VoteView

Information Technology Services

Overview

VoteView is software designed to manipulate legislative roll call data. The data currently available with VoteView is all individual roll call votes in the United States House of Representatives and Senate for the first 106 Congresses (1789-2000), maps of congressional districts, codebooks with descriptive information on the roll calls, codings of the roll calls into thematic and topical categories, and the Poole-Rosenthal **DW-NOMINATE** ideological scores for members.

The software provides a display of any vote either on a map of the United States or on a spatial map based on **DW-NOMINATE** scores. Users can search for roll calls either sequentially or by use of the pre-set categories or by user-generated key word searches. The displays also permit cross-tabulations of two votes, even in different Congresses. VoteView also shows party breakdowns on a vote. Users can either print the roll-call voting data or write it to a spreadsheet ready file. Maps can also be printed. Users can also select a set of votes and generate "ratings" for legislators or track an individual's voting records.

Accessing VoteView

On the desktop, click on the Start button and point to Programs, then point and click on VoteView For Windows.

Running VoteView

Once the program has completed loading, you are presented with the title screen of VoteView.
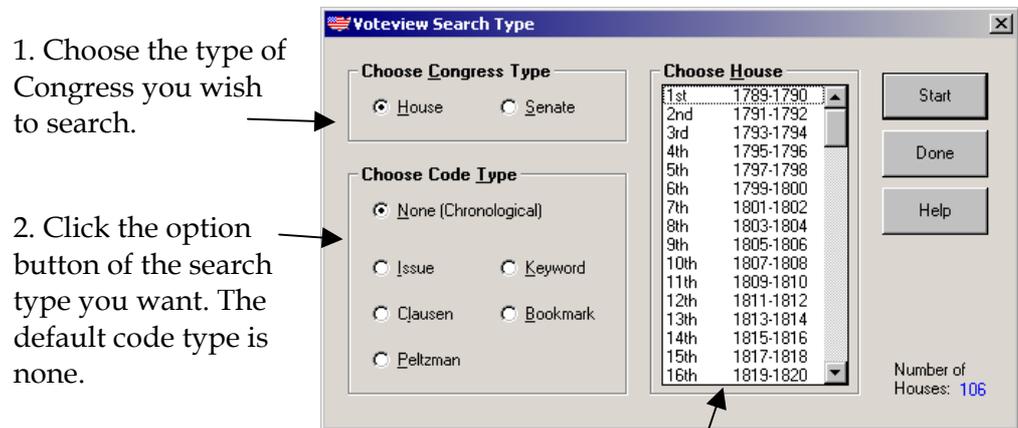
From the title screen, you can use the **File** menu to:

- begin your VoteView search

- change or view VoteView preferences

- exit the program

Note: Double-clicking on the flag is a shortcut method to begin the VoteView search.
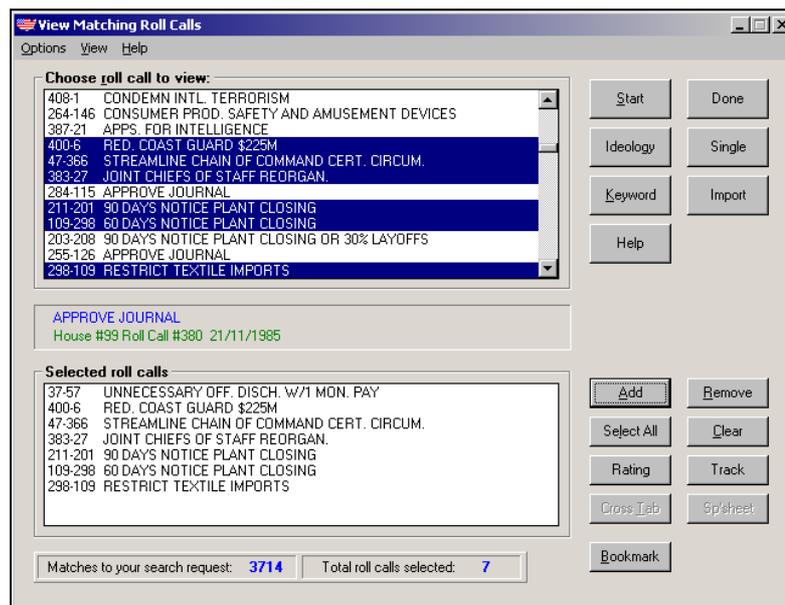
Beginning the search

The VoteView search type is selected from the following dialog box. The list of available Houses or Senates (depending on which is selected, see step 1 below) is shown on the right.

1. Choose the type of Congress you wish to search.

2. Click the option button of the search type you want. The default code type is none.

3. Select or multiple select (using SHIFT or CTRL) the Congresses you want to search.

4. Click the Start button to continue.

Note: If you are only selecting one Congress to search, double-clicking on a Congress is the same as selecting it and clicking Start.

Viewing Roll Calls

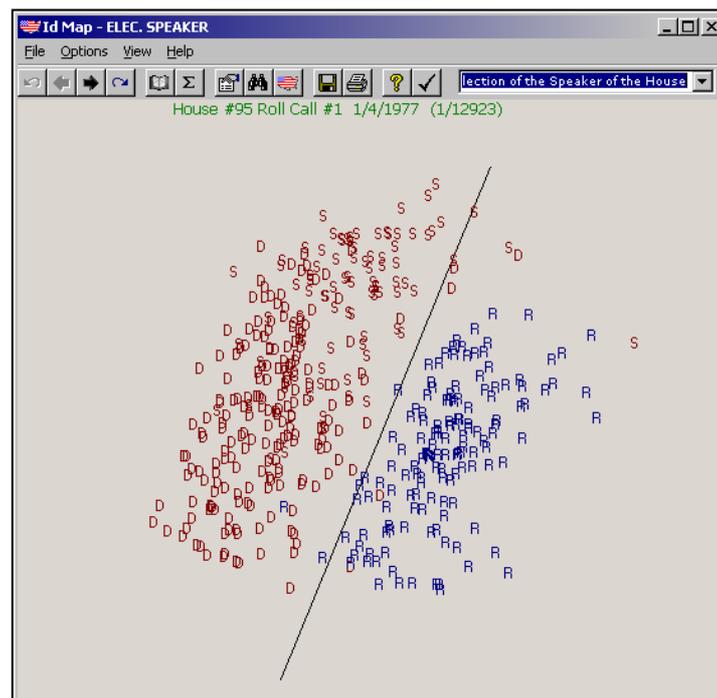This window is created after a set of roll calls matching the search request are found.

The top list contains the entire set of matching roll calls (or all of them if a chronological search was requested).

The bottom list is your viewing queue. It is empty at first; you fill it up with the roll calls you wish to view from the top list.

- you select single roll calls by **single-clicking** on one and then clicking **Add**, or **simply by double-clicking** on a roll call. You can also multiple select roll calls.clicking on the **Ideology** button will toggle between Ideology and US (the geographical map display)

- clicking on the **Single** button will toggle between Single (displaying either the ideological map or the geographical map) and Double (displaying both the ideological map and the geographical map).

- Click on **Start** to display the roll call data in the requested format.

Ideological Map

VoteView displays the current roll call vote (from the queue of selected roll calls) on a spatial map based on Poole-Rosenthal **D-NOMINATE** ideological scores[1].

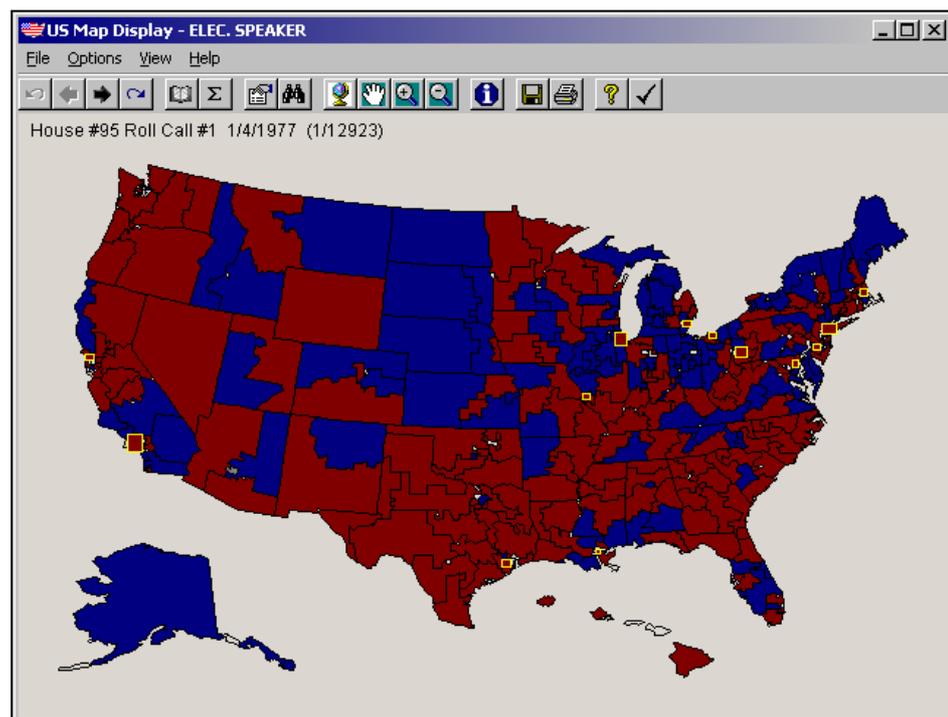The Ideological Map Toolbar buttons, going from left to right, consist of the following functions:

- Jump to first roll call in the queue

- Go to previous roll call

- Go to next roll call

- Go to last roll call

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[1]   See "Patterns of Congressional Voting," *American Journal of Political Science*, 1991, pages 228-278.

- Roll call information

- Roll call statistics

- Inquire about a legislator

- Find a legislator

- View US Map

- Save roll call information

- Print roll call information

- Help

- Done

Geographical Map

VoteView displays the current roll call (from the entire queue of selected roll calls) on a geographical map of the United States. Each state or district is coloured based on the vote of the legislator.

The Geographical Map Toolbar buttons, going from left to right, consist of the following functions:

- Jump to first roll call in the queue

- Go to previous roll call

- Go to next roll call

- Go to last roll call

- Roll call information

- Roll call statistics

- Inquire about a legislator

- Find a legislator

- See the full US map without any zoom

- Pan around the map

- Zoom into the map

- Zoom out of the map

- Go to the ideological display

- Save roll call information

- Print roll call information

- Help

- Done

Options available from map displays

Cities

Major cities with multiple congressional districts in the Congress of the selected roll call can be displayed with this option. Shadings are similar to the US map display. **Click Done** to exit the City window.

Cross Tab Statistics

Statistics are available on cross-tabbed roll calls. This includes the breakdown of yea-yea, yea-nay, nay-yea, and nay-nay votes, as well as Yule's Q and Chi-Square statistics for each particular political party.

Click on a party name to get these statistics for the party.

Done Finishes displaying roll call cross-tab statistics and returns to the Ideological map.

Find

Selecting this menu item opens a window which allows the location of tokens symbolizing particular legislators. The list box contains the names of all legislators in the current Congress, and selected legislators are coloured according to their vote on the selected roll call and colour preferences.

1. Click on the desired legislator.

2. Click **Start** to locate the token (it will be circled in black if you are in the Ideological Map or it will blink yellow if you are in the US map display).

3. Click **Done** to end the Find process.

*Note: Double-clicking on a legislator name is a short cut for clicking on the legislator and then clicking **Start**.*

Inquire

After selecting Inquire from the Options menu, a check appears beside the option to indicate that "inquire mode" is turned on until such time as it is turned off by selecting Inquire again (toggling).

1. Once "inquire mode" is on, clicking on any legislator token will pop up a window indicating the legislator name and state symbolized by the selected token.

2. Click **Done** to quit viewing the current legislator. Repeat as desired.

3. When finished, **toggle** the Inquire menu item to **turn off** "inquire mode."

Roll Call Information

Selecting this menu item displays supplementary information on the roll call, including Yea/Nay numbers and full roll call description.

Statistics

VoteView calculates various statistics on each roll call. These include the breakdown by party of the roll call votes and the number of [not mem., yes, paired yes, ann. yes, ann. no, paired no, no, {blank}, and present] votes.

Statistics Buttons

Done   Finishes displaying roll call statistics and returns to the Ideological map.

Save   Saves roll call statistics in a disk file (ASCII format).

Print   Prints the roll call statistics on a connected printer.

Help   Get detailed on-line help for this window.

Vote Breakdown

This reveals the vote breakdown of the Congress delegation from multiple-member congressional districts, expressed in "yea-nay" form.

Geographical Map File Menu

Save As...	Saves roll call data to a disk file in ASCII format.
Spreadsheet Output	Saves roll call data to a disk file in ASCII format ready for importing into a spreadsheet application such as Excel.
Print	Prints roll call data to a selected printer.
Print US Map	Prints the US map itself to a selected printer.