

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

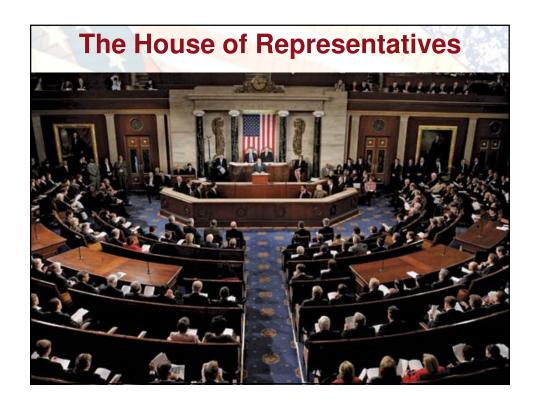


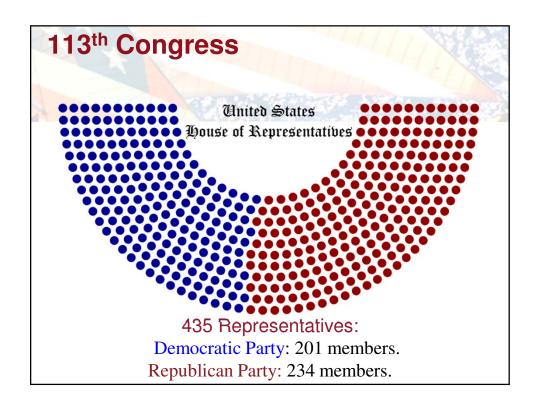
- Congressional Elections
- The Structure and Powers of Congress
- Congressional Leadership and Committees
- How a Bill Becomes a Law
- Job of the Legislator
- An Assessment of Congress

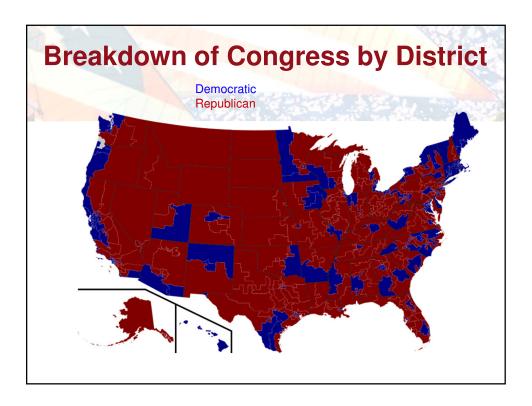
Congressional Leadership and Committees

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









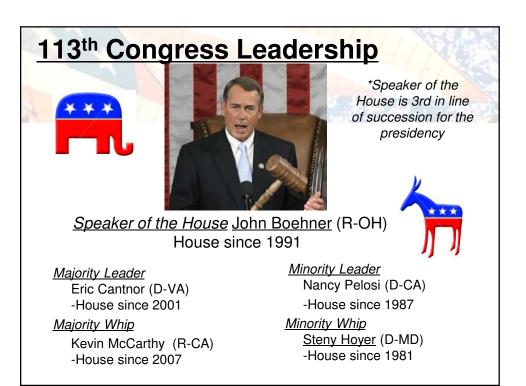
Structure of the House



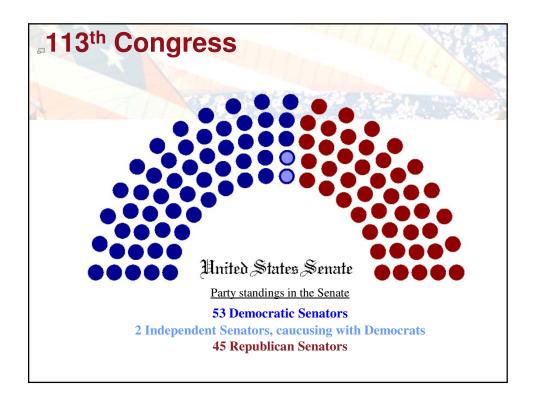
- Speaker of the House is leader of majority party and presides over House
- Majority leader and minority leader: leaders on the floor
- Party whips keep leaders informed, round up votes, and ensure a quorum
 - > 100 Reps for debate
 - > 217 for vote
 - > 2/3ds to choose President or Vice President

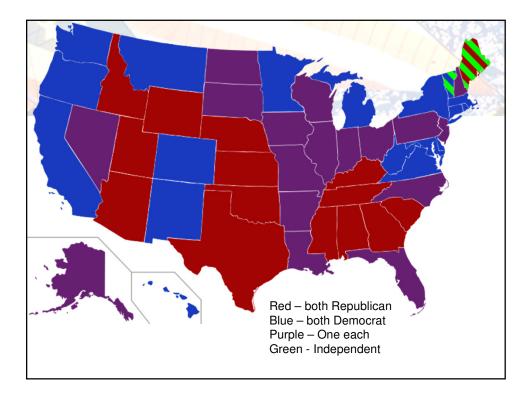
Speaker of the House

- Leader of majority party
- Assigns office space
- Disciplines House members
- Decides who may speak during debates
- Runs Steering Committee
 - > assigns representatives to committees and selects Chairmen
- Runs Policy Committee
 - > controls introduction of bills and determines where they are sent
- Runs the Rules Committee
 - > sets the legislative agenda and the rules on debate and voting
- 3rd in line of succession for the Presidency









Structure of the Senate

- Vice President presides over Senate and casts vote in event of tie
- President pro tempore presides in VP's absence; this is the member with most seniority in majority party (a largely honorific office)

Party Structure in the Senate

- Majority leader and Minority leader, elected by their respective party members
- Party whips: keep leaders informed, round up votes for quorum
 - > 51 senators
- Policy committee: schedules Senate business
- Committee assignments are handled by each party usually based on seniority

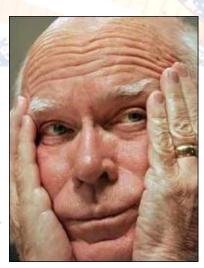
The major struggle in the Senate was about how its members should be chosen; **17th** amendment (1913)



President Pro Tempore

Patrick Leahy(D-VT) born 1940, Senate since 1975

President Pro Tempore is 4th in line of succession for the Presidency



| TABLE 11–1 Differences Between the House of F | Representatives and the Senate |
|--|--|
| 11-1 Differences Between the House of Representatives and the Senate | |
| House | Senate |
| SIZE | SIZE |
| 435 members | 100 Members |
| ELECTIONS | ELECTIONS |
| Two-year term | Six-year term |
| All seats are open for election | One-third of seats are open for each election |
| Elected in districts | Elected in states |
| LEADERSHIP | LEADERSHIP |
| Strong leadership controls action by individual members | Weaker leadership provides more freedom to individual members |
| More powerful committee leaders | More equal distribution of power among committee members |
| LEGISLATION | LEGISLATION |
| Decision to consider legislation made by majority | Decision to consider legislation made by unanimous consent of all members; one senator can stop action |
| Responsible for moving first on raising revenues | Responsible for giving advice and consent on presidential appointees and treaties |
| All amendments to legislation must be approved for consideration in advance of legislative action | Amendments are generally allowed |
| DEBATE | DEBATE |
| Strict limits on debate | Flexible limits on debate approved by unanimous consent |
| Single member or group of members cannot stop debate once the bill is approved for action by the Rules Committee | Single member can stop action through the filibuster |

How a Bill Becomes a Law

3.9 Identify the steps by which a bill becomes a law

- Bill must be introduced by a member of Congress
 - ➤ All Revenue bills must originate in the House
- Bill is referred to a committee for consideration by either Speaker or presiding officer of the Senate
- Most bills die in committee



Committees

- Committees are the most important organizational feature of Congress
- Consider bills or legislative proposals
- Maintain oversight of executive agencies
- Conduct investigations
- Majority party has majority of seats on the committees and names the chair

Types of Committees

- Standing committees: permanent with specified legislative responsibilities
- Select committees: appointed for a limited purpose and duration
- Joint committees: have both representatives and senators
- Conference committee: a joint select committee appointed to resolve differences in Senate and House versions of the same piece of legislation

| TABLE 11–2 Congressional Standing Committees, 2010–2011 | |
|---|--|
| House | Senate |
| RULES COMMITTEES | RULES COMMITTEE |
| House Administration | Rules and Administration |
| Rules | |
| Standards of Official Conduct | |
| BUDGET COMMITTEE | BUDGET COMMITTEE |
| Budget | Budget |
| AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES | AUTHORIZING COMMITTEES |
| Agriculture | Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry |
| Armed Services | Armed Services |
| Education and Labor | Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs |
| Energy and Commerce | Commerce, Science, and Transportation |
| Financial Services | Energy and Natural Resources |
| Foreign Affairs | Environment and Public Works |
| Homeland Security | Foreign Affairs |
| Judiciary | Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions |
| Natural Resources | Judiciary |
| Science and Technology | Small Business and Entrepreneurship |
| Small Business | Veterans Affairs |
| Transportation and Infrastructure | |
| Veterans Affairs | |
| APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE | APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE |
| Appropriations | Appropriations |
| REVENUE COMMITTEES | REVENUE COMMITTEES |
| Budget | Budget |
| Ways and Means (Revenue and Budget) | Finance |
| OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES | OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES |
| Oversight and Government Reform | Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs |

How a Bill Becomes a Law in the House

- Speaker assigns bill to a committee
- After hearings and mark-up sessions, the committee reports out bill to the House
- Most bills are not reported out and die in committee
- Bill must be placed on a calendar by the House Rules
 Committee to come to the floor for debate and a vote
- House Rules Committee sets rules for debate, amendments, and voting

How a Bill Becomes a Law in the Senate

- Bill are placed on calendar by the Majority and Minority Leaders
- Bills may be sent to committee for hearings and mark-up sessions, OR
- Bills may be directly introduced
 - ➤ Bills passed by House are automatically introduced
- No restrictions on debate: the filibuster restricted by Rule 22 (1917), which allows a vote of cloture

Supermajority needed for cloture, 70 votes

How a Bill Becomes a Law

- Bills are debated on the floor of the House or Senate
- If there are major differences in the bill as passed by the House and Senate, a conference committee is appointed
- The bill goes to the president
- President can sign or veto
- If President vetoes bill, congress can override his veto with a 2/3ds vote of BOTH houses.

