

Scoop Jackson

Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson, born in Everett, WA in 1912, entered US Congress in 1941, when he was only 28 years old. He went on to serve under nine different presidents in both the House and the Senate, never losing a Washington election. Scoop, so nicknamed as a child by his elder sister after a cartoon character who excelled in avoiding work, graduated from UW law school at the age of 23. Before receiving his law degree, Jackson worked for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, which convinced him that the federal government should be, and perhaps more importantly, could be responsible for the welfare of the public. In 1938, Jackson was elected prosecuting attorney for Snohomish County.

Jackson started his career as a textbook "Cold War liberal" who believed in high government spending on both anti-Soviet and growing military programs and on social welfare programs alike. He remained a staunch New Dealer throughout his life, advocating for national health programs, while supporting the Truman administration's "containment" policy towards the USSR. Despite his later rejection of Nixon's detente policy with the USSR, Jackson did support the opening of official relations with China.

In 1952 Jackson won the Senate seat that had been held by Republican Harry P. Cain, quite an accomplishment in an election that heavily favored Republicans. Because of his unwavering position supporting increased defense spending, Jackson earned another nickname: "the Senator from Boeing." In 1960, John F. Kennedy openly preferred Jackson as his possible running mate, but ultimately chose Lyndon B. Johnson.

Becoming chair of the Interior Committee in 1963, Jackson oversaw the passage of much of the important environmental legislation of the 1960s, including the Wilderness Act (1964) and the National Environmental Policy Act (1969). Jackson was not a die-hard environmentalist, however, and often worried over the economic consequences of these acts.

In a battle over anti-ballistic missile systems to be placed at Fort Lawton in Seattle (1967-70), Jackson supported the program despite opposition of other Democrats and many of his constituents, just as he supported the war in Vietnam long after it ceased to be popular. In 1970 Jackson successfully negotiated a settlement to a sit-in staged by Indian activists over a proposed park in

Jackson bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination twice, in 1972 and in 1976, but poor relations with the left-wing of the party and questions of the legality of his relationship with Boeing, as well as his mediocre public speaking

abilities and his inability to connect with national voters as he did with local voters combined to prevent his gaining the nomination.

Jackson's greatest legacy, perhaps, is that of his role as one of the first "neoconservatives." Notable for their belief in high military spending and their disillusionment with the liberal inability to solve cultural and social ills in the 1960s and 1970s, this group of former liberals moved towards the Republican Party throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Many were former New Dealers, such as Ronald Reagan, and many Jackson supporters turned to Reagan in the national election. Jackson served in the Senate until his sudden death in 1983. He was 71 years old.

Resources:

Web: For a complete biography of Jackson, see [historylink.org](http://www.historylink.org) at http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=5516. This site also has a bibliography of books on Jackson.

Discussion: Jackson exemplifies the neoconservative movement from New Deal liberal to Reagan Republican.

What does the rise of the neoconservative say about American society and culture after WWII? Why did so many people find the liberal movements of the 60s unsatisfying?

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