, the Speaker could entertain motions to suspend the rules on days other than Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays and the last six days of a Congress only by unanimous consent or under the terms of a special rule reported by the Committee on Rules and agreed to by the House. At the start of the 119th Congress, the House adopted H.Res. 5 (the rules package), which reinstated the Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday limitation on suspension motions but without the previous exception for the last six days of a Congress. See CRS Report R48449, *House Rules Changes Affecting Floor Proceedings in the 119th Congress (2025-2026)*, by Jane A. Hudiburg.

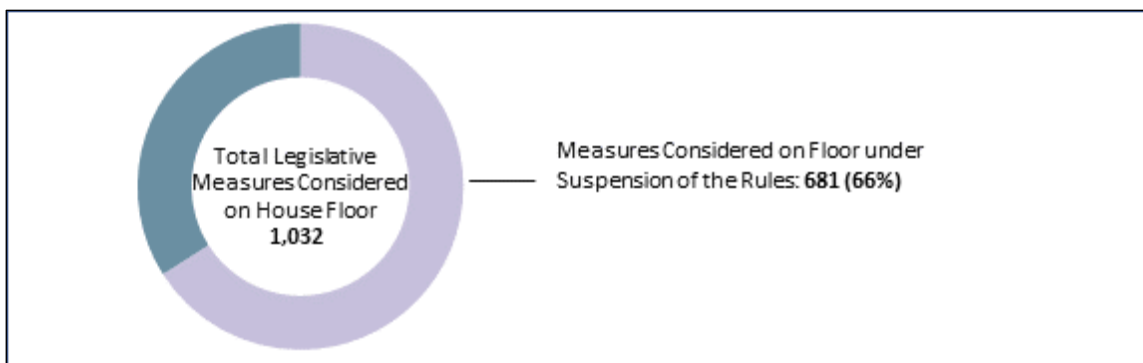
²⁴ Measures providing continuing appropriations are often considered to avoid a potential lapse in government funding. Appropriations-related motions to suspend the rules comprised 31% of the late-week motions in the 118th Congress.

Suspension measures comprised 71% of House-considered measures if special rules are excluded.²⁵

Figure 2 displays the legislative form of suspension measures. Most of the measures considered under suspension during the 118th Congress (94%) were bills. House bills made up 80% of the suspension total, Senate bills 14%. The remaining measures were House resolutions (5%) and House concurrent resolutions (1%). No House or Senate joint resolutions or Senate concurrent resolutions were considered under suspension of the rules in the 118th Congress.

Figure 1. Suspension Measures Compared to Total Number of Measures Considered on House Floor

118th Congress (2023-2024)

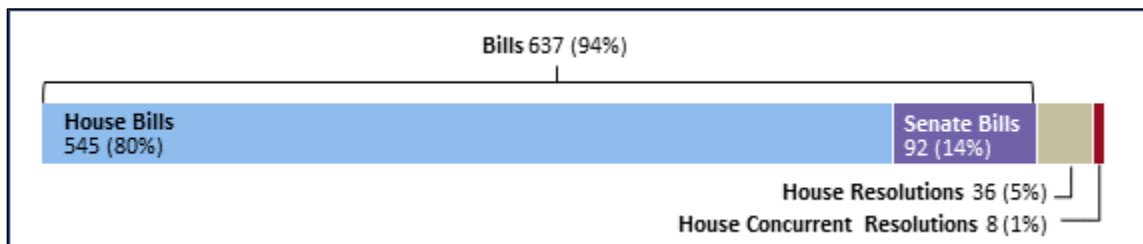


Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

Note: Chart reflects initial consideration of House and Senate bills and resolutions.

Figure 2. Forms of Measures Considered Under Suspension Procedure

118th Congress (2023-2024)



Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

Note: Chart reflects initial consideration of House and Senate bills and resolutions.

Sponsors of Suspension Measures

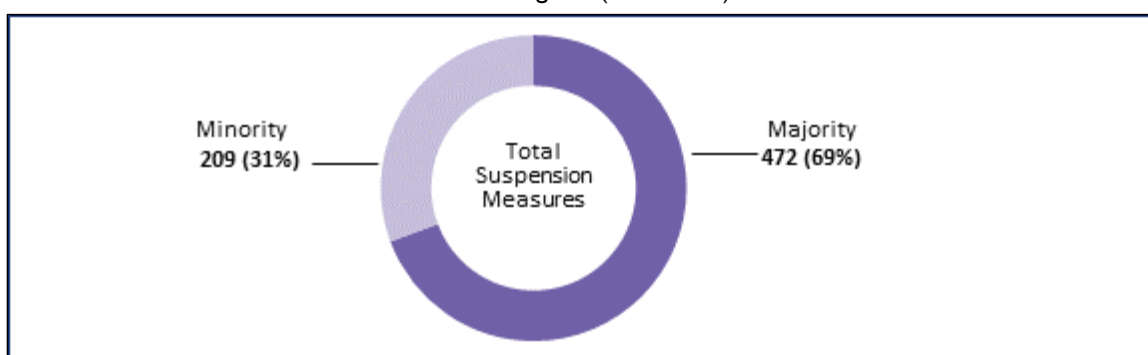
As represented in **Figure 3**, most suspension measures were sponsored by Members of the majority party during the 118th Congress. House or Senate majority-party Members sponsored 69% of all bills and resolutions initially considered in the House under suspension. House majority-party Members sponsored 422 (72%) of the 589 House-originated measures (designated with an H.R., H.Res., or H.Con.Res. prefix).

²⁵ House resolutions containing special rules are considered via the one-hour rule. See CRS Report 98-427, *Considering Measures in the House Under the One-Hour Rule*, by James V. Saturno.

By a wide margin, suspension is the most common procedure used to consider minority-sponsored legislation in the House. In the 118th Congress, 87% of the minority-sponsored measures that were considered on the House floor were raised under the suspension procedure. Members of the House or Senate minority parties sponsored 31% of all suspension measures originating in either chamber, and minority-party House Members sponsored 167 (28%) of the 589 House measures considered under suspension.²⁶ In contrast, minority-party members sponsored 9% of legislation originating in either chamber that was subject to different procedures: privileged business (22 measures) or unanimous consent (10 measures).²⁷ They sponsored no measures considered under the terms of special rules, which are often passed without minority-party support.

Figure 3. Suspension Measures by Party of Sponsor

118th Congress (2023-2024)



Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

Note: Chart reflects initial consideration of House and Senate bills and resolutions.

Committee Consideration

Committee Referral

Most suspension measures are referred to at least one House committee before their consideration on the chamber floor. In the 118th Congress, 588 out of the 681 suspension measures considered (86%) were previously referred to one or more House committees. Two House resolutions (H.Res. 1061 and H.Res. 1102) provided full-text substitute amendments to appropriations bills. The remaining 91 measures were Senate bills that were “held at the desk” prior to consideration.²⁸

Measures may be referred to multiple House committees before receiving floor action. When a bill or resolution is referred to more than one House committee, the Speaker will designate one committee as primary, meaning it is the committee exercising jurisdiction over the largest part of the measure. Generally, the chair of the committee of primary jurisdiction works with majority party leadership to determine if and when a measure should be considered under suspension.

²⁶ In the 118th Congress, the Republican Party controlled the House and the Democratic Party controlled the Senate.

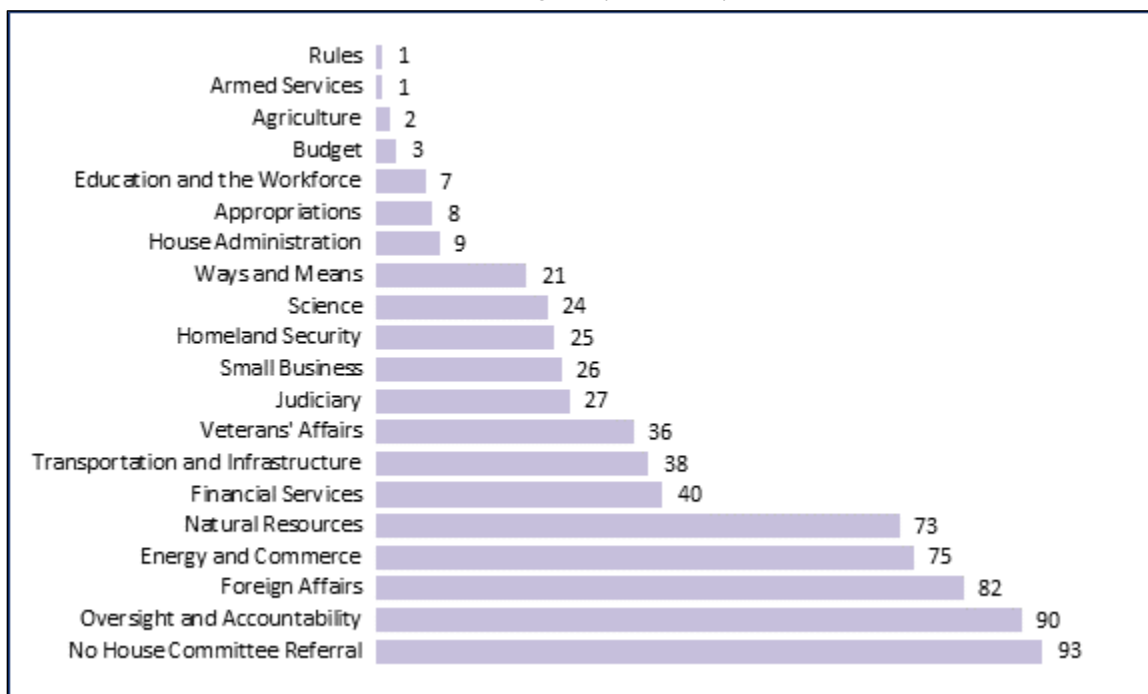
²⁷ Senate Republicans sponsored 46% (42 bills) of the total number of Senate bills (92) raised and considered under the suspension of the rules procedure.

²⁸ When a Senate-passed bill is received in the House and “held at the desk,” it is not referred to a committee. The measure may remain at the desk or instead be called up on the floor by suspension of the rules, under the terms of a special rule, or by unanimous consent.

The House Committee on Oversight and Accountability (now Oversight and Government Reform) was the committee of primary jurisdiction for the largest number of committee-referred measures considered under suspension in the 118th Congress: 90, or 13%, of the total number of suspension measures considered. **Figure 4** shows the number of measures brought up under suspension from each House committee of primary jurisdiction.

Figure 4. Suspension Measures by Committee of Primary Jurisdiction

118th Congress (2023-2024)



Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

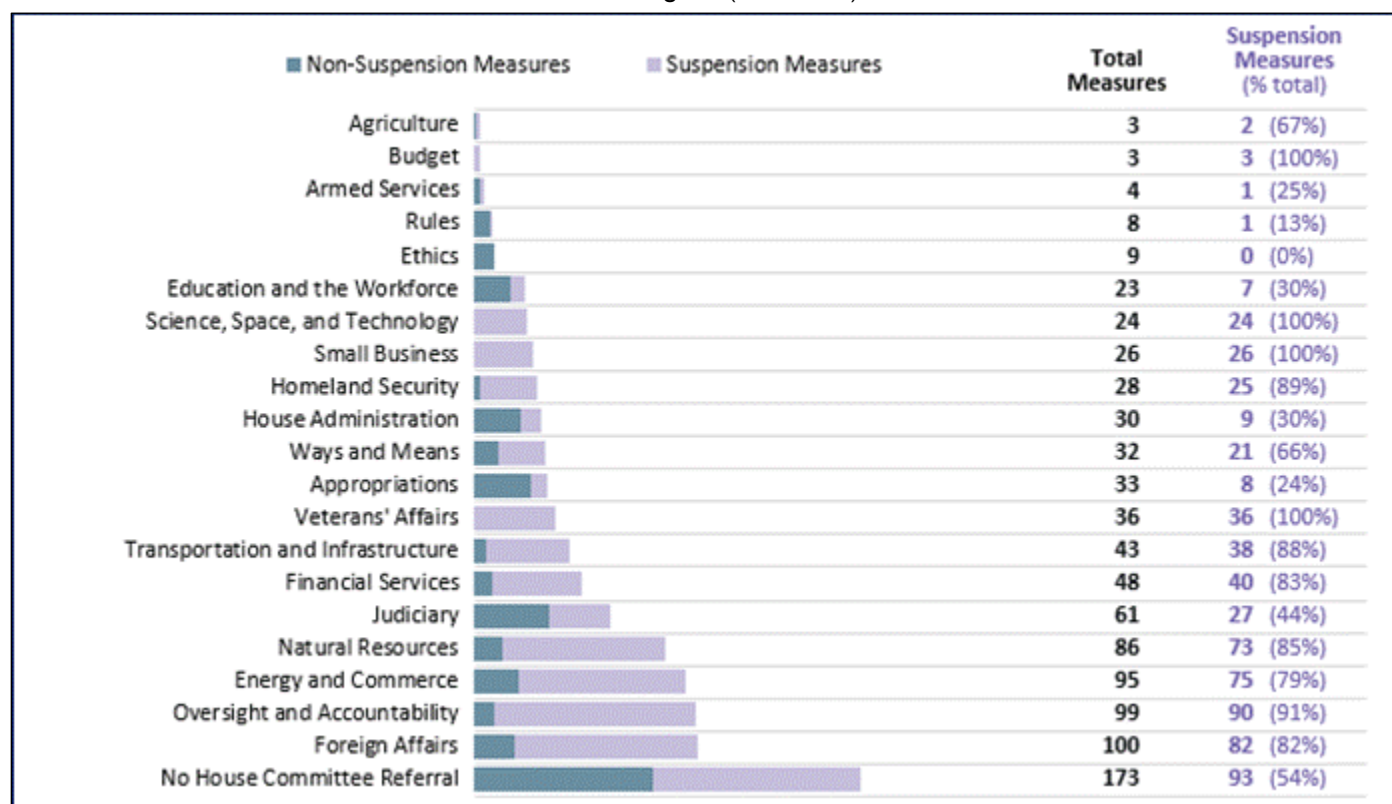
Note: Chart reflects initial consideration of House and Senate bills and resolutions.

For most House committees, the majority of their referred measures that reached the floor were raised under the suspension procedure. In the 118th Congress, the exceptions included Ethics, Rules, Appropriations, Armed Services, House Administration, Education and the Workforce, and Judiciary, which had the majority of their measures considered by alternative means: by special rule, by unanimous consent, or as privileged business (**Figure 5**).

As suspension motions require a two-thirds majority for passage, House committees that consider topics with broad interest tend to have more of their measures considered under the suspension procedure in comparison to other committees. In the 118th Congress, committees considering a large number of suspension measures included Science, Space, and Technology, Small Business, and Veterans' Affairs—100% of their measures that received floor action were considered under suspension. Oversight and Accountability, Homeland Security, Transportation and Infrastructure, Natural Resources, Financial Services, and Foreign Affairs also had high percentages of suspension measures.²⁹

²⁹ In the 118th Congress, the Committee on the Budget was the primary committee for three measures that were considered on the House floor, all via suspension procedure. However, due to its primary responsibility for reporting a concurrent resolution establishing the congressional budget for the fiscal year, it is not considered a high-suspension (continued...)

Figure 5. Total Number of Measures Considered on House Floor, Grouped by Committee of Primary Jurisdiction
118th Congress (2023-2024)



Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

Notes: Chart displays House and Senate bills and resolutions that were considered on the House floor as sorted by the committee of primary jurisdiction. Special rules reported by the Committee on Rules are not included in the analysis.

Committee Markup and Reporting

While suspension measures are not subject to floor amendments, committees may recommend amendments to legislative texts during markup meetings or through informal negotiations.³⁰ The motion to suspend the rules can include these proposed changes when a Member moves to suspend the rules and pass the measure “as amended.” In the 118th Congress, 343 suspension measures (50% of the total) were considered “as amended,” meaning that the text considered pursuant to the suspension motion differed from the measure’s introduced text.

Clause 2 of House Rule XIII requires that a measure reported by a House committee must be accompanied by a written report. Otherwise, it is not placed on a calendar of measures eligible for floor consideration.³¹ However, the written report requirement is among those rules suspended

committee. During the Congress, the committee did not report a budget resolution, which is commonly considered pursuant to a special rule.

³⁰ By two separate unanimous consent requests, H.R. 5860 was subject to a floor amendment and an extended period of debate (an extra 10 minutes per side).

³¹ *House Practice*, ch. 11, §28.

under the suspension procedure. Thus, a measure may be called up on the floor under suspension of the rules even if a committee never ordered it to be reported or wrote an accompanying committee report.³² Instead, the motion to suspend the rules discharges the committee and brings the legislation directly to the House floor.

In the 118th Congress, 506 suspension measures (74% of the total) were ordered to be reported by House committees, and 341 (50%) were reported with accompanying House committee reports. The percentage of suspension measures that were ordered reported or reported from committee (or both) increased significantly from the 117th Congress, which had 61% of suspension measures ordered to be reported and 34% reported.

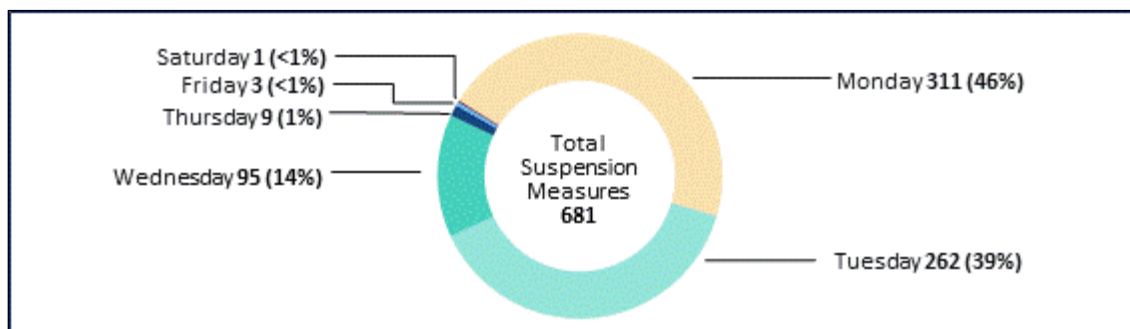
Floor Consideration

Raising Measures (Day of Week)

As displayed in **Figure 6**, in the 118th Congress, most suspension measures were raised and considered on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays, with 13 measures considered on other days. Three of the measures considered on Fridays or Saturdays responded to time-sensitive issues: consolidated appropriations (H.Res. 1102) and continuing appropriations and authorizations (H.R. 5860 and H.R. 10545).³³

Figure 6. Days of the Week Suspension Measures Were Considered

118th Congress (2023-2024)



Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

Note: Chart reflects initial consideration of House and Senate bills and resolutions.

Majority and Minority Floor Managers

Typically, the relevant committee chairs and ranking members select the majority and minority floor managers for particular bills and resolutions. A manager may be the measure's sponsor, the

³² In regular practice, a House committee will vote to order a measure reported (almost always favorably), then the committee will often prepare a written report and file it on the floor or electronically through the "eHopper." However, a motion to suspend the rules and pass a measure may occur without a measure being ordered reported or after the measure is ordered reported but without the filing of an accompanying committee report. The motion to suspend the rules, if adopted, discharges the committee from the further consideration of the measure and places it directly on the floor (*House Practice*, ch. 53, §2).

³³ Another suspension measure that was raised on a Friday failed by a roll call vote on a Saturday: H.R. 3602, the Transnational Criminal Organization Illicit Spotter Prevention and Elimination Act.

chair or ranking member of the measure's committee of primary jurisdiction, or another committee member.

In the 118th Congress, the measures' sponsors served as the majority managers on 111 (16%) of the suspension measures. The committee chairs managed 260 (38%) of the measures.

The majority floor manager makes the motion to suspend the rules by stating, "Mr. [or Madam] Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill [or resolution] ____." After the Clerk reads the title of the bill, the Speaker (or Speaker pro tempore) responds, "Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman [woman] from [state] and the gentleman [woman] from [state] each will control 20 minutes."³⁴ The majority and minority managers then, in turn, make opening statements regarding the measure using the 20 minutes each controls.

The managers may be their parties' sole representatives for or against the motion, or they may yield increments of the 20-minute allotment to other Members. If the majority and minority managers have secured additional speakers, the speakers generally alternate between the parties within the 40-minute limit. Occasionally, floor managers controlling time on a motion to suspend the rules cede their control to other Members during debate. By unanimous request, the other Member then controls the remaining amount of time allotted.

Debate and Length of Consideration

Suspension measures are limited to 40 minutes of debate under Rule XV. However, if there are time gaps between speakers or procedural interruptions, such as a vote on a motion to adjourn, the period between the start of the first speaker's remarks and the conclusion of debate may exceed 40 minutes.³⁵ The statistics displayed in **Figure 7** show the length of consideration of suspension measures as documented in Congress.gov, not the accumulated length of statements as kept by official timekeepers in the chamber.³⁶

In the 118th Congress, the average length of consideration on a motion to suspend the rules was approximately 12 minutes, and more than half of the measures considered had debate periods of 10 minutes or less. Thus, while overall debate is limited to 40 minutes under the rule, on most suspension measures, a fraction of that time was actually expended during consideration. Seventeen measures, however, had consideration periods that appeared to exceed 40 minutes as a result of unanimous consent requests for additional time to debate or due to unspecified procedural delays.³⁷

³⁴ For an example of this script, see *Congressional Record* (January 13, 2025), p. H99.

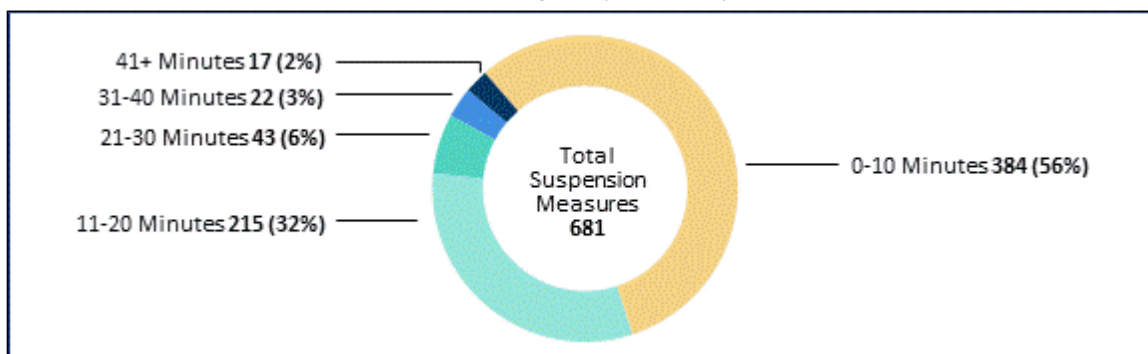
³⁵ "Pending a motion to suspend the rules, only one motion to adjourn is in order, unless the failure of a quorum is demonstrated" (*House Practice*, ch. 53, §5).

³⁶ For the purposes of this report, the length of consideration is the difference in the time between a measure being called up under suspension and the conclusion of debate, as noted in Congress.gov.

³⁷ By unanimous consent, the House extended debate on two motions to suspend the rules. The motions' underlying measures were H.Res. 771 and H.R. 5860.

Figure 7. Length of Debate Periods for Suspension Measures

118th Congress (2023-2024)



Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

Notes: Chart reflects initial consideration of House and Senate bills and resolutions. Measures that were debated for a length of time between the displayed intervals (e.g., 10 minutes and 20 seconds) are included in the next highest interval.

Voting and Passage in the House

House leaders generally choose measures for suspension that are likely to achieve the two-thirds majority threshold for passage. Thus, the House passed or adopted almost all suspension measures in the 118th Congress.

The House passed, via motions to suspend the rules, 536 of the 545 House-originated bills that were initially considered under suspension. Nine House bills did not receive the requisite supermajority. One bill was later considered and approved under the terms of a special rule.³⁸ The other bills did not return to the floor and therefore did not pass the House.³⁹

The House agreed to all of the House resolutions (36) and concurrent resolutions (8) that were considered under suspension. The House also passed each of the 92 Senate-originated bills initially considered under the suspension procedure, enabling all but three of these bills to be sent to the President for signature.⁴⁰

Voice Votes

Most suspension motions are agreed to in the House by voice vote, which is the chamber's default method of voting on most questions. This method of voting led to the final approval of 66% (447) of the motions to suspend the rules and pass the measures (see **Figure 8**).

Record Votes

After the initial voice votes, Members obtained eventual record votes on 234 (34%) of the suspension measures considered in the 118th Congress. This was done by demanding the “yeas

³⁸ H.R. 9495, the Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act, failed to achieve two-thirds supermajority support under suspension and subsequently passed under the terms of a special rule.

³⁹ H.R. 10515, H.R. 5342, H.R. 3602, H.R. 7887, H.R. 7217, H.R. 8314, H.R. 1631, and H.R. 1338 (118th Congress) failed under suspension and did not return to the floor during the 118th Congress.

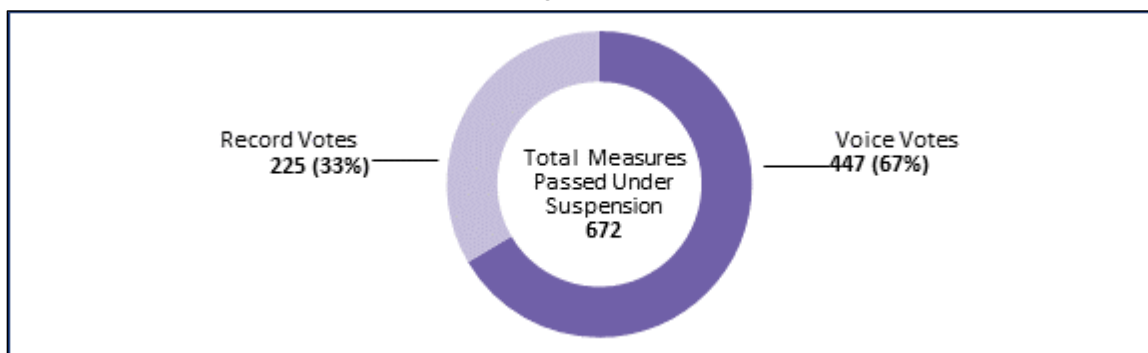
⁴⁰ The House passed three Senate bills “as amended” via the suspension of the rules procedure. However, the Senate and the House were unable to resolve differences in text, so the bills were not sent to the President for signature (or veto) and were not enacted into law. Those bills were S. 1258, S. 1146, and S. 2073.

and nays” with support from one-fifth of those present or by objecting to the vote “on the grounds that a quorum is not present,” with either action triggering a subsequent recorded vote.⁴¹ In most instances, the chair elected to postpone the vote to a later period within two additional legislative days pursuant to clause 8 of House Rule XX.⁴²

In the 118th Congress, 225 suspension motions were adopted by record vote, and nine motions to suspend the rules were defeated by recorded votes. The defeat of a motion to suspend the rules, however, does not necessarily kill the legislation. The Speaker may choose to recognize a Member at a later time to make another motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill, or the House may consider the measure pursuant to a special rule reported by the Committee on Rules. Accordingly, one of the initially unsuccessful measures was later called up and passed under the terms of a special rule.⁴³ The other eight measures did not receive further House consideration after their initial rejection under the suspension of the rules procedure.⁴⁴

Figure 8. Adoption of Suspension Motions in the House

118th Congress, 2023-2024



Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

Note: Chart reflects initial consideration of House and Senate bills and resolutions.

⁴¹ A voice vote ascertains the approval or disapproval on a question, while record votes also list the names of Members and how they voted. There are three types of record votes: (1) one that is triggered by a sustained point of order alleging that a quorum is not present, in which case a recorded vote is automatically ordered without the need for a sufficient second; (2) one that is triggered by a demand for the yeas and nays with the concurrence of one-fifth of Members present; and (3) one that is triggered by a demand for a recorded vote with the concurrence of one-fifth of a quorum—44 Members. See CRS Report 95-563, *The Legislative Process on the House Floor: An Introduction*, by Christopher M. Davis; CRS Report 98-228, *House Voting Procedures: Forms and Requirements*, by Jane A. Hudiburg; and CRS Report 98-988, *Voting and Quorum Procedures in the House of Representatives*, coordinated by Elizabeth Rybicki.

⁴² *House Manual*, Rule XX, clause 8(a), §1030.

⁴³ The House passed H.R. 9495, the Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act, after considering it pursuant to a special rule.

⁴⁴ The eight suspension measures that were not considered again were H.R. 7887, H.R. 8314, H.R. 1338, H.R. 1631, H.R. 5342, H.R. 7217, H.R. 3602, and H.R. 10515.

Final Disposition of Measures Considered Under Suspension of the Rules

Passed by the Senate

Although suspension measures generally receive broad support, measures that receive the requisite two-thirds majority in the House are not guaranteed passage in the Senate. As shown in **Table 1**, in the 118th Congress, the Senate agreed to five of the eight House concurrent resolutions considered under suspension of the rules. The Senate passed 172 of the 545 House bills initially considered under suspension (32%).

Of the 269 suspension measures that passed the House and Senate, 17 House and Senate bills entered a “resolution of differences” stage between the chambers.⁴⁵ Nine House bills and eight Senate bills were subject to an amendment exchange process. (No measure initially considered under suspension of the rules had bicameral differences resolved in a conference committee.)

One of these measures—S. 2073—did not have its differences resolved, because the House and Senate did not agree on the final text as amended by both chambers. The remainder of these bills were enacted into public law. Two Senate bills (S. 1258 and S. 1146) passed the House “as amended” but did not enter the resolving differences phase or become law because the Senate did not consider the House amendments.

Presidential Action

Of the measures initially considered under suspension during the 118th Congress, 172 House bills and 89 Senate bills were presented to President Biden for signature or veto. The President signed all of these measures, so a total of 261 bills were enacted into law (see **Table 1**).

Table 1. Final Status of Legislation Initially Brought Up Under Suspension
118th Congress, 2023-2024

Form of Measure	Number of Measures	Passed House	Passed Both Chambers	Presented to President	Vetoed	Achieved Final Passage/ Became Law
House Bill	545	537 ^a	172	172	0	172
Senate Bill	92	92	92	89 ^b	0	89
House Concurrent Resolution	8	8	5	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	5
Senate Concurrent Resolution	0	0	0	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	0
House Resolution	36	36	N/A ^d	N/A ^c	N/A ^c	36

⁴⁵ If one chamber passes the other chamber’s bill with an amendment, the two chambers must resolve the textual differences between the two versions of the bill before it can be presented to the President. This may be done via an amendment exchange process or a conference committee. See CRS Report R41003, *Amendments Between the Houses: Procedural Options and Effects*, by Elizabeth Rybicki.

Form of Measure	Number of Measures	Passed House	Passed Both Chambers	Presented to President	Vetoed	Achieved Final Passage/ Became Law
Total	681	673	269	261	0	302

Source: CRS analysis of data from Congress.gov.

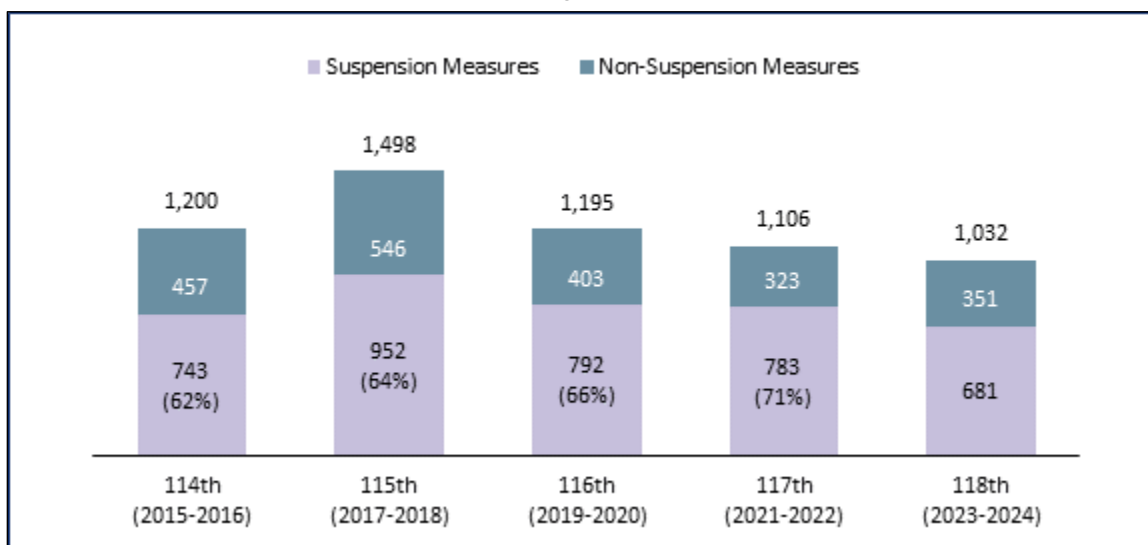
Notes:

- a. Of the 545 House bills initially considered under suspension of the rules, the House passed 536 House bills under the suspension procedure and 1 under the terms of a special rule.
- b. Three Senate bills passed both the House and the Senate, but the House and Senate did not agree to identical text, so the bills were not presented to the President.
- c. House and Senate concurrent resolutions and House resolutions are not sent to the President for signature and do not become law.
- d. House resolutions are not sent to the Senate for consideration.

Appendix. Use of Suspension Motions, 114th-118th Congresses

Figure A-1. Measures Considered Under Suspension Compared to Measures Considered Under Other Procedures on the House Floor

114th-118th Congresses, 2015-2024



Sources: Congress.gov and the following reports by Christopher M. Davis: CRS Report R43912, *How Legislation Is Brought to the House Floor: A Snapshot of Parliamentary Practice in the 113th Congress (2013-2014)*, and CRS Report R44734, *How Legislation Is Brought to the House Floor: A Snapshot of Parliamentary Practice in the 114th Congress (2015-2016)*.

Note: Chart reflects initial consideration of House and Senate bills and resolutions.

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Acknowledgments

Amber Wilhelm, CRS visual information specialist, provided the graphics for this report.

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