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THE DEMOCRATIC STUDY GROUP: AN AID
TO FRESHMEN CONGRESSMEN

by

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It is appropriate, at the outset, to give thanks to the many people who have given me assistance in this thesis. I would like to express my appreciation to the Honorable Frank Thompson, Jr. for allowing me to use his time, his knowledge, and his wonderfully capable staff; to my friends who bore the brunt of my trials and tribulations while I worked, especially Miss Marie Horton, to Ruth Eastberry, who helped with the tedious job of proofreading; and to my patient friend, Robert L. [unclear], whose understanding and encouragement I could not have done without.

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Abstract, *Law Perspectives on the House of Representatives*,
 H. Robert L. Pasbody and Nelson W. Taylor, Chicago, 1970, p. 1.

The following make up a small part of a list of past such studies:
 James H. Alexander, *History and Development of the House of Representatives*,
 Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913; Joseph L. Gandy, *Congress*,
 New York: Columbia University Press, 1967; Carl Hark,
History of Congress (New Orleans: Pelican Press, 1977); Edward Hopkins,
The House and Wisdom of Congress (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1961).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The House of Representatives fascinates scholars and laymen alike. Its ancient customs, intricate byways, colorful rituals and practices, rich controversies and displays of all the arts and crafts of politics attract the attention of diverse observers and students of politics.¹ These characteristics add to its more formal function as the national legislature. There are many interesting and valuable approaches that can be taken in a study of Congress. It may be approached on a historical basis, where past trends and incidents are discussed. The personalities of the House members can have great influence on the temper and tempo of legislative affairs. Several members of the House have portrayed Congress from the standpoint of their own experiences. Many studies of Congress have been based on personal anecdotes. In contrast, others have made statistical studies in order to predict Congressional behavior. These are but a few ways in which Congress can be discussed.²

¹"Preface," New Perspectives on the House of Representatives, ed. Robert L. Peabody and Nelson W. Polsby (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), p. 1.

²The following make up a small part of a list of many such studies: DeAlva Stanwood Alexander, History and Procedures of the House of Representatives (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916)--Stephen K. Bailey, Congress Makes a Law (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950)--Carl Beck, Contempt of Congress (New Orleans: Phauser Press, 1959)--Edward Boykin, The Wit and Wisdom of Congress (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1962)--

Regardless of the difference in methods used to study Congress, each yields valuable insights. This paper concentrates on one particular facet of the House of Representatives--the importance of the internal group life of the House. Specifically, the focus is on the Democratic Study Group (DSG) and its relationship with new members of Congress.

Although "the other body", the Senate, is equally interesting and important, the differences in length of Senate terms, the make-up of the constituencies, the formal and informal traditions and procedures, the size of total membership, make the Senate a very different organization. For this reason it shall not be discussed in this paper. The conclusions reached here are, therefore not necessarily applicable to the Senate, although similarities may exist.

Congress is a highly decentralized organization with many centers of power and conflicting influences.³ It has its own group life which gives the legislative body operating structure in which the members may act. Some of these groups are based on such formal institutional characteristics as party membership, state and regional representation, and committee membership. Common experiences such as belonging to the same national party, representing districts

²(continued--William F. Buckley (ed.), The Committee and Its Critics (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1962)--George Galloway, The Legislative Process in Congress (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1961)--Theodore Lowi, Legislative Politics, USA (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1962)--Clem Miller, Member of the House (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962)--David Truman, The Congressional Party (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959)--Julius Turner, Party and Constituency: Pressures on Congress (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1951).

³Lewis A. Froman, Jr., Congressmen and Their Constituencies (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1962), p. 8.

in the same state or region of the country, serving on the same House Committee give members of the House a focal point for association. Certain relationships and communication channels may be established because of the sharing of these associations.

On the other hand there are more informal House groups such as the organizations (classes) of entering freshmen Congressmen of one party, various discussion groups, the Prayer Breakfast Club, and the less formal social systems such as the "gym groups," "the Chowder and Marching Club," and the Republican Wednesday Club.⁴ At one time or another all Congressmen are involved to some degree in groups which are outside the formal structure of partisan and legislative organizations. Alan Fiellin has defined these groups as:

...identifiable, self-conscious, relatively stable units of interacting members whose relationships are not officially prescribed by statutes and rules.⁵

There is usually a great sense of *comradèrie* about the participants in these various groups. For instance, the "classes" of freshmen are composed of all the members of the same party who were elected in the same election year (i.e. members elected in the fall of 1966 are considered as the class of '66). There is a sense of mutual experience among them for they share the understanding of the hardships as well as excitement of an election campaign. They also feel a kinship because they will face reelection in a short two years. Often they come to Congress ignorant of the complexity of the job for which they have been chosen. Freshmen members find they have many things in common. Other groups, as the "gym groups", seem to have much more significance and effectiveness than

⁴ Charles Clapp, The Congressman (Chicago: Penguin Publishing Co., 1963), p. 45.

⁵ Allan Fiellin, "The Function of Informal Groups: A State Delegation," New Perspectives on House of Representatives, (ed.) Robert L. Peabody and Nelson W. Polsby (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), p. 63.

their title might suggest. The gym may provide a casual atmosphere for the development of friendships and alliances and can ease the way for the necessary accomodation of diverse views. In the gym, members can easily cross party lines for discussion. On the other hand, informal groups may provide an opportunity for members to discuss partisan views on issues and strategy. Two such groups are The Republican Wednesday Club and the Democratic Study Group. All of these informal groups can aid in the process of information sharing just as effectively as the formal groups. This personal interaction can build important communication networks that can influence considerably a member's actions. Just how influential these groups are is difficult to measure in concrete terms.

...over many years...they (informal groups) were coalitions, power blocs, alliances that cut across party affiliations and loyalties, and often set at naught the most powerful of outside forces attempting to control the actions of the House.

Thus, a congressman may receive assistance from an informal group in several ways that are not necessarily a part of its original purpose.

A new member of the House is immediately thrust into a large and complex legislative body. Usually, his past political experience has not adequately prepared him to cope with these new problems. He is immediately confronted with questions of significance to him: what is expected of him as a new member, where does he go to find people to staff his office, how does he obtain important committee assignments, how does he find his way around the massive office buildings? The new member has often left a prestigious local position. When he arrives

⁶ Neil MacNeil, Forge of Democracy (New York: McKay Co., 1963), p.271.

in Washington, there are neither brass bands nor red carpets waiting for him. His new home is often very different from his farm town background, the small town community life, or the massive urban complex with which he is most familiar. The overwhelming complexities and relative obscurity of Congressional life can be very deflating to a man who has been accustomed to the local spotlight. There is no special treatment for new members who come to Congress with a distinguished background.

A Congressman must learn through experience how to be effective within his new environment. The psychological adjustment is very difficult for many members. Joined with the technical difficulties of his new position, a Congressman finds that Washington is not always a happy place for him. He may, in his confusion, wonder why he bothered to seek the position.

In the fall of 1966, Congressman Morris Udall (D-Ariz.) with research aid from the American Political Science Association published a new book entitled The Job of the Congressman - An Introduction to Service In the United States House of Representatives. This all-encompassing volume has already served as a helpful guide to freshmen members concerning the important mechanical matters that they should know when they begin their new job. This is the first publication of real substance printed for the educational benefit of new members, and it was heralded by some of the freshmen members as an invaluable aid.

The new member feels the pressure of intensive work and conflicting demands. It is no small wonder that many members of the House of Representatives do not seem very well-informed about their jobs or current congressional activities. How is it then that the legislative body manages to get things done when "learning the ropes" demands so

much of their time and energy?

The Democratic Study Group, a coalition of liberal - minded House Democrats, is one of the more prominent informal groups within Congress today. The DSG provides an excellent example of one House group that can influence the patterns of behavior and communications among its members and particularly its freshmen members.

Daniel Berman describes a liberal as "the one who considers the use of federal power indispensable for the amelioration of economic and social inequality...".⁷ The stated purpose of the DSG is to organize House Democrats interested in the passage of liberal programs outlined in the Democratic Party Platform. According to one of its past chairmen and founders, the fundamental aims of the DSG are to propagate and support liberal ideas. It works to make the Democratic party an instrument for the enactment of progressive legislation and to assure the responsiveness of the House of Representatives to the will of the people who elected its members.

I contend that the DSG is more than just an organizing force in the process of getting votes for important liberal legislation. Although the DSG has established a fairly dependable liberal voting coalition, it has also provided a means for indoctrinating those freshmen members who are predisposed to its fundamental philosophy. As an issue-oriented resource on matters of particular concern to its members and as a means for establishing important friendships between freshmen and veterans, the DSG offers an effective channel for communication and socialization for new members.

⁷ Daniel Berman, A Bill Becomes a Law (New York: MacMillan Co., 1962), p. viii.

To determine whether this hypothesis is valid, I have chosen to examine the organization and development of the DSG and the effect its activities have had on new members. Although the conclusions may be applicable to other legislative groups, they are specifically relevant to the DSG during the early 1960's.

There is little scholarly material available on either the DSG or any other informal legislative group in the House of Representatives. Moreover, a formal membership list of the DSG was not available. Because of these resource limitations, I have relied heavily on descriptive material about the DSG from professional journals, periodicals, DSG reports, personal letters, and texts on legislative behavior. To supplement this material I have used personal interviews with several DSG members, staff assistants, and knowledgeable observers. The most valuable of all my sources was my summer experience as a political intern in the office of Frank Thompson, Jr. (D.-N.J.). As a member and leader of the DSG, Mr. Thompson was able to give me a wealth of personal material concerning the DSG - its conception, activities, and achievements. Despite the valuable insights gained from working in Mr. Thompson's office, my close association may have produced a bias in my approach to the available data. In this paper I have consciously attempted to reduce the effect of this bias.

Although there have been very definite limitations in the process of research, I intend to show that an informal group such as the DSG can prepare freshmen members for the complexities of full participation in Congressional activity.

Joseph S. Felt, "The Institutionalization of Young Men's
Political Activity" (June, 1964), pp. 24-27.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND ORGANIZATION OF THE DSG

According to many observers, the DSG is "the group that runs the House," "House Mavericks," "the liberal coalition," or "house reformers". In essence, the DSG has been an institutionalization of a voting bloc rather than a short-lived group challenging the traditional ways of the House of Representatives.⁸

There are many questions that arise when studying the DSG... What exactly is the DSG? How and why did it come into existence? Who led the development of the DSG? What effect did it have on the affairs of the House of Representatives? What activities did it sponsor? How well did it achieve its goals?

The first session of the 84th Congress was frustrating for the new Democratic members representing northern, western, and mid-western districts. Though numerically the Democrats had a 283-153 majority, they were consistently defeated when they attempted to pass progressive legislation. The Dixiecrat-Republican coalition hit hard at the efforts of the strengthened Democratic elements. Although the newly elected Democrats shared similar philosophies they had no organizational effectiveness. The lack of communication among liberals concerning voting cues on pending bills before the House hampered their chances

⁸Kenneth Kofmehl, "The Institutionalization of a Voting Bloc," Western Political Quarterly (June, 1964), pp. 256-276.

to pass progressive legislation. Two men played an important part in the beginning stages of the group's organization. Lee Metcalfe (D-Mont.) and Eugene McCarthy (D.-Minn.) joined with several other liberal Democrats. Through their concentrated efforts, they managed to defeat several anti-liberal measures. For several years this liberal group remained rather amorphous. They coordinated their efforts only on issues of mutual interest.⁹ The divided majority of Democrats in the 84th Congress was unable to plan and enact positive programs. They could only prevent passage of legislation they considered undesirable. The freshmen members, especially, felt a strong disappointment with the House leadership for its **failure** to provide over-all guidance for positive action.

The liberal Democrats were increasingly ~~dis~~satisfied with their own lack of communication with each other. Frequently, they failed to enlist each others' support on measures generally favored by a majority of them. Discouraged by a series of unnecessary defeats and the relatively poor record of legislative action during the 84th Congress, a group of these Democrats decided to act.

At the beginning of the 85th Congress the unofficial leaders of this loose coalition took important steps to correct their weaknesses. Representatives McCarthy, Metcalfe, John Blatnik (D.-Minn.), Chet Holifield (D.-Calif.), and Frank Thompson, Jr. (D.-N.J.) prepared the "Liberal Manifesto", a comprehensive program for liberal Democrats.¹⁰ This document was introduced into the Congressional Record and circulated among all House Democrats. It was endorsed by 80 Democratic Congressmen

⁹Kofmehl, *op. cit.*, p. 257.

¹⁰The full text of this proposal can be found in the Congressional Record, (January, 30, 1957), p. 1326.

from 21 states, 75% of whom were from urban districts. During the next few years efforts were made to push the program, but, except for a few key issues, the crippling lack of organization and the lack of skill in exploiting the legislative machinery prevented sustained coordination.

The original leaders of the group had hoped that by proposing a comprehensive program of legislation they could develop a focal point for organization that would inhibit the tendency of members to work independently on issues of mutual concern. After the distribution of the "Manifesto", the leadership introduced another technique to improve communications among the liberal House Democrats. Early in 1957 the proponents of the "Manifesto" established a rudimentary whip system headed by Frank Thompson, Jr.. When issues arose which the group decided merited attention, Thompson would inform his dozen or so assistant whips. They, in turn, were supplied with a list of supporters who had signed the "Manifesto" and alerted those members of the liberal bloc within their geographical regions.¹¹

The group of liberal Democrats was learning how to work within an organization while at the same time it was formulating legislative strategy. In addition to the strategy sessions on particular issues, the group invited various outside authorities to discuss selected issues with the group. The secretarial needs of the group expanded beyond the capacities of the leaders and their staffs as a result of the increase in the groups' projects. On June 1, 1957, the group hired its own small staff headed by George Fain. Metcalfe, McCarthy, George McGovern (D.-S.D.), John E. Moss (D.-Calif.), and Thompson each contributed

¹¹ Kofmehl, op. cit., p. 260.

part of their own clerk-hire allowance for this staff.

However, just as this staff was becoming organized and effective, there was a change in the liberal Democratic leadership. From the spring of 1958 McCarthy was no longer a prime force within the group since he was completely absorbed in his November election campaign for the Senate. The responsibility of leadership was handled then by Metcalfe and Thompson. These two congressmen continued to improve and initiate new measures to make the group more effective.

One of the important innovations was the distribution to group members of campaign materials for the 1958 election. Among the materials distributed to eighty members of the liberal bloc were memoranda prepared by the group's staff rebutting Republican charges and summarizing Democratic achievements in the 85th Congress. In order to increase the membership and cohesion in the new Congress, the liberal bloc began to offer assistance to all Democratic House candidates who might support the liberal position. The House group sent a letter to between 80 and 90 such candidates which offered them assistance in their campaigns.¹² Slightly over fifty of the recipients accepted this offer. Thirty-five of these candidates were elected to the 86th Congress. When they arrived in Washington, D.C., many of them dropped by Thompson's or Metcalfe's office to express appreciation for the assistance received.

The group, to broaden its operations, increased the number of releases sent to members. This continued through the spring of 1959. The members responded more frequently to written notices for briefing sessions, and the number of sessions increased. During its development

¹²See Appendix I for a reprint of this letter.

the group had not adopted a formal title. In April, however, they established themselves as the "Congressional Study Group". The use of a specific name had been avoided, because many members feared that they would call attention to themselves as a possible threat to the established House Democratic leadership. For this reason, the word "study" was used in the title to avoid misunderstanding among members of the Democratic party who were not affiliated with the group. In addition, Chet Holifield felt that the group had received adverse publicity from its pre-session efforts to curb the power of the Rules Committee. Since the House Democratic leadership opposed a change in the Rules Committee at this time, the press frequently referred to the liberal Democrats as "insurgents" or "Young Turks". With a noncontroversial title, Holifield felt that no one could object to a group which studied issues of particular concern to them.

For several years the DSG attempted to initiate liberal action, but was seldom able to carry it through. Many liberal Democrats had to vote on complicated amendments they did not understand. The division in their ranks, the failure to muster their strength on the House floor at critical junctures, the inadequacies in their informal communications system were glaringly revealed in their failure to prevent the passage of the Landrum-Griffen Bill. At an informal planning session held after this fiasco, the group appointed a twelve-man Select Planning Committee headed by B.F.Sisk (D.-Calif.) to prepare plans for setting up a more permanent and functional organization of the liberal House Democrats and to relate its recommendations to the main body at a meeting scheduled for September 8th.

During the winter of 1959-1960 the group concentrated on improving its communications system. The effectiveness of this system was proven

by the passage of John Blatnik's water pollution bill by the use of Calendar Wednesday procedure. The whip system for this was under the direction of Clem Miller (D.-Calif.). Shortly after this accomplishment, the group changed its name to the Democratic Study Group, hired and expanded more staff members to be led by John Morgan. Today the DSG still uses the same basic staff organization established in the spring of 1960.

The staff's principal responsibility is to prepare research memoranda and reports under the guidance of various research sub-committees. These fact sheets, which may be drafted by DSG personnel or compiled from members' speeches, offer information on a broad range of issues. The fact sheets explain the issues involved in individual legislative items and then point out why DSG members should support a particular position. The members have often used these fact sheets in writing their own speeches and newsletters as well as in deciding their own policy decisions.

The thrust of the group changed under Holifield's leadership, during the first session of the 87th Congress in 1961. In the Eisenhower years, the DSG concentrated its efforts on initiating liberal programs. After the inauguration of John F. Kennedy, it shifted to an aggressive support of the Administration and the platform upon which he was elected--a platform which the President dramatized by his pledge to "get the country moving again".

Additional refinement and expansion of the DSG structure took place during the long second session of the 87th Congress. Representative Blatnik succeeded Chet Holifield as Chairman in July, 1962. Shortly thereafter, the members reorganized, creating an executive committee composed of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and six regional chairmen.

The Research and Program Chairman and all former DSG chairmen who are still members of the House also serve on the Executive Committee. This committee is "responsible for implementing policy decisions of the DSG and for carrying out other executive functions as are necessary for the efficient operation of the Group".¹² New officers of the DSG are elected at the opening of each Congress to serve for the entire term. The full membership takes part in the balloting for the major officers. The Chairman appoints the two standing subcommittees for program responsibility and research direction, as well as the ad hoc subcommittees to handle specific tasks.

The 88th Congress was the center of change, inaction, and controversy. The first session was extremely inactive except for the introduction of what was to be the 1964 Civil Rights Act. President Kennedy was charged with the lack of skill in legislative leadership. The shock of Kennedy's assassination and the change in administration produced a complete reversal of the tone of Congressional action. The Johnson administration expanded and carried on many of the Kennedy proposals that had languished in Congress. The Great Society was on the move! Because the Great Society programs were supported by members of the DSG, the group continued to be a major House voice for the Administration.

As had been the case in 1960, the DSG assembled special campaign materials for use by DSG members and Democratic candidates during the 1964 campaign. Coordinating efforts with other Democratic groups was a primary responsibility. In the past the Democratic National Party had provided such assistance, but a large number of the DSG members were dissatisfied with the National Party's performance. In 1964, the DSG organized its own campaign committee. They raised and distributed more

¹²Democratic Study Group, "By-Laws," Mimeographed, 1965, Washington, D.C.
p2.

than \$70,000 for Democratic candidates who were challenging Republican incumbents. During the election each of the veteran members of the DSG who faced little G.O.P. opposition in their own districts, sponsored a candidate under what was called the election "buddy system". Through this effort the veteran member would offer time and advice to the candidate. If elected, the candidate would receive further assistance from the veteran in Washington.

The DSG then sent a letter of congratulations to all the new members and expressed a desire to see them in Washington. During the same period the DSG Executive Committee prepared an agenda for the first DSG meeting in January, 1965. This agenda included the revival of the 21-day rule, permanent enlargement of the Rules Committee, and further Civil Rights legislation as possible action issues.

The 1964 Democratic landslide produced a large Democratic majority in the House of Representatives. The Democratic National Committee undertook some of the initial work of orienting new Democratic representatives. They flew all new members to Washington before they took the oath of office. The DSG extended the orientation program by giving new members DSG material and introduced the new members to the techniques and opportunities of the DSG.

The 1966 election reduced the ranks of the DSG. As a result, the orientation program for new members was also reduced. With only 13 new members in the House and 7 of them from the South the prospects for recruitment were not too fertile.

During the first few months of the 90th Congress, the DSG has not been as active as in the past. The fact that there are fewer liberal Democrats this session may account for its inactivity. Also, most of the liberal legislation that the DSG has worked for in the past has

ten years is now law, and they have not developed a broad new program.

CHAPTER THREE

A VIEW FROM WITHIN THE BSA ORGANIZATION

The life of a Congressman, like so many other seemingly glamorous jobs, is filled with many time-consuming details that the ordinary citizen does not understand. Many of the more general pressures and tasks facing a new representative were mentioned in earlier chapters. This chapter will deal more specifically with the challenges each new member faces every day and the way the BSA has organized to assist the new members in meeting these challenges.

What are some of these problems? The following questions are but a few of many that new representatives must understand. What is the best way to organize the staff in his new office? How can he handle various difficult issues and also retain good relations with the constituents who have divergent views? To whom does he turn for assistance in answering some of the issue questions that face him? How can he get the most accurate information on major issues? What type of relations should he have with outside interest groups who seek his support on issues concerning them? How does he get re-elected? How can he best allocate his time and energy among his

The majority of the factual material in this chapter comes from personal interviews held during the summer of 1966 and also the 25th and 26th of January, 1967. All names used are fictitious.

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many responsibilities?

Freshmen and veteran members vary in their answers to some of these questions. For instance, a freshman member comes to Congress with very few contacts. He does not know who can best help answer questions on the war in Vietnam, farm policy, civil rights legislation, and what to do with the local problems back in the district. The veteran member has established relationships with influential people in the House and knows that he can call on certain people for advice and voting support on issues. No one in the House can tell a freshman member how to organize his office staff. Congressmen are responsible for filling all Postmaster positions in their districts, for answering requests of veterans and servicemen who need aid, for sending out baby books to all new mothers in their districts, for nominating students for the various service academies, and for answering any questions that their constituents may have. There is no manual explaining the necessity for carrying out these responsibilities. The same people who ask for assistance and special favors vote every two years for or against the Representative. To survive in Congress and to get reelected, a new member must quickly learn the most effective way of handling these problems. It is no surprise, then, that the freshmen Congressmen despair over a job he has no idea how to begin. The helpless newcomer finds the DSG an oasis in the desert of overwhelming tasks.

Just how does he find this group and understand its value to him?

Congressman Cautious is a loquacious, self-confident, westerner, who was elected for the first time in 1964. He learned about the DSG from a fellow state delegate. Mr. Cautious is not an active participant in DSG activities and was, moreover, very dubious about his need for

the group. In his estimation, financial assistance in his campaign was the major benefit he derived from the DSG. He never had heard much about the organization and he made little use of its research assistance during his campaign. Once elected Mr. Cautious was wary about the group and wished to refrain from actively affiliating with it until his staff members had explored the DSG's purpose and activities.

On the other hand, Congressman Candid, who also was elected for the first time in the fall of 1964, learned about the DSG during his campaign and recognized its value to him as a candidate and as a freshman member. It was natural for Mr. Candid to know of the DSG, since an early leader of the DSG movement is a senior Representative from his state. Mr. Candid is a firm supporter of the DSG aims and praised its accomplishments in the past years. During his first campaign, he received information, statistics, materials on issues (i.e. Medicare, Aid to Education, etc.) which were important in his own northern, east coast, urban district. The most important factor in Mr. Candid's successful campaign, he feels, was the fact that DSG research material aided him in conducting a very "informed campaign" in addition to freeing him from the time-consuming burden of research. It was logical, then, that Mr. Candid became an active member of the DSG once he was elected.

Through its campaign committee the DSG aids liberal freshmen just before the House session opens. Since the beginning of the 88th Congress, "Fishbait" Miller, Doorkeeper of the House, has included an introduction of the DSG officials as part of the traditional tour which he gives new members. For the past few years, prior to the publication of his book, Representative Morris Udall (D.-Ariz.) conducted a bipartisan "College of Congressional Knowledge" to give tips on methods of office management and available office facilities. These bipartisan sessions

are followed by two Study Group-sponsored supplementary classes which get down to the partisan "guts of the matter". Finally, in the first weeks of the session, the DSG regional Vice-Chairmen visit the newly elected Democrats from their areas and invite them to the Group's program-planning caucus. A majority of the new liberals accept this invitation. Mr. Cordial, a more experienced member of Congress and the DSG, states that he personally keeps an eye out for new members in an effort to give them valuable tips concerning topics of particular concern to them.

Most DSG members represent Northern and Western districts. In fact, Mr. Experience, another "old timer" with the DSG, commented that the DSG usually doesn't even bother to contact Southern Democrats in their efforts to recruit new members. Two recent exceptions were ex-Representatives Charles Weltner of Atlanta and Richard Fulton of Nashville, who were both DSG members and from the South. DSG members are either senior congressmen who represent urban constituencies or young men who represent mixed constituencies and choose to respond to the urban elements in their districts. Congressman Experience felt that the liberal orientation of the DSG is extremely important in attracting new members, since in his estimation freshmen members tend to be issue-oriented rather than group-oriented. However, members from conservative Northern districts frequently are reluctant to openly identify with the DSG because of constituency sentiment.

Since open affiliation with the DSG can create constituency problems for some members, the DSG does not reveal either its membership list or its exact size. In fact, the membership list is one of the most closely guarded secrets of the DSG organization. The group does not use a "liberal" or "conservative" label in its public statements in

order to avoid embarrassing DSG members on any issue.

Membership in the DSG is entirely voluntary and adherence to the DSG position on any specific issue is also voluntary. For the most part, the DSG merely brings like-minded liberal Democratic Congressmen together, so that DSG affiliation does not usually require a fundamental alteration of a Congressman's general ideological position.

One of the most important pressures on Congressmen are constituents, and elected officials must pay attention to the preferences of those who elect them.¹⁴ Assuming that those new members of the DSG were well-aware of the general nature of their constituencies, their views as well as the views of veteran members shall show how the DSG has come to aid members in solving constituency problems.

Congressman Candid found that the DSG was of particular help in working with his constituents. He stated that he generally agrees with the DSG position. If the formal organizational structure of the Group had not existed, Mr. Candid felt he would still have been elected as a liberal Democrat. Whenever he had an individual question that concerned legislation that might effect his district directly, Mr. Candid could turn to the DSG for specific information. Also, the DSG has helped him defend his voting position when constituents question his decision.

Congressman Experience feels that the DSG has given both freshmen and senior members not only a forum for their ideas but also a framework in which to present these ideas to their constituents. For instance, in the last session of Congress two senior members of the DSG composed a very carefully worded letter to the President asking for a step-up

¹⁴Lewis Froman, Jr., Congressmen and Their Constituencies (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co.), 1963, p. 9.

in the United States peace efforts in the Vietnam war. Seventy-three members signed the letter to the President. Since the conduct of the war is a controversial issue, this letter gave all DSG members a safe position to present to their districts during their campaign.

Congressman Cordial, a senior representative from a mid-western state, presented a slightly different perspective on a DSG member's relationship with constituents. In his own case, his major difficulty came from right wing extremist groups rather than his constituents. He felt he was probably considered a liberal-member and his membership in the DSG merely accentuates this liberalism. He felt more resentment among House Democrats who were opposed to the DSG than he did among his own constituents.

Membership in the DSG is more than just a source of help for constituent problems. Charles Clapp found that younger, junior House members are more appreciative of informal groups than their more senior brethren. He outlines three primary functions of groups such as the DSG which have particular appeal to freshmen members:

They are a means by which to facilitate the indoctrination of freshmen...they provide a social outlet, a means for broadening the base of one's friendships; and they are useful in providing potential sources of assistance on legislation.¹⁵

The DSG, in fulfilling these functions, has a wide range of aids that it can offer freshmen members. Its research facilities are extremely helpful to freshman Congressmen in becoming better equipped to make their own policy decisions. Congressman Cordial stated that

¹⁵ Clapp,
Op. cit., pp. 41-42.

to his knowledge the DSG was the first information service on the Democratic side to draft position papers, research memoranda, campaign tips, and speech material for the use of members. Congressman Cautious, whose association with the DSG has been more peripheral than others, feels that the research materials are the DSG's greatest service to him.

Mr. Cordial sees the DSG as an aid to freshmen through its role as a rallying point for members of the House who support the Democratic Platform. As a point of reference for new members, the DSG provides a means for developing methods of communication with other members who share the same beliefs. As an organized communication network, the DSG plays a significant part in the first stage of freshmen member's relationships with more experienced members.¹⁶

For many of the freshmen members, especially those who do not have active or cohesive state delegations, the DSG offers their chief opportunity for meaningful contact with influential veteran Congressmen, and may therefore be their most reliable source for sophisticated counsel.¹⁷ For example, Congressman Candid came to Congress with no background in parliamentary procedure. He was a high school teacher. He knew little about the procedural maneuvers used by more experienced members of the House of Representatives. The DSG leadership through its whip system helped Mr. Candid at many crucial points during floor action. Because of their experience with the legislative system and with the habits of their veteran adversaries, DSG leaders who guided the whip system were often

¹⁶ Fiellin, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁷ David Truman, The Congressional Party: A Case Study (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1959), pp. 249-269.

able to anticipate opposition moves to bring up an amendment for a procedural motion detrimental to the DSG cause.

During floor debate any member of the House can call for a roll-call vote. At this time each member present votes either yea or nay on the proposal before the whole body. It could be a proposed amendment, a technical question dealing with the procedure of the House, a vote on whether to finally pass the bill, a motion to recommit the bill to committee, or numerous other motions which may seem innocuous. A call for a roll-call can be made for a variety of reasons, and the roll-call vote can kill the chances for House action for the entire Congress. To someone unfamiliar with the procedures of the House, the vote on many of these motions may seem inconsequential and harmless when, in essence, it would keep the bill from appearing for passage for at least another year. The leadership of the DSG is usually able to predict what kind of amendment will be proposed and will know when it is really important for members to be present for a vote.

A Congressman cannot always be present in the House chamber. Therefore, the House is equipped with an elaborate system of bells which ring in each member's office when a floor vote is imminent. He then proceeds immediately to the floor to cast his vote. Many times a member arrives on the floor without knowing what is involved in the vote. In such cases he consults the first available member whose judgement he trusts and then votes accordingly. The DSG leadership, with knowledge of the general approach of most of its members, gives the necessary voting cues to the DSG members who flock into the chamber to cast their votes. Mr. Candid, who frequently availed himself of this DSG service, felt that this was the most helpful service the groups provided. His faith in the beliefs shared with

other DSG members meant reliance on their advice in voting when he was unprepared to exercise his own judgment. The more the DSG members find that they can rely on such cues given by the DSG leadership, the easier it becomes to build cohesion and get concerted action.

DSG Research Organization

How does the DSG decide that a particular issue shall warrant its attention? The Executive Committee appoints a Task Force to investigate a certain issue which they think may be of major concern to the entire membership. This Task Force is made up of younger members who hold no other formal position within the organization. The Task Force, after thorough research, makes a policy position recommendation to the Executive Committee. Each regional vice-chairman on the Executive Committee estimates the sentiment of the members from his area. The Executive Committee is responsible for distributing the agenda for meetings and the fact sheets and memoranda to be discussed at the meetings. An example of such a notice is found in Appendix II.

After the Executive Committee meeting the entire membership meets to discuss and to consider the issue. At this time, the Task Force answers specific questions. For instance, how will the proposed legislation help the nation as a whole as well as the particular regions from which the DSG members come? The Task Force presents facts and figures to substantiate its stand. No basic rules govern the discussion within the full membership meeting. Any member may voice an opinion pro or con to the subject under consideration, and there is no attempt to "railroad" through a specific line of thinking.

The DSG uses its organization meetings to sound out the various opinions and it strives for a solid consensus within the membership before it will take a definite stand on an issue. There must be overwhelming

approval of the issue under consideration or it is not made an official position of the DSG. The final decision lies with the rank and file members. Whatever opposition there may be is taken into serious thought and the bitterness or extent of this opposition is weighed heavily before the DSG actively gives its support. The DSG is very careful not to take a stand that will violently alienate a number of its members.

With such a careful process of selection of issue stands, the DSG accounts that between 85% - 100% of its members vote in agreement with the DSG position. In only a few instances has the percentage of DSG support by its members fallen below 85%. If a member cannot support the DSG position the Executive Committee in no way attempts to coerce him to do so. Conflicting pressures can compel a DSG member to deviate from the DSG position. He may be facing a tough campaign in the fall and does ~~not~~ not wish to vote on a controversial issue that could be exploited by his opponent. He may be confronted with supporting a DSG measure that is somehow distasteful to a large part of his constituency. For example, the DSG supported the repeal of section 14 - B of the Taft-Hartly Act that gave the states the right to pass right-to-work laws. For many members of the DSG this was an extremely sensitive topic and they, realizing opposition in their districts, had to vote against the DSG position although they personally favored the legislation.

Although much of the work of the DSG is directed towards broad goals, the individual members gain psychological benefits from their work within the DSG. The Study Group compensates for some of the effects of the seniority system, by giving younger members a feeling of active

participation in the conduct of the House and providing a practical means by which a member can serve a more influential position within the legislative process without serving the conventional apprenticeship. It is a tradition of the House of Representatives that major positions and responsibilities within the formal structure of the body be given to those members who have served the most consecutive terms in the House. There is little room for ambitious, active freshmen members to feel any immediate sense of significance. The sense of participation that the DSG provides can be extremely helpful to the baffled freshman and even the more veteran member of the DSG who finds many desired channels closed to him.

DSG Leadership

The men most consistently cited by DSG members and outside observers, as the real leaders of the DSG were John Brademas (D.-Ind.), James O'Hara (D.-Mich.), Morris Udall (D.-Ariz.), Richard Bolling (D.-Mo.), and Frank Thompson, Jr. (D.-N.J.). These men have been called a "new breed of liberals",¹⁸ because of their ideological approach combined with the practical necessity of getting support.

The first task of the DSG leadership is to build internal cohesion, using the informational channels of the Group and their own personal persuasion as their main tools. The DSG system of communications is probably the leadership's most effective instrument for influencing members' policy decisions. Thus, although the leaders do control the communications, they personally assume responsibility for initiating and coordinating activities, rather than the task of discussing the merits

¹⁸ National Congress For a More Effective Congress, Congressional Report, quoted in the DSG pamphlet, "Democratic Study Group", p. 8.

of a question with the individual members.

Congressman Leader, one of the past chairmen of the DSG and very much a part of all its activities, has said that the relations among the DSG leaders are most cordial. Most of the men who fill leadership positions have worked together for a great many years and understand each other. Perhaps this results from the group's lack of a rigid hierarchy, so the leadership structure operates with enough flexibility to include all of the members willing to take time for participation on that level. Freshmen are brought into the leadership as chairmen of the ad hoc Task Forces, and the DSG chairman can create other subdivisions to accommodate members who can in any way assist the leadership.

Ostensibly, the leadership of the DSG appears fairly open and accessible to anyone able to gather enough support from the rank and file members to be elected to any leadership position. A nominating committee appointed by the DSG Chairman draws up the slate of the elected officials who serve the entire group. The regional members elect their vice-chairmen. Congressman Experience feels that the leadership base is too narrow and proposes to step-down from his leadership position within the DSG. He feels that the time has come for more members to participate in the planning of the DSG since many of the ideas that were floating around during the years he first worked with the DSG have been incorporated into President Johnson's Great Society program. He believes that a new leadership must assume responsibility for developing new issues that do not represent the established "middle of the road liberalism".

Congressman Cautious in a way echoes this opinion for he feels that the DSG leadership is a "closed cooperation" similar to the formal Party leadership of the House of Representatives. He believes that the

present leadership of the DSG tends to aim its sights on far out goals when it should be specifically concerned with the passage of liberal legislation. He cited the fact that at one time the DSG was busy investigating the House UnAmerican Activities Committee when there were more important things to be done.

Congressman Candid seemed quite pleased with the leadership organization of the DSG and extolled the "altruistic service that the leaders gave in order to make Congress a more effective body." Contrary to Congressman Cautious, he believed that all members can participate through the discussion periods when they are free to suggest, criticize, and revise the proposals of the leaders. To him these meetings provide an excellent opportunity for each DSG member to act upon the major decisions of the group. In no way could he consider the leadership as a closed "corporation".

Member Benefits

It has been said that a group is an instrument toward the satisfaction of needs in the individual.¹⁹ A fraternal atmosphere prevails among DSG members as a result of the repetitive contact that they have with one another and the shared beliefs that first brought them together. According to Congressman Leader, a majority of the DSG members respect the group's research methods and are grateful that it can provide cohesiveness for liberal thinkers when most necessary. Above all, the communication system that sends out fact sheets and letters urging specific action are most beneficial to the members. Freshmen members depend on the DSG notices to know the particular legislative status of

¹⁹ Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, Group Dynamics (New York: Row, Peterson, and Company, 1953), p. 93.

items and help him choose his own course of action. All the Congressmen interviewed took time to read and to follow the suggestions in the DSG information releases, since they knew they could trust the research staff.

Congressman Leader commented that an additional benefit provided by the DSG for both freshmen and veteran members is a coordinated organization of individual liberal efforts. Like so many others, Mr. Leader expressed the fact that liberals as a group are so often ineffective because no one wished to carry out the hard, cold job of finding a consensus and getting the necessary votes needed to implement this consensus.

How successful is the DSG? Not every liberal Democrat is a DSG member, but on 16 key roll-call votes in 1965 (out of a total of 6,312 votes cast for and against these issues), northern-western Democrats voted with the Johnson Administration 92.66% of the time, while Southern Democrats voted pro-Administration only 51.8% of the time on the same 16 issues.²⁰ Since the DSG has made a point of supporting the Administration, this shows a rather high percentage of voting cohesion among these representatives who are probably DSG members.

Congressman Leader gave a specific example where the DSG efforts to aid freshmen Congressmen helped both the new member as well as the achievement of the group's goal. In January, 1963, 53 new Congressmen attended a initial DSG caucus meeting preceding the 89th Congress. Many of these new members had received DSG assistance during their campaigns. One of the first items of business was a motion proposing a reform in

²⁰United Auto Workers Citizenship-Legislative Department, Washington Report (Washington: November 29, 1965), p. 2.

the Rules Committee procedure. In the past, this committee, chaired by conservative Howard Smith (D.-Va.), could, in essence, kill a major bill, either by not granting a special rule for floor debate, or by agreeing to a restrictive special rule. The DSG had been working for several years to reform the procedures of the Rules Committee and, as Mr. Leader said, the final passage of this motion in 1965 could rightfully be attributed to the votes cast for the change by a number of these same freshmen who received aid from the DSG that previous fall. Thus, the campaign assistance had paid off in votes, because a switch of 12 votes on that motion would have meant the defeat of the reform. Without this reform, Mr. Leader felt that a large portion of Johnson's Great Society program could not have passed the House of Representatives.

Congressman Candid summed up the thoughts of many freshmen DSG'ers. He commented that the group serves as a focal point where one can go for mutual support, advice, assistance, and information. Through its helpful activities, it has built a bond among its members that is reflected in the high degree of voting cohesion on issues that are supported by the DSG.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DSG AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

The effectiveness of any group within the House of Representatives depends a great deal on its relationships with other Congressional groups. The DSG's operations vary through the years, because of changes in the cooperation it has had with elements outside the realm of Congress. This chapter focuses on only a small segment of the DSG's working environment.

Relations with the House Leadership

At the beginning of each Congress both the Republican and Democratic Parties meet to elect their respective formal leaders. The Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader are members of the same party who shall be referred to as the formal leadership of the Democratic Party. The election of the House Speaker is a mere formality, for it is traditional that on this vote both parties give their support for the nomination submitted by the majority party in the House.

The importance of these leaders during the sessions can not be over-emphasized. The Speaker and the Majority Leader are powerful because of their relative control over the House agenda and floor procedures. These leaders must depend on their personal mastery of the techniques of internal strategy to prod the disparate groups within their Party into effective cooperation on important partisan concerns. If the President is of their own Party, they guide the Administration's program. When their party does not control the White House, their

support of the National Party Platform is optional.

The Democratic Study Group officially considers itself a subgroup within the Congressional Democratic party, an "arm of the Democratic leadership", according to one of its leaders. Ever since the publication of the "Liberal Manifesto" their avowed goal has been to carry out to a greater extent the legislative program spelled out in the Democratic Platform. Regardless of the pledges of party loyalty from the DSG, the Speaker and Majority Leader have, at times, viewed the Group as a challenge to their power. The fact that the group exists in the first place is an indication of dissatisfaction with the performance of the party leaders who are formally charged with carrying out the platform promises. The development of a institutionalized formula for legislative organization outside the regular party and seniority channels is naturally watched suspiciously.

The DSG has operated under the leadership of two different Speakers. After a period of careful scrutiny, Speaker Rayburn became a more enthusiastic supporter of the group than is Speaker McCormick. McCormick has tended to be more in support of the DSG's legislative ventures than was Rayburn. Rayburn's great power within the House was based on his wide range of personal support, therefore he could afford to be more tolerant of the insurgent group when it first appeared. However, it is significant that the DSG did not gain its present strength until after Rayburn's death. While he was Speaker, the DSG acted more as a faction group within the party. It was more of a threat to McCormick who was then Majority Leader. It was his job to handle the internal management of the party and the appearance of a dissident group within his party hindered his efforts. Rayburn's time was spent directing the overall conduct of the House. Today, the DSG rivals Speaker McCormick in influence,

while in the past the prestige of Rayburn kept it from such a position.

The DSG has acted more as an independent body in the undertaking of its legislative campaigns since McCormick assumed the Speakership. The DSG's strengthened position within the House and McCormick's inability to satisfy their demands by personally using his influence have made independent action necessary.²¹

A comparison of two major DSG legislative achievements -- the enlargement of the Rules Committee and the changes authorized by the 1965 House Democratic Caucus -- demonstrates the differences in the character of Study Group activities under the two Speakers.²²

DSG leaders started agitating for some sort of reform of the House Rules Committee after the 1958 election. They argued that the greatly enlarged Democratic House majority justified the restriction of the conservative committee chairman's (Howard W. Smith) control over House business. After canvassing liberal Democrats by letter, Representative Thompson reported that 170 members had "indicated interest" in his plan to curb the Rules Committee.²³ Rayburn, in favor of compromise, opposed a formal change, promising to use his influence to make the Committee more amenable to the will of the House majority. Counting on Rayburn's cordial relationship with Minority Leader Joseph Martin, the liberals accepted this pledge, but at the opening of the session,

²¹Unpublished paper by Judith Mazo, The DSG: The Changing Structure of Power within the House of Representatives, April 11, 1966, Wellesley College, Mass., p.46.

²²These achievements are not necessarily the only significant moves of the DSG. According to several of the leaders of the group, these measures were essential for the success of further DEG supported activities.

²³Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, (January 8, 1960), p. 39. See also, Kofmehl, op. cit., p. 263.

in January, 1959, Martin unexpectedly lost the Republican leadership, and Rayburn was unable to affect the Rules Committee's recalcitrance.

By 1961 the Speaker was convinced that a procedural change involving the Rules Committee would be necessary in order to pass the Kennedy Administration's programs. The liberals were anxious to purge the conservatives from the committee, but Rayburn decided a more satisfactory alteration would be to enlarge the committee from 12 to 15 members. He figured two of these new members could be progressive Democrats. "Working closely with Speaker Rayburn and Majority Leader McCormick...the DSG played a key role in the month-long fight which finally resulted in passage of the Speaker's enlargement resolution" at the end of January, 1961.²⁴ One of the two new Democratic positions was filled by DSG member B.F.Sisk (D.-Calif.).²⁵

In January, 1965, the Democratic Party Caucus in the House adopted DSG proposals to deny party privileges, including seniority, to two Southern Representatives who had endorsed the 1964 Republican Presidential ticket, and to liberalize certain House rules. Study Group efforts in behalf of both moves had begun early in 1965, and had proceeded without the assistance of the House leadership or the White House. McCormick was persuaded to endorse the rules reforms shortly before the vote was taken, on the grounds that they would increase the authority of the Speaker at the expense of the seniority leaders, but the move to "purge" Representatives Albert Watson (D.-S.C.) and John Bell Williams (D.-Miss.) never received official support.²⁶

²⁴ DSG Report, "The Democratic Study Group", Washington, D.C., 1965, p.4.

²⁵ For an excellent coverage of this reform see, Alan Westin (ed.), The Uses of Power, "Race, Religion, and the Rules Committee" (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1962), pp. 1-72.

²⁶ Daniel Rapport, "Mr. Blatnik Plans a Purge", Reporter, December 3, 1964, p.32.

Thus, where enlargement of the Rules Committee was primarily a victory for Speaker Rayburn in which the DSG cooperated, the DSG can be given principal credit for the 1965 reforms, with only minimal cooperation from Speaker McCormick. The 1965 reforms do indicate the way in which the Study Group can be an aid to the party leadership and also a challenge to its influence. Although their ultimate goal may be to change the power structure of the House to enhance the liberal's influence, the immediate result of the reforms has been to make it easier for the Speaker to pass the President's proposals.

The DSG's efforts to coordinate the liberal Democrats relieves the party leadership of that difficult task. Perhaps in recognition of the value of the DSG, McCormick has actually suggested that new members join the DSG.²⁷ When the Speaker and the DSG work together to pass legislation, the coordination and discipline which the DSG has introduced into the liberal bloc makes the work of coalition-building that much easier.

Relations Outside Congress: Interest Groups

Along with the more formal relationships with established institutions, the DSG does work with outside groups, especially possible interest groups. Contacts that result from such associations may give the members access to information otherwise unavailable, and thus contribute to Group cohesion by making membership in it more valuable. The members may also establish the Study Group's importance in the opinion of the members of the potentially influential groups, and increase the possibility for cooperation if these groups should ever realize their full potential. For example, by unofficially arranging for DSG members

²⁷ Thompson, op. cit., p. 4.

to meet with foreign policy critic Julian Bond, in January, 1966, the DSG was giving notice to the "peace movement" that they would perhaps be a potential ally. The DSG has also, in the past, offered seminars for students working in Congressional offices as summer interns and this might be construed as an attempt to enhance DSG ties with the academic community. It also could have some effect on the students who one day may be returning to Congress in more permanent positions. Thus, the DSG has possible sources of influence in a number of areas that may directly or indirectly affect the way in which the DSG operates.

Relations Outside Congress: The President

The Democratic Study Group was created, in part, as an alternative to the Eisenhower program. Liberal Democrats had a definite reason for unity. The DSG research memoranda on specific issues and bills were extremely significant at this time, because the executive branch failed to give the Democrats information.

The DSG has openly supported both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, and the leaders of the group consider that their relations with the White House are excellent. The DSG leadership has worked in many occasions with representatives of the executive branch on particular bills and has also aided in the drafting of some measures.

The 1964 Civil Rights Bill is heralded by some as one of the DSG's greatest legislative achievements. The votes of freshmen DSG members were extremely significant at this time for without their support the measure would not have passed. The Administration sought DSG support for this measure, and almost a year before introduction onto the House floor, the two were working together on planning strategy.

One of the most dangerous stages for a legislative proposal is the

period during floor action that amendments can be offered by House members. Because of the possible harm that an amendment may cause, a constant watch must be kept on floor action by the supporters of the bill. A major factor in holding supporters in line on key amendments during the Civil Rights debate was the carefully planned formula of the major legislative and lobby groups behind the bill -- the Democratic Study Group, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, major Negro rights organizations, top industrial unions of the AFL-CIO, Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish church groups, the White House, Justice Department, and groupings of pro-civil rights Republicans. ²⁸ In contrast, the Southern Democrats, who were in vigorous opposition to the bill, appeared to enter the battle with minimal organization and little gusto for the fight.

At the start of each day's debate, basic strategy and planning meetings were held. First the entire Leadership Conference on Civil Rights would meet, and then later in Thompson's office key civil rights and union operatives along with the Justice Department and White House officials would meet. There was often open conflict between participants of these sessions about what would be most effective strategy. Some of the participants felt it was better to sacrifice certain provisions for the sake of passing the general bill. Others felt that this strategy would reinforce Negro distrust of white liberal leadership. This latter group felt that it would be better to be defeated while adhering to the demands of Negroes for definite legislative action. This internal dissention placed the leadership of the DSG in the position as mediator and at times opened up deep divisions among the Civil Rights promoters.

²⁸ Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1964, p. 344.

The Civil Rights coalition kept careful tabs on every member who might be expected to back the bill. When the public galleries opened each day before the House session began, numerous representatives of civil rights organizations and unions were there. Each had a specific responsibility: to watch four or five Congressmen and to record their attendance and their votes on all proposed amendments.

When a spotter in the gallery saw that one of the bill's likely backers was off the floor too long, a telephone call was placed to a central headquarters in the nearby Congressional Hotel, where a master chart of office locations in both the House office buildings was maintained. The missing member was then summoned by a whip call from the DSG staff, urging him to get to the floor of the House to vote on a key amendment. This warning system was very significant for the freshmen DSG members. Past experience proved to many freshmen that the advice of the DSG whip calls could be trusted. During the Civil Rights debate they once again relied on the voting cues received from DSG sources.

The DSG supplemented and eventually replaced this master system by a successful House "buddy system". Under the direction of Representative Frank Thompson, each of a group of twenty DSG members was responsible for keeping track of five and six other members, both on attendance and how they voted.

Of the 122 amendments proposed during debate, only 28 were accepted, leaving the bill relatively in tact. The vote alignment on the final passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act is significant. Table I shows the distribution of the 420 votes cast, according to political party affiliation. The total number of Democratic votes cast is then distributed according to regional alignment - Northern and Southern. Fifteen members, for one reason or another, did not vote, so that the numbers used do not

represent the House membership in full.

TABLE I

1964 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT: PARTY AND REGIONAL
DISTRIBUTION OF FINAL VOTES*

VOTES	FOR	%	AGAINST	%	TOTAL
Final Vote	290	69	130	31	420
Party Votes					
Republicans	138	80	34	20	172
Democrats	152	61	96	39	248
Regional Democrats					
Northern Democrats	141	97	4	3	145
Southern Democrats	11	11	92	89	103

*Source: Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1964, p. 606

Of the 152 Democrats who voted for the Civil Rights Act, 141 of them were Northern Democrats. This Northern group represents 97% of all Northern Democrats voting, only 4 out of 145 from this region and party voted against the bill. Since it has been stated that most Democrats from the North are DSG members, the high degree of cohesion of these members illustrates the legislative effectiveness of the DSG. Of the total 248 Democrats who voted, 103 were Southern Democrats. 89% of these Democrats voted against the bill. Because of this regional division in the Democratic Party, the DSG's cohesion was vital to the outcome of the Civil Rights Bill. Also significant was the support from the Republican members. There were 172 Republicans voting, and from this group, 138, or 80% voted for the bill. This is an excellent

testimony of cooperation between parties on a pro-Administration bill. The ability to work with other groups on issues of mutual concern is an attribute of the DSG. Without this type of coordinated effort, the fate of the 1964 Civil Rights Act would have been much different.

With a larger majority of Democrats in the House during the 89th Congress, President Johnson tended to rely less on the DSG for legislative aid than did Kennedy. Perhaps this could be attributed to the fact that there is a basic difference in personality between the two Presidents. To many DSG members, Kennedy appeared as a young, progressive intellectual, who was concerned with liberal ideals and was willing to pursue them. Johnson has tended in the past to pursue a more moderate, conservative approach as the Democratic President, and as a result, the DSG has tended to work more on its own in the achievement of legislative proposals.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: THE DSG, AN AID TO FRESHMEN CONGRESSMEN

Current literature on decision-making in Congress, depicts a House of Representatives' member with conflicting considerations and cross pressures as a part of his everyday work. How does the new member acquire an intelligent basis for any decision? How does he decide which issues merit his serious attention? With the impossibility of adequately familiarizing himself with more than a fraction of the measures of which he must adopt a stand, where does the individual member coordinate his efforts with those of like-minded colleagues to promote the objectives he favors?²⁹

The Democratic Study Group gives liberal oriented freshmen an avenue for more meaningful involvement in Congress, and also provides the opportunity for new members to establish beneficial relationships with veteran members. Although the DSG developed as an institutional response to the needs for improved communications among liberal House members, it has played an important part in the member's introduction to Congress. After several months many freshmen Congressmen feel that their new positions do not allow them full-participation in major Congressional action. They yearn for an opportunity to express their views openly, and they feel a need for experienced counsel from veteran members.

²⁹Kofmehl, op. cit., p. 256.

The DSG has restricted its membership to those Congressmen who share identical views. The DSG educates new members by its practical explanations of legislative strategy and provides the freshmen with a training ground where they can learn about the formal and informal ways of the House. The freshmen member finds a ready-made opportunity to implement his ideas and ideals. Without the DSG, liberal newcomers would have a hard time implementing some of the campaign promises they made. A majority with no organization to plan and work together, has proven to be very ineffective in the past.

The DSG, by its information services and veteran advisors, aids freshmen as well as older liberals in learning to work within the structure of the House of Representatives. The research and educational projects are an important factor in the assimilation process of new members into the complexities of the House. The DSG also provides an arena where members who lack seniority can use their talents in a way that may benefit and improve the quality of House performance. As a forum, the DSG gives the freshmen members a way to become very much involved with the decision-making process. Without the DSG there would be few opportunities for freshmen members to excel and to circumvent the restrictions of the seniority system.

A DSG spokesman once expressed the hope that one day the DSG will no longer be necessary. The Study Group developed because liberals failed to act together in the face of the G.O.P.-Dixiecrat coalition. If the House should someday be consistently responsive to the needs of the nation, the DSG would still be needed. The overwhelming size of the House of Representatives, the confusion, the questions, the complexities that freshmen members must work with would still remain. The DSG's information service and communications network shall always be a valuable aid for freshmen members. The talents

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APPENDIX I
DSG CAMPAIGN LETTER¹

Fellow Democrat:

We are members of an informal bloc of 80 Liberal Democratic Members of the House who have been working together during the past two years.

We believe that there is considerable material available here in Washington that might be of assistance to you in your campaign. It includes printed hearings, committee reports and other useful documents. If you will write Congressman Frank Thompson, 452 House Office Building, Washington 25, D.C., letting us know which issues you plan to stress, we will be glad to send you such material as can be pulled together quickly.

Best of luck to you in your campaign. We look forward to welcoming you to the 86th Congress.

Sincerely,

signed/ Frank Thompson, Jr., 4th District, N.J.
Lee Metcalfe, 1st District, Montana
Chet Holifield, 19th District, California
Ray J. Madden, 1st District, Indiana
John E. Moss, 3rd District, California
Sidney R. Yates, 9th District, Illinois
John A. Blatnik, 8th District, Minnesota
Thomas E. Morgan, 26th District, Pa.
Melvin Price, 24th District, Illinois
Henry S. Reuss, 5th District, Wisconsin
Stewart L. Udall, 2nd District, Arizona
George M. Rhodes, 14th District, Pa.

¹Source: Kofmehl, op. cit., p. 262.

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URGENT -- MEMBER'S ATTENTION

January 25, 1967

TO: MEMBERS

FROM: Frank Thompson, Jr., Chairman

SUBJECT: Democratic Caucus, Wednesday, February 1, 1967

The next meeting of the House Democratic Caucus will be held Wednesday morning, February 1, 1967, in the Hall of the House. An official Caucus notice will be forthcoming.

The agenda of the Caucus will be limited to a resolution offered on behalf of Rep. John Bell Williams of Mississippi, who seeks restoration of the seniority he had attained at the end of the 88th Congress (No. 2 on Interstate and Foreign Commerce and No. 4 on District of Columbia). The Democratic Caucus of January 2, 1965 disciplined Rep. Williams by placing him at the bottom of both Committees because of his open and energetic support of the 1964 Republican National ticket --- Barry Goldwater and William E. Miller.

The DSG Executive Committee's position is that Rep. Williams should remain in the same Committee ranking that he had attained at the end of the 89th Congress (No. 15 on Interstate and Foreign Commerce and No. 12 on District of Columbia).

Rep. Williams by his own written request on January 23 asked that he be placed "other than in 15th position" on the Commerce Committee. (See Congressional Record, January 23, p. H 442.)

It is vitally urgent that you attend the February 1 Caucus, in order that political infidelity be not rewarded.

APPENDIX III

Interview Questionnaire

1. Did you know about the DSG before you came to Congress? How did you find out about the DSG? What did you expect from your membership? i.e. new acquaintances, learn about issues, campaign help, prestige?
2. What is the purpose of the DSG? What does the DSG do to achieve this? What benefits have you gotten from it? Has your association with the DSG presented any difficulties for you?
3. What are some of the more important DSG activities? How are you a part of these? Do you have any suggestions for an expansion of the participation of the members of the DSG?
4. Were activities helpful when you came to Congress? In what way?
5. In what way are you concerned with the DSG activities that deal with policy decisions? Would you give me a rough percentage of how often you find that you are in agreement with the DSG positions on policy?
6. Does your affiliation with the DSG present any problems for you in your relationships with non DSG Congressmen? Your constituents? Interest Groups? The Party leadership?
7. It is my hypothesis that the DSG is most effective in its job as helping freshmen Congressmen learn their jobs? Would you please comment on this?