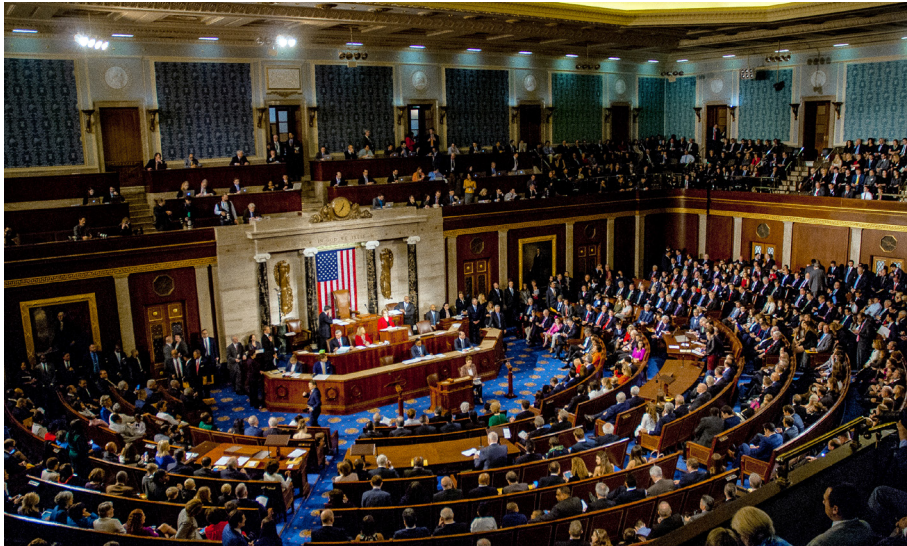


Congress



Source: mark reinstein/Shutterstock

Learning Objectives

When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to:

- Discuss how the way congressional districts are drawn can determine who gets elected to Congress.
- Describe the demographic makeup of Congress, and explain how it differs from the population at large.
- Identify key congressional norms, and explain the purpose they serve for the institution.
- Contrast the organization of the House of Representatives with the organization of the Senate.
- Discuss ways in which minority rights are protected by Senate procedure.
- Identify key congressional leadership positions, and explain the role of leadership in Congress.
- Discuss how members of Congress manage their work expectations.
- Explain why members of Congress pay close attention to the votes they cast.
- Speak about the relationship between members of Congress and their constituents.
- Evaluate whether the perks of serving in Congress outweigh the disadvantages.

CHAPTER 9

Chapter Outline

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Getting to Congress: Who Wins and Why?
- 9.3 Adjusting to Congress
- 9.4 Serving in Congress: How Congress Works
- 9.5 Serving in Congress: What Congress Does
- 9.6 Leading Congress
- 9.7 Working in Congress: Washington
- 9.8 Working in Congress: Back Home
- 9.9 Staying in Congress

Chapter Review

Key Terms

Resources

Notes

9.1 Introduction

You don't spend a lot of time thinking about Congress, do you? You're not alone. Many people are capable of going for months or years without giving any thought to the workings of Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, or the court system. You may well be one of them. However, because we tend not to pay too much attention to our political institutions, it's easy to misinterpret what they do and how they do it.

A place like Congress can seem totally unrelated to our everyday experiences, when, in fact, in many important ways, it's a lot like places that are very familiar to us—your college or university, for instance—filled with people doing their best to find a way to fit in, manage their time amidst great pressure to do way too much, and avoid making mistakes that could hurt their future careers. If this sounds a little bit like some of what you face in school, it's because you have a lot more in common with members of Congress than you probably think.

In the pages ahead, we'll explore some of those similarities. We'll look at who gets to serve in Congress—the people who choose to run in elections and the characteristics of those who win. We'll examine how new members (called freshmen, just like in school) adjust to unfamiliar surroundings. We'll take some time to figure out what members of Congress do: what it means to serve in Congress, to be part of the congressional leadership, and to handle an unbelievable amount of work—way more than anyone can do at any one time (this may sound familiar to you, too). For some members, the work is just too much, and they decide to drop out, despite the thrill and privilege of serving in Washington. We'll figure out why.

When people do take the time to think about Congress—or when pollsters ask them to think about it—responses are typically negative, at least when they think about Congress as a large, disorganized group of 435 representatives and 100 senators. A survey taken a few years back found Americans hold Congress as an institution in lower regard than cockroaches, colonoscopies, and head lice.¹ In another survey taken that same year, 74 percent of those responding wanted to see most congressional representatives defeated in the next election.² However, only 38 percent said they wanted to see their own representative defeated.³ So, when we put a single human face on the institution, we're much more likely to react positively. As we'll see, Congress is a complex and chaotic place, but it can be appreciated as the scene of hundreds of individual human dramas.

9.2 Getting to Congress: Who Wins and Why?

Many things determine the composition of that relatively small group of people who represent us in Congress. Candidates have to be motivated to run. They need to be willing to put everything in their lives on hold for up to a year so they can knock on doors, make phone calls, plead for money, give speeches, eat large quantities of mediocre chicken, and engage in all the campaigning activities we talked about in Chapter 7. Even if potential candidates have the passion to serve, they still may not run if they're not a good match to their district—say, if the candidate is a Democrat in a heavily Republican area.

9.2a Drawing the Lines

The first step in determining who gets to Congress happens before a single candidate decides to run, when lines are drawn on a map that determine the partisan composition of each district that will send someone to Congress. Congressional districts are drawn every ten years following the release of the decennial census. The Constitution requires that each state have at least one House district, with each district represented by a single member (each state, of course, also has two senators). In states with more than one House district, each district has to include roughly the same number of people.

This sounds pretty uninteresting and straightforward, but in fact, the way district lines are drawn can go a long way to determining who gets elected, so the process of **redistricting** is the basis of some pretty intense political battles. For starters, states that

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Discuss how the way congressional districts are drawn can determine who gets elected to Congress.

redistricting: The process by which congressional districts are redrawn every ten years following the release of new census data.

gain or lose large numbers of residents in the ten years since the previous census may gain or lose congressional seats.⁴ Other states may see significant shifts in their populations, like from cities to suburbs. New lines need to be drawn to reflect these changes, a process that can lead to redrawing the boundaries of many or all previous districts.

If redistricting were a neutral exercise, it would be pretty dull, but it can be a highly political process when performed by officials with an interest in stacking the deck in favor of their party. District lines can be drawn in lots of ways to satisfy the population requirement, and the governors and legislators who are responsible for redistricting in many states look for the best ways to divide the opposition while maximizing their electoral prospects.

Redistricting is a complex process that takes place in several rounds and draws a lot of attention from interested parties. Because of federalism, each state has its own procedures for redistricting. A few rely on nonpartisan boards to draw the lines, but most commonly, the governor and state legislators draw district boundaries. Because of the stakes, interest groups may get into the act and lobby for boundaries that will help sympathetic candidates. It's not unusual for courts to have the final say, either because the governor and legislators couldn't arrive at a plan or because there's a question about the legality of the new districts. It's also not uncommon for the courts to completely overturn the work of the legislature, or for a group challenging a redistricting plan to seek relief in a court that's historically supportive of their position.⁵

When states lose House seats, unless an incumbent retires, it's inevitable that two incumbents are going to be thrown together in a newly redrawn district, forced to fight against each other for their political lives. Depending on which party has the political advantage in drawing the new districts, incumbents of the same party could be forced to battle it out in a primary, or incumbents of different parties could be pitted against each other in the general election. We saw both types of spectacles during the last redistricting period following the 2010 census, and it got ugly. (See *Demystifying Government: When Incumbents Collide*.) Because (as we'll see) incumbents can generally depend on an easy ride back to Congress, redistricting can cause a sudden and unexpected end to a House career.

9.2b It Looks Like Some Kind of Serpent

When the dust settled on the 2012 election, Democrats found themselves once again in control of the White House and Senate and with a commanding lead of 1.3 million votes in the aggregate vote for the House of Representatives. But Republicans maintained control of the House chamber because of how those House votes were distributed—the first time in sixteen years that a party held the House while losing the combined popular House vote. The reason rests with where Republican and Democratic voters live and how congressional

DEMYSTIFYING GOVERNMENT

When Incumbents Collide

In California, following the last decennial census, redistricting forced Representative Howard Berman, the top Democrat on the powerful House Foreign Relations Committee, into the same district as fifteen-year veteran and fellow Democrat Brad Sherman. Though both Democrats, the two faced off in November because of a California law that puts the candidates who poll first and second in the primary on the fall ballot, even if they represent the same party. Absent redistricting, both would have been reelected comfortably. But forced to compete head-to-head, the race between them turned bitter and ugly—to the point where a fistfight nearly broke out between them during a debate.^{T1}

The two representatives were quite different in substance and style. With his important committee assignment and the backing of high-ranking fellow Democrats, Berman could present himself as a national figure with influence over significant policy discussions. Sherman, on the other hand, was less the team player in Washington and more attuned to parochial matters of concern to his Southern California constituents.^{T2} In the end, constituent service beat out national endorsements: Sherman defeated Berman, ending the congressional career of one of the House's more senior members.

district lines in some states were drawn around them.⁶ With Democratic voters concentrated in urban areas, it's possible to draw boundaries that cluster those voters into a few districts while creating a far larger number of districts that favor Republicans. All that's needed to do this is partisan control of the line-drawing machinery. Republicans in states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, and North Carolina had this control after big statewide victories in 2010 left them in charge of governorships and state legislatures at the time when redistricting was constitutionally mandated following the 2010 census. So, while President Obama won Pennsylvania by a comfortable five points in 2012, Republicans carried thirteen of eighteen congressional districts. In Ohio, which Obama won by two points, Republicans managed wins in twelve of the state's sixteen districts.⁷ Because of how district lines were drawn, it took twice as many votes to elect a Democrat to the House in Michigan than it took to elect a Republican. In North Carolina, the ratio was over 3:1.⁸

Partisan state legislators can achieve results like this by drawing serpent-like districts shaped like the one in Figure 9.1, pulling voters from small enclaves of partisan supporters and allowing district lines to meander over a wide range of territory in the most unlikely fashion. It's called **gerrymandering**, and it's an age-old political practice that predates the actions of nineteenth-century Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry, who in 1811 signed off on a salamander-shaped district (hence the name gerrymander) designed to be a safe haven for Jeffersonian Democrats. Does it work? A case can be made that strong candidates from the disadvantaged party are discouraged from running in gerrymandered districts.⁹ Certainly, partisans continue the practice because they believe it gives them an edge. For the better part of a decade, Republicans at the federal and state levels benefited from gerrymandered districts in states where Republicans controlled the redistricting process in 2010. In gerrymandered states where they retained legislative majorities in 2020, Republicans are positioned to protect their advantages in the next mandated round of redistricting following the 2020 census.

Since 1990, some states have engaged in the controversial practice of **racial gerrymandering**, drawing district lines that group together far-flung populations of Black or Hispanic voters for the purpose of assuring representation for these groups. The effort began in response to language added to the Voting Rights Act in 1982 prohibiting states from diluting the voting power of racial minorities, which was interpreted broadly in some states as a green light to gerrymander in order to bolster the influence of minorities.

gerrymandering: Drawing district lines in a way that favors the electoral prospects of the party in power.

racial gerrymandering: Drawing district lines in a way that combines disparate populations of minority groups in order to guarantee representation by those groups in Congress.

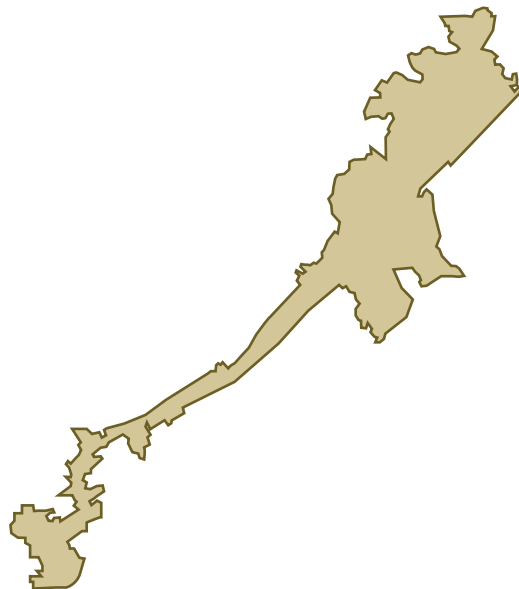


FIGURE 9.1 Is It an Iguana Tongue?

Actually, it's a congressional district. Specifically, it's Texas's 35th Congressional District, stretching from Austin to San Antonio. In some places it's not much wider than a highway. But it sure looks like an iguana tongue. *Source:* GovTrack.us.

The effects of racial gerrymandering cut two ways. Although the districts it created sent generally liberal Black and Hispanic representatives to Congress, neighboring districts that lost these voters became more conservative. In 1992, seven districts represented by Democrats lost at least 10 percent of their Black constituents to racial gerrymandering. By 1996, all seven were represented by Republicans—enough to help Republicans hold the majority in Congress.¹⁰ Ironically, a procedure designed to enhance minority representation in Congress had the effect of diluting minority influence because, as we will see, influence in Congress flows to those in the majority.

Because it's so controversial, racial gerrymandering has been the subject of court challenges. A divided Supreme Court has voted to curtail the process on multiple occasions, overturning some of the more far-reaching districts on the grounds that they represented an effort to segregate voters.¹¹ By the end of the 1990s, a number of states reacted to the Court's position by redrawing the boundaries of racially gerrymandered districts to reduce the concentration of minority voters. Then, in the 2013 case *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Supreme Court removed a major obstacle to employing racial criteria in redistricting when they narrowly overturned a provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 requiring states with a history of racial discrimination to get federal approval or "preclearance" before drawing district boundaries.¹²

9.2c Who Runs for Congress—And Who Makes It?

Against this backdrop of partisan maneuvering over district boundaries, a potential candidate needs to take a good, long look in the mirror before embarking on an expensive and time-consuming public campaign that could easily come to nothing. If you were thinking of running, you'd want to consider who lives in the district and assess how closely your background and political views match your would-be **constituents**. You would also need to make sure the timing is right for a run, especially if you have to abandon a lower office where you could probably win reelection.

A big part of this calculation involves whether or not you will have to face an **incumbent**. Challengers don't like to face incumbents, and for a good reason. With the contacts they have and with their ability to raise large sums of money, incumbents are hard to topple. Since World War II, better than nine in ten incumbent representatives and almost eight in ten incumbent senators seeking reelection have been victorious. Incumbents may play to their strength by raising large sums of money in an effort to scare off strong competition,¹³ and the strategy is likely to work, unless the nation is going through an economic downturn, a global pandemic, or generally experiencing a moment when voters are unhappy with the status quo (as they have been a lot recently).

Some candidates are self-starters who make the judgment to run on their own, although to have a chance at success it helps if they have a high level of **name recognition** from a previous job. This favors amateurs who've previously worked as reality television stars, actors, athletes, or at other high-visibility jobs. Many candidates are encouraged to run by political party operatives, who (as we mentioned in Chapter 6) engage in candidate recruitment as one of the formal functions of political parties.

As a constitutional requirement, you have to be at least twenty-five to serve in the House of Representatives, a resident of the state from which you're seeking election, and an American citizen for seven years. You don't have to live in the district you represent as long as you live in the same state, although as a practical matter, it's bad politics to ask people to vote for you when you live somewhere else. To be a senator, you have to be at least thirty and an American citizen for nine years.

On paper, this appears to open membership in Congress to most of us (at least in a few years). However, with the emphasis on wealth and popularity in candidate recruitment, it shouldn't be too surprising that Congress is far from a mirror of American society. (See *Demystifying Government: Changes to the Boys Club*.) What may be surprising is how different it is from the country as a whole on such things as occupation, education, religion, race, and gender. Remember our earlier discussion about **pluralism** and **elitism**? When it comes to the characteristics of congressional members, background similarities

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Describe the demographic makeup of Congress, and explain how it differs from the population at large.

constituents: Individuals living in a district represented by an elected official.

incumbent: An official presently serving in office.

name recognition: An informal measure of how much the public is aware of a candidate or elected official, based on how widely people are able to identify the candidate or official.

pluralism: The theory that government responds to individuals through their memberships in groups, assuring that government is responsive to a wide range of voices. People who subscribe to this position believe that the wide distribution of resources in society drives the decisions government officials make.

elitism: The theory that government responds to a small, stable, centralized hierarchy of corporate and academic leaders, military chiefs, people who own big media outlets, and members of a permanent government bureaucracy. People who subscribe to this position believe the actions of regular citizens, like voting and joining groups, simply mask the real power exercised by elites.

Changes to the Boys Club

In 1992, an unprecedented number of women were elected to Congress in what the press dubbed the “Year of the Woman.” Ever since, although the vast majority of members are male, there has been a notable female presence in an institution that previously functioned as something of a boys club.

The presence of female lawmakers has made a difference in the ways of Congress. Legislative matters once dismissed as “women’s issues,” like family leave during pregnancy and illness, funding for breast cancer research, and workplace discrimination, have found their way onto the agenda.^{T3} Some have made it into law.

It takes time to accumulate power in Congress, and by the turn of the century, some women were beginning to do just that. In 2001, Representative Nancy Pelosi became the first woman elected to a leadership position in Congress when she was chosen to be the House Democratic whip; one year later, she became House Democratic leader. In 2007, she became the first female Speaker of the House, a job she held until Democrats lost their majority in 2010, only to regain it when they again became the majority party in 2018.

As in any institution, though, change can be slow and those who are there at the start can find it frus-

trating. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, a member of the Class of 1992, stated that she and her female colleagues suffered indignities from congressional workers and some male members who treated them as second-class citizens. She recalls an experience she had during a presidential State of the Union Address to a joint session of Congress, which she felt provided a good measure of how far women in Congress had come—and how far they still had to go:

I remember sitting with my colleagues, looking around at all 435 of us. The women stood out in a truly dramatic fashion, and I thought, my gosh, people are going to turn on the tube tonight and see us and they’re going to realize that the rest of the nation has begun to inch itself into this body. I was sitting next to North Carolina Democrat Martin Lancaster, who was trying to point out somebody on the other side of the aisle, and he said, “He’s the guy with the receding hairline, gray hair.” And I said, laughing, “You’ve eliminated nobody!” My point is that the people who have always been outside of the system are now beginning to infiltrate it. There aren’t enough of us, but we’re working on it—all the time.^{T4}

favor some groups over others, even though Congress is a less homogeneous place than it was when you were born. Check out Figure 9.2 for some demographics on the 116th Congress that convened in 2019.

So, what of these apparent inequities between congressional members and the populations they represent? If Congress is largely a professional, White, male, straight, and Protestant bastion, can it function as a representative institution? The answer depends on how

FIGURE 9.2 Who Gets to Serve?^{T5}

Gender	A record number of women were elected to Congress in 2018. Still, at about one-quarter the membership of the House and Senate, women are well under-represented with respect to the population.
Race	Although members are overwhelmingly White, the 116th Congress had the largest-ever number of members who are Black (55), Latinx (44), Asian American (15) and Native American (4).
Occupation	Not too many organizations can claim that almost 40 percent of its members are lawyers (apart from law firms, of course), but that’s the case in Congress, where lawyers and business people far outnumber all other professionals. Remember when we said celebrities make good candidates? Members of Congress have included several astronauts, including former Senator John Glenn; former football players like Representative Steve Largent; former baseball players like Jim Bunning, who once pitched a perfect game in the major leagues; and comedian Al Franken, known for his work on “Saturday Night Live.”
Sexual Orientation	There were ten openly gay members of the 116th Congress, including Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, the first openly gay or lesbian person to serve in the Senate, and Kyrsten Sinema, the first openly bisexual member of Congress.
Religion	Congress is an overwhelmingly Christian place where almost everyone has a religious affiliation. The 116th Congress included 34 Jewish members, three Muslims, three Hindus, and two Buddhists.

we look at the idea of representation. As a descriptive matter, the answer would have to be no because the congressional class picture doesn't look very much like the portrait of America. If you believe that a member's lived experience will shape how they approach representation, then it will be hard to make the case that Congress is a representative body in the fullest sense. As a substantive matter, the answer could still be yes. To engage in **substantive representation**, a member of Congress has to be able to act in the interests of groups to which he or she does not belong. If you believe that a White representative can promote the interests of voters of color, that a male representative can advance the agenda of women's groups, or that a college-educated lawyer can advocate the concerns of blue-collar workers, then you may be able to make the case for Congress as a representative institution, despite the fact that it draws its members from a nonrepresentative elite group of Americans.¹⁴

9.3 Adjusting to Congress

Think back for a minute to college orientation, to what it felt like to be in a new place surrounded by new people. Maybe you traveled far from home, and everything looked new. Maybe you're a commuter, or going to a local school, and you had to confront new ways of doing things and new people as you made the transition from high school to college. Remember how you felt? Many people experience moments of frustration or confusion, even sadness or homesickness, during those first crazy days of college. You want to fit in, but everything is new, and you're not always sure how to do it.

As distant and remote as Congress may seem, new members are human and experience many of the same feelings. No place can compare with Congress (just like nothing exactly compares with college), so arriving there several months after experiencing the thrill of being elected (much like arriving at school several months after the excitement of getting that acceptance letter) can leave a person bewildered.

One member relates the story of getting to her new office to find it unfurnished. She was advised by a senior member to roam through the office building corridors looking for discarded furniture. So, she did, furnishing her office with stuff other people had cast off, not unlike the way some people furnish an off-campus apartment.¹⁵

One way we try to fit into a new place, be it college or Congress, is by learning the ways of the institution, the **norms** people live by as they try to get along with each other. Norms are unspoken and unwritten rules of behavior. No one has to teach us about them—we observe norms and internalize them, and if we violate them, we'll probably hear about it from a friend or from someone in a position of authority. For instance, it may be okay for you to get a visit from a friend at midnight while you're living at school. The norm for late-night visits when you're back at home with your parents over the summer could be something quite different. No one has to tell you this—you know what's going on—although your parents probably will say something if you violate the norm.

Norms help people ease into a new institution, but they also serve the institution by helping it run more smoothly. Many people don't get to choose their first-year roommate, and sometimes, things don't work out too well, but by observing the norms for good roommate behavior, you can make the best of a bad situation. In much the same way, members of Congress do not get to choose their colleagues—voters in other districts do—but they have to find a way to work together. Norms help smooth the way for members who might not choose each other as colleagues if they had the option.

The five norms in Table 9.1 have existed in Congress for decades. Take a look at the table for a definition of each norm and an explanation of how it benefits members of Congress.

The last norm listed in the table—reciprocity—can assume a couple of specific forms. The example in the table, where members trade support for each other's pet projects, is called **logrolling**, evoking the kind of cooperation people exhibit when they stand on a log and try to roll it down a river.¹⁶ Logrolling helps members get the kind of projects for their home districts that constituents love—and that can only help members with their reelection prospects. However, you can probably see how logrolling could encourage spending

substantive representation: The ability of a legislator to represent the agenda or interests of a group to which he or she does not personally belong.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify key congressional norms, and explain the purpose they serve for the institution.

norms: Unspoken rules of behavior that people adhere to in an institution like Congress that allow people to fit in and help the institution run smoothly.

logrolling: A form of reciprocity in which members of Congress exhibit mutual cooperation for each other's pet projects.

TABLE 9.1 Congressional Norms

Norm	Definition	Example	Benefit
Specialization	specialization: The legislative norm that members of Congress should become experts in a legislative field.	Becoming an expert on global warming	Congress addresses a range of complex issues and needs members' expertise to handle them intelligently.
Legislative Work	legislative work: The legislative norm that members of Congress should stay on top of the work required by the committee that deals with their area of specialization.	A subcommittee chairman being prepared for a hearing	If some members are not prepared, the burden of their negligence is passed to other members.
Courtesy	courtesy: The legislative norm that members of Congress should treat each other with respect and avoid personal attacks, regardless of how much they may disagree.	Referring to a member you may personally dislike as "honorable" or "distinguished" during floor debate	Kind words cool the heat of conflict and keep debate moving forward.
Institutional Patriotism	institutional patriotism: The legislative norm that precludes members of Congress from acting or speaking in ways that would discredit the institution.	Avoiding getting entangled in a bribery scheme	Discredit brought upon the institution undermines every member's base of power.
Reciprocity	reciprocity: The legislative norm that encourages members of Congress to support each other's initiatives, even if there is no direct political benefit in doing so.	An urban senator voting for crop subsidies in return for a rural senator supporting mass transit aid	When everyone reciprocates, everybody benefits; if no one reciprocated, no one would benefit.

pork barrel: Wasteful or unnecessary spending that can result from logrolling. Whether something is a pork-barrel project or a valuable use of taxpayer dollars may depend on whether you stand to benefit from it.

compromise: A form of reciprocity in which members of Congress exhibit flexibility over their legislative objectives in exchange for future flexibility from their colleagues.

integrity: A key component of reciprocity in which members of Congress are expected to keep their word with each other and honor their commitments.

on dubious projects because to win the support of colleagues for a pet venture, members only have to signal their willingness to support each other without having to make a case for the importance of their initiatives. Although there is always a way to justify any congressional action, some projects seem on the surface to be just a bit more dubious than others—projects that may be criticized as being **pork-barrel** items because of their apparent wastefulness. When Congress spends \$20,000 to build a limestone replica of the Great Wall of China or \$6,000 for a report instructing the Army on how to buy a bottle of Worcestershire sauce,¹⁷ it can create a big target for opponents of pork-barrel spending.

Reciprocity can also be expressed through **compromise**, or flexibility over an issue that a member may feel strongly about—like the wording of legislation. Since what goes around comes around, members who compromise can expect that at some later time, others will offer the same courtesy to them. The same is true with **integrity**, which is a critical component of reciprocity. You probably know from personal experience how you feel about a friend who promises something and doesn't deliver. As one member put it, "You don't have to make these commitments [to other members], . . . but if you do make them, you had better live up to them."¹⁸

Remember, norms are enforced by the people in the institution, and stay in effect because the institution benefits along with its members. So, specialization is held in place by virtue of the tremendous amount of detailed work that Congress has to handle and the fact that it's in everybody's interest for the work to get done, which can best be accomplished if every member contributes. Likewise, the norm of doing legislative work is held in place by the fact that everyone benefits if everyone does a small share of the heavy lifting. If you've ever been in a group project where not everyone contributed equally (but everyone was in the same boat when it came to getting graded), you can probably

appreciate how easily resentment could be generated toward those who did less work. Since congressional legislative work is like a big group project, specialization keeps the institution moving forward while minimizing those resentful feelings.

Of course, if norms no longer benefit those involved, they can evolve out of existence. One norm that's not in Table 9.1 is **apprenticeship**, even though it was a hallmark of how Congress did business for the better part of the twentieth century. Freshmen members were expected to refrain from voicing their opinions in committees, introducing legislation, or drawing attention to themselves as they learned the ropes from senior members and acclimated to the ways of Congress. Apprenticeship maintained institutional stability and was a great way for new members to learn other norms.

If you happen to be a freshman, you probably don't think much of a norm that has you speaking only when you're spoken to and holding back on what you came to Congress to accomplish. If you had a large enough group of like-minded peers, you might want to do something about it.

That's essentially what happened to apprenticeship in Congress. In 1974, in the wake of the Watergate scandal that rocked the Nixon administration, a huge freshman class of 103 young, reform-minded newcomers was elected to Congress. They felt they had a mandate to change things in Washington, and they weren't about to be quiet or wait their turn. Backed by the strength of their large numbers, they fashioned themselves as a new type of member, more entrepreneurial and outspoken, as they brushed aside apprenticeship as an antiquated norm.¹⁹

In recent years, a decline in the number of members with long institutional memories and an increase in partisan sentiment have continued to change the ways of Congress and strain some of the other norms. Members have become more media-savvy and self-promotional; some (especially in the Senate) devote great energy to positioning themselves to run for president. In the process, they may be absent from Congress more than in the past, and fail to keep up with their legislative work the way you may at times let extracurricular activities cut into the time you devote to your homework.²⁰

There have also been testy moments between the two parties reflecting the divisions we see in public opinion polls about the direction of the country, and as partisanship produces tension in Congress, norms that for years have worked to the benefit of the institution come under pressure. For instance, in 2016, a group of 170 Democratic members staged a sit-in on the floor of the House to protest inaction on gun control legislation, faulting Republican leaders for not permitting a vote on legislation requiring background checks for gun purchases. The sit-in represented a dramatic departure from the decorum normally exhibited by members, violating the norm of courtesy.²¹ Weeks before the 2020 election, Senate Republicans pushed ahead with hearings for controversial Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett over strenuous objections from Democrats, including the complaint that committee members recently diagnosed with COVID-19 were appearing in person rather than remaining in quarantine. In an earlier time, it is possible to imagine that the norm of courtesy might have influenced the decision of Republican leaders to hold the proceedings under these conditions.

9.4 Serving in Congress: How Congress Works

New members of Congress arrive at an institution that's been shaped by centuries of history, but the broad contours of what Congress does—and what members are expected to do in Congress—can be traced to the parameters established in the Constitution.

Article I of the Constitution establishes a **bicameral** legislature with a House of Representatives (created in Section 2) and a Senate (created in Section 3) as the two branches. As constitutional articles go, it's pretty long because it takes great pains to spell out exactly what the Congress would do. The powers specifically granted to the House and Senate are called **enumerated powers**, and they go well beyond what the national legislature could do under the Articles of Confederation.

Enumerated powers include the power to tax, with all revenue bills required to originate in the House of Representatives, the body designed to be closer to the people. Other

apprenticeship: The legislative norm that says freshmen members of Congress should limit their activity and defer to senior members as they learn the ways of the institution. Apprenticeship is no longer enforced in Congress.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Contrast the organization of the House of Representatives with the organization of the Senate.

bicameral: A legislature composed of two houses.

enumerated powers: Powers directly granted to Congress by the Constitution.

important enumerated powers include the ability to regulate commerce among the states and with other nations, coin money, raise a military, declare war, establish post offices and roads, and create a court system below the Supreme Court (which is itself established by the Constitution).

Then Article I gives Congress the ability “To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.” This “necessary and proper” clause has been interpreted over the years as a broad grant of **implied powers**, which has allowed Congress to consider matters that could not have been anticipated by the Constitution’s authors.

Despite going into detail on a range of congressional responsibilities, the Constitution leaves it up to each house to determine how it’s going to put into place the procedures to do its job. The Constitution dictates that a majority of members of a house is required to form a quorum (which is the number of members required for a legislative body to meet and do business) and that each house has to keep a record of its public votes and proceedings, but it leaves to each house the ability to determine how to do business. As a consequence, the two houses operate under different sets of rules.

implied powers: The broad constitutional grant of power to Congress that allows it to make all the laws that are “necessary and proper” to carry out its enumerated functions.

standing committees: Permanent congressional committees that handle matters related to a specific legislative topic.

subcommittees: Subunits of standing committees that do the detail work involved in writing legislation.

iron triangle: The ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship among an interest group, members of Congress sharing the interest group’s objectives, and bureaucrats in federal agencies responsible for carrying out legislation pertaining to the interest group’s field. Iron triangles can develop in any policy area, and many distinct iron-triangle relationships form because the federal government is responsible for a large number of policies.

9.4a How the House Works

In a simpler time, the first Congresses (see *Demystifying Government: How Congresses Get Their Numbers*) debated important matters as a group, and if legislation was deemed appropriate, a committee was established to discuss the nuts and bolts. However, it didn’t take long before the need to process a growing workload led to the establishment of permanent or **standing committees**, which were organized to deal with ongoing matters like budgetary or military concerns. By the 1820s, standing committees would debate legislation before it was brought before the full House.

Because most legislation needs to go through the committee process to make it to the floor for a vote, many of the thousands of proposals introduced each session for consideration never get a hearing and simply die on the vine. The few proposals that make it to committee are typically sent to one or more **subcommittees** of the standing committee. The detail work of legislating takes place in subcommittees, which are specialized units suited to ongoing relationships with interest groups of the sort we talked about in Chapter 8 when we discussed **iron triangles**. Together, twenty-one standing House committees support ninety-eight subcommittees, each with its own chairperson and agenda (the Senate’s seventeen standing committees support sixty-nine subcommittees). Table 9.2 lists the names of the standing committees of the House, along with the number of House members serving on the committee and the number of subcommittees each committee had in 2020 (the names and sizes of committees and subcommittees will vary slightly

DEMYSTIFYING GOVERNMENT

How Congresses Get Their Numbers

Maybe the phrase “the first Congresses” in the first paragraph of Section 9.4a sounded a little funny to you. If it did, it’s because you’re probably used to thinking of Congress as a singular (albeit bicameral) entity. It is, of course, but when we talk historically about Congress, we classify each group that serves together as “a Congress,” and we give it a number.

So, the First Congress served from 1789–1791, with the first year constituting the first “session” of the First Congress and the second year constituting the second session. Why two years? That’s the stretch

between congressional elections. The entire House of Representatives is up for election every two years (a short period designed to keep representatives responsive to public opinion). One-third of the Senate is also up for election every two years (a full Senate term is six years). When they reconvene in January following the election, the new collection of members—the “new Congress”—gets a new number.

The 117th Congress was elected in November 2020 and sworn in on January 3, 2021, to serve until January 2023.

TABLE 9.2 House Committees and Subcommittees, 2020^{T6}

Committee	Members	Subcommittees
Agriculture	47	6
Appropriations	53	12
Armed Services	57	6
Budget	33	0
Education and Labor	50	4
Energy and Commerce	55	6
Ethics	10	0
Financial Services	59	6
Foreign Affairs	47	6
Homeland Security	31	6
House Administration	9	0
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence	22	4
Judiciary	41	5
Natural Resources	42	5
Oversight and Reform	42	5
Rules	13	0
Science, Space, and Technology	39	5
Small Business	24	5
Transportation and Infrastructure	67	6
Veterans' Affairs	28	5
Ways and Means	42	6

from Congress to Congress). Notice how some of these committees have more people in them than an upper-division political science class!

If a bill fails to clear a subcommittee, it dies; otherwise, it's sent back to the full committee where it can again die if it fails to win passage. Even if it wins full committee approval, it's not out of the woods yet. That's because the House places restrictions on the terms of debate and on what bills get to move to the floor for final consideration. As with the development of standing committees, House rules on debate evolved over the years. Initially, House debate was fluid and unlimited. As the House grew in size and legislation grew in complexity, the House began placing limits on how long members could speak, and procedures were instituted to control the flow of legislation.

In the late nineteenth century, the House established a process by which legislation would be channeled from standing committees through a **Rules Committee** before it could come to the floor for debate and a vote. Despite the fact that a standing committee may have worked for months or longer on legislation, if it failed to be assigned a "rule" from the Rules Committee, it would simply disappear from legislative consideration. If the Rules Committee decides to assign a rule and bring a measure to the floor, it can set

Rules Committee: The committee of the House that channels legislation to the floor for debate and a vote on passage.

the terms of the debate, including whether amendments can be offered that would change the bill. If a bill is brought to the floor with a rule that prohibits amendments, then members have only the choice to vote the bill up or down as it's written. This gives the Rules Committee—and the political party controlling it—enormous power to set the terms of the House agenda.²²

select committee: A House or Senate committee established on a temporary basis to review a specific matter. Typically, select committees make recommendations but do not move legislation.

If an issue lends itself to short-term review, the House may establish a **select committee** (also called a special committee) to investigate. Senate rules permit the establishment of select committees as well. Select committees are established for one congressional session and then expire. Instead of reporting bills like a standing committee, they usually review a matter and make recommendations for action. For instance, the Senate Select Committee on Ethics investigates alleged rules violations against senators or staffers and, pending their investigation, recommends disciplinary action if deemed appropriate.²³ In January 2019, the House authorized the formation of a Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, charged with making recommendations to Congress for policies that would reduce pollution and address global warming.²⁴

A member introduces legislation in the House by literally dropping it in a wooden box at the front of the chamber. Any member can do it for any reason—to advance a personal priority or the priorities of constituents or interest groups. At that point, the bill is referred to a committee or, in some cases, multiple committees that have jurisdiction over the content of the proposal. For most bills, that's the end of the line. A select few undergo the generally slow process of moving through subcommittee, where hearings are held that shape the content of the emerging bill or determine whether it will ever come to a committee vote.

These are the textbook procedures for moving legislation through the House and, well, this is a textbook, so what better place than here to describe it? Not every bill travels that route, however. There are House procedures that allow the leadership to circumvent the committee process entirely, which they may do in politically sensitive circumstances, although these situations are very rare. It happened in 1996, when House Republican leaders moved a last-minute budget resolution directly to a floor vote following an unsuccessful confrontation with President Clinton over spending priorities.

discharge petition: A House procedure that forces a floor vote on legislation stalled in committee. To succeed, a discharge petition must be signed by half the House membership.

There's also a procedure called a **discharge petition**, which, if signed by half the membership (218 representatives), plucks a bill from committee and brings it to the House floor for a vote. In 2018, a rebellious group of moderate House Republicans used a discharge petition to try to force a vote on immigration policy over the objection of party leaders, who acquiesced when it appeared the petition would succeed. But it's usually very difficult to get half the House to go along with a discharge petition because of reluctance to disobey the wishes of party leaders. A notable exception occurred in 2001, when supporters of campaign finance reform forced a vote on the campaign reform bill that would eventually become the McCain-Feingold Act.²⁵

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Discuss ways in which minority rights are protected by Senate procedure.

filibuster: The strategy available to senators to delay or derail legislation by refusing to relinquish their time on the Senate floor. The filibuster is possible only in the Senate, where rules permit unlimited time for debate.

9.4b How the Senate Works

The early Senate operated like the early House, first as a deliberative body then through the work of standing committees. Owing to its smaller size, it never faced quite the same pressures as the House to limit debate or control the flow of legislation. So, the Senate doesn't channel legislation through a Rules Committee, and senators maintain the privilege of unlimited debate time. This gives each senator a legislative weapon not available to their House colleagues: the **filibuster**, or the ability to prevent a measure from coming to a vote by refusing to consent to end the debate. A filibuster can only be ended by a vote of **cloture**, which requires a supermajority of three-fifths, or 60 percent of the Senate to enact. This means a minority of 41 senators can block a bill if they stick together and refuse to support cloture. The filibuster can be a powerful procedure in the hands of a determined Senate minority—and a tool of last resort for outnumbered senators—because it gives a minority of the Senate the opportunity to delay or prevent legislation they oppose despite the presence of majority support.

Although the picture of a senator stalling the chamber by reading from a telephone book or talking about his or her grandchildren may seem funny (and, yes, it's really hap-

pened), in recent years, filibusters have been sustained simply through the failure of cloture votes. This has coincided with an explosion of filibusters, as Figure 9.3 attests. The blue bars indicate the number of cloture motions filed to end filibusters, and the orange bars indicate the number of those motions that succeeded.

cloture: The procedure for ending a filibuster. A cloture vote requires a 60 percent majority of the Senate.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, the filibuster was used strategically and selectively. It was a favorite tool of conservative senators opposed to civil rights legislation. A seventy-four-day filibuster delayed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 from coming to a vote, and South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond personally held the Senate floor for over twenty-four hours (a Senate record) in an unsuccessful effort to block the earlier Civil Rights Act of 1957.²⁶

The routine use of the filibuster in recent years reflects entrenched partisan sentiment in the Senate. Notice the outsized blue bars on the right of Figure 9.3 corresponding to the 111th through 116th Congresses (2009–2021), where legislation routinely faced blocking tactics, for the first six years by a Republican minority that saw the filibuster as an effective way to slow or stop the Obama administration’s agenda, then by minority Democrats seeking to keep the Republican Congress in check. That’s why when President Obama and Senate Democratic leaders plotted strategy to reform the health-care system in 2009,

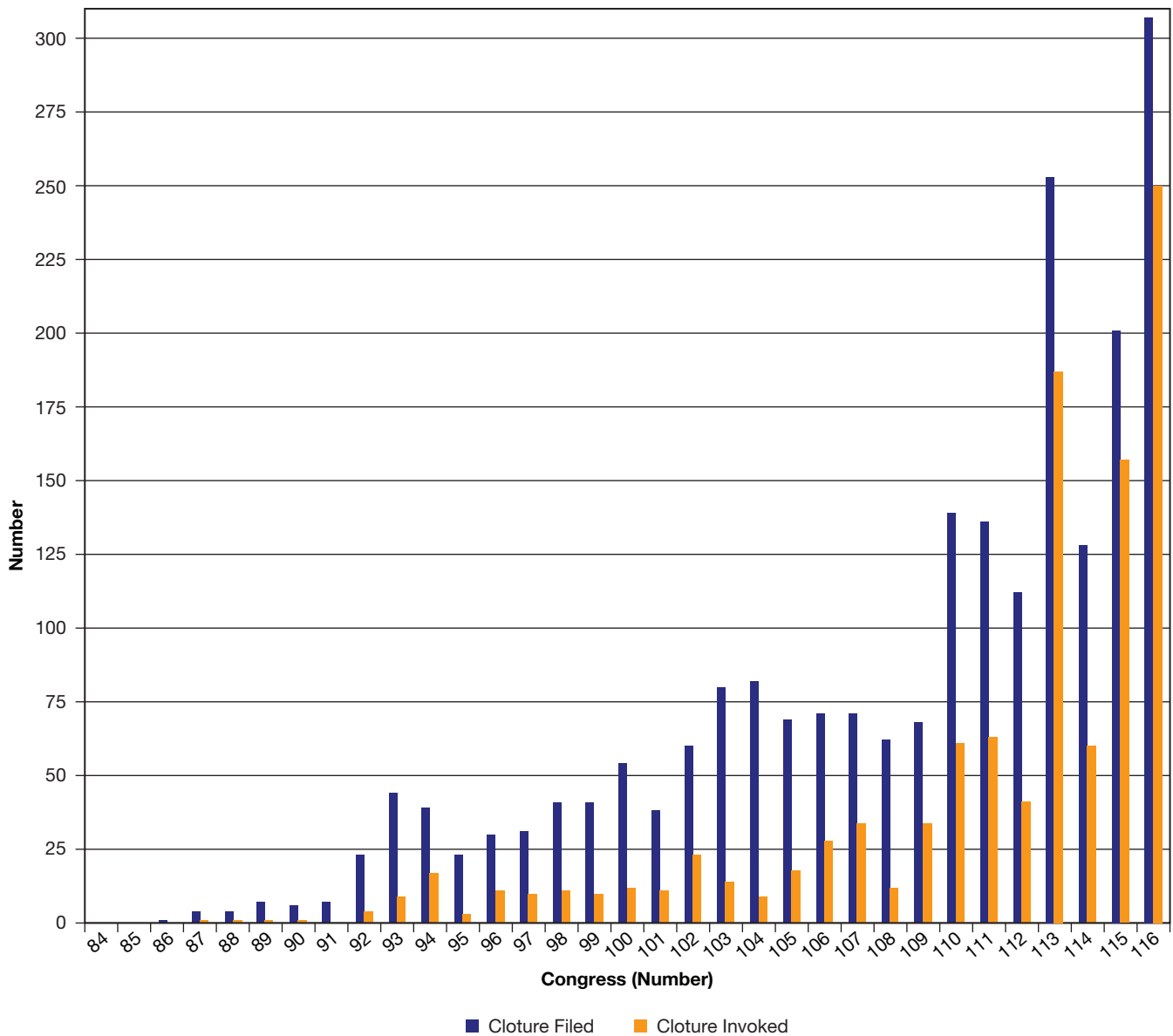


FIGURE 9.3 Explosion of the Filibuster, 84th through 116th Congress (1955–2021)^{T7}

their working assumption was that they would need 60 votes to pass anything in the Senate, because the Republican minority was unanimous in its opposition to Democratic proposals and planned to use the filibuster to stop them. And, it's why progressives in the Senate Democratic caucus agitated for filibuster reform prior to the start of the 113th Congress—with some success, as Democrats removed the supermajority requirement for confirming executive and judicial nominees (excluding nominees to the Supreme Court). Progressive Democrats again advocated to modify or eliminate the filibuster when their party regained control of the Senate in 2021.

Apart from the protection of minority rights, the Senate operates much like the House. The standing committee, subcommittee, and select committee structure is the same, although with fewer members, there are more committee and subcommittee leadership opportunities. Virtually every senator has a leadership role somewhere, even newly elected senators. Table 9.3 lists the names of the standing committees of the Senate, the number of senators serving on each committee, and the number of subcommittees associated with each committee in 2020. Notice how much overlap there is between House and Senate committees, even though each house organizes its standing committees independently.

joint committees: Committees composed of members of the House and Senate that consider matters of interest to both houses.

In some cases, the House and Senate establish **joint committees** to commonly investigate or study a matter that concerns both houses. Much of what joint committees do is routine and detailed. For instance, the Joint Taxation Committee pools House and Senate staff to help with the technical details of writing tax legislation.²⁷

In an entirely different context, the two houses of Congress will form conference committees when they pass different versions of the same legislation. The Constitution requires

TABLE 9.3 Senate Committees and Subcommittees, 2020^{T8}

Committee	Members	Subcommittees
Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry	20	5
Appropriations	31	12
Armed Services	27	7
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs	25	5
Budget	21	0
Commerce, Science, and Transportation	26	6
Energy and Natural Resources	20	4
Environment and Public Works	21	4
Finance	22	7
Foreign Relations	19	7
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions	23	3
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs	14	3
Indian Affairs	13	0
Judiciary	22	6
Rules and Administration	19	0
Small Business and Entrepreneurship	19	0
Veterans' Affairs	17	0

that the House and Senate pass identical legislation before it's sent to the president for consideration, but it's probably easy to see how that's not likely to happen when legislation has to pass separately through the network of rules and committees in each house. So, when both houses pass their own version of a bill, they form a **conference committee** made up of representatives and senators that tries to hammer out differences between the two versions of the legislation, writing compromise language that committee members believe will be acceptable to majorities in both chambers. If they fail to do so, the legislation dies. If they succeed, the bill they produce still has to be approved by both houses.

Introducing a bill in the Senate works pretty much the way it does in the House. However, because the Senate is less formal and “clubbier” than the House, individual senators have more range to influence the path of legislation. In contrast to the formal discharge petition required by the House to bypass the committee process and bring a bill to a floor vote, any senator can request that a bill go directly to the floor (in reality, though, a senator would need the support of the Senate leadership to be successful). Because the Senate doesn't use a Rules Committee to prohibit a bill from being modified during floor debate, any senator can introduce an amendment to a bill being debated on the floor—forcing the Senate to act on the amendment even if it has nothing to do with the legislation being discussed. This privilege effectively circumvents the committee process. If a senator wishes to introduce a civil rights amendment to a bill on veteran's benefits, the rules allow it.²⁸

Figure 9.4 provides an overview of the whole process of how a bill becomes law. Despite procedural differences between the two houses, notice the parallel structures in place between the House and the Senate for considering legislation. Notice, also, how each step in the process provides opponents with an opportunity to derail legislation. When you think for a second about all the places where proposals can die, it's not surprising that thousands of proposals flood into Congress but only a handful become law.

9.5 Serving in Congress: What Congress Does

As the legislative branch of government, Congress has its hands in the development of both domestic and foreign policy. Of course, power is separated among the branches of the federal government, so Congress is continually engaged in a push-pull relationship with the president, sometimes spearheading the national agenda and sometimes following the president's lead. Generally speaking, Congress is more assertive about domestic issues and follows presidential leadership in foreign affairs.

Every president comes to office with a domestic policy agenda—President Trump, for instance, wanted to cut taxes and boost infrastructure spending—but members of Congress can be fairly vocal about putting their imprint on the president's ideas, rejecting the president's agenda, or advancing an agenda that's entirely different than the president's. Although President Trump ran on a populist platform at odds with elements of Republican orthodoxy on issues like trade and providing universal health care, he largely aligned himself with the domestic priorities of Republicans in Congress, in particular on tax policy and the appointment of judicial conservatives to the courts.

Even when the president wants to work with a Congress of his own party, shared party affiliation is not a guarantee of success, as we noted in Chapter 6. Take the legislatively complicated issue of health care. President Clinton proposed a sweeping overhaul of the health-care system, then failed to marshal support for it despite having party control of both houses of Congress. It was sixteen years before another president would try again, and even though President Obama ultimately achieved passage of the Affordable Care Act, he and a Congress controlled by his fellow Democrats struggled for months to find common ground on an approach that would generate sufficient political support. Several years later, despite having a Republican majority in both houses of Congress, President Trump was unable to win legislative support for repealing the Affordable Care Act, one of his signature campaign issues.

When Congress and the president are of different parties, congressional leaders can be in a position to steer the national agenda. An evenly divided Senate was considering

conference committees: Committees made up of members of both houses of Congress, assembled when the House and Senate pass different versions of the same legislation. If the conference committee can iron out the differences, a compromise version of the legislation is sent back to both houses for final passage. If it cannot arrive at a compromise, the legislation dies.

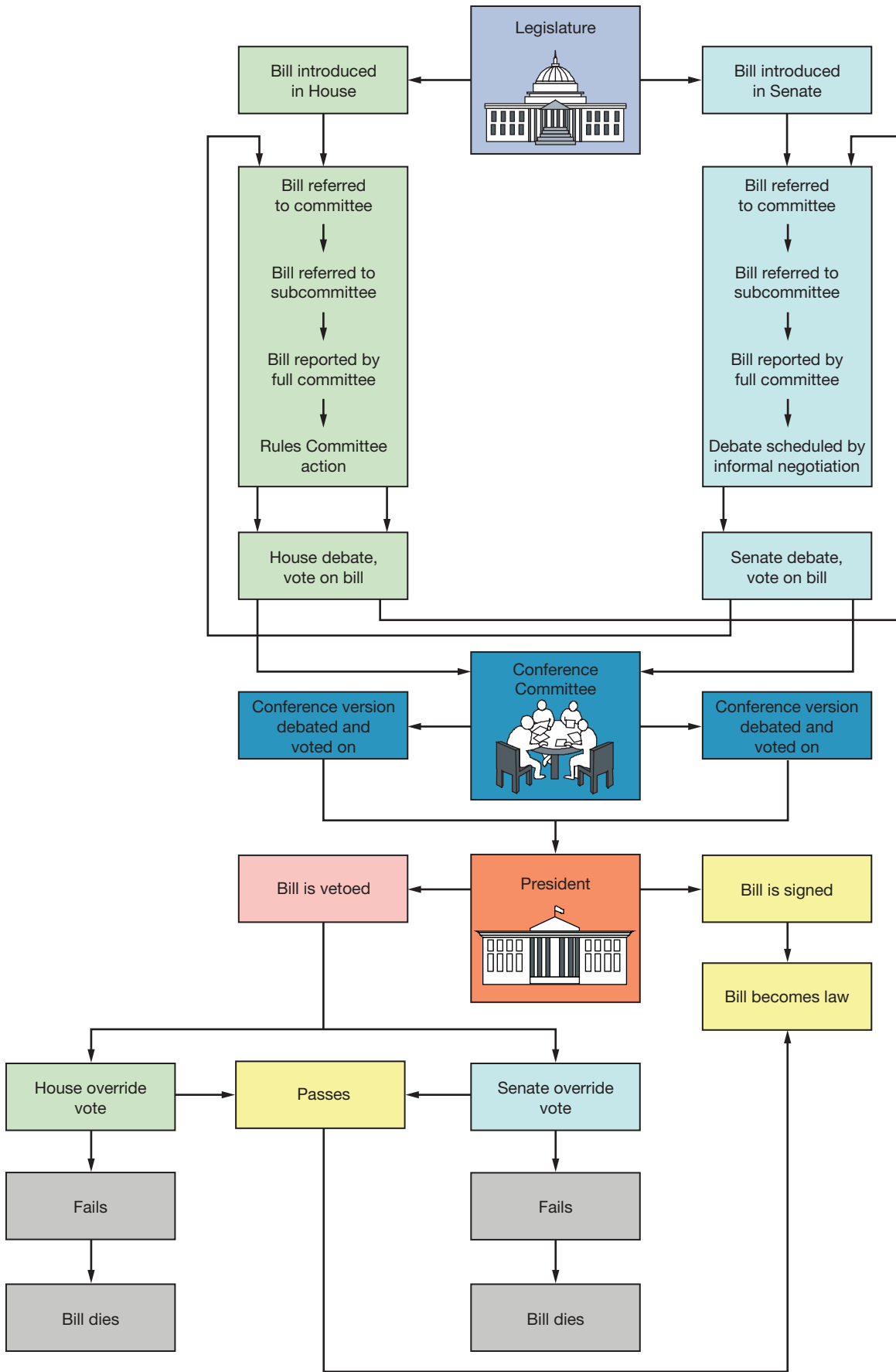


FIGURE 9.4 The Legislative Process

President George W. Bush's budget priorities in 2001 when Vermont Senator Jim Jeffords bolted the Republican Party to become an independent aligned with Democrats, handing them outright control of the chamber. Overnight, the Senate discarded President Bush's agenda to consider items that the president had no interest in pursuing, like campaign finance reform.

Foreign affairs are another matter. The Constitution gives Congress important tools for the conduct of foreign policy, but it also gives a broad grant of authority to the president, and over time, the president has emerged as the premier voice in international matters. Congress has the power to declare war (something it has not done since World War II), and the Senate has the power to confirm ambassadors and ratify treaties. In turn, the president is commander-in-chief of the armed forces, and, as we'll see in Chapter 10, best positioned to move public opinion in times of international tension. As a consequence, Congress typically defers to presidential leadership on foreign and defense issues.

On the other hand, Congress plays a central role in several important government activities: making budgets, overseeing the actions of the bureaucracy, confirming a wide range of presidential appointments, and removing other officials from office. Let's look at each one in turn.

9.5a Making Budgets

If you've ever tried to save for something or figure out how you're going to spend limited funds on a bunch of needs, then you know how tricky it can be to write a budget. Add the individual wishes of hundreds of members of Congress and the president into the mix, and it shouldn't be hard to see how writing a budget is one of the most complex, sensitive, and important things Congress has to do. Members who sit on committees with a hand in budget writing find that they are rarely lonely.

Budget writing is an annual affair that typically takes an entire year to complete. A number of committees get into the act, in keeping with the decentralized way the House and Senate function. The process has been more coordinated, though, ever since the passage of the **Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974**.²⁹ A lot of the action happens in the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, which are charged with reporting bills that determine how much money government agencies and programs will have to spend (**appropriations** refer to legislation authorizing the government to spend money).

The procedure is complex, but it follows this outline: First, the House and Senate budget committees set guidelines and budgetary priorities. Then the appropriations committees are supposed to allocate money in line with those priorities. They approve spending bills to cover the variety of items in the federal budget. If the sum of these expenditures exceeds the budgetary guidelines, the expenditures are brought into line with the budget targets through a process called **reconciliation**. For both houses to end up with the same budget, differences between them are resolved in a conference committee, after which final approval on a budget can be sought in both houses.³⁰

If budget guidelines necessitate changes in tax law, the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee get into the act. As the tax-writing committees of Congress, they draft legislation specifying which taxes will be raised and by how much. Because so much money is at stake, and because real policy changes can be made by the act of budgeting, there are always a lot of congressional fingerprints on the final act. We'll take a closer look at budgeting when we talk about domestic policy in Chapter 15.

9.5b Oversight of the Bureaucracy

Congress may pass laws, but as we discussed in Chapter 8 and as we'll see in greater detail in Chapter 11, the bureaucracy is responsible for implementing laws, or carrying them out. This gives the bureaucracy a lot of freedom to interpret the intent of Congress, although Congress does have a function that can allow it to retain some control over how the bureaucracy implements legislation. It's called **oversight**, the process by which Congress reviews

Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974: An act designed to centralize the congressional budgeting process, which established current procedures and timetables for writing a budget.

appropriations: Legislation permitting the government to spend money that determines how much will be spent and how it will be spent.

reconciliation: A procedure in the budget-writing process, whereby appropriations made in a number of congressional committees and subcommittees need to be brought in line with spending targets established early in the process.

oversight: The process of congressional review of the bureaucracy.

the actions of the bureaucracy to see that laws are being enacted as Congress intended. Most congressional oversight is carried out through the committees and subcommittees that share jurisdiction over a policy area with agencies and departments in the bureaucracy.

This sounds fairly neutral, but in fact, congressional oversight can be politically charged. The bureaucracy is part of the executive branch, and the president's political opponents in Congress can try to interfere with agencies they feel are implementing the law in accordance with the president's wishes instead of their own. Oversight can be a weapon for members of Congress who seek to undermine programs they don't like. During the budgeting process, oversight can have dramatic consequences for government programs, as Congress can reduce (or threaten to reduce) funds to agencies, or put restrictions on how money is spent, all set against the backdrop of competing political and ideological agendas about what government should and should not do. Republicans in recent years have cut the budgets of entities they felt did not warrant government spending, such as Amtrak and public broadcasting. After Democrats won a House majority in 2018, they engaged in aggressive oversight activities during the final two years of the Trump administration, holding 398 oversight hearings and sending 1,229 letters to Trump officials in executive branch agencies.³¹

At the other end of the spectrum, oversight can be anything but acrimonious. The cooperative nature of iron-triangle relationships can turn oversight into something of a lovefest between bureaucratic agencies and the congressional committees supposedly overseeing them, fueled by mutual friendships with like-minded interest groups. When this happens, congressional committees work to protect agencies from scrutiny, investigations, and loss of funding.³² Sometimes even representatives or senators who in other instances are vocal critics of government spending will work to protect agencies that benefit interest groups with cooperative ties to their office.

9.5c Confirming Presidential Appointments

The Constitution simply gives the Senate the responsibility to offer “advice and consent” when the president nominates people to fill vacancies in the bureaucracy and the court system. In reality, the function of confirming presidential appointees can be an institutional and ideological tug-of-war between the legislative and executive branches, as we saw when we were discussing the filibuster—especially when senators and the president have dramatically different ideas about how conservative or liberal appointees should be.

When a presidential nomination is made, it is referred to the appropriate Senate committee for deliberation, and if approved, to the floor for a final vote. The committee holds hearings on the nominee, which are often smooth and uneventful, although they can be contentious if there is a philosophical rift between the nominee and committee members.

Presidents are most likely to win approval for major cabinet-level appointments made as they come into office, on the grounds that a president has the right to appoint people of his choosing to key positions. However, even this is not guaranteed if an appointment is controversial. Democrats opposed a number of President Trump's cabinet nominees, claiming they lacked the requisite qualifications or had conflicts of interest with the positions they were nominated to fill. Because Democrats could not filibuster them—they had eliminated that possibility when they reformed the filibuster rules—they instead aired their complaints through congressional hearings in the hope that public pressure would force the president to relent or get several Republicans to join them in opposition.

In 2005, when the filibuster still applied to executive appointments, Democrats blocked President George W. Bush's appointment of former Undersecretary of State John Bolton to be the ambassador to the United Nations, contending Bolton lacked the diplomatic skills necessary for the post. In response, President Bush took the unusual step of circumventing the Senate and appointing Bolton to a temporary term using a constitutional provision enabling the president to make interim “**recess appointments**” while Congress is out of session.

Recess appointments don't require approval, and those appointed can only serve until the end of the congressional session—but they're highly controversial. Recess appoint-

recess appointments: The constitutional power granted to the president to make nominations while Congress is out of session that do not require Senate approval. The appointments stand until the end of the congressional term.

ments anger senators, who see the appointments as a way for the president to circumvent the normal legislative process.

Traditionally, Senate hearings center on the nominee's qualifications for office, but in recent years, almost anything goes: moral issues, personal or family background, financial dealings, medical history—any or all of these could be open for discussion. Senators looking for justification to turn down a nominee can turn almost anywhere for a rationale to vote no.³³ This is particularly true for judicial nominations, which tend to be more contentious than other presidential nominations. You'll find a good example of just how contentious things can get in *Demystifying Government*: “Bork” Becomes a Verb.

Senators traditionally have had the opportunity to place “holds” on nominees they dislike, although this custom has been undermined in recent years as partisanship has gripped the Senate. Until 2013, “holds” could be made anonymously, permitting obstructing senators to shield their identities. Senate Democrats accused Senate Republicans of using these tactics during the Obama and Clinton administrations to block liberal judicial appointees; Senate Republicans accused their Democratic counterparts of dragging their heels on a host of President Bush's bureaucratic and judicial nominees when they

DEMYSTIFYING GOVERNMENT

“Bork” Becomes a Verb

It's hard to pinpoint when the Senate confirmation process became so ugly—it wasn't always that way—but one place to look is President Reagan's 1987 nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court. Under intense pressure from liberal interest groups who feared Bork's constitutional philosophy was too conservative, and with the ideological direction of the Court hanging in the balance, Democratic senators subjected the nominee to rigorous questioning about his philosophical perspective, pronounced him unfit to sit on the Supreme Court, and voted down his appointment. Many conservatives were livid. They claimed that a nominee's philosophy had never been grounds for Senate action, that the president had the legitimate right to appoint someone who shared his ideological outlook, and that liberal senators had distorted Bork's record. Civility in the nomination process fell by the wayside as an ideological war of sorts was declared; “Bork” entered the language as a verb. To many conservatives, to be “Borked” meant to be ambushed and destroyed politically through misrepresentation and lies, and they vowed to be more media savvy and proactive next time.

Things got worse four years later, when President George H. W. Bush nominated Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court. Thomas, a conservative Black judge, would replace liberal justice Thurgood Marshall—the first Black person to sit on the Court—guaranteeing a shift in the Court's ideological center. Again, interest groups on both sides of the ideological spectrum geared up for full-scale battle, determined to win at any cost.

When the hearings began, little appeared to stand in Thomas's way. A southerner who began life in poverty, Thomas's story was a compelling one, and his judicial record, though undistinguished to critics, didn't

raise any red flags. Then word leaked to the press of sexual harassment charges leveled against him by a former employee, University of Oklahoma law school Professor Anita Hill, and the hearings took a bizarre turn. The Senate Judiciary Committee, run by Democrats, opted to explore the sexual harassment charges as the television cameras rolled. Conservative groups charged that it was a setup; Thomas himself pointedly called it a “high-tech lynching” of a Black nominee by White senators.

Today, sexual harassment is widely discussed and understood (in part, because of the Thomas hearings), but at the time, many Americans were not familiar with the topic, so it hit with tremendous force. Hill leveled her accusations as Thomas defended against them in what was arguably the most thorough exploration of the issue to date. All the while, it was hard to separate partisanship from the discussion, as evidenced by the pattern of Thomas's Democratic detractors grilling the nominee as his Republican supporters put Hill's credibility on trial. Ostensibly, the subject was sexual harassment, but the subtext was clearly politics and power.

Thomas was confirmed, 52–48, in one of the closest Senate votes ever for a Supreme Court nominee, and he took his seat on the Court under a cloud of controversy, but the bitterness of the battle never fully dissipated. As we will see in Chapter 12, Republicans responded to a 2016 Supreme Court vacancy by going one step further and refusing to hold hearings or a vote on President Obama's nominee on the pretext that the decision should be left to the voters in an election year, then reversed course and confirmed Trump appointee Amy Coney Barrett days before the 2020 election.

controlled the process. Then, during the Trump administration, Senate Republican leadership stopped recognizing objections from individual senators to the president's judicial appointments, clearing the way for speedy confirmation votes.

When the Senate fails to act on a nomination, unless the president takes the unusual step of making a "recess appointment" or appointing the nominee on an "acting" basis, the position simply remains vacant. During the last two years of the Obama administration, the Senate acted on only twenty federal court nominations, a record low figure compared to the final two years of previous presidencies, leaving seventy-eight vacancies for Donald Trump to fill with the approval of a Republican Senate.³⁴

9.5d Impeachment

On September 24, 2019, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the opening of an impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump after evidence surfaced that the president had pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate Hunter Biden, the son of his likely 2020 opponent, before he would release millions of dollars in military aid to Ukraine. It would be the first of an unprecedented two impeachment votes against President Trump, with the second coming days before the close of his administration for inciting an insurrection at the Capitol while Congress was certifying the election of President Biden. Prior to Trump's two impeachments, only three previous presidents had been the subject of an impeachment inquiry: Andrew Johnson, Bill Clinton, and Richard Nixon. Trump would have had to vacate the presidency had he been convicted of the charges against him.

No political power is greater than the power to eject an official from office, and the Constitution grants that power exclusively to Congress. **Impeachment** is a two-step process involving both houses. The House of Representatives can impeach any federal official, including the president, vice president, Supreme Court justices, and federal court judges. Impeachment requires a majority vote of the House and is similar to an indictment in court in that it charges the official with one or more counts of misconduct. Once articles of impeachment are approved, a trial is held in the Senate, where evidence is presented to support each accusation. With the Chief Justice of the United States presiding, the impeached official is permitted to offer a defense against the charges. At the conclusion of the trial, each senator casts one vote on each article of impeachment, with a two-thirds majority required to convict.

impeachment: The power granted to Congress to remove from office the president, vice president, judges, and other federal officials.



President Trump was impeached for the first time in December 2019, then tried and acquitted by the Senate in January 2020 on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. *Source:* YES Market Media/ Shutterstock.

The first Trump impeachment followed this path (Trump's second impeachment was different in that the Senate trial did not commence before his term was over, but had he been convicted the Senate could have voted to preclude him from holding office in the future). One month after the impeachment inquiry was announced, the full House voted to begin formal impeachment hearings, which resulted in the drafting of two articles of impeachment against Trump, for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.³⁵ When the House approved the two articles on December 18, 2019, Trump became the third president in American history to be impeached. The process swiftly moved to the Senate, where Chief Justice Roberts presided over a relatively brief trial in which Republicans blocked an effort by Democrats to call witnesses to testify. On February 5, 2020, the process ended with an acquittal on a party-line vote. Only one Republican senator, Mitt Romney of Utah, crossed the aisle and voted to convict Trump on the article alleging abuse of power.

Impeachment is designed to be a complicated process with a low likelihood of conviction so that political adversaries wouldn't routinely employ it. Only seventeen officials have been impeached since the Constitution was ratified, and only seven were convicted—all federal judges.³⁶

Like the two previous presidential impeachment trials—Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998—the Trump impeachments took place against the backdrop of partisan politics. Johnson, a southerner who took office upon the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, was strongly at odds with a Congress unsympathetic to the South in the period following the Civil War. When Congress passed the Tenure of Office Act, requiring congressional approval before a presidential appointee could be removed from office, Johnson ignored it, believing it to be unconstitutional. The House rushed to impeach him, eager to see Johnson removed for political reasons. He prevailed in the Senate by one vote.

President Clinton’s impeachment grew out of charges that he perjured himself when he lied under oath about a sexual relationship with a White House intern. Since the charges did not stem from an issue related to the president’s official conduct of his office, reporters, political analysts, and constitutional scholars questioned whether President Clinton’s alleged offenses were impeachable. These questions were reinforced by the political nature of the proceedings, as the House voted almost along party lines to impeach. A dramatic Senate trial concluded in Clinton’s acquittal on one count of perjury and one count of obstruction of justice.

Richard Nixon is the only president who likely would have been convicted, on charges related to his conduct during the Watergate scandal, but he circumvented the impeachment process by becoming the first president to resign from office. Nixon faced removal in the wake of evidence pointing to a broad pattern of abuse of power stemming from his participation in and cover-up of events surrounding a break-in at Democratic Party headquarters. When a bipartisan majority of the House Judiciary Committee voted to recommend that the full House impeach the president, it became apparent that Nixon lacked the votes to avoid impeachment in the House or conviction in the Senate. Had the proceedings continued, it would have been the only time in history that the gravity of the charges against a president would have compelled significant numbers of his own partisans to vote to remove him from office.

The question of what constitutes an impeachable offense arose at the first three presidential impeachment trials. The Constitution is especially vague on this point, stipulating only that impeachment is warranted in the event of “Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and misdemeanors.” Through the years, it has fallen to others to determine what this means. Invariably, the interpretation is political because, although the impeachment process looks like a trial, the jurors are elected officials responsive to public opinion. Regardless of the merits of the case, it’s politically difficult to impeach and convict an official who has a lot of popular or party support.

This is a good time to stop for a second and review the broad outlines of what we’ve been discussing. Let’s do it by briefly comparing a few key elements of the House and Senate—see Table 9.4.

9.6 Leading Congress

When the authors of the Constitution left it up to each house to figure out how it was going to function, they didn’t imagine a role for political parties because, as we know, they viewed parties as factions and assumed (or hoped) that they would never develop. As it turns out, parties mean everything in Congress. They determine who gets to lead Congress, control congressional committees, set the agenda, and set the rules. Power flows to the majority party; frustration visits the minority. For this reason, congressional leaders are highly motivated to attain and keep majority status.

In both houses, the majority is simply the party with the most seats. However, just like in congressional elections where all the representation goes to the winner, all of the leadership benefits go to the majority party. Even a 50-50 Democratic Senate majority that rests on Vice President Harris’s tie-breaking vote permits Democrats to have a majority of its members on all committees, to have its members chair all committees and subcommittees, and to have its leader set the legislative agenda. That’s how Senator Jim Jeffords could turn an earlier 50-50 Senate on its head by defecting from the Republican Party during the 2001 legislative session, becoming an independent who voted with Democrats

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Identify key congressional leadership positions, and explain the role of leadership in Congress.

TABLE 9.4 Comparing House and Senate

	House	Senate
Number of Members	435	100
Districts	Congressional districts	States
Member Terms	2 years	6 years
Elections Held	Every 2 years for everyone	One-third every 2 years
Distinctive Functions	Originate revenue bills Write articles of impeachment	Ratify presidential appointments Hold impeachment hearings Ratify treaties
Most Powerful Committees	Appropriations Budget Commerce Rules Ways and Means	Appropriations Armed Services Commerce Finance

on leadership issues. Overnight, (mostly liberal) Democrats replaced (generally conservative) Republicans as leaders and committee chairs, bringing with them an entirely different set of legislative priorities and the power to have them heard.

9.6a Leadership Structure

The different traditions and procedures in the House and Senate translate into differences in the degree to which the majority party can clamp down on the minority. The Senate offers more opportunities to members of the minority party to express their will through the filibuster and through courtesies extended individual members. It operates on the principle of **minority rights**, whereby deference is granted to the concerns of those whose party does not control the chamber.

The House, in contrast, functions on a **majoritarian principle** that frustrates dissent. After more than a century of dealing with rules that permitted legislative minorities to derail legislation, the House, around the turn of the twentieth century, instituted rules that give the leadership of the majority party tight control over all proceedings.

The **Speaker of the House** is the foremost leader in the chamber. Chosen by a caucus of the majority party, then ratified by a party-line vote of the full House, “Madam Speaker” is one of the premier leaders in Washington (not to mention second in line for the presidency after the vice president). The Speaker has both formal and informal powers, which allow the Speaker to advance her priorities and the priorities of the Speaker’s party, regardless of the wishes of the minority. Formally, the Speaker presides over the House, resolves disputes as they arise, decides which committees will consider legislation, and determines who will serve on conference and select committees. Informally, the Speaker can influence the Rules Committee (affecting the scheduling of debate and votes on legislation), reward members for their loyalty (or punish members for their independence), influence assignments to standing committees, and function as the spokesperson for the House of Representatives in the press.³⁷

Unlike other congressional leadership offices, the position of Speaker of the House is mandated by the Constitution. Article 1, Section 2 says that “The House of Representatives shall choose their Speaker and other Officers,” leaving the rest of the leadership structure to evolve through custom and practice. What the Constitution does not say is that the Speaker has to be a member of a majority party (remember, no parties are mentioned in the Constitution) or even a member of the House. However, every Speaker has been a House member, and every contemporary Speaker has been a majority party member with many years of service in the House.

minority rights: Procedures, such as those in place in the Senate, that permit members of the minority party the opportunity to resist legislative actions they oppose.

majoritarian principle: Procedures, such as those in place in the House of Representatives, that limit the ability of the minority party to influence the shape of legislation or the direction of the legislative agenda.

Speaker of the House: The leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives who exercises control over the operation of that branch through formal and informal means.

The Speaker is assisted by the rest of the majority party leadership, which, like the Speaker, is selected by a caucus of the majority party at the start of each congressional session. The key positions are the **majority leader** and the **majority whip**. The majority leader is the floor leader for the majority party, responsible for doing the everyday work of moving the party's legislative agenda through the House: lining up the support of committee chairs, gauging levels of support among House members, and persuading members to vote the party position. The majority leader is assisted in this effort by the majority whip. The name suggests whipping up or rounding up votes, which is a good description of what the whip does.³⁸ The whip reminds party members of key votes, counts heads to determine if the party position is likely to prevail, and when necessary, leans on members to vote with the leadership.

Because, as we mentioned in Section 6.4a, "How Parties in Government Function," we do not have **responsible parties** in government, members—even powerful committee chairs—cannot be assumed to support the positions of leadership, and legislators will not automatically heed the wishes of a president of their party. This fact has been the cause of a lot of anguish over the years as party leaders have tried—some more successfully than others—to keep their members in line.

A famous example (for those who pay attention to these things) of leadership being stretched beyond the last minute to keep their members together occurred in 2003, when President Bush and Republican congressional leaders faced a revolt by a few congressional representatives of their own party over legislation to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. Republican leaders kept the final vote on the measure going all night in a frantic effort to convince enough recalcitrant conservatives to give their president a victory. One reporter recalled feverish efforts by House Speaker Dennis Hastert and his lieutenants:

The House's reigning Caesars were running around in circles, going back once, twice, and three times to conservatives who were clearly hard "no's" and had been that way for days. Tom Feeney, R-Fla.? No thanks. Steve Chabot, R-Ohio? Didn't like the means-testing provision. Todd Akin, R-Mo.? The [Republican] whip, fellow Missourian Roy Blunt, had him out in the Speaker's lobby all alone and was getting nowhere.³⁹

It took close to three hours and a few personal phone calls by the president to round up enough votes to secure passage of the measure. In time, however, the victory raised serious questions about the tactics used by the House leadership and the administration—including the prospect that Republican leaders had employed threats to change the votes of reluctant members, and that the White House knowingly withheld the true cost of the measure to keep conservatives on board—in an extreme example of what can happen because congressional representatives are free to go their own way.

The minority party counterparts to these leadership positions are the **minority leader** and **minority whip**. As leaders of the party out of power, their roles parallel their counterparts in the majority but without the ability to shape the legislative agenda. So, the minority leadership advocates the policy alternatives of the minority as they look for opportunities to develop alliances with wayward members of the majority in an effort to frustrate the majority party's agenda.

Leadership in the Senate operates a little differently. There is no counterpart to the Speaker of the House. Instead, the Constitution makes the vice president of the United States the presiding officer of the Senate, where her formal title is president of the Senate, and her one formal power is the ability to cast tie-breaking votes. However, unless it looks like the Senate is heading for a tie vote, you probably won't find the vice president anywhere near the Senate. In her absence, the chore of presiding over the Senate falls to the **president pro tempore**, a mostly honorary position that typically goes to the longest serving member of the majority party. Apart from being third in line for presidential succession behind the vice president and the Speaker of the House, the president pro tempore has no formal powers and typically finds the job of presiding over the Senate to be as dull as the vice president does. That's why, on any given afternoon, it's not unusual to

majority leader: The number-two leadership position in the House of Representatives and the number-one leadership position in the Senate. In the House, the majority leader is the chief assistant to the Speaker; in the Senate, the majority leader is the chief leader on a par with the House Speaker.

majority whip: The number-three leadership position in the House of Representatives and the number-two leadership position in the Senate. In both instances, the whip is responsible for mobilizing party members to support the leadership on key issues.

responsible parties: Political parties whose legislative members act in concert, taking clear positions on issues and voting as a unit in accordance with their stated positions.

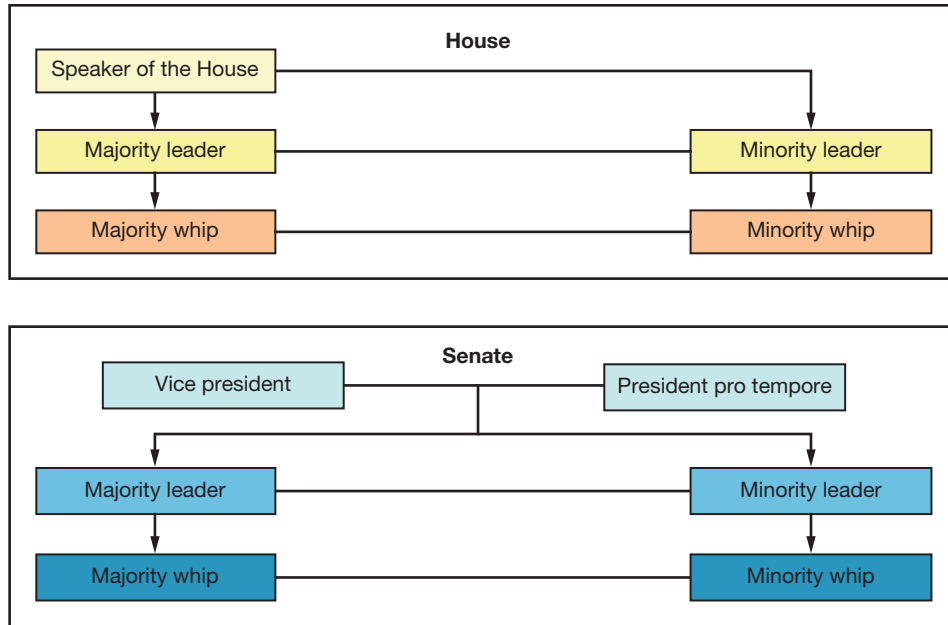
minority leader: The number-one leadership position for the opposition party in the House of Representatives and Senate, whose responsibilities mirror those of the majority leader but without the ability to set or advance the legislative agenda.

minority whip: The number-two leadership position for the opposition party in the House of Representatives and Senate, whose responsibilities mirror those of the majority whip.

president pro tempore: The senator charged with the honorary duty of presiding over the Senate in the absence of the vice president of the United States.

find junior senators presiding over the proceedings, not as an honor but as an obligation assumed by those with the least standing in the chamber.

In the absence of a powerful figure like the House Speaker, the Senate is led by the majority leader and majority whip. They determine the items on the legislative agenda and work to keep their majority in line. It can be a harder job than what befalls their House counterparts because of the Senate's less hierarchical traditions that permit individual senators to go their own way. The minority leader and minority whip function much like their House counterparts. Figure 9.5 shows the House and Senate leaders after the 2020 election.



House Speaker
Nancy Pelosi (D-California)
Elected to the House in 1986
Previous Occupation: California politics
Primary Function: Presides over House



Senate Majority Leader
Chuck Schumer (D-New York)
Elected to the Senate in 1998
Previous Occupation: New York politics
Primary Function: Advances majority agenda



House Majority Leader
Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland)
Elected to the House in 1981
Previous Occupation: Maryland politics
Primary Function: Advances majority agenda



Senate Majority Whip
Richard Durbin (D-Illinois)
Elected to the Senate in 1996
Previous Occupation: Law
Primary Function: Lines up votes for majority



House Majority Whip
Jim Clyburn (D-South Carolina)
Elected to the House in 1993
Previous Occupation: South Carolina politics
Primary Function: Lines up votes for majority



Senate Minority Leader
Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky)
Elected to the Senate in 1984
Previous Occupation: Government service
Primary Function: Advocates for opposition



House Minority Leader
Kevin McCarthy (R-California)
Elected to the House in 2006
Previous Occupation: Small business
Primary Function: Advocates for opposition



Senate Minority Whip
John Thune (R-South Dakota)
Elected to the Senate in 2004
Previous Occupation: South Dakota politics
Primary Function: Mobilizes opposition



House Minority Whip
Steve Scalise (R-Louisiana)
Elected to the House in 2008
Previous Occupation: Louisiana politics
Primary Function: Mobilizes opposition



President Pro Tempore
Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont)
Elected to the Senate in 1974
Previous Occupation: Government service
Primary Function: Ceremonial

FIGURE 9.5 House and Senate Leadership^{T9}

Maybe you're getting the sense that political parties have emerged as the organizations that hold Congress together, structure its operations, and help to centralize an institution staffed by hundreds of ambitious people from different regions of the country with varying personal agendas and objectives. Without parties to provide structure, it's quite possible that the legislative branch would be a much harder place to run—particularly in the Senate, where customs and procedures give voice to individual and minority opinions. The other side of this coin is that during times of intense partisan division like we've experienced over the past few years, the efforts of party leaders can serve to heighten philosophical differences between the two camps, leading to hard-fought battles over legislation and, more broadly, the general direction of the country.

There are a number of things the leadership can do to appeal for party cohesion. Leaders can listen to members and incorporate their interests as legislation is formulated. They can help them get committee assignments that will promote their career goals—by putting them on committees that afford them power in Congress or that address their personal legislative interests or the interests of their constituents. They can shower members with rewards for adhering to the party line on key votes, although this tactic has fallen out of favor in recent years. Leaders can go to member districts and campaign for them, and use their clout to raise money for member reelection efforts.

Any or all of these things can just as easily be withheld from members who cause trouble for the leadership, but only to a limited extent. Remember, it's in the leaders' self-interest to help party members win reelection because holding the majority fulfills the promise of power in Congress, and every reelected member brings an incumbent or would-be majority leader closer to that goal.

9.6b Party Structure

For the congressional member who is not part of the leadership, party business is conducted primarily through participation in the **party caucus**. Each party in each house has a caucus (Republicans call it a conference), which conducts leadership elections and finalizes committee assignments at the start of each new Congress, and provides a forum for discussion of policy issues and party legislative strategies. The caucus is the place where House Republicans, House Democrats, Senate Republicans, or Senate Democrats can articulate their interests or concerns about the positions the party might take, in an effort to build general agreement for the positions that the leadership will move forward. (Although it's the same term, this use of caucus should not be confused with a caucus that meets to elect delegates to a political party convention, like the Iowa caucus we talked about in Chapter 7.)

Complementing the relatively informal caucus are party committees (see Table 9.5) that help coordinate the political and policy interests of the parties. Because these committees serve partisan purposes rather than institutional purposes, they're different and apart from the standing committees and subcommittees we talked about earlier. These committees give partisan advice on developing legislative strategy, recommend committee assignments by matching members with committees that can help them politically, and help party members with reelection needs.

A quick glance at a couple of these committee websites could give you a richer sense of how they operate and what they do. For instance, the Senate Republican Policy Committee (RPC) bills itself as “helping shape the GOP game plan”:

The committee advances Republican policies by providing positions on legislation, floor debate, and votes. RPC also provides in-depth analysis on specific issues, policy solutions and alternatives, and strategic guidance. We also provide a recorded vote analysis and run the internal RPC TV broadcast.

The RPC provides a forum for Republican Senators for policy discussions. This is principally carried out through the weekly policy lunch. RPC also hosts Republican Staff Directors and Legislative Directors to discuss the Senate committees and floor agenda.⁴⁰

party caucus: The group of all members of a political party in the House or Senate that meets to discuss and formulate legislative priorities.

TABLE 9.5 Party Committees and Their Purposes^{T10}

	Committee	Purpose
House	Republican Policy Committee	Build consensus for party policy positions
	Democratic Steering and Policy Committee	Build consensus for party policy positions and assign Democrats to committees
Senate	Republican Policy Committee	Research and draft party policy positions
	Democratic Policy and Communications Committee	Develop and communicate party positions and priorities
House	Republican Steering Committee	Assign Republicans to committees
Senate	Republican Committee on Committees	Assign Republicans to committees
	Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee	Coordinate party policy agenda and assign Democrats to committees
House	National Republican Congressional Committee	Elect Republicans to the House
	Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee	Elect Democrats to the House
Senate	National Republican Senatorial Committee	Elect Republicans to the Senate
	Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee	Elect Democrats to the Senate

The Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee, in addition to its committee assignment function, works to coordinate the Senate Democratic legislative strategy with Democratic allies outside Congress:

The Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee is dedicated to fostering dialogue between Senate Democrats and community leaders from across the nation. Each year, the Steering Committee hosts numerous meetings with advocates, policy experts, and elected officials to discuss key priorities and enlist their help in the development of the Senate Democratic agenda. The Committee serves as a liaison between Senate Democratic offices, advocacy groups and intergovernmental organizations.⁴¹

Beyond these committees, members can find numerous opportunities to gather in less formal or smaller partisan group settings to discuss goals, map strategies, and mediate disputes. Congressional parties in both houses occasionally hold retreats (typically in a pleasant setting outside Washington) for the purpose of boosting party unity. Like on a college campus, there are plenty of extracurricular groups you can join in Congress, where you'll find other people with similar partisan or ideological interests. For instance, the Republican Study Committee is a House Republican group dedicated to advancing a small-government, socially conservative agenda. The Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus are organized around identity politics. The Blue Dogs are a group of moderate House Democrats that tries to build bridges between liberal Democrats and Conservative Republicans.

9.6c Committee Structure

Congressional leadership and party structures play big roles in the organization of the committee system. There are so many committees—the structure is so decentralized—that parties step in to hold things together. We've already talked about how committees are organized around parties and how leadership plays a critical role in making committee assignments, attempting to match members with committees that will advance their careers.

However, there are a few things we haven't addressed about the committee structure that are important to the way they operate. One is how the ratio of Republicans to Dem-

ocrats is determined. Another is how member preferences are matched to committees. Then, there's the all-important matter of seniority.

We've said that the majority party receives a majority of seats on all committees, but the magnitude of that advantage will vary, depending on how many seats the majority party occupies. In a closely divided legislature of the sort we saw during the first years of the century, the majority party will command only a small advantage on most committees, but there can be exceptions. For instance, the majority party may demand disproportionate representation on the House Rules Committee, allowing majority leadership to control the flow of legislation to the floor. When one party controls a comfortable majority of seats in the House or Senate, as Republicans did after the 2014 House elections, their numerical advantage on each committee grows as well.

At the start of every Congress, new members will seek committees on which they want to serve and will typically lobby their leadership to get them. Members are goal-directed, and see committee service as an opportunity to advance career objectives. Those interested primarily in making laws will gravitate to policy-oriented committees, like the House Foreign Affairs Committee or the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. Those seeking to climb the leadership ladder in Congress will be drawn to committees where they can exert influence on the congressional agenda, like the Ways and Means Committee or the Rules Committee in the House. Members from competitive districts with reelection on their minds will want to join committees where they can benefit from the perks of pork, like the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.⁴²

Although leaders try to accommodate assignment requests, not everyone gets what they want. Just like in many universities, where seniors have priority over freshmen when enrolling for courses, **seniority** gives long-serving members an edge in having their committee requests fulfilled. Seniority also plays an important role in committee leadership. As a long-standing matter of custom, each **committee chair** is the member of the majority party with the longest continuous service on the committee. The longest-serving member of the minority party is the **ranking minority member**. Although there have been a few cases over the past several decades of a party caucus granting a committee chair to someone other than the longest-serving member, the seniority custom is rarely violated.

Because most legislation first goes to committee for a hearing, a committee chair can have enormous power over the legislative process. Committee chairs are no longer the iron-fisted dictators of an earlier time, although they can still influence the committee's agenda, budget, and staff, and may have influence over determining subcommittee memberships. They can decide how—or whether—to route legislative proposals to subcommittees. They can decide when—or whether—to schedule a vote to send legislation on for consideration by the full chamber. By delaying action on a bill they don't like, chairs can keep the rest of Congress from considering it, even if the bill has widespread support. As a result, chairs are well positioned to fashion committees to suit their interests.⁴³

Drafting health-care reform policy during the Obama administration was such a complicated legislative task that it fell under the jurisdiction of five separate committees—three in the House and two in the Senate. Each had to approve a reform measure before the entire House or Senate could vote.⁴⁴ Four of the five committees completed their work quickly, but the Senate Finance Committee took a lot longer as the committee chair, Senator Max Baucus, attempted to craft a proposal that Republicans could support. Considering the high degree of opposition among congressional Republicans to any health-care initiative, this was a monumental task, but it was within the chairman's discretion to pursue it, and the entire process came to a halt for several weeks while the rest of Congress waited for Baucus to unveil his committee's plan.

9.7 Working in Congress: Washington

Okay, see if this sounds familiar to you. It's final exam week. You have four tests in the next three days, and while you've done your best to keep up with most of the reading, you realize you're facing a few long days and nights.

seniority: The custom of awarding committee chairs on the basis of length of service.

committee chair: The member of Congress responsible for running a committee, who can have great influence over the committee agenda and, by extension, the legislative process.

ranking minority member: The minority party counterpart to the committee chair, but without the power to influence the direction of the committee.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Discuss how members of Congress manage their work expectations.

Now imagine that finals week goes on forever, and you'll have a sense of what the workload is like for members of Congress. There's always more to do than can get done, and just like you're always aware that you'll be getting graded at the end of each term, every member keeps an eye on when their term ends and they have to face the voters again.

Members have to fulfill a number of obligations, all with implications for how well they'll do on Election Day. When they cast a vote on legislation, when they do work on committees, when they address the concerns and complaints of constituents, they realize they're doing things with the potential to assist—or undermine—their reelection prospects. It's a lot to cover, and it's probably not exaggerating things too much to say that a big misstep, or a lot of small missed steps, could put their future in jeopardy.

9.7a On the Job

Representatives can be easily overwhelmed. They need to make judgments about a wide range of issues, many of them detailed and technical. With the exception of perhaps one or two issues, members are limited in their level of expertise. It would be like taking a series of liberal arts courses in everything from biology to art history to sociology to psychology, and feeling a sense of command only in your major subject—except, where you probably take no more than five courses per term, representatives are inundated with many more than five complex issues they need to address.

Members of Congress typically spend more time in committee rooms than you spend in classrooms; just like the job of learning takes place in class, the detail work of Congress takes place in committee. Between committee and subcommittee assignments, members are regularly overbooked and have to make choices about which hearings to attend. It would be as if you registered for seven courses and some of them met at the same time.

More than committee work pulls members in competing directions. They need to meet with lobbyists and constituents, they're expected to spend time on the floor of Congress debating and voting on legislation, they have to pay attention to their public image by devoting time to the media and by making public speaking engagements, and they are presented with a steady supply of social functions that offer opportunities to “network” and conduct business. It's not unusual for a representative's day to begin early and end late in the evening.

Then there's the commute. Members must return to their districts regularly or they risk losing touch with their constituents at the grass roots. Some members who live close to Washington are able to divide their time between the Capital and their district, spending long weekends at home or even driving or taking the train if they're very close. Others have a much longer way to go: Imagine if you represented California—or Hawaii. Once home, members keep working, often on weekends, taking care to meet with constituents, locally based interest groups, and financial supporters.

9.7b Staff to the Rescue

Of course, they don't have to do it alone. The typical House member has a full-time staff of up to eighteen paid employees and nine college interns. The typical senator has a paid staff of between thirty and thirty-five and nine college interns. Typically well educated, young, and willing to trade off higher pay elsewhere for the thrill of working with powerful people and the ability to make important professional contacts, staffers help manage the workload by performing a number of important roles:

- **Administrative assistants (AAs)** help manage the Washington office, provide political advice to the representative or senator, and function as an intermediary in dealings with constituents, lobbyists, and other members.
- **Legislative assistants (LAs)** help manage the member's committee work by writing speeches and bills, analyzing legislative proposals, and following up on committee and subcommittee meetings the member misses.

- **Caseworkers** devote their time to helping constituents with problems and work either out of Washington, D.C., or out of one of the member’s home offices. Representatives on average have two or three “branch offices” in their districts; senators average four offices in their state.
- **Press aides** are responsible for the member’s media relations, including communicating the member’s message to the press and managing communications with constituents through newsletters, social media, and, in some cases, surveys of constituent opinion.⁴⁵

Take a look at some of the things a member of Congress might face on a typical day. You’ll find them in *Demystifying Government: A Day on the Hill*. This is a fictional composite, but it’s based on the real thing. Imagine you’re the representative with the scheduling conflicts shown (in some cases, this will require a lot of imagination): an ideologically moderate, pro-business Democrat from a competitive district in the Northeast with an interest in affordable housing, alternative energy (particularly offshore wind power), and homeland security—all of which are important to the constituents who support you. During much of the day, scheduling conflicts make it impossible for you to be everywhere and do everything you would like. You’ll have the chance to decide how you will resolve these conflicts by selecting the events you’re going to attend and those you’re going to miss from a set of available options. Remember, some of what you miss can be taken care of by your staff—but not everything.

Also, remember that there’s a potential cost every time members of Congress fail to show up for an event that a staff member can’t cover, either in the form of a lost opportunity, an angry constituent, a violated congressional norm—or the appearance that they are just not doing their job.

9.7c Voting on Legislation

If, after reading *Demystifying Government: A Day on the Hill*, you felt it was an intrusion on your busy schedule to have to vote on legislation creating a “National Asparagus Day,” you can probably get a sense of the range of things—big and small—that representatives are called upon to decide. Maybe which way to vote on something like an honorary holiday is a no-brainer (you support it!), but there are a lot of more substantive votes a member has to cast and—let’s face it—with so many technical issues to decide, members have to cast plenty of votes on things they know nothing about.

So, they need voting strategies. To simplify what could be confusing decisions on unfamiliar matters, members of Congress engage in **cue taking**, looking to other members for reliable signals on how to vote. There are several commonsense shortcuts that members might take. They could turn to a colleague who shares their philosophical outlook and vote the way the colleague is voting. They could seek advice from a member with expertise on the legislation being considered, such as a member of the committee that held hearings on it. If they are junior members, they might look for someone with seniority who has been around long enough to be familiar with the matter at hand. If they are in the House, they could turn to a member of their state delegation, someone from their area who is known and trusted. This sort of cue makes particular sense if the legislation could have an impact back home, like a measure that could affect an industry in the member’s state.⁴⁶

If a member’s vote on the issue is important to other members but does not concern the member or his or her constituents, it would probably be an appropriate time to engage in logrolling, where the member would exchange his or her vote for future support on something that does matter to the member. Logrolling can be accomplished informally before a final vote on legislation, and it can involve a number of members. One former senator, sounding a whole lot like anyone who has ever called in favors from a friend, explained how he put together majority support for a bill: “Maggie said she talked to Russell, and Tom promised this if I would help him on Ed’s amendment, and Mike owes me one for last year’s help on Pete’s bill.”⁴⁷

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Explain why members of Congress pay close attention to the votes they cast.

cue taking: Looking to other members of Congress for guidelines on how to cast a vote on a technical or unfamiliar matter.

A Day on the Hill

Conflicts in congressional schedules are the rule, rather than the exception. Every decision disappoints some groups. The conflicts listed below are typical of what you would have to face if you served in Congress. Take a look at each one and figure out, in each case, which options you would choose.

Conflict 1

- 7:50 A.M. Breakfast with Chamber of Commerce officials from home district to discuss business interests and the Chamber’s political support for your reelection campaign
- 8:00 A.M. Breakfast meeting with fellow Blue Dog Democrats to discuss centrist legislative strategies

Consider: Meeting with lobbyists connected to your district instead of going to a regularly scheduled meeting with other moderate Democrats is the less risky choice. Maintaining good relationships with sympathetic groups will help you earn their money and support for your next reelection effort. You can always meet with the Blue Dogs next week.

Conflict 2

- 8:55 A.M. A long, impromptu meeting with a Republican colleague who wants your vote for a bridge construction project in her district; she is willing to support construction of a military helicopter in your district in return
- 9:00 A.M. Meeting with computer company lobbyists about adding funding to combat cyberterrorism in the homeland security bill

Consider: This is a tough call with no obvious good choice. The tradeoff you’re arranging with your colleague will help you bring an important pork-barrel project back to your constituents. However, the computer lobbyist you’re neglecting is a potential political supporter who wants to talk about an important legislative matter.

Conflict 3

- 10:15 A.M. Meeting with a postal worker from your district who is retiring after 50 years of service without ever calling in sick
- 10:20 A.M. Floor vote on designating an official “National Asparagus Day”

Consider: The meeting will matter to the postal worker (who may turn out to vote in the next election), it will likely get you favorable coverage in the local papers back home, and you’ll build up good will with the postal workers in your district. The vote, on the other hand, is symbolic; missing it would be a problem only for a member from a district that produces asparagus.

Conflict 4

- 10:45 A.M. Hearing on wind and solar power (Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy and Power)
- 11:00 A.M. Hearing on possible public/private expedition to Mars (Committee on Science, Space and Technology Subcommittee on Space)

Consider: You can’t go to every hearing. Of the two, the hearing on wind and solar power is probably the more important one to you because your constituents will have a direct interest in the possibility of offshore wind farms. Your legislative assistant can keep tabs on the meeting you missed.

Conflict 5

- 1:15 P.M. Floor debate. Prepared remarks (two minutes) on proposed homeland security bill
- 1:20 P.M. Unscheduled visit by an elementary school group from your home district hoping to meet you and have a personalized tour of Congress

Consider: It makes sense that you’d want to deliver your remarks on an important measure like homeland security, although you could always have your remarks entered in the permanent record without actually presenting them. It may be harder to overlook school kids from home—remember, their parents are voters—although the visit was unannounced and your staff can arrange the tour.

Conflict 6

- 3:00 P.M. CNN Interview on affordable housing
- 3:00 P.M. Floor vote on raising the minimum wage by 20 cents an hour

Consider: This is another tough call. You want the publicity that CNN can give you, but your opponent in the next election could raise questions about why you are not doing your job if you do not vote on an important measure like the minimum wage.

Conflict 7

- 8:00 P.M. Evening reception in Georgetown with lobbyists from Greenpeace
- 8:00 P.M. Evening function at the White House honoring the Canadian prime minister
- 8:00 P.M. Quiet time with family

Consider: The Greenpeace reception would allow you to mix with sympathetic lobbyists who support your environmental concerns. However, it means giving up an event at the White House. All of this weighs against time with your family, which is always a tough choice to make.

Cue taking is necessary when a lawmaker doesn't know much about the legislation on the table, and logrolling is effective when the outcome of a vote doesn't matter to the representative. Every so often, though, members have to cast votes that matter to their constituents on things their constituents are aware of and feel intensely about. These are the votes that get noticed, the votes that could influence how constituents react the next time they see the member's name on a ballot. Perhaps it's a vote involving an industry that employs a lot of people back home, like the automobile industry in the Midwest or the tobacco industry in the South. Maybe it's a vote about something that touches people's lives in a direct way, like tax increases, health-care costs, Social Security benefits, or education. These votes require extra care.⁴⁸

Likewise, members will take notice when an issue mobilizes elite groups in their districts. Issues of this nature tend to be narrow and don't involve large numbers of constituents, but they can matter strongly to the group with a stake in the outcome—for instance, cigarette manufacturers facing a new surcharge on their product. Because elites are politically active, resource-rich groups that can use their clout to help or hinder a member's reelection prospects, they can command a lot of notice despite their size.

On rare occasions, a vote can be tricky if a representative feels strongly about the matter at hand and holds a position that is at odds with the position of her constituents. Demystifying Government: Burke's Dilemma explains.

It's unusual for a single vote to mean the difference between political life and death. Often, members will consider their overall voting record as they look toward the next campaign, rather than worry about any particular vote. They'll try to avoid casting what political scientist John Kingdon calls a "string of votes" against a series of constituent interests that could form the basis for a future campaign against them. They'll also try to be conscious of ways to explain the more controversial parts of their voting record to their constituents, perhaps by pointing to other actions more in line with constituent wishes or by finding shelter for their votes in the supportive words of the president or other authorities their constituents might respect.⁴⁹

They do these things because they recognize that while most votes will be inconsequential, there will always be a handful of votes on salient issues that can generate polit-

trustee: A philosophy of representation that says officials are elected for their wisdom and to exercise their judgment of the national interest, even when it is at odds with their constituents' wishes.

delegate: A philosophy of representation that says officials are elected to carry out constituent interests, even when these interests conflict with what the representative believes is the right thing to do.

DEMYSTIFYING GOVERNMENT

Burke's Dilemma

Before you get the sense that legislators try to make everyone happy all the time, you should consider a couple of things. Legislators have values, and sometimes they want to cast votes on principles that could contradict constituent wishes. Some legislators believe that they were hired to vote their conscience and experience, to do what they felt was best for the nation even if it contradicts the views of their constituents. These considerations can factor into their voting decisions, depending in part on how they view the notion of representation.

Edmund Burke, eighteenth-century political philosopher and member of the British Parliament, espoused the view of representatives as **trustees** who are elected to exercise their best judgment of the national interest. His perspective conflicts with the more widely held contemporary American view that representatives are **delegates** of the people who put them in office and are thereby obligated to vote their constituents' wishes. Both are legitimate ways to understand representation.

Most of the time, the difference between the trustee and delegate approaches to representation isn't relevant. Because most votes are not controversial, and because the personal philosophy of candidates recruited to run for office typically matches the prevailing views of the district, significant differences between representative and constituent do not emerge often or can get lost in the shuffle of legislation.

However, should members face a rare, highly visible vote on a matter where their best judgment puts them at odds with their constituents' wishes, they face a dilemma. In fact, they face "Burke's Dilemma," as Burke himself found his view of the national interest in conflict with the wishes of his constituents.

It's probably easy to see how the trustee view of representation can have its political costs. On matters of principle, it's also easy to see how representatives might wish to risk these costs and vote against their constituents' wishes in order to do what they feel is best for the nation.

ical risk. The riskiest type of vote is on a highly visible and unpredictable matter that the member cannot avoid, like the decision members of Congress had to face in 2002 over whether to support military action against Iraq, or the votes to impeach President Trump.

9.8 Working in Congress: Back Home

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Speak about the relationship between members of Congress and their constituents.

Whether members regard themselves as delegates or as trustees, the folks back home are the ones who will decide whether they get to return to Washington for another term. Legislative voting is, of course, one of the determining factors that constituents might use when they decide whether to reelect an incumbent. There's another side to the job that's more personal and often more mundane than what a member does in Washington. It's about constituent service, and it's a key part of what members of Congress do to keep their voters satisfied with their performance.

Constituent service can help the entire district at once or serve one constituent at a time. Members are always looking out for things to bring back to their districts—tangible items like public projects or federal jobs. These are the fruits of logrolling, and since every member needs them, every other member is sympathetic to the need to trade off favors for favors. Remember the \$20,000 limestone replica of the Great Wall of China that we mentioned in Section 9.3? That represented a \$20,000 federal outlay to a congressional district. Members can point to items like this at reelection time as concrete evidence of their effectiveness in serving community interests and needs.

On a more individual level, members (with an important assist from their staff) regularly perform **casework** for constituents who have problems they would like to see handled by the federal government. Casework is homework in the literal sense of the word because it requires members to use their legislative positions to address requests from people back home that can be serious and important—as well as mundane or tedious. Just like the relationship that so many of us have to doing homework, it's fair to say that most legislators do not find this to be the most fulfilling part of their job. However (just like our homework assignments), it's important to do (your grade—and their reelection prospects—hinge on doing it), and the work never stops pouring in.

Some casework involves problems constituents have with government agencies. For instance, a constituent having trouble getting his Social Security check or veteran's benefits might contact a member of Congress for help. Someone having trouble getting a passport also could turn to his or her member for assistance. So might somebody whose child wants a congressional nomination to attend West Point.

Not all casework is about navigating the bureaucracy. Lots of people contact their member of Congress because they want to receive a flag that was flown over the Capitol (flags are raised and lowered over the dome with great frequency in order to provide this service).⁵⁰ Many are interested in arranging a tour of the House, Senate, or White House during their family trip to Washington.

Other requests are just downright odd. Members have been asked for recipes, transportation on military aircraft, help changing a grade in a college course (don't bother trying—it can't be done), and all sorts of unusual, personal items. These requests are granted if possible, or turned down gently, but they're always taken seriously because there's no point in antagonizing a potential voter, even though responding to these requests takes time.

All constituent requests may get a hearing, but members of Congress do not regard all constituents the same way, especially as they think about the next election. Members try to be alert to the groups of constituents they can count on to vote for them, those they can count on to support them intensely, and those whose support they probably can never win. The strong supporters can be pretty easy to identify, but at the margins, many representatives will confess to some fuzziness in their picture of whom they can rely on politically.

Political scientist Richard E. Fenno uses the term **home style** to describe the way members approach these different constituency groups. The way representatives size up the political inclinations of people in their district can affect the way they allocate staff resources in the district, how they fashion their trips home, and how they explain to their constituents what they do in Washington.⁵¹

casework: Service performed by members of Congress for constituents with individual problems or complaints that they would like the government to address.

home style: The way legislators approach constituents, determined partly by how they size up their support in the district.

Fenno says members—without being fully conscious of it—divide their districts into a set of overlapping constituencies based on perceptions of political support. From this perspective, a relatively small number of people can have a disproportionate influence on the member’s approach to the whole district. Figure 9.6 illustrates the different layers of constituents that make up a member’s district. Imagine that the circles in the figure represent different constituent groups in a district. Consider that constituents who are closer to the “bull’s-eye” have more influence with their representative.

9.9 Staying in Congress

It shouldn’t be too hard to figure out that when you add up the cost of all those staff members and the price of travel back to the district, members of Congress have a number of perks that ease the burden of their jobs and help grease the way towards reelection. The truth is, we haven’t even scratched the surface of the rewards members of Congress get when they serve.

LEARNING OBJECTIVE
Evaluate whether the perks of serving in Congress outweigh the disadvantages.

9.9a Perks

You can start with the prestige of office (which is greater for senators but not so shabby for representatives). Tack on an annual salary in 2021 of \$174,000.⁵² Then, there are the professional and personal perks, such as the following:

- Allowances averaging \$1,268,000 in the House and between \$6 and \$8 million in the Senate for
 - Legislative, administrative and clerical staff
 - Office expenses
 - Travel to and from one's home district or state based on distance from Washington
 - Franking (postage)
- Government subsidized health and life insurance
- Pension plan (typical lifetime benefit with retirement at age 60 after 20 years: \$1,000,000)
- Recording studio
- Automobile leasing privileges
- Free office and airport parking
- Richly furnished offices for senior members and secret Senate “hideaway” offices
- House and Senate gymnasium
- House Child Care Center
- Subsidized haircuts (Senate only)
- Subsidized House and Senate restaurant privileges⁵³

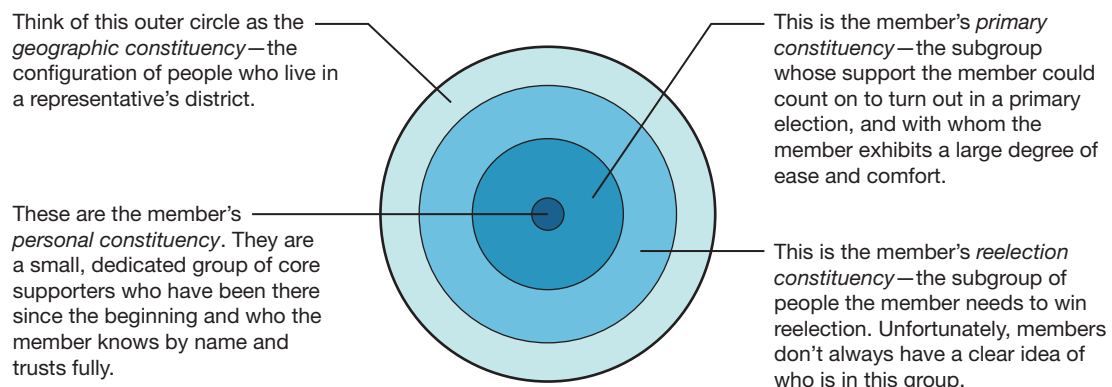


FIGURE 9.6 Constituencies inside Constituencies^{T11}

It's hard to put an exact figure on the salary, benefits, and allowances a member receives because a lot depends on sliding scales adjusted by the distance a member has to travel from home or by the population of a senator's state. But it should be pretty easy to see that service in Congress can be lucrative and offer perks that you wouldn't be able to find in many other jobs.

Compensation has grown in recent years. Take the salary figures as an example. In 1990, the congressional salary was \$98,400, which means it increased by \$75,600 in two decades (it was last raised in 2009). That's a steep increase in a relatively short time—and quite a change from the \$6 per day members earned in the First Congress.

More importantly, much of what members get in the form of taxpayer-subsidized benefits helps them stay in office. Travel allowances enable members to return to their districts to bolster support among their primary and reelection constituencies. The “franking” privilege, which allows members to substitute their signature for postage, enables them to send newsletters to constituents at no charge—newsletters that keep constituents familiar with their members' name and accomplishments (as told from the perspective of the member, of course). Access to video and audio recording equipment enables media-savvy members to take their positions to constituents in a more visible way.

9.9b Media Access

In fact, the media-saturated environment in which all political figures operate gives members of Congress a number of opportunities to keep their images and messages in front of constituents in a way that most political challengers would find hard to match. Your representative and senators have websites where you can go to find the latest “news” about what they've been up to, packaged to present your member in the most favorable light. Websites also facilitate casework by giving constituents an easy way to make frequently asked requests. Social media permit members (or their staffs) to reach constituents through Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram (of course, their challengers are free to do the same).

It's worth taking a second to check out one of your representative's websites. Go to <http://senate.gov>, then select “Senators” and “States” to locate the senators from your home state. If you're not from the United States, you could select the state your school is in, or any state you like. Click on their name and you'll be directed right to their website. Take a minute to look around, especially at the way they present themselves. What's your reaction?

Members of Congress also have easy access to conventional media. By virtue of their position in Congress, members are **newsworthy** and can command the attention of local radio and television in their districts with little effort. Senior members can attract national media as well. Committee chairs presiding over an issue in the news will find themselves in demand, as will members of the leadership of both parties and practically any senator, regardless of the story.

Everyone in Congress can take advantage of C-SPAN, the cable service that provides coverage of floor debate and key hearings on three channels operating 24/7. If a member wants to make points with the folks back home, a two-minute appearance from the floor of the House or Senate broadcast on C-SPAN offers great publicity.⁵⁴

The value of all this media attention rests with the ability it gives members to publicize themselves and their actions. Members naturally want to claim credit for doing things they know their constituents will support, and the media (supplemented by member websites, social media, and newsletters) provide a natural way to do this. Leaders want to do the same thing for their party and will use the media to communicate whatever messages they feel give them an advantage over their adversaries, even to the point of staging media events to draw attention to their message.

9.9c The Incumbency Advantage

There have been frequent shifts in party control of Congress in recent years: from Republicans to Democrats in 2006; to Republicans in the House in 2010, then to Republicans

newsworthy: The conditions under which a story warrants publication or dissemination, based on a set of values applied by newspaper editors and television producers. Newsworthy stories typically have conflict, proximity and relevance to the audience, timeliness, and familiarity.

entirely in 2014; then back to Democrats in the House in 2018 and in the Senate in 2020. Nonetheless, individual incumbents are reelected in overwhelming numbers. Prior to the 2020 election, Republicans controlled 199 House seats, meaning they needed to pick up 19 seats to claim a majority. If all 435 seats were competitive, this wouldn't sound like a difficult task, but in fact, most House seats were never in play. There are several reasons for this. One is the strategic use of the perks of office by incumbents. Gerrymandering and the clustering of Democratic voters is another. Looming over everything is money. PAC money flows more freely to those who hold the reins of power than to those who wish to replace them, and Chapter 8 showed us just how much money now floods the political system.

Incumbents overall are able to far out-raise their challengers—in some cases, acting preemptively to raise so much money well in advance of the election that strong challengers never make the race. Challengers looking at an incumbent with name recognition, access to the perks of office, and a huge wallet are acting rationally if they think they'll never be able to catch up, and in the process, never be able to communicate their message and structure the agenda of the race. (This also explains why both parties will look to wealthy candidates who can self-finance campaigns against incumbents.)

The ability to raise large sums of money has a darker side. Members know they have to raise money to maintain their advantage, and they have to raise it in large quantities as campaign costs are high and continue to soar higher. Imagine serving in the House and having to run for reelection every two years. You'd never be done with your fund-raising. Senators have six years between contests but have to run statewide—a more expensive proposition, except in small states.

Money may be easy to come by, but members still have to ask for it. Some find the process distasteful. If you think about it for a second, no matter how big your ego or how much you feel you're worth it, many people cannot glide easily into a room filled with strangers, give a five- or ten-minute presentation about how important their reelection is to everyone in attendance, and then ask for large sums of cash. Calling potential donors on the telephone is hardly any better.

Herein lies a key dilemma of twenty-first-century legislative politics. Members of Congress are showered with perks. They have power and visibility. Once elected, the likelihood of keeping their job is greater than at any time in memory.

But the job has become more distasteful than ever before.

Between constant fund-raising, intense partisan bickering, endless casework, and long hours away from home and family, members can be forgiven for wondering whether the demands of such a seemingly glamorous occupation are worth it. In an era when it is more possible than ever to make a long career out of serving in the national legislature, it's not unusual for members to ask themselves whether it pays to serve.

Would you stay? It's a difficult question to answer if you've never put in the effort to run for office, just like it's hard for you to say if you'd go to college again until you've been through it once. It might seem easy to say no to staying in Congress, but if you were elected to one term in the House, you have already spent two years campaigning and raising money before you were sworn in, and another two years in office doing more campaigning and raising more money for your anticipated reelection campaign. That's four years of campaign work in order to serve two years in office. It's hard to walk away from an investment like that.

So, while some walk away, many stay despite the complaints—and some of them strive for higher office. For those who see elected office as a career, an eye is often turned to the next level of the political food chain. House members with long-term ambitions will wait for a Senate seat to become vacant. Many senators look in the mirror at some point in their careers and see a future president.

And why not? Even though the Constitution makes Congress the centerpiece of the political establishment, in the contemporary world no one is more visible than the American president. As an office, the presidency is quite different from Congress—less deliberative, less collaborative, and far more dependent on the actions and personality of one

individual. It's also hard to make a successful bid for the presidency from Congress, even though so many members have tried. In this regard, Barack Obama is the exception to the rule. Given the huge differences between the two offices, maybe it's not surprising that only Obama, John F. Kennedy, and Warren Harding successfully made the move down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House. Let's turn to Chapter 10 and see what they found waiting for them when they got there.

Chapter Review

Discuss how the way congressional districts are drawn can determine who gets elected to Congress.

Before you can get to Congress, you have to run for election, and the way House district lines are drawn is a political matter that can dramatically influence who wins elections (senators, elected statewide, don't face this issue). Gerrymandering is the process of drawing district lines for political purposes, to bolster the prospects of one party at the expense of the other.

Describe the demographic makeup of Congress, and explain how it differs from the population at large.

With the high cost of campaigning, wealthy candidates who can finance their own race have become popular in recent years. Although women have been elected to Congress in larger numbers than ever before, members are still overwhelmingly male. Most members of Congress are White, college-educated professionals.

Identify key congressional norms, and explain the purpose they serve for the institution.

Like any institution, Congress has informal norms of behavior that members learn as they become familiar with the institution. Congressional norms emphasize flexibility, compromise, and civility—qualities that might not arise spontaneously in the often-contentious legislative environment. As partisanship has overtaken Congress, norms have begun to break down.

Contrast the organization of the House of Representatives with the organization of the Senate.

Discuss ways in which minority rights are protected by Senate procedure.

The House and the Senate are organized differently, with the House less likely to tolerate minority dissent. Where the House places strict limits on debate, the Senate is respectful of the individual wishes of its members to the point that a single senator can filibuster legislation unless sixty colleagues vote to terminate debate. Both houses are organized around standing committees and subcommittees that hold hearings on legislative matters. Among the important functions Congress performs are writing an annual federal budget and overseeing the actions of the bureaucracy. The Senate confirms presidential appointments, and both houses play a role in the impeachment of federal officials.

Identify key congressional leadership positions, and explain the role of leadership in Congress.

A parallel leadership structure is in place in both chambers, with the majority party responsible for determining the legislative agenda and chairing committees. The leader of the majority party in the House is the Speaker, who presides over the chamber. The vice president of the United States presides over the Senate, but there is little to do in this role with the important exception of being able to cast tie-breaking votes. Both parties have leaders and whips. With few exceptions, committee leadership is determined by seniority.

Discuss how members of Congress manage their work expectations.

Members of Congress face an intense legislative workload and the responsibility for handling constituent problems. Staff members help manage the work, but members still rely on shortcuts like cue taking from other members to figure out how to vote on a wide range of issues they know nothing about.

Explain why members of Congress pay close attention to the votes they cast.

Voting is a particularly important concern for members, who need to avoid casting a string of votes against different constituent groups, who might oppose them in the next election.

Speak about the relationship between members of Congress and their constituents.

Members tend not to see their district as a uniform entity, instead focusing their energy on maintaining good relationships with voters they believe are most likely to renominate and reelect them. It can be a demanding job.

Evaluate whether the perks of serving in Congress outweigh the disadvantages.

For all the perks of office that give incumbents an electoral advantage over challengers—including access to media resources that help them boost their name recognition and communicate messages to voters—the demands of casework and fund-raising can make the job a taxing one. This leads some members to walk away from public service, although many make a career out of running for and serving in Congress.

apprenticeship The legislative norm that says freshmen members of Congress should limit their activity and defer to senior members as they learn the ways of the institution. Apprenticeship is no longer enforced in Congress. (p. 271)

appropriations Legislation permitting the government to spend money that determines how much will be spent and how it will be spent. (p. 279)

bicameral A legislature composed of two houses. (p. 271)

casework Service performed by members of Congress for constituents with individual problems or complaints that they would like the government to address. (p. 294)

cloture The procedure for ending a filibuster. A cloture vote requires a 60 percent majority of the Senate. (p. 275)

committee chair The member of Congress responsible for running a committee, who can have great influence over the committee agenda and, by extension, the legislative process. (p. 289)

compromise A form of reciprocity in which members of Congress exhibit flexibility over their legislative objectives in exchange for future flexibility from their colleagues. (p. 270)

conference committees Committees made up of members of both houses of Congress, assembled when the House and Senate pass different versions of the same legislation. If the conference committee can iron out the differences, a compromise version of the legislation is sent back to both houses for final passage. If it cannot arrive at a compromise, the legislation dies. (p. 277)

Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 An act designed to centralize the congressional budgeting process, which established current procedures and timetables for writing a budget. (p. 279)

constituents Individuals living in a district represented by an elected official. (p. 267)

courtesy The legislative norm that members of Congress should treat each other with respect and avoid personal attacks, regardless of how much they may disagree. (p. 270)

cue taking Looking to other members of Congress for guidelines on how to cast a vote on a technical or unfamiliar matter. (p. 291)

delegate A philosophy of representation that says officials are elected to carry out constituent interests, even when these interests conflict with what the representative believes is the right thing to do. (p. 293)

discharge petition A House procedure that forces a floor vote on legislation stalled in committee. To succeed, a discharge petition must be signed by half the House membership. (p. 274)

elitism The theory that government responds to a small, stable, centralized hierarchy of corporate and academic leaders, military chiefs, people who own big media outlets, and members of a permanent government bureaucracy. People who subscribe to this position believe the actions of regular citizens, like voting and joining groups, simply mask the real power exercised by elites. (p. 267)

enumerated powers Powers directly granted to Congress by the Constitution. (p. 271)

filibuster The strategy available to senators to delay or derail legislation by refusing to relinquish their time on the Senate floor. The filibuster is possible only in the Senate, where rules permit unlimited time for debate. (p. 274)

gerrymandering Drawing district lines in a way that favors the electoral prospects of the party in power. (p. 266)

home style The way legislators approach constituents, determined partly by how they size up their support in the district. (p. 294)

impeachment The power granted to Congress to remove from office the president, vice president, judges, and other federal officials. (p. 280)

implied powers The broad constitutional grant of power to Congress that allows it to make all the laws that are “necessary and proper” to carry out its enumerated functions. (p. 272)

incumbent An official presently serving in office. (p. 267)

institutional patriotism The legislative norm that precludes members of Congress from acting or speaking in ways that would discredit the institution. (p. 270)

integrity A key component of reciprocity in which members of Congress are expected to keep their word with each other and honor their commitments. (p. 270)

iron triangle The ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship among an interest group, members of Congress sharing the interest group’s objectives, and bureaucrats in federal agencies responsible for carrying out legislation pertaining to the interest group’s field. Iron triangles can develop in any policy area, and many distinct iron-triangle relationships form because the federal government is responsible for a large number of policies. (p. 272)

joint committees Committees composed of members of the House and Senate that consider matters of interest to both houses. (p. 276)

legislative work The legislative norm that members of Congress should stay on top of the work required by the committee that deals with their area of specialization. (p. 270)

logrolling A form of reciprocity in which members of Congress exhibit mutual cooperation for each other’s pet projects. (p. 269)

majoritarian principle Procedures, such as those in place in the House of Representatives, that limit the ability of the minority party to influence the shape of legislation or the direction of the legislative agenda. (p. 284)

majority leader The number-two leadership position in the House of Representatives and the number-one leadership position in the Senate. In the House, the majority leader is the chief assistant to the Speaker; in the Senate, the majority leader is the chief leader on a par with the House Speaker. (p. 285)

majority whip The number-three leadership position in the House of Representatives and the number-two leadership posi-

tion in the Senate. In both instances, the whip is responsible for mobilizing party members to support the leadership on key issues. (p. 285)

minority leader The number-one leadership position for the opposition party in the House of Representatives and Senate, whose responsibilities mirror those of the majority leader but without the ability to set or advance the legislative agenda. (p. 285)

minority rights Procedures, such as those in place in the Senate, that permit members of the minority party the opportunity to resist legislative actions they oppose. (p. 284)

minority whip The number-two leadership position for the opposition party in the House of Representatives and Senate, whose responsibilities mirror those of the majority whip. (p. 285)

name recognition An informal measure of how much the public is aware of a candidate or elected official, based on how widely people are able to identify the candidate or official. (p. 267)

newsworthy The conditions under which a story warrants publication or dissemination, based on a set of values applied by newspaper editors and television producers. Newsworthy stories typically have conflict, proximity and relevance to the audience, timeliness, and familiarity. (p. 296)

norms Unspoken rules of behavior that people adhere to in an institution like Congress that allow people to fit in and help the institution run smoothly. (p. 269)

oversight The process of congressional review of the bureaucracy. (p. 279)

party caucus The group of all members of a political party in the House or Senate that meets to discuss and formulate legislative priorities. (p. 287)

pluralism The theory that government responds to individuals through their memberships in groups, assuring that government is responsive to a wide range of voices. People who subscribe to this position believe that the wide distribution of resources in society drives the decisions government officials make. (p. 267)

pork barrel Wasteful or unnecessary spending that can result from logrolling. Whether something is a pork-barrel project or a valuable use of taxpayer dollars may depend on whether you stand to benefit from it. (p. 270)

president pro tempore The senator charged with the honorary duty of presiding over the Senate in the absence of the vice president of the United States. (p. 285)

racial gerrymandering Drawing district lines in a way that combines disparate populations of minority groups in order to guarantee representation by those groups in Congress. (p. 266)

ranking minority member The minority party counterpart to the committee chair, but without the power to influence the direction of the committee. (p. 289)

recess appointments The constitutional power granted to the president to make nominations while Congress is out of session that do not require Senate approval. The appointments stand until the end of the congressional term. (p. 280)

reciprocity The legislative norm that encourages members of Congress to support each other's initiatives, even if there is no direct political benefit in doing so. (p. 270)

reconciliation A procedure in the budget-writing process, whereby appropriations made in a number of congressional committees and subcommittees need to be brought in line with spending targets established early in the process. (p. 279)

redistricting The process by which congressional districts are redrawn every ten years following the release of new census data. (p. 264)

responsible parties Political parties whose legislative members act in concert, taking clear positions on issues and voting as a unit in accordance with their stated positions. (p. 285)

Rules Committee The committee of the House that channels legislation to the floor for debate and a vote on passage. (p. 273)

select committee A House or Senate committee established on a temporary basis to review a specific matter. Typically, select committees make recommendations but do not move legislation. (p. 274)

seniority The custom of awarding committee chairs on the basis of length of service. (p. 289)

Speaker of the House The leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives who exercises control over the operation of that branch through formal and informal means. (p. 284)

specialization The legislative norm that members of Congress should become experts in a legislative field. (p. 270)

standing committees Permanent congressional committees that handle matters related to a specific legislative topic. (p. 272)

subcommittees Subunits of standing committees that do the detail work involved in writing legislation. (p. 272)

substantive representation The ability of a legislator to represent the agenda or interests of a group to which he or she does not personally belong. (p. 269)

trustee A philosophy of representation that says officials are elected for their wisdom and to exercise their judgment of the national interest, even when it is at odds with their constituents' wishes. (p. 293)

Resources

You might be interested in examining some of what the following authors have said about the topics we've been discussing:

Davidson, Roger H., and Walter J. Oleszek. *Congress and Its Members*, 17th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2019. A comprehensive overview of topics relating to the operation of

Congress, including congressional structure, leadership, and decision making.

Dodd, Lawrence C., and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds. *Congress Reconsidered*, 11th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2017. The essays in this volume cover a variety of topics related to the operation of Congress.

Ornstein, Norman J., Thomas E. Mann, and Michael J. Malbin. *Vital Statistics on Congress*, 2020. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2020. A thorough source of data on Congress.

Fenno, Richard F. *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. New York: Longman, 2009. The author traveled with members of Congress to see how they approach their constituents as they work for reelection.

Margolies-Mezvinsky, Marjorie. *A Woman's Place: The Freshmen Women Who Changed the Face of Congress*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1994. A former member of Congress dis-

cusses how the institution was changed by the largest influx of female representatives in its history.

You may also be interested in looking at your senators' websites. Go to www.senate.gov and select "Senators" and "States"—then click on your state to find links to your home state senators. You can check out their voting records, personal backgrounds, and other information. You can also view the Senate floor schedule, recent vote results, and Senate news.

Notes

1 "Congress Less Popular than Cockroaches, Traffic Jams," Public Policy Polling, January 8, 2013, at http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/2011/PPP_Release_Natl_010813_.pdf.

2 "Record Anti-Incumbent Sentiment ahead of 2014 Elections," The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, October 15, 2013, at <http://www.people-press.org/2013/10/15/record-anti-incumbent-sentiment-ahead-of-2014-elections/>.

3 "Record Anti-Incumbent Sentiment."

4 States can even gain population and lose seats if their growth was slower than population growth in other states.

5 Roger H. Davidson and Walter J. Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 7th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2000), 48–49.

6 "Geography, Not Gerrymandering, May Explain GOP's Hold on House," National Public Radio, November 15, 2012, at <https://www.npr.org/sections/itsallpolitics/2012/11/15/165230606/geography-not-gerrymandering-may-hold-key-to-gops-hold-on-house>.

7 David Weigel, "How Ridiculous Gerrymanders Saved the House Republican Majority," Slate.com, November 7, 2012.

8 Adam Serwer, Jaeah Lee, and Zaineb Mohammed, "Now That's What I Call Gerrymandering!" MotherJones.com, November 14, 2012.

9 Linda L. Fowler, *Candidates, Congress, and the American Democracy* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993), 84–87.

10 Davidson and Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 64–69.

11 Davidson and Oleszek, 56–59. The central cases were *Shaw v. Reno* 509 US 630 (1993) and *Miller v. Johnson* 515 US 900 (1995).

12 *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013).

13 Davidson and Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 53–56.

14 Hannah Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967).

15 Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, *A Woman's Place: The Freshmen Women Who Changed the Face of Congress* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1994), 35. The member this happened to was Representative Jennifer Dunn, a Washington State Republican.

16 Sure, people roll logs down rivers. Check out <http://uslogrolling.com/>. The origin of the term, though, is believed to be in the nineteenth-century custom of neighbors cooperatively rolling logs to build a fire.

17 These are actual congressionally funded projects. In the 1970s, Wisconsin Senator William Proxmire published a list of what he considered dubious projects funded by Congress and gave the most outlandish among them a "Golden Fleece Award."

18 David W. Rhode, Norman J. Ornstein, and Robert L. Peabody, "Political Change and Legislative Norms in the U.S. Senate, 1957–1974," in Glenn R. Parker (ed.), *Studies of Congress* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1985), 151; emphasis in original.

19 Burdett Loomis, *The New American Politician* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 6–19.

20 David W. Rhode, Norman J. Ornstein, and Robert L. Peabody, "Political Change and Legislative Norms in the U.S. Senate, 1957–1974," in Glenn R. Parker (ed.), *Studies of Congress* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1985), 181–184.

21 Deirdre Walsh, Manu Raju, Eric Bradner, and Steven Sloan, "Democrats End House Sit-In Protest Over Gun Control," CNN, June 24, 2016, at <http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/22/politics/john-lewis-sit-in-gun-violence/>.

22 Barbara Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking: New Legislative Processes in the U.S. Congress* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1997), 5–6.

23 U.S. Senate Select Committee on Ethics, at <https://www.ethics.senate.gov/public/>.

24 House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, at <https://climatecrisis.house.gov/about>.

25 Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, 9–31.

26 U.S. Senate, at https://www.senate.gov/reference/reference_index_subjects/Filibuster_vrd.htm.

27 You can read about the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 online at <https://history.house.gov/Historical-Highlights/1951-2000/Congressional-Budget-and-Impoundment-Control-Act-of-1974/>.

28 Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, 63–69.

29 Davidson and Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 205–206.

30 Sinclair, *Unorthodox Lawmaking*, 32–50.

31 Molly E. Reynolds and Jackson Gode, "Tracking House Oversight in the Trump Era," The Brookings Institution, December 2020, at <https://www.brookings.edu/interactives/tracking-house-oversight-in-the-trump-era/>.

32 Davidson and Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 324–330.

33 Davidson and Oleszek, 314–317.

34 Russell Wheeler, “Senate Obstructionism Handed a Raft of Judicial Vacancies to Trump—What Has He Done with Them?” The Brookings Institution, June 4, 2018.

35 You can read the articles of impeachment at Congress.gov, <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hres/755/BILLS-116hres755enr.pdf>.

36 Davidson and Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 328.

37 Davidson and Oleszek, 165.

38 The term *whip* derives from the person in a fox hunt who is responsible for keeping the dogs in line. See https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Party_Whips.htm.

39 Mike Viqueira, “Medicare Vote Got Surreal in House,” MSNBC News, November 24, 2003.

40 Senate Republican Policy Committee, at <http://www.rpc.senate.gov/about>.

41 Senate Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee, at <http://www.dsoc.senate.gov>.

42 Richard Fenno, *Congressmen in Committees* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).

43 Christopher J. Deering and Steven S. Smith, *Committees in Congress*, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1997), 124–182.

44 The reform measures passed by the three House committees were merged into one bill considered by the entire House, and the measures passed by the two Senate committees were merged into a separate bill considered by the entire Senate.

45 Davidson and Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 153–155.

46 John W. Kingdon, *Congressmen’s Voting Decisions*, 3rd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 75–96.

47 Davidson and Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 279.

48 Kingdon, *Congressmen’s Voting Decisions*, 29–45.

49 Kingdon.

50 If you’re interested in obtaining one, keep in mind that there’s a charge and you should allow six weeks for delivery.

51 Fenno, *Congressmen in Committees*, 1–53.

52 As of 2019. Data from the House of Representatives, at <https://pressgallery.house.gov/member-data/salaries>.

53 Figures are as of 2016 and are compiled from Davidson and Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 153–155; the National Taxpayer’s Union; and Ida A. Brudnick, “Congressional Salaries and Allowances: In Brief,” Congressional Research Service, July 14,

2016, at <http://www.senate.gov/CRSPubs/9c14ec69-c4e4-4bd8-8953-f73daa1640e4.pdf>.

54 If you’re curious about who’s on C-SPAN right now, just go to their website at <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/schedule>.

Table, Figure, and Box Notes

T1 “Berman Concedes to Sherman in Bitter House Race,” *USA Today*, November 7, 2012.

T2 Ian Lovett, “Two Democrats, Two Incumbents and One Tough House Race,” *New York Times*, September 28, 2012.

T3 Roger H. Davidson and Walter Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 7th ed. (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1999), 130–31.

T4 Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky, *A Woman’s Place: The Freshmen Women Who Changed the Face of Congress* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1994) 38–39.

T5 Claire Hansen, “116th Congress by Party, Race, Gender and Religion,” *U.S. News and World Report*, January 3, 2019, at <https://www.usnews.com/news/politics/slideshows/116th-congress-by-party-race-gender-and-religion>.

T6 United States House of Representatives, at <http://www.house.gov/committees/>.

T7 United States Senate, at <https://www.senate.gov/legislative/cloture/clotureCounts.htm>.

T8 United States Senate, at <https://www.senate.gov/committees/>.

T9 United States Senate. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: Ryan Rodrick Beiler/Shutterstock.com; House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer: Albert H. Teich/Shutterstock.com; House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn: <https://www.majoritywhip.gov>; House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy: Jaguar PS/Shutterstock.com; House Minority Whip Steve Scalise: U.S. Congress; Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer: stocklight/Shutterstock.com; Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin: United States Senate of the House of Congress, http://durbin.senate.gov/page_images/Durbin002.jpg; Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell: Christopher Halloran/Shutterstock.com; Senate Minority Whip John Thune: United States Senate/John Klemmer; President Pro Tempore Patrick Leahy: Rob Crandall/Shutterstock.

T10 Roger H. Davidson and Walter Oleszek, *Congress and Its Members*, 13th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2009, 168.

T11 Richard F. Fenno, *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. New York: Longman, 2009.