Collectively, Congress is a weapon of mass destruction

By Ralph Nader

Collectively, Congress is a weapon of mass destruction. With multiple warheads. Collectively, because there are several dozen lawmakers who would not tolerate its collective acts of action and inaction that have resulted in such preventable damage to humankind and the world.

As an operating legislative institution, given enormous constitutional authority, Congress has the originating power for good or bad, on a scale unmatched by any counterpart in other countries.

The paradox is that the worse Congress becomes, the more our culture lowers its expectations. This is reflected in the citizenry, the media and the public dialogue around elections. Low public expectations feeds the concentration of power in the few – who expect much from Congress for themselves – over the many – who withdraw.

High public expectations would put into play forces of motion to deconcentrate this power and break up the corporate state.

Congressional destruction Target Number One is democracy itself, starting with corrupting campaign money in elections benefitting politicians who get along by going along.

It was more pro forma, let’s get this baby over and done with and move on kind of a hearing.

There was a time when Congress held deep dives into issues of public importance – like, for example, organized interstate criminality. Remember the Kefauver hearings of the early 1950s?

Corporate crime gets a hearing

By Citizen Staff

Corporate crime finally got a hearing in Congress. The Senate Judiciary Committee held the hearing, which it titled – Cleaning Up the C-Suite: Ensuring Accountability for Corporate Criminals.

In recent months, public interest groups had been lobbying Democrats in Congress to do a deep dive into the problem of corporate crime – which the FBI estimates costs the nation $300 billion a year compared to $16 billion for street crime.

In round numbers, that’s 65 percent of the public that wants a ceasefire compared to only 15 percent of members of Congress calling for a ceasefire.

The Biden administration vetoed a United Nations Security Council vote for a ceasefire in the war in Gaza.

In October, 2023, the Biden administration vetoed a UN resolution that would have condemned all violence in the Gaza war.

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A HEAD IN THE POLLS

By Russell Mokhiber

By a two-to-one margin, Americans are more inclined to support a member of Congress who supports a ceasefire in Gaza and they are less willing to support a member of Congress who opposes a ceasefire.

That’s the key finding from an early January 2024 poll by John Zogby Strategies.

A December, 2023 Data for Progress poll came in with similar results – sixty-one percent of respondents supported a permanent ceasefire and de-escalation of the violence in Gaza.

Josh Paul, the State Department official who resigned last year to protest the Biden administration’s unqualified support for Israel’s war in Gaza, said that congressional staffers are telling him that constituent calls to Congress are running ten to one in favor of a ceasefire.

And yet, as of this writing, only sixty members of the House (14 percent) and four Senators (four percent of Senators) have called for a ceasefire in Gaza.

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And while the less than two-and-a-half hour hearing actually was held on December 12, 2023, it was not exactly what you would call a deep dive by the Democrats.

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