1 Jack Kingston (R)

Of Savannah — Elected 1992, 3rd term

Biographical Information
Born: April 24, 1955, Bryan, Texas.
Education: U. of Georgia, A.B. 1978.
Occupation: Insurance broker.
Family: Wife, Libby Morris; four children.
Religion: Episcopalian.
Political Career: Ga. House, 1985-93.
Capitol Office: 1507 Longworth Bldg. 20515; 225-5831.

Committees
Appropriations
Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA & Related Agencies; Foreign Operations, Export Financing & Related Programs; Military Construction



In Washington: Kingston, who took the 1st out of Democratic hands in 1992, got a thank you from the GOP leadership at the start of the 104th Congress, in the form of a seat on the Appropriations Committee. In his rookie term on the panel, Kingston used his newfound "power of the purse" as readily as many veteran appropriators who push issues of concern to their constituents and sometimes try to punish lawmakers who block their agendas.

As a member of the committee's Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies Subcommittee, Kingston is well-positioned to protect the interests of the farmers in his district who raise Vidalia onions, peanuts, tobacco and other crops. In the 104th, Kingston's concern for local agricultural interests put him at odds with fellow GOP conservatives pushing the party's "Freedom to Farm" legislation, a major overhaul of U.S. agriculture policy aimed at phasing out New Deal-era crop subsidies.

Kingston resisted efforts to alter the federal price-support programs for peanuts and cotton, staple crops in Georgia. "When we talk about farm subsidies . . . we need to keep in mind that the people who are being subsidized are not necessarily the farmers," he said on the House floor in June 1995. "They are the American consumers."

However, Kingston made a concerted effort to end, or at least curtail, the subsidy to farmers of one crop not big on the Georgia scene: sugar. He called sugar supports "the sweetest deal of all" and contended that they benefit only wealthy growers. Consumers, he said, lose money because of the sugar subsidy; in 1995 Kingston claimed the cost for a ton of sugar in the United States is 13 cents more than the average price in the rest of the world.

Although Kingston's chief criticism of the sugar program was that it inflates what consumers pay for sugar, he did have another interest in the debate: Savannah Foods, the nation's largest sugar refiner, is based in the 1st. He said current policy had caused sugar shortages and forced some refineries to close shop temporarily.

During conference negotiations on the fiscal 1996 agriculture spending bill, Kingston proposed, but later withdrew, an amendment to kill the sugar program. A year later, on the fiscal 1997 agriculture bill, he won the addition of language that would have capped the price of raw cane sugar at 21.15 cents per pound, but that provision was dropped in conference with the Senate.

Kingston did not take his defeats at the hands of the powerful sugar lobby lightly. After the highest profile sugar vote of the 104th — a 208-217 House floor vote in March 1996 that ended the bid to kill the price-support program — he accused sugar lobbyists of filling the Capitol "with pockets full of money." And when legislators from sugar-growing Florida lobbied against Kingston's later plan to cap the price of sugar, he persuaded the Appropriations' Agriculture Subcommittee to cut funding for a $27.7 million farm-research center planned for Fort Pierce, Fla. The full committee restored the Fort Pierce money.

Kingston ultimately voted with the vast majority of Republicans for final passage of the "Freedom to Farm" legislation. In the bill, the peanut subsidy program was modified, but it survived. Peanut program critics had proposed phasing it out by 2002, but they lost, 209-212.

Kingston is a reliable opponent of the Clinton administration, even on one Clinton priority that most Republicans back — lifting barriers to international trade. Kingston opposed NAFTA in 1993, concerned about its impact on jobs in rural areas of the 1st, and in 1994 he voted against GATT.

More than once Kingston has staked out positions on the right side of the conservative-dominated House Republican Conference. In the 104th he voted against a bill that increased the nation's debt limit, even though GOP leaders counseled a vote for the debt-limit increase so as not to provoke a showdown with the Clinton administration over funding the government. He opposed a bill increasing the minimum wage in 1996, even after the measure was sweetened with business tax

GEORGIA 1
Southeast - Savannah; Brunswick

The 1st District is a microcosm of Georgia's racial, demographic and political composition. Remapping in 1995 added predominantly black areas around Savannah that had been cordoned off in the erstwhile majority-black 11th. That boosted the black population of the 1st to nearly 31 percent, just above the state average. The district's population grew 10 percent from 1990 to 1995, just below the state clip of 11 percent.

The 1st, like Georgia, is ancestrally Democratic but increasingly receptive to the GOP. Kingston's 1992 election marked the first time since Reconstruction that southeast Georgia had not sent a Democrat to Washington.

Thirty-seven percent of the 1st's population resides in Chatham County, dominated by the city of Savannah, which James Oglethorpe founded in 1733. Many of the town squares he envisioned and designed are well-preserved, including Chippewa Square, where some of the movie "Forrest Gump" was filmed. Savannah is ethnically diverse, with a significant African-American population. There are large numbers of Jews, Greeks, French Huguenots, and Irish; descendants of the latter organize a large St. Patrick's Day parade.

Major industry in Savannah includes Gulfstream Aerospace, which designs and manufactures jet aircraft, and Union Camp, a manufacturer of paper, chemicals and wood products. Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah and Fort Stewart in Liberty County account for tens of thousands of jobs for the military and civilians.

South of Chatham is Bryan County, the 1st's fastest growing county in population from 1990 to 1995. Bob Dole captured 57 percent of Bryan's votes in 1996, his best showing in the district. Republicans also run well in Glynn County; along the county's coast are a number of upscale beach resort communities, such as St. Simons Island and Jekyll Island. The Treasury Department's Federal Law Enforcement Training Center is at a former naval air station near Brunswick that was converted in the mid-1970s.

Burgeoning Camden County in the extreme southeast corner houses the Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, which supports the Navy's submarine-launched ballistic missile program and employs about 9,000. The county includes the Cumberland Island National Seashore, a picturesque, wildlife-laden tourist attraction.

Farming provides a substantial part of the district's economy. Cotton has long been a major crop in southeastern Georgia; Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin near Savannah, and Georgia was the first state to grow cotton commercially. Other primary crops include corn, soybeans, wheat, peanuts, tobacco, and sweet Vidalia onions, discovered in Toombs County in 1931.

No other Georgia congressional district more closely paralleled statewide voter sentiments in 1996. Dole beat Bill Clinton in the district by 48 percent to 45 percent, while Democratic Senate nominee Max Cleland edged Guy Millner 49 percent to 48 percent.

As of May 19, the Census Bureau had not recalculated population data, racial and ethnic breakdowns, and age statistics for districs newly drawn for the 1996 election.

breaks that won over many other Republicans.

Kingston quickly and repeatedly jumped to the defense of Newt Gingrich whenever Democrats attacked the Speaker's character or assailed him for alleged ethical lapses. The most notable exchange came amid the House debate on the budget-reconciliation bill in November 1995.

Democrats took to the floor to chide Gingrich for suggesting that Congress' budget standoff with President Clinton came in part because Clinton made him sit in the back of Air Force One and exit from the rear on a return trip from the funeral of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. To make his point, George Miller, D-Calif., displayed a New York Daily News cover sketch of Gingrich, crying and in diapers, under the headline "CRY BABY." Kingston made a "point of order" that the display violated House rules, and the presiding officer ruled that posters should not be used to "demean" other members. Democrat Lloyd Doggett of Texas appealed their ruling. That appeal was tabled, 231-171.

As a freshman, Kingston found fault with congressional accounting methods he saw as phony. "When we say there is going to be a cut, what we mean is there is going to be a decrease in the projected increase, not a real cut the way you and I think of a cut in our households or businesses," he said. When Republicans took over the House in 1995, they changed chamber rules on accounting methods. Later in the 104th, Republicans employed Kingston's argument in responding to Democratic charges that the GOP was proposing "cuts" in Medicare and Medicaid. Republicans said they aimed to reduce the rate of projected spending growth on the programs.

Kingston is a pithy participant in the one-minute speeches that House lawmakers can make before legislative work begins each day.

In the 103rd Congress, he faulted Clinton's health care proposal, complaining that it required people to pay the same for coverage whether or

not they practice healthy habits. "If you are a 55-year-old person who does not ever exercise — you may smoke a little bit too much, you may drink a little bit too much, you may eat a lot of fried foods — your premium is going to be the same as [a] 23-year-old marathon runner," Kingston said in 1993. "People who take care of themselves should pay a lower premium than those that do not."

And in a 1993 interview with the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, he had this to say about the nation's welfare program: "All these Great Society programs of Lyndon Johnson, none of them have done a doggone thing."

Kingston rose on the House floor in November 1995 to lambaste the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for insisting that the restaurant chain Hooters, known for its shapely and scantily clad waitresses, hire male waiters and be more sensitive to men. "There's nothing that men like more than an abundance of Buffalo wings and breasts," Kingston said, angering several female lawmakers, even though Kingston clarified that he was referring to chicken breasts.

At Home: The Supreme Court's demand that Georgia alter the boundaries of its congressional districts in 1996 had little impact on the conservative bent of Kingston's district, yet he, like several of the state's House members, flirted briefly with the idea of seeking the open Senate seat of retiring Democrat Sam Nunn.

He opted not to run, explaining that the demands of a Senate campaign would keep him away from his four young children, and citing his Appropriations Committee seat as an inducement to remain in the House. Kingston won re-election with more than two-thirds of the vote.

When Democrat Lindsay Thomas retired from the 1st in 1992, Kingston was well-positioned to woo voters into the Republican column for a House election; many of them already had been voting Republican for president.

An insurance agent from Savannah, Kingston since 1985 had held a state House seat in Chatham County, the district's most populous. He drew minor primary opposition, while his eventual Democratic opponent, Barbara Christmas, a school principal in rural Camden County, struggled through a crowded primary and a runoff against former Hinesville Mayor Buddy DeLoach.

Christmas was a woman and a political "outsider," two hot qualities in 1992. She also got some mileage out of her last name, choosing "Christmas in November" as her campaign theme and dubbing her daylong visits to each of the district's 22 counties "Christmas Days."

Kingston emphasized his eight years' service in the state House and portrayed Christmas as lacking legislative know-how. He also said she would pursue a liberal agenda, citing a contribution Christmas received from the National Organization for Women — which, a Kingston brochure noted, supported homosexual rights. Conservative Phyllis Schlafly sent a mailing calling Christmas an "ultra-liberal, radical feminist."

Christmas, a mother and grandmother, protested, but to no avail. Kingston took 58 percent, and in 1994, he won re-election easily.

HOUSE ELECTIONS

1996 General		
Jack Kingston (R)	108,616	(68%)
Rosemary Kaszans (D)	50,622	(32%)
1994 General		
Jack Kingston (R)	88,788	(77%)
Raymond Beckworth (D)	27,197	(23%)

Previous Winning Percentages: **1992** (58%)

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

	Receipts	Receipts from PACs		Expenditures
1996				
Kingston (R)	$557,574	$176,055	(32%)	$452,178
Kaszans (D)	$46,939	$2,500	(5%)	$46,023
1994				
Kingston (R)	$513,973	$203,596	(40%)	$296,202
Beckworth (D)	$0	0		$5,338

DISTRICT VOTE FOR PRESIDENT

	1996		1992
D	81,804 (45%)	**D**	76,900 (42%)
R	87,895 (48%)	**R**	81,443 (44%)
I	11,491 (6%)	**I**	26,023 (14%)

KEY VOTES

1997	
Ban "partial birth" abortions	Y
1996	
Approve farm bill	Y
Deny public education to illegal immigrants	Y
Repeal ban on certain assault-style weapons	Y
Increase minimum wage	N
Freeze defense spending	Y
Approve welfare overhaul	Y
1995	
Approve balanced-budget constitutional amendment	Y
Relax Clean Water Act regulations	Y
Oppose limits on environmental regulations	N
Reduce projected Medicare spending	Y
Approve GOP budget with tax and spending cuts	Y

VOTING STUDIES

	Presidential Support		Party Unity		Conservative Coalition	
Year	**S**	**O**	**S**	**O**	**S**	**O**
1996	29	65	89	7	84	10
1995	17	83	95	5	93	7
1994	42	56	88	11	94	3
1993	26	73	89	9	84	14

INTEREST GROUP RATINGS

Year	ADA	AFL-CIO	CCUS	ACU
1996	5	n/a	86	100
1995	0	0	100	96
1994	5	11	83	100
1993	10	8	91	100

ZIP CODES

Georgia's 1st District

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