

Unit 3 Learning Objectives

The Structure and Powers of Congress

• 3.5 Differentiate the powers of Congress, and compare and contrast the structure and powers of the House and the Senate

Congressional Elections

3.6 Describe the congressional election process and the incumbent advantage

The Job of the Legislator

• 3.7 Characterize the ways legislators represent their constituencies.

Congressional Leadership and Committees

• 3.8 Compare and contrast the leadership systems in the House and the Senate, and explain the committee system.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

· 3.9 Identify the steps by which a bill becomes a law

Chapter 10: Congress



- Congressional Elections
- The Structure and Powers of Congress
- Congressional Leadership and Committees
- How a Bill Becomes a Law
- Job of the Legislator
- An Assessment of Congress



The Structure and Powers of Congress

3.5 Differentiate the powers of Congress, and compare and contrast the structure and powers of the House and Senate.

The intent of the Framers:

To oppose the concentration of power in a single institution; separation of powers

To balance large and small states

- Bicameralism
- ■House of Representatives and Senate

To avoid the tyranny of the majority, or populism To encourage compromise

They expected Congress to be the dominant institution in the government

Article I, Section 8

The Powers of Congress

- Tax, Print, Borrow Money
- · Establish Post Office
- Regulate Interstate and International Commerce
- Prepare for and Declare War
- Create the Federal Judiciary
- "Necessary and Proper"

Back to learning objectives

Differences between Parliament and Congress

Differences between Parliament and Congress

Parliament

- •Candidates selected by Party
- •Voters choose between Parties, not candidates
- •Members of Parliament select Chief Executive
- •Party Loyalty: members always vote together
- •Most Debate is National Issues
- •Individual Members have very little power

Congress

- •Vote is for candidate, not party
- •Members represent districts or states, not parties.
- •Party discipline is limited
- •Members do not choose the chief executive
- •Members' principal work is
 - Representation
 - · Negotiation
 - Passing laws
- Members have a great deal of power, high pay and significant staff resources



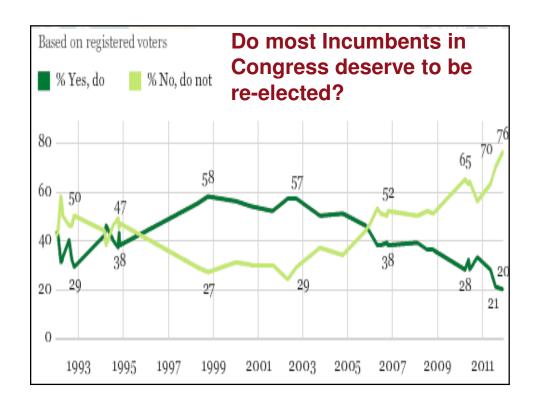
Congressional Elections

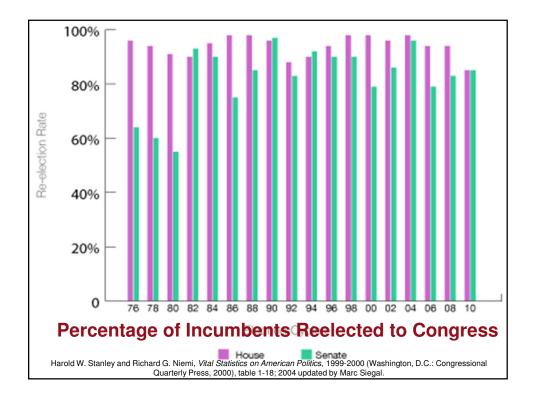
3.6 Describe the congressional election process.

Congressional Elections

- · House of Representatives
 - 25-years old, 7 years a citizen
 - Everyone every 2 years
- Senate
 - 30-years old, 9 years a citizen
 - 6 years terms, but 1/3 stand for election every 2 years

Table 13.1 Blacks, Hispanics, and Women in Congress, 1971–2006						
	Senate			House		
Congress	Blacks	Hispanics	Women	Blacks	Hispanics	Women
109th (2005–2006)	1	0	14	37	23	59
108th	0	0	13	39	23	62
107th	0	0	13	36	19	59
106th	0	0	9	39	19	58
105th	1	1	9	37	18	51
104th	1	0	8	38	18	48
103rd	1	0	6	38	17	47
102nd	0	0	2	26	10	29
101st	0	0	2	24	11	25
100th	0	0	2	23	11	23
99th	0	0	2	20	11	22
98th	0	0	2	21	10	22
97th	0	0	2	17	6	19
96th	0	0	1	16	6	16
95th	1	0	2	16	5	18
94th	1	1	0	15	5	19
93rd	1	1	0	15	5	14
92nd (1971-1972)	1	1	2	12	5	13





The Incumbency Advantage

- Media coverage is higher for incumbents
- Greater name recognition
- Travel Allowance, Franking Privilege
- Earmarks: Members secure policies and programs for voters
- Casework: Work on behalf of individual constituents

Safe Seat

Who is in Congress?

- The House has become less male and less white
- Membership in Congress became a career
- Incumbents have a great electoral advantage



The Job of the Legislator

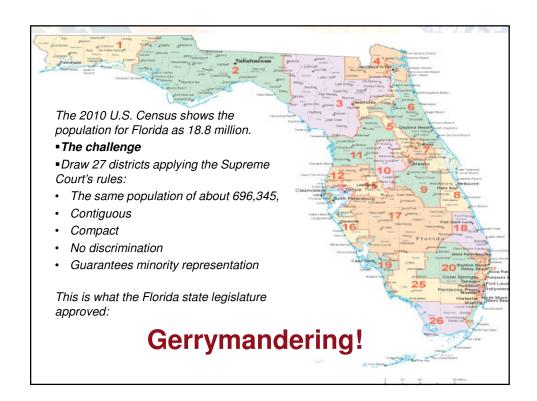
3.7 Describe the ways legislators represent their constituencies and identify the various influences on their votes.

- Representational view: members vote to please their constituents in order to get re-elected
- Organizational view: members respond to pressure from their party
- Attitudinal view: the member's individual beliefs determines her/his vote

Ideology has become increasingly important recently as congress has become **polarized**.

Reasons for Polarization?

- Voters?
- Primaries?
- Media?
- Redistricting?
- Special Interests?



Congressional Caucuses

Caucus: an association of members of Congress created to advocate a political ideology or a regional or economic interest

- Intra-party caucuses: members share a similar ideology
- Personal interest caucuses: members share an interest in an issue
- Constituency caucuses: established to represent groups, regions or both

Congressional Staff

- Casework: Constituency service is a major task of members' staff
- Legislative functions of staff include devising proposals, negotiating agreements, organizing hearings, and meeting with lobbyists and administrators
- Members' staff consider themselves advocates of their employers

