

Opinion: Lame duck Congress defied naysayers

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As it turned out, the recently concluded lame-duck session of Congress wasn't as lame as many had predicted.

In fact, it turned out to be one of the most productive in years, even decades.

Picking up on one of the messages sent by voters in November, legislators (with some exceptions) put aside the rancor, gamesmanship and obstruction that characterized the last two years. Both parties seemed to recognize their fortunes could be enhanced by finding common ground.

Some pundits had forecast the lame-duck session – so named because it included lawmakers voted out of office – would be a waste of time and an exercise in bloviation. Yet Americans have a right to expect lawmakers to work right up until the end of their terms. That is the contract they signed with voters.

President Barack Obama's deal with Republicans extending tax cuts and unemployment benefits, in retrospect, proved to be a blast that released the logjam. And Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's masterful work kept the bills moving.

Where Republicans had been delaying and blocking everything, bills now made it to the floor – and garnered significant bipartisan support.

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