

[Search Salon](#)[Directory](#)**Hot Topics**[Election 2004](#)[2004 Republican National Convention](#)[2004 Summer Olympics](#)[Iraq War](#)[Terrorism](#)[King Kaufman's Sports Daily](#)**Articles by date**

- [All of Salon.com](#)
- [By department](#)

[► News & Politics](#)[Opinion](#)[Tech & Business](#)[Arts & Entertainment](#)[Books](#)[Life](#)[Comics](#)[Dialogue](#)[Letters](#)[Columnists](#)[Corrections](#)

## House votes to block new overtime rules

**By Jim Abrams**

Sept. 9, 2004 | Washington -- In a sharp rebuke of a new administration policy, the House moved Thursday to block the Labor Department from carrying out overtime rules that critics argued could deprive millions of workers of their overtime pay.

The 223-193 vote in favor of blocking the rules defied the White House. A threatened veto applied to veto a massive spending bill, now on the House floor, if it contains any language tampering with the rules that took effect Aug. 23.

"This is one step in the legislative process. We are continuing to work with the Congress," said Trent Duffy, a spokesman for President Bush.

Democrats, united against the rules, were joined by 22 Republicans in voting for the amendment to a \$142.5 billion health and education spending bill.

The vote was Bush's second election-season defeat in Congress in two days. On Wednesday the Senate disregarded a White House veto threat and voted to prohibit Bush from giving federal immigration jobs to private workers.

"The administration has chosen this time to institute new regulations which for the first time in 80 years scale back workers' entitlement to overtime pay," said Rep. David Obey, D-Wis., a sponsor of the overtime proposal.

Democrats sought to depict the issue as an election-season example of the Bush administration's insensitivity to worker rights, saying the overtime privileges of up to 6 million workers were at risk.

"This is the place where making ends meet happens because people have overtime pay. Republicans cannot grasp that," said House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California.

### Premium Benefits

Salon's latest music mix [Listen](#) to 16 tracks from artists like Ani DiFranco, Camper Van Beethoven and Elysian Fields.

One year subscription to [Wired and U.S. News and World Report magazines](#).

[Get Premium on your PDA or Wireless device](#)

[Free one month audio subscription](#) to the New York Times or Wall Street Journal

Get a free month of Premium when you [refer a friend](#)

**Table Talk**

[Spirited  
Salon forums]

[How is the religious right shaping the election?](#)

[Is Iran the next battleground?](#)

- [Posts of the week](#)

**The Well**

[Pioneering members-  
only discussions]

[Can the future be both bright and green?](#)

**Sound Off**

- [Letter to the Editor](#)
- [Salon Blogs](#)

SALON PREMIUM

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Gift Subscriptions](#)
- [Upgrade your account](#)
- [Help](#)
- [Mobile edition](#)
- [Refer a Friend](#)
- [Institutional Subs](#)

SALON SERVICES

- [Personals](#)
- [Newsletter](#)
- [Unsubscribe](#)
- [Salon's RSS Feed](#)
- [Salon Credit Card](#)
- [Salon Publications](#)
- [Salon Store](#)

CONTACT SALON

- [Customer Service](#)
- [About Salon](#)
- [Investor Relations](#)

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry said the veto threat is "the latest evidence of how dead wrong the Bush administration is when it comes to meeting the needs of America's struggling middle class."

The White House and most Republicans insisted the rules would update an antiquated overtime pay system and make an additional 1 million lower-paid workers eligible for overtime.

"I do think that the clarity that comes with these new rules will help better protect American workers," said Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee.

It was unclear how much impact the House vote would have on the biggest overhaul of overtime regulations in more than half a century.

The Senate has yet to take up the health and education bill. House GOP Whip Roy Blunt, R-Mo., said he expected that the provision would be removed when the House and Senate meet to work out the final version of the bill.

He said that by that time there will be "overwhelming evidence" that the rules are benefiting tens of thousands of workers.

Republican Rep. Steven LaTourette of Ohio, who voted for the amendment, suggested there was a middle ground. "I would hope this vote, taken together with some votes in the Senate, will let the administration say, 'Well, wait a minute, let's go back and revisit this case.'"

Democrats and pro-labor Republicans have fought for more than a year to stop the Labor Department from going ahead with the proposed rules. The administration said they were needed to adjust to changing working conditions and clear up confusion that has led to lawsuits against employers.

"For those who receive overtime it's as high as 20 or 25 percent of their income," said Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., co-sponsor of the provision with Obey. "It's the largest government-imposed pay cut in the history of this country."

The AFL-CIO, which has lobbied against the new rules, said the 6 million workers facing weakened overtime protections include foremen and assistant managers, nurses, workers in the financial services industry, journalists and others who do small amounts of administrative work.

The department said 1.3 million workers who earn less than \$23,660 a year would become eligible, while about 107,000 white-collar workers making \$100,000 or more could lose eligibility.

The department said the amendment would put the overtime rights of millions in jeopardy because the government could no longer protect those making more than \$23,660. "Especially hard-hit are police, firefighters, construction workers and others whose overtime rights were explicitly guaranteed for the first time in the new rules," said Alfred B. Robinson, Jr., acting administrator for the Wage and Hour Division.

In May, the Senate, by a 52-47 vote on a different bill, approved language stating that no worker who currently qualifies for overtime should lose that eligibility.

Get Salon's headlines delivered to your [e-mail address](#)

Download Salon as [plain text](#) or [PDF](#)

The Obey-Miller language blocks all aspects of the rules except those that extend overtime to lower-paid workers.



**Associated Press**

[More wire stories](#)

-----

**Sound Off**

Send us a [Letter to the Editor](#)



Salon provides breaking news articles from the Associated Press as a service to its readers, but does not edit the AP articles it publishes.

© 2004 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. The information contained in the AP News report may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without the prior written authority of The Associated Press.

[Salon](#) | [Search](#) | [About Salon](#) | [Table Talk](#) | [Investor Relations](#)

[News & Politics](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Tech & Business](#) | [Arts & Entertainment](#)  
[Indie film](#) | [Books](#) | [Life](#) | [Comics](#) | [Audio](#) | [Dialogue](#)  
[Letters](#) | [Columnists](#) | [Salon Gear](#)

Reproduction of material from any Salon pages without written permission is strictly prohibited

Copyright 2004 Salon.com

Salon, 22 4th Street, 11th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103

Telephone 415 645-9200 | Fax 415 645-9204

[E-mail](#) | [Salon.com Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)