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HEADLINE: IT'S PERSONAL; LAWS MADE ON CAPITOL HILL MAY SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST, BUT OFTEN THEY'RE SPARKED BY PRIVATE PASSIONS OR FAMILY TIES

BYLINE: BY LARRY VAN DYNE; SENIOR WRITER LARRY VAN DYNE HAS WRITTEN RECENTLY ABOUT ART DEALER CHRIS MIDDENDORF AND ABOUT THE NEW WASHINGTON ESTABLISHMENT.

BODY:

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 ripped apart 10-year-old Norman Mineta's comfortable California boyhood in ways that were impossible to forget. His father, a Japanese immigrant who owned a successful insurance agency in San Jose, had lived in America for 40 years. But that was not enough, amid the hysteria of war, to prevent the US government from considering him a "security risk." His insurance license was suspended, his savings account confiscated, and the Minetas were shipped off, like some 120,000 other Japanese-Americans, to an internment camp.

For most of the war the Minetas lived in an isolated camp in the sagebrush country outside Cody in northern Wyoming. There were 12,000 people in the camp--sleeping in crowded barracks, eating in mess halls, and coping with the bitter cold of winter and the sandstorms of summer. Norman Mineta went to school inside the camp and was a member of its Boy Scout troop, but he could look up and see that his rights stopped at the barbed wire.

After the war Norman Mineta returned to California, graduated from Berkeley, served as mayor of San Jose, and was elected in 1974 to Congress, where he's serving his tenth term. Of the dozens of bills Mineta has sponsored over the years, one cut to the heart of his past. It sought an apology and compensation for Japanese-Americans who had been detained in those wartime camps. With a push from Mineta and other Japanese-American lawmakers, it passed in 1988.

While it was a personal victory for Mineta, the bill's passage also stirred memories for Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming. He had grown up in Cody, a few miles from what the locals called "the Jap camp." In 1943, his Boy Scout troop had gone out to the camp to meet with the Japanese-American Boy Scouts there. The two groups of kids got to know each other--pitching coins, talking of merit badges, and trying to best each other at knot-tying. It was there that Al Simpson met Norm Mineta--forging a personal link that would lead him, 45 years later, to support Mineta's demand that the government apologize for its wartime treatment of Japanese-Americans.

It's no surprise to see David Boren of Oklahoma throwing his weight around for oil, Jesse Helms of North Carolina standing tall for tobacco, or Robert Byrd getting all he can for West Virginia. But one of the overlooked aspects of life on Capitol Hill is that senators and congressmen sometimes spring into action out of motives that are emotional and deeply personal.

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The trigger may be some great pain that has struck them or a loved one--a disease, a disability, or a crime. It may come from a corner of their identity--a hobby, a memorable experience of youth. Or it may be the influence of a crusading spouse.

Whatever their personal passions, the politicians of Capitol Hill are in a unique position to push them. Beyond access to the op-ed pages and talk shows, they're able to insert their personal agendas into government policy, tapping the Treasury or unleashing the forces of regulation for better or for worse.

Nobody in Washington understands this sentimental side of politics better than lobbyists, who stand ready to exploit even the smallest advantage. Which congressmen have arthritis? Whose wife has breast cancer? Who rides a bike to work? Whose child is dyslexic? He who knows these secrets about the lives of politicians knows where to find the soft spots in their hearts.

CRUSADING AGAINST CANCER

Congressman Richard Durbin of Illinois is the Hill's top anti-tobacco crusader--the man who got smoking banned on all domestic airline flights. The airline campaign was ignited by his sitting between two smokers on a flight between Phoenix and Chicago. Deeper down was something else: Durbin's father was a heavy smoker who had died at age 51 from lung cancer.

Nothing heightens legislative resolve like a life-threatening disease in the family. Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon pushed through Congress a program to give identification bracelets to Alzheimer's victims who have a tendency to wander away from home--a problem that affected his own father. Congressman Jim Kolbe of Arizona is a supporter of fetal-tissue research in part because his father died of Parkinson's, one of the diseases the research may help.

No disease hits home on the Hill with the power of cancer. Consider the testimony at a hearing before the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources a couple of years ago on the twentieth anniversary of the National Cancer Act. The chairman's gavel was wielded by Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts, whose son, Teddy Jr., had lost a leg to the disease when he was 12. Former House Speaker Tip O'Neill, fresh from his own cancer surgery, lamented the death of his old Massachusetts buddy Silvio Conte from prostate cancer. Tom Harkin of Iowa told of the loss of two sisters to breast cancer. A couple of other senators told of the anguish of losing their wives to the same disease.

Given the number of women who have battled breast cancer, it's no surprise that the disease has struck two members of the House. Barbara Vucanovich, who was 61 when she was elected to Congress from Nevada in 1982, discovered her breast cancer during a health screening given to freshman lawmakers. Though a conservative Republican normally opposed to government spending, she has successfully sponsored legislation extending Medicare coverage to include mammograms for older women. Marilyn Lloyd of Tennessee, who had a mastectomy in 1991, has testified in favor of exempting cancer patients from a proposed federal ban on breast implants. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, a survivor of ovarian cancer, is another backer of more cancer research.

The list of legislators who have lost relatives to breast cancer--and have strongly supported research on the disease--is much longer. Olympia Snowe of Maine was 8 years old when her mother died, and Connie Morella of Maryland

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raised six nieces and nephews after her sister's death. The wives of Connie Mack of Florida, Sidney Yates of Illinois, and Robert Dornan of California survived breast cancer. In addition to Tom Harkin's sisters, the disease has killed the mother of Brock Adams, and the wives of Birch Bayh, David Durenberger, and James Oberstar. Oberstar, a congressman from Minnesota, once made a moving speech about his dying wife during a floor debate on a cancer-research bill. He was so grateful for the care she received at Georgetown University Hospital that he has helped the university secure appropriations for various projects.

Breast cancer has become a favorite charity on the Hill. An annual 5-kilometer run, the National Race for the Cure, attracts 15,000 runners and raises nearly \$700,000. Two years ago it was led by Vice President Dan Quayle and Marilyn Quayle, whose mother died of breast cancer; this year at the front of the pack were Vice President Al Gore and Tipper Gore, who lost an aunt to the disease.

The male counterpart of breast cancer is prostate cancer. Its recent victims on the Hill include Silvio Conte and Senator Spark Matsunaga of Hawaii, but much of the attention and new research money comes from a crusade by Senate Republican leader Bob Dole of Kansas, who had surgery for prostate cancer in 1991.

Dole has talked about prostate cancer on Larry King Live, joined the boards of several cancer groups, and sponsored testing booths at the Republican National Convention and the Kansas State Fair. He also got another \$36 million for research on the disease inserted into the federal budget with help from three other senators who'd had prostate surgery--Ted Stevens of Alaska, Jesse Helms of North Carolina, and Alan Cranston of California.

Bob Dole, they say, has become the poster boy of prostate cancer--a title he wears with pride.

THIS SPORTING LIFE

They call themselves the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, an alliance of senators and congressmen dedicated to keeping America safe for hunting and fishing. Their adversaries may deride them as the "hook and bullet crowd," but they're also awed by how much clout the caucus wields on behalf of two of the country's oldest and most popular sports.

Founded by then-Congressman Dick Schulze of Pennsylvania in 1989, the caucus has grown into one of the largest ad hoc groups on the Hill, with 33 senators and 128 congressmen. About 60 percent are Republicans, most representing rural areas where there is a lot of hunting and fishing. Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, Alaska, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Missouri count both their senators as caucus members. Its leaders are Conrad Burns of Montana and Richard Shelby of Alabama in the Senate, Don Young of Alaska and Bill Brewster of Oklahoma in the House.

Some members join the caucus because it helps back home, but the group also includes avid outdoorsmen. John Dingell, the Michigan Democrat who chairs the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee, is one of the Hill's most enthusiastic bird hunters and gun collectors, and he has played a major role in legislation to protect wetland habitats. Dingell also opposes gun control and sits on the National Rifle Association's board of directors, along with

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Brewster, Ted Stevens, and Senator Larry Craig of Idaho.

Although the sportsmen's caucus leaves the gun-control issue to its individual members, it wages battles to maintain hunting and fishing rights. That always puts the caucus at odds with animal-rights groups and sometimes with environmentalists.

Fishermen on the Hill arouse less controversy than the guys with the guns. Nobody pickets when the sportsmen's caucus sponsors its annual bass-fishing derby on the Potomac--an event that draws such top-flight anglers as Senator Christopher Bond of Missouri.

Senator John Breaux, the Louisiana Cajun, is also a big fisherman and was a major player, along with Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, in passing a bill to restore the nation's fisheries. A lobbyist who once took a six-hour fishing trip with Breaux says that fishing boats--like golf courses and duck blinds-- are the lobbyist's best friend: "You've got a captive audience. Get 'em on a boat and you can hammer the hell out of 'em."

The Hill's cadre of bicyclists also carries its enthusiasm into the committee rooms. Minnesota's James Oberstar, an avid biker who once was injured when struck by a car in Bethesda, wrote into 1992's highway bill a requirement that every state appoint a "bicycle and pedestrian coordinator." Joe Kennedy II, another member of the Hill's "chain gang," has proposed that 3 percent of federal transportation funds be devoted to bike trails--a proposal that was crushed by the "road gang."

Congress also has lots of tennis players, a couple of whom helped allow construction of a privately financed tennis stadium on federal land in Rock Creek Park. The big boosters were Senator J. Bennett Johnston of Louisiana and Congressman Norm Dicks of Washington, both frequent players on Washington's celebrity tennis circuit.

And they're just amateurs. Two former basketball stars--Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey and former Maryland Congressman Tom McMillen--have paid close attention to the academic scandals of college sports. McMillen and Bradley, both Rhodes scholars, engineered passage of legislation requiring colleges to disclose how many of their athletes earn degrees.

Jim Bunning, the seven-term congressman from Kentucky, carries experience into his battles with major-league baseball owners. Though he won 224 games and made seven All-Star teams with the Detroit Tigers, Philadelphia Phillies, and Pittsburgh Pirates, Bunning pitched in the era before free agency and never made the big money of modern players. Later on, as a sports agent, he watched ball players get pushed around by owners. Which may explain why the lanky right-hander keeps pushing for an end to baseball's exemption from anti-trust laws.

FAMILY AFFAIRS

There are special interests, but nobody in Washington is quite so special as a lawmaker's spouse. Their fingerprints are most often seen in the nooks and crannies of public affairs that rarely come to light in the papers.

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Mrs. J. Bennett Johnston is a lover of roses, which grace the garden of her Northern Virginia home. In the mid- 1980s, she convinced her husband to introduce legislation making the rose America's "national-floral emblem"--a gesture that corresponded nicely with the interests of the American Rose Society, based in Shreveport, Louisiana, which is Senator Johnston's home town. This was accomplished despite competition from the marigold, a favorite of House Republican Leader Robert Michel of Illinois, and a florid speech on behalf of the camellia by Senator Howell Heflin of Alabama.

Johnston also helped set aside three acres near the US Botanic Gardens for a privately funded national garden, with emphasis on the rose. So far the project has attracted more than \$2 million in donations--\$1 million of it from the widow of the late Senator John Heinz of Pennsylvania.

In the House, Annette Lantos has been a major force in turning the office of her husband, California Congressman Tom Lantos, into a clearinghouse for the animal-rights movement. Lantos can be counted on to get behind nearly all legislation on the issue--from attempts to outlaw steel-jawed traps to better handling of pets on airlines and on to the very edges of animal welfare. He wrote the government of South Korea suggesting that visitors to the Olympics would be offended by dog meat on menus in Seoul. And Mrs. Lantos got a better mousetrap introduced as an option for Hill offices--one that captured mice live for release elsewhere. The congressman also is co-chairman of an informal group called Congressional Friends of Animals, along with Congressman Charlie Rose of North Carolina, whose wife, Joan, also is interested.

Annette Lantos sees her involvement in animal rights as a logical extension of the work she and her husband have done on the Congressional Human Rights Caucus. Her husband is co-chairman of that group, along with Congressman John Porter of Illinois, and she is an unpaid staff member. Both Tom and Annette Lantos come to the human-rights issue out of personal experience as Jews who survived the Holocaust. Tom Lantos was sent to forced-labor camps in his native Hungary, escaped from them to fight in the anti-Nazi resistance, and ended up, like his wife, under the protection of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest.

The idea for the Human Rights Caucus arose out of the experience of Congressman Porter and his wife, Kathryn. In 1982, during a trip to the Soviet Union to meet with Jewish "refuseniks" who had been denied exit visas, she was strip-searched by Soviet authorities. Back in Washington, her outraged husband contacted Lantos, and together they launched the caucus.

Causes backed by congressional spouses sometimes flare into controversy. One involved Peace Links, a group of congressional spouses rounded up by Betty Bumpers, wife of the senior senator from Arkansas. The group--mostly Democrats--favored nuclear disarmament and visited the Soviet Union. Conservatives thought it was a loony liberal outfit, and Jeremiah Denton, Republican senator from Alabama at the time, denounced it as a tool of the Communists. It was an unprecedented attack on a colleague's spouse.

More famous was Tipper Gore's crusade to get the recording industry to warn parents about music said to glorify rape, satanism, and drug abuse. She testified at a Senate hearing on the subject along with Susan Baker, wife of then-Treasury secretary James Baker. One member of the committee was Tipper's husband, then-Senator Al Gore of Tennessee, who acknowledged that while he

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liked the music of two witnesses, John Denver and Frank Zappa, he could do without Twisted Sister. Zappa, who thought Mrs. Gore's idea amounted to censorship, was not so kind. He mocked her Southern accent and referred to her and Mrs. Baker as "the wives of Big Brother"--prompting one senator to rebuke him as "boorish."

In 1972, a plane carrying Representative Hale Boggs, the Democratic majority leader from Louisiana, went down in the Alaskan mountains. Search parties looked for days, but the crash site was never found. Hale Boggs was succeeded by his widow, Lindy, who ended up on an appropriations subcommittee that handled the budget of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. There she became the chief protector of a NASA satellite program called SARSAT. The acronym stood for "search-and-rescue satellite," and its job was to guide rescue parties to planes and ships in trouble.

Politicians sometimes are also moved by their parents. Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut was repaying an old family debt when he supported the nomination of John Tower as secretary of defense: Tower, while a senator from Texas, had stood up for Dodd's father, Senator Thomas Dodd, during censure proceedings against him in the 1960s.

Other times politicians are thinking of their kids. Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island linked his support for the nomination of a lesbian lawyer as an assistant secretary at the Department of Housing and Urban Development to the fact that his own daughter is a lesbian. And Lynn Woolsey, a freshman House member from California, introduced her gay son during a press conference in support of lifting the ban against gays in the military.

REMEMBERING THE WAR?

It is said that no one in the generation of Americans who lived through the Great Depression ever forgot it. The experience of hard times was so vivid that it stuck in their guts and revealed itself later in support for social programs like Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty. It has been said that LBJ never brought up a bill on rural electrification without a moment of private silence for his mother, whom he remembered sweating over her stove-heated iron in the darkness of the Texas hill country.

LBJ is long gone, and so are most of the people on the Hill for whom the Depression was a defining moment. One of the few remaining powers with that hardscrabble experience is Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia, who was 12 at the time of the Crash of '29. Orphaned as a baby and raised by an aunt and uncle in coal country, Byrd spent a dozen years working as a grocery clerk, butcher, gas-station attendant, and shipyard welder. No wonder he grabs everything he can for his poverty-ridden state.

Nobody ever forgets being shipped off to a war, either. There are 54 World War II veterans on the Hill--19 in the Senate, 35 in the House. Bob Dole, 70 years old, is the last one with a shot at the presidency. Dole lost the use of an arm in the Italian campaign, and Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, who had planned to be a surgeon, lost his right arm in the war.

World War II vets in Congress are nearly matched by the 52 veterans of the Korean conflict--14 in the Senate and 38 in the House. Last year a Vietnam-era veteran, Lane Evans of Illinois, came within three votes of wresting the

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chairmanship of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee from G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery of Mississippi, who is thought to be most responsive to the concerns of the older veterans with whom he served during World War II and the conflict in Korea.

Though many members of the '60s generation managed to avoid the war in Vietnam, 91 members of Congress are eligible for membership in the Vietnam-era Veterans Caucus. But only 20 of them--8 in the Senate, 12 in the House--actually went to Vietnam; 33 were in regular military units but never were sent to the war zone, and another 38 were reservists.

The Senate's war-zone veterans include four Republicans--Hank Brown of Colorado, Robert Smith of New Hampshire, Larry Pressler of South Dakota, and John McCain of Arizona, a Navy pilot who was shot down and spent six years as a prisoner of war. The four Democrats are Tom Harkin of Iowa, Chuck Robb of Virginia, John Kerry of Massachusetts, who became a leader of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, who lost a leg to shrapnel.

Many veterans have taken up issues related to the war. McCain and John Kerry have been major players on the MIA-POW issue. Tom Daschle of South Dakota has campaigned to compensate veterans who suffer illnesses from exposure to Agent Orange. And Chuck Robb has said that his support for lifting the ban on gays in the military was influenced by his experience in the Marine Corps legal corps watching decorated Vietnam vets being discharged because they were homosexuals.

In the House, the seven Democrats and five Republicans who served in Vietnam include a couple of POWs. Pete Peterson of Florida, a career Air Force pilot, spent more than six years in captivity, and Sam Johnson of Texas, another Air Force pilot, was held six years in the same camp as John McCain.

Several members of Congress got their start in politics by opposing the Vietnam war. The two senior Democrats on the House Armed Services Committee--chairman Ronald Dellums of California and Patricia Schroeder of Colorado--were anti-war activists.

Other types of '60s activism helped shape the politics of senators and congressmen. Some of Senator Jay Rockefeller's work on health reform is traceable to what he saw as a young VISTA volunteer in a West Virginia coal camp. A couple of liberal House members worked in LBJ's anti-poverty program--Maxine Waters of California in Head Start and Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut as a community organizer.

The civil-rights movement shaped others, including Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, the son of an Alabama sharecropper who became director of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The half-dozen former Peace Corps volunteers in Congress include Tony Hall of Ohio, who has crusaded against hunger, and Christopher Shays of Connecticut, who has pushed national-service legislation.

DISABILITIES UP CLOSE

An estimated 43 million Americans--one in six--live with disabling physical, mental, or emotional conditions. Nearly everyone cares about somebody who struggles with a hearing loss, paralysis, or any of a hundred other disabilities. So it was inevitable, during the debate over the new Americans with Disabilities Act, that many politicians came to the issue with up-close

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sensitivity.

That was true of Senator Lowell Weicker of Connecticut and Congressman Tony Coehlo of California, who sponsored early versions of the bill in the mid-1980s. Weicker is the father of a child with Down's syndrome, and Coehlo has epilepsy. He had felt the stigma of being disabled for years, having been kicked out of a Jesuit seminary, turned down for jobs, forced to give up his driver's license, and had his condition used against him in a campaign.

When Weicker lost a re-election bid and Coehlo resigned from Congress in a junk-bond scandal, the disability bill was taken up by others. In the Senate, it was Tom Harkin, who had a deaf brother, and Ted Kennedy. Kennedy not only had a son with a missing limb but had taken part in his family's sponsorship of the Special Olympics and other programs inspired by his mentally retarded sister, Rosemary. In the House, Coehlo handed off leadership on the bill to Steny Hoyer of Maryland, whose wife is epileptic.

The 1990 debate on the bill--described by Joseph P. Shapiro in *No Pity*, a new book on the disabled--produced some moving moments. Harkin delivered part of one speech on the floor of the Senate in sign language directed to his brother, who was watching on television. And Charles Bennett, then a 79-year-old Congressman from Florida, told of catching polio in the Philippines during World War II and being told he'd never walk again. He had defied the prediction, he said, noting that he had walked with two canes for more than 40 years.

Other Democrats were able to see the disability issue in personal terms. Congressman Ron Coleman of Texas had taught in a school for the deaf. And Senator John Glenn of Ohio had watched his wife struggle to overcome stuttering.

Despite the costs the bill would impose on businesses, it attracted support among Republicans. Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah delivered a tear-filled speech about his polio-stricken brother-in-law, who slept in an iron lung and whom Hatch had once carried into a Mormon temple. Although he did not talk publicly about it until later, Senator Pete Domenici of New Mexico had coped with the mental illness of a daughter. But most crucial was the support of Bob Dole, the Republican leader in the Senate, who'd lost the use of his arm in World War II.

At the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, President George Bush had reason to be sympathetic. His son, Neil, was learning-disabled--one reason why Barbara Bush, as First Lady, had focused on reading. And the president himself had often spoken of his admiration for a favorite uncle who had been a great athlete and surgeon until polio left him a quadriplegic.

HERE'S TO THE OLD COUNTRY

Nick Rahall represents a district in West Virginia where his main job is to protect coal mining, the dominant local industry. But Rahall also spends a lot of time traveling in the Middle East, criticizing Israel, and supporting closer US links to the Arabs. All of which seems a bit odd--unless you know that his grandparents emigrated to America from Lebanon.

That was 90 years ago--distant enough to demonstrate how enduring ethnic and racial identity can be in shaping American politicians. In a country peopled by immigrants, it's no surprise to find so many of these groups well represented on the Hill:

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IRISH. Though nobody's done a formal count of Irish-Americans on the Hill, the Friends of Ireland, a group of senators and congressmen that issues a statement each St. Patrick's Day condemning violence by all sides in Northern Ireland, has about 130 members, many of them with Irish blood. It was started in the 1970s by a group of Irish pols--Ted Kennedy, Tip O'Neill, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Hugh Carey--known as the Four Horsemen. Another congressional group, the Committee for Irish Affairs, has been more critical of British policy in Northern Ireland. The reputation of the Irish as master politicians is reinforced by the fact that several recent House speakers have been Irish, including John McCormack, Tip O'Neill, Jim Wright, and Tom Foley.

ITALIANS. Several veteran Italian-American lawmakers have departed--including Silvio Conte of Massachusetts, Dante Fascell of Florida, and Frank Annunzio and Marty Russo of Illinois--but there are still four senators and 24 members of the House whose ancestors came from Italy. In the Senate there's Pete Domenici of New Mexico, Dennis DeConcini of Arizona, Alfonse D'Amato of New York, and Patrick Leahy of Vermont, whose mother was Italian. House members include Romano Mazzoli of Kentucky, Connie Morella of Maryland, Bruce Vento and Jim Oberstar of Minnesota, and Vic Fazio, Nancy Pelosi, and George Miller of California. The National Italian American Foundation has counted on their support mostly on small issues like funding for celebration of the 500th anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus.

JEWS. There are 42 Jewish lawmakers on the Hill, nearly half from New York and California. Ten are in the Senate--Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein of California, Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold of Wisconsin, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, Howard Metzenbaum of Ohio, Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey, Carl Levin of Michigan, and Paul Wellstone of Minnesota. Prominent House members include Sidney Yates of Illinois, Henry Waxman of California, Barney Frank of Massachusetts, and Martin Frost of Texas. Though support for Israel is the big issue among them, they're also active on matters ranging from research on Tay-Sachs disease to support for the new US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Judaism is the sixth-most-common religious affiliation on the Hill, according to a survey by Congressional Quarterly. Roman Catholics rank first (141 members), Methodists second (65), Baptists third (62), Presbyterians fourth (54), and Episcopalians fifth (50). There are also 21 Lutherans, twelve Mormons, seven Unitarians, two Seventh-Day Adventists, and two Christian Scientists.

BLACKS. Gone are the days when Adam Clayton Powell in the House and Edward Brooke in the Senate were the only visible blacks on the Hill. The Congressional Black Caucus, founded in 1970 and chaired by Kweisi Mfume of Baltimore, has 40 members, making it one of the more important voting blocs in the House. Half a dozen are big-city politicians with more than twenty years of seniority, including Charles Rangel of New York City, William Clay of St. Louis, Louis Stokes of Cleveland, John Conyers Jr. of Detroit, and Ronald Dellums of Oakland. Dellums, Conyers, and Clay chair full committees; another fifteen subcommittees have black chairmen; and Georgia's John Lewis is a chief deputy whip in the House Democratic leadership. This puts them in a position to influence legislation on civil rights, urban aid, drugs, crime, welfare, research on sickle-cell anemia, and other issues.

Race arises in other contexts as well. Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois, the one black senator, took deep offense at attempts to secure Senate endorsement

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for using the Confederate flag in the insignia of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Conyers is the Hill's leading champion of African-American culture, having pushed national honors for Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie and secured a National Tap Dance Day to honor Bill "Bojangles" Robinson.

HISPANICS. Growth in the number of Hispanics on the Hill reflects the increasing Latino population in California, Texas, Florida, and New York. Two-thirds of the eighteen Hispanic members of the House come from those four states. Most powerful are E. "Kika" de la Garza, who represents a district in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and is chairman of the Agriculture Committee, and Henry B. Gonzalez of San Antonio, chairman of Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs. Among the big issues for Hispanics: immigration policy and the trade pact with Mexico.

OTHER ETHNICS. Several other groups count on legislators' paying attention to immigration and foreign-policy issues involving ancestral homes. The five Greek-Americans on the Hill include Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland and Representative Olympia Snowe of Maine. Polish-Americans there include Senator Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, as well as congressmen Dan Rostenkowski and William Lipinski of Illinois and John Dingell of Michigan. The bill apologizing to Japanese-Americans sent to internment camps was pushed not only by Norman Mineta but also by his House colleague Robert Matsui of California, who also had been sent to such a camp. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, the new senator from Colorado, is the Hill's only Native American--and he has threatened to block Jack Kent Cooke's new stadium unless the Washington Redskins change their name.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR

About 10:30 one night last April a college coed named Nancy Moore Thurmond stepped from a curb to cross a street in Columbia, South Carolina. She was 22 years old, a senior at the University of South Carolina, headed to law school in the fall, and scheduled to take part a few weeks later in the Miss South Carolina beauty pageant. Her mother had won that pageant in 1966 and gone on to become a well-known figure in Washington by marrying 66-year-old Strom Thurmond, South Carolina's senior senator. Nancy, named for her mother, was the first of the Thurmonds' four children.

As young Nancy stepped into the street that night, a 1987 Plymouth Horizon approached, driven by a woman whose blood contained enough alcohol to put her over the legal limit. The car struck the senator's daughter; she died of a head injury the next afternoon. Knocked from her hand by the impact was a birthday card with a note from her father.

For several years, Strom Thurmond had sponsored a bill to require wine, beer, and liquor companies to include warnings in their advertising about the safety and health problems of their products. Though supported by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and other groups, it was opposed by liquor, advertising, and broadcasting lobbies and had always languished in committee without a hearing.

There was a great outpouring of sympathy for the Thurmonds on Capitol Hill, some of it from lawmakers who had their own memories of similar losses. Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, whose mother had been killed in an accident involving a drunk driver, introduced legislation forcing states to adopt laws prohibiting open containers of alcohol in vehicles. Thurmond's bill finally received a sympathetic hearing; several senators suggested it be passed as a

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memorial to his daughter. Its fate remains undecided.

When politicians or those close to them are victims of crime, the impulse often is to strike back with legislation.

Take Robert Krueger, who replaced Treasury secretary Lloyd Bentsen as senator from Texas until his defeat last spring. Krueger and his wife, Kathleen, have been harrassed for nearly nine years by a former campaign worker who has screamed obscenities over the phone, repeatedly rung their doorbell, and sent them death threats--a classic case of "stalking." Because the hands of law-enforcement agencies usually are tied until stalkers carry out their threats, Krueger and Senator Barbara Boxer of California introduced legislation to make stalking itself a federal crime.

Handgun violence also has sparked personal crusades. The assassinations of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy transformed them into symbols in the quest for gun control, and the wounding of James Brady in the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan made him and his wife, Sarah, leaders of the anti-gun movement. Mel Reynolds, a freshman congressman from Chicago's south side, traces his trying to raise taxes on guns to the time he was cut by flying glass in a drive-by shooting during his campaign, and to the killing of two teenagers within a block of his office.

Another killing that unleashed a personal crusade was that of Tom Barnes, a young aide to conservative Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama. Barnes was gunned down in January of 1992 on a Capitol Hill street. While a liberal might have called for more gun control, Shelby successfully attached an amendment to a DC appropriations bill requiring the city to hold a referendum on instituting the death penalty. The proposition was defeated by DC voters.

WE'RE ALL PROS HERE

It's true that Congress is overrun with lawyers, and that many are career politicians. But that leaves plenty of other congressmen and senators for whom politics is a second calling and whose previous professions help shape their legislative interests. As the profiles in Congressional Quarterly's Politics in America indicate, the Hill looks more like America than you might expect. It has its own:

FIRE CHIEF. Curt Weldon was head of the volunteer fire department in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, before his election to the House in 1986. In his first term he helped put out a fire in the office of House Speaker Jim Wright. A couple of years later he led a group of fellow Republicans with fire extinguishers around the Hill looking for demonstrators who might be burning the American flag, and he gained an exemption for fire extinguishers from a phaseout of certain chemicals under the Clean Air Act. He's also founder of the Fire Services Caucus, whose 430 members make it the largest caucus on the Hill.

DOCTORS. J. Roy Rowland was a small-town physician when he was elected to the House in 1982 from southern Georgia. He's used that expertise to become a player on AIDS legislation, which has reaped him some criticism from the Christian Right back home. Congressman Jim McDermott of Seattle is a psychiatrist who's been involved in health-care reform, especially in making sure that any new national program covers mental illnesses.

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TOP GUNS. Among several former fighter-pilots in Congress are Representative Sam Johnson of Texas, who flew with the Thunderbirds precision-flying team and headed the Air Force's fighter-pilot school, and Congressman Randy Cunningham of California, who was a Navy combat ace in Vietnam and an instructor at the Navy school featured in the movie Top Gun, which hired him as an adviser. When there was a debate on the Hill about investing in a new F-14D fighter, Cunningham based his support on the fact that he'd flown it. An admirer of John Wayne, he is the only member of Congress nicknamed "Duke."

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT. Bill Goodling, a Republican congressman from Pennsylvania, served more than two decades as an English teacher, principal, and school superintendent before coming to the House in 1974. Most of his attention since then has focused on education issues, and now he is the ranking Republican on the Education and Labor Committee.

ACTORS. With the departure of Representative Ben Jones of Georgia, who played Cooter on The Dukes of Hazzard, the Congress is down to one former actor, Congressman Fred Grandy of Iowa, who played Gopher on The Love Boat. A little Hollywood carry-over was apparent in their defense of the National Endowment for the Arts--a position that did not win them many votes in their rural districts.

ENGINEERS. New York Congressman George Hochbrueckner's fight to prevent cancellation of the F-14D fighter built by Grumman was more than just another effort to protect an industry in his Long Island district. He was an engineer who'd helped design it. Another former engineer, Congressman Tom Lewis of Florida, has used his background in flight testing at Pratt & Whitney in pressing the Federal Aviation Administration to spend more research money on airline safety.

FBI AGENTS. Don Edwards of California and Michael Oxley of Ohio were FBI agents, but they came away with markedly different opinions about law enforcement. Oxley is a strong defender of the agency and has pushed legislation making it easier for it to mount sting operations against drug launderers. Edwards, who chairs a subcommittee dealing with constitutional rights, is one of the leading civil libertarians in the House and a frequent critic of the FBI, especially of the agency's Abscam sting, which snared several congressmen.

No look at the personal passions of America's legislators would be complete without a notice of the heroics of Republican Congressman Tom DeLay of Houston, the owner of a pest-control company who was elected to the House in 1984. Forget the big stuff, like his opposition to federal regulation, or his support for the super collider. Remember the little stuff: DeLay's office is always helpful when other congressmen call about problems with cockroaches.

It happens frequently on the Hill, says one of DeLay's aides. "I used to work in Longworth, and they'd crawl on my lap and up the phone cord. Since I came over here to work for Tom DeLay, I haven't seen a single one."

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