

= John Olver =

John Walter Olver (born September 3 , 1936) is an American politician who was the U.S. Representative for Massachusetts 's 1st congressional district from 1991 to 2013 . Raised on a farm in Pennsylvania , Olver graduated from college at the age of 18 and went on to earn a Ph.D. in chemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology , and later taught chemistry at the University of Massachusetts Amherst for eight years .

He served in both chambers of the Massachusetts General Court , being elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1968 , and the Massachusetts Senate in 1972 . He ran in a 1991 special election to succeed 17 @-@ term Congressman Silvio O. Conte , who died in office . He was the first Democrat to ever represent the 1st congressional district .

Olver announced that he would not seek re @-@ election in 2012 , and retired at the end of his eleventh term in Congress after his district was dismantled in redistricting .

= = Early life , education , and career = =

Olver was born on September 3 , 1936 in Honesdale , Pennsylvania , the son of Helen Marguerite (née Fulleborn) and Thomas Horace Olver . His paternal grandparents were of English descent and his maternal grandparents were German . Olver grew up on his father 's farm , where the two tended cows , while his mother ran a boarding house which served families from Philadelphia and New York . Olver graduated from high school when he was 15 and enrolled in Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute , where he earned a Bachelor of Science in chemistry at the age of 18 . After earning his undergraduate degree , Olver went on to earn a Master of Science in chemistry from Tufts University in 1956 , and a Doctor of Philosophy in chemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1961 .

Olver taught chemistry at the University of Massachusetts Amherst for eight years , and later resigned to pursue a career in politics . He served two terms as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from January 1 , 1969 , to January 3 , 1973 . He later served for nine terms in the Massachusetts Senate from January 3 , 1973 , until his resignation in 1991 to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives .

= = U.S. House of Representatives = =

= = = Elections = = =

On February 18 , 1991 , Congressman Silvio Conte died one month after taking office for his 17th term . That June , Olver , who had been sworn in for his 10th term in the state Senate a few months earlier , in January 1991 , narrowly defeated Republican Steven Pierce in a special election for the seat , becoming the first Democrat to win the seat since it changed from being the 13th district in 1893 . Olver resigned from the state Senate on June 15 and was sworn in June 18 .

Olver won election to a full term in 1992 . In 1994 , the year which Republican took control of the House for the first time in 40 years , Olver ran unopposed . In 1996 , he defeated State Senator and future Lieutenant and Acting Governor Jane Swift by a 53 % to 47 % margin . After 1996 , Olver continually won re @-@ election with high margins above 60 % .

On October 26 , 2011 Olver announced he would not seek re @-@ election in 2012 , clearing the way for any potential Democratic primaries due to Massachusetts losing a congressional seat after the 2010 United States Census . His district had been eliminated in redistricting . The bulk of his former territory had been merged with the 2nd district of fellow Democrat Richard Neal , while his home in Amherst was drawn into the 2nd District (the old 3rd District) of fellow Democrat Jim McGovern .

= = = Tenure = = =

CQ 's Politics in America described Olver as " a staunch liberal who prefers to yield the spotlight to other similarly ideological members . " Olver has consistently high rankings from the progressive lobbying group Americans for Democratic Action , and consistently low rankings from its conservative counterpart the American Conservative Union .

As a superdelegate to the 2008 Democratic National Convention , Olver endorsed future President Barack Obama . In a tribute to an outgoing Olver and Barney Frank , Ed Markey remarked unlike other elected officials who embraced superficial positions to curry public favor , the two were " happy to tell you [they] disagree with you " if they believed so .

Foreign policy

Olver has been a staunch opponent of the United States involvement in Iraq , and opposed a United States military presence in Iraq since the 2002 authorization for the use of force in Iraq . Olver has advocated for the removal of U.S. troops from Iraq , and has consistently voted against proposals to increase funding for military operations and increased deployment . Olver stated that he believes that the United States should seek out a political solution in cooperation with the states neighboring Iraq , such as Iran and Syria , rather than pursuing a strategy based primarily on military means in order to create a stable and democratic Iraq .

Olver has been critical of the United States lack of involvement regarding the genocide in Darfur . Olver was one of five members of Congress arrested April 28 , 2006 after protesting the genocide outside the Sudanese Embassy . Olver was arrested again in front of the Sudanese Embassy during a protest in 2012 along with other members of Congress and actor George Clooney .

Domestic policy

Olver was one of thirty @-@ one House Representatives who voted to not count the electoral votes from Ohio in the 2004 presidential election , which would have given the presidency to John Kerry .

Olver co @-@ sponsored H.R. 676 which would introduce a universal health insurance program with single @-@ payer financing . In addition to supporting different pieces of healthcare reform legislation in the House , Olver has also strongly supported allowing federal funds related to health care programs to fund abortion operations . In addition to supporting the inclusion of coverage for abortions in healthcare , Olver has consistently supported pro @-@ choice legislation in the House and has received favorable ratings from pro @-@ choice interest groups such as the NARAL Pro @-@ Choice America , which gave Olver a rating of 100 .

Olver supports efforts to reduce the number of illegal immigrants entering the United States , but also believes in immigration reform so that qualified immigrants could more easily be granted entrance . Olver also believes that illegal immigrants currently residing in the United States need to be provided with a pathway to citizenship , and that these immigrants should not have to return to their countries of origin before obtaining citizenship .

= = = Committee assignments = = =

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

Subcommittee on Homeland Security

Subcommittee on Transportation , Housing and Urban Development , and Related Agencies (Ranking Member)

Party leadership

Congressional Progressive Caucus

Senior Whip of the Democratic Caucus

= = Personal life = =

Olver was married to Rose Richardson Olver , a Professor of Psychology and Sexuality , Women 's and Gender Studies at Amherst College , from 1959 until her death in 2014 , and they had one daughter named Martha . He has lived in Amherst , Massachusetts , since 1963 .

On May 4 , 2012 a new central bus and rail station in Greenfield , Massachusetts was dedicated in Olver 's honor . The building is the first zero @-@ net @-@ energy transportation facility in the nation , generating heat and power via geothermal wells , photovoltaic panels and sunlight .

On October 28 , 2010 Olver was awarded the Soldier On Award presented by the veterans group , Soldier On . This award , created for Soldier On by sculptor Andrew DeVries , recognizes individuals whose leadership and actions have advanced the goal of ending veteran homelessness .