

Congress

Chapter 12

The Representatives and Senators

- The Job
 - Salary of \$174,000 with retirement benefits
 - Office space in D.C. and at home and staff to fill it.
 - Travel allowances and franking privileges.
 - Often requires 10 to 14 hour days, lots of time away from the family, and lots of pressure from different people to “do the right thing.”

Extra Duties

- **Senate Leadership**

Majority Party Leader - \$193,400

Minority Party Leader - \$193,400

- **House Leadership**

Speaker of the House - \$223,500

Majority Leader - \$193,400

Minority Leader - \$193,400

The Representatives and Senators

Table 12.1 A Day in the Life of a Member of Congress

TYPICAL SCHEDULE IN WASHINGTON		TYPICAL SCHEDULE IN CONSTITUENCY	
8:00 A.M.	Budget Study Group:—Chair Leon Panetta, Budget Committee	7:30 A.M.	Business group breakfast: 20 leaders of the business community
8:45 A.M.	Mainstream Forum meeting	8:45 A.M.	Hoover Elementary School: 6th grade class assembly
9:15 A.M.	Meeting with Consulting Engineers Council from constituency about various issues of concern	9:45 A.M.	National Agriculture Day: speech
9:45 A.M.	Meet with Soybean Association representatives regarding agriculture appropriations projects	10:45 A.M.	Supplemental Food Shelf: pass foodstuffs to needy families
10:15 A.M.	WCHL radio interview (by phone)	12:00 NOON	Community college: student/faculty lunch, speech and Q & A
10:30 A.M.	Tape weekly radio show—budget	1:00 P.M.	Sunset Terrace Elementary School: assembly 4,5,6 grades, remarks/Q & A
11:00 A.M.	Meet with former student, now an author, about intellectual property issue	(Travel Time: 1:45 P.M.–2:45 P.M.)	
1:00 P.M.	Agriculture Subcommittee Hearing—Budget Overview and General Agriculture Outlook	2:45 P.M.	Plainview Day Care Facility: discuss changes in federal law with owner
2:30 P.M.	Meeting with Chair Bill Ford and Southern Democrats regarding HR-5, Striker Replacement Bill, possible amendments	4:00 P.M.	Town Hall meeting: American Legion
3:15 P.M.	Meet with Close-up students from district on steps of Capitol for photo and discussions	(Travel Time: 5:00 P.M.–5:45 P.M.)	
3:45 P.M.	Meet with professor regarding energy research programs	5:45 P.M.	PTA meeting: speech on education issues before Congress (also citizen involvement with national associations)
4:30 P.M.	Meet with constituent of Kurdish background regarding situation in Iraq	6:30 P.M.	Annual Dinner: St. John's Lutheran Church Development Activity Center
5:30–7:00 P.M.	Reception—Sponsored by National Association of Home Builders, honoring new president Mark Tipton from constituency	7:15 P.M.	Association for Children for Enforcement of Support meeting: discuss problems of enforcing child support payments
6:00–8:00 P.M.	Reception—Honoring retiring Rep. Bill Gray	(Travel Time 8:00 P.M.–8:30 P.M.)	
6:00–8:00 P.M.	Reception—Sponsored by Firefighters Association	8:30 P.M.	Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) meeting: speech on drinking age, drunk driving, uniform federal penalties
6:00–8:00 P.M.	Reception—Sponsored by American Financial Services Association	9:30 P.M.	State university class: discuss business issues before Congress

Sources: Adapted by permission from Craig Schultz, ed., *Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide*. Copyright © 1994 Congressional Management Foundation, Washington, D.C. and from David E. Price, *The Congressional Experience: A View from the Hill*. Copyright © 1999 Westview Press, a division of HarperCollins Publishers. Reprinted by permission of Westview Press, a member of Perseus Books, L.L.C.

The Representatives and Senators

Table 12.2 A Portrait of the 109th Congress: Some Statistics

CHARACTERISTIC	HOUSE (435 TOTAL)	SENATE (100 TOTAL)
Party		
Democrat	202	44
Republican	232	55
Independent	1	1
Gender		
Men	371	86
Women	64	14
Race		
Asian	4	1
African American	38	1
Hispanic	25	2
White and other	368	96
Religion		
Protestant	268	63
Roman Catholic	128	24
Jewish	26	11
Other and unspecified	10	2
Prior Occupation*		
Law	160	58
Business	162	30
Education	86	12
Public service/politics	163	32
Agriculture	28	5
Journalism	10	7
Real estate	38	3
Medicine	15	4
Other	61	6

*Some members specify more than one occupation.

Source: *Congressional Quarterly*.

United States Congress

113th United States Congress



Type

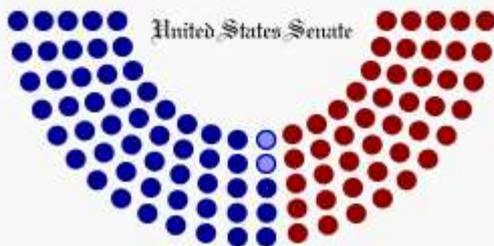
Type	Bicameral
Houses	Senate House of Representatives

Leadership

President of the Senate	Joe Biden, (D) Since January 20, 2009
President pro tempore of the Senate	Patrick Leahy, (D) Since December 17, 2012
Speaker of the House of Representatives	John Boehner, (R) Since January 5, 2011

Structure

Seats	535 voting members: 100 senators 435 representatives 6 non-voting members
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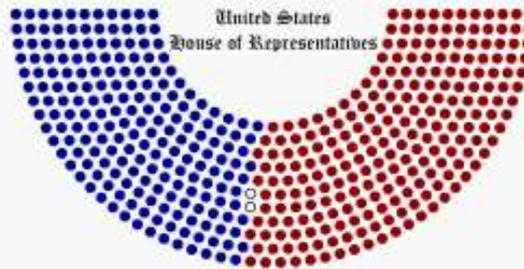
Senate political groups

Majority (55)

- Democratic (53)
- Independent (2)

Minority

- Republican (45)



House of Representatives political groups

- Republican (233)
- Democratic (200)
- vacant (2)

Elections

Senate last election	November 6, 2012
House of Representatives last election	November 6, 2012

Meeting place



United States Capitol
Washington, D.C., United States

Website

- Senate [↗](#)
- House of Representatives [↗](#)

Congressional Elections

- Who Wins Elections?
 - Incumbent: Those already holding office.

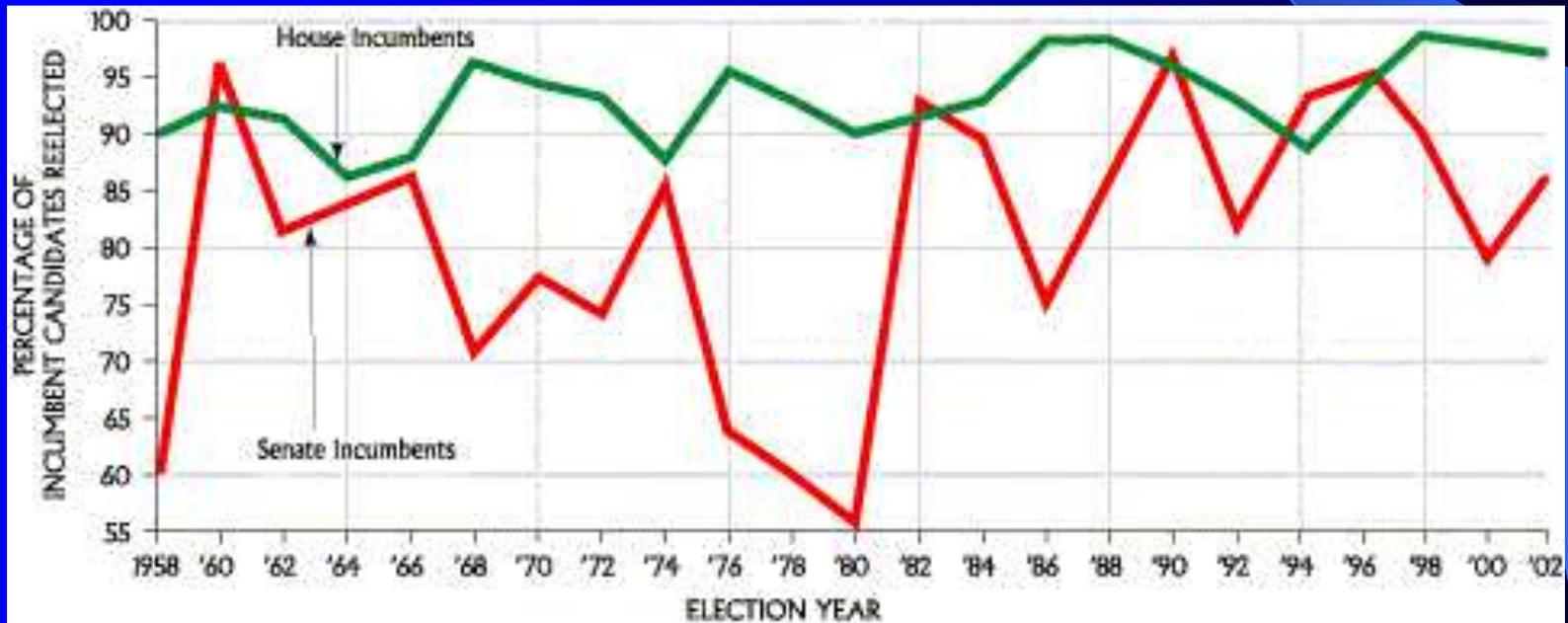


Figure 12.1

Congressional Elections

- The Advantages of Incumbents
 - Advertising:
 - The goal is to be visible to your voters.
 - Frequent trips home & newsletters are used.
 - Credit Claiming:
 - Service to individuals in their district.
 - Casework: specifically helping constituents get what they think they have a right to.
 - Pork Barrel: federal projects, grants, etc. made available in a congressional district or state.

Congressional Elections

- The Advantages of Incumbents
 - Position Taking:
 - Portray themselves as hard working, dedicated individuals.
 - Occasionally take a partisan stand on an issue.
 - Weak Opponents:
 - Most opponents are inexperienced in politics.
 - Most opponents are unorganized and underfunded.
 - Campaign Spending:
 - Challengers need to raise large sums to defeat an incumbent.
 - PACs give most of their money to incumbents.
 - Does PAC money “buy” votes in Congress?

Congressional Elections

- The Role of Party Identification
 - Most members represent the majority party in their district.
- Defeating Incumbents
 - Some incumbents face problems after a scandal or other complication in office.
 - They may face redistricting.
 - They may become a victim of a major political tidal wave.

Congressional Elections

- Open Seats
 - Greater likelihood of competition.
- Stability and Change
 - Incumbents provide stability in Congress.
 - Change in Congress occurs less frequently through elections.
 - Are term limits an answer?

How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- American Bicameralism

- Bicameral: Legislature divided into two houses.

- The House

- 435 members, 2 year terms of office.
 - Initiates all revenue bills, more influential on budget.
 - House Rules Committee
 - Limited debates.

- The Senate

- 100 members, 6 year terms of office.
 - Gives “advice & consent”, more influential on foreign affairs.
 - Unlimited debates. (filibuster)

How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- Congressional Leadership

- The House

- Lead by Speaker of the House - elected by House members.
- Presides over House.
- Major role in committee assignments and legislation.
- Assisted by majority leader and whips.

- The Senate

- Formerly lead by Vice President.
- Really lead by Majority Leader - chosen by party members.
- Assisted by whips.
- Must work with Minority leader.

How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- The Committees and Subcommittees
 - Four types of committees:
 - Standing committees: subject matter committees handle different policy areas.
 - Joint committees: few policy areas- made up of House & Senate members.
 - Conference committees: resolve differences in House and Senate bills.
 - Select committees: created for a specific purpose.

Senate Committees

- Committees
- **Standing**
 - Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
 - Appropriations
 - Armed Services
 - Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
 - Budget
 - Commerce, Science, and Transportation
 - Energy and Natural Resources
 - Environment and Public Works
 - Finance
 - Foreign Relations
 - Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
 - Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
 - Judiciary Rules and Administration
 - Small Business and Entrepreneurship
 - Veterans' Affairs
- **Special, Select, and Other**
 - Indian Affairs
 - Select Committee on Ethics
 - Select Committee on Intelligence
 - Special Committee on Aging
- **Joint**
 - Joint Committee on Printing
 - Joint Committee on Taxation
 - Joint Committee on the Library
 - Joint Economic Committee

House Committees

- Agriculture
- Appropriations
- Armed Services
- Budget
- Education and the Workforce
- Energy and Commerce
- Ethics
- Financial Services
- Foreign Affairs
- Homeland Security
- House Administration
- Judiciary
- Natural Resources
- Oversight and Government Reform
- Rules
- Science, Space, and Technology
- Small Business
- Transportation and Infrastructure
- Veterans' Affairs
- Ways and Means
- Intelligence
- Joint Economic Committee
- Joint Committee on the Library
- Joint Committee on Printing
- Joint Committee on Taxation

How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- The Committees and Subcommittees
 - The Committees at Work: Legislation and Oversight
 - Committees work on the 11,000 bills every session.
 - Some hold hearings and “mark up” meetings.
 - Oversight involves hearings and other methods of checking the actions of the executive branch.
 - As the size of government grows, oversight grows too.

How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- The Committees and Subcommittees
 - Getting on a Committee
 - Members want committee assignments that will help them get reelected, gain influence, and make policy.
 - New members express their committee preferences to the party leaders.
 - Support of the party is important in getting on the right committee.
 - Parties try to grant committee preferences.

How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- The Committees and Subcommittees
 - Getting Ahead on the Committee: Chairs and the Seniority System.
 - The chair is the most important position for controlling legislation.
 - Chairs were once chosen strictly by the seniority system.
 - Now seniority is a general rule, and members may choose the chair of their committee.

How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- **Caucuses: The Informal Organization of Congress**
 - **Caucus:** A group of members of Congress sharing some interest or characteristic.
 - **Caucuses pressure** for committee meetings and hearings and for votes on bills.
 - **Caucuses can be more effective** than lobbyists.

How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

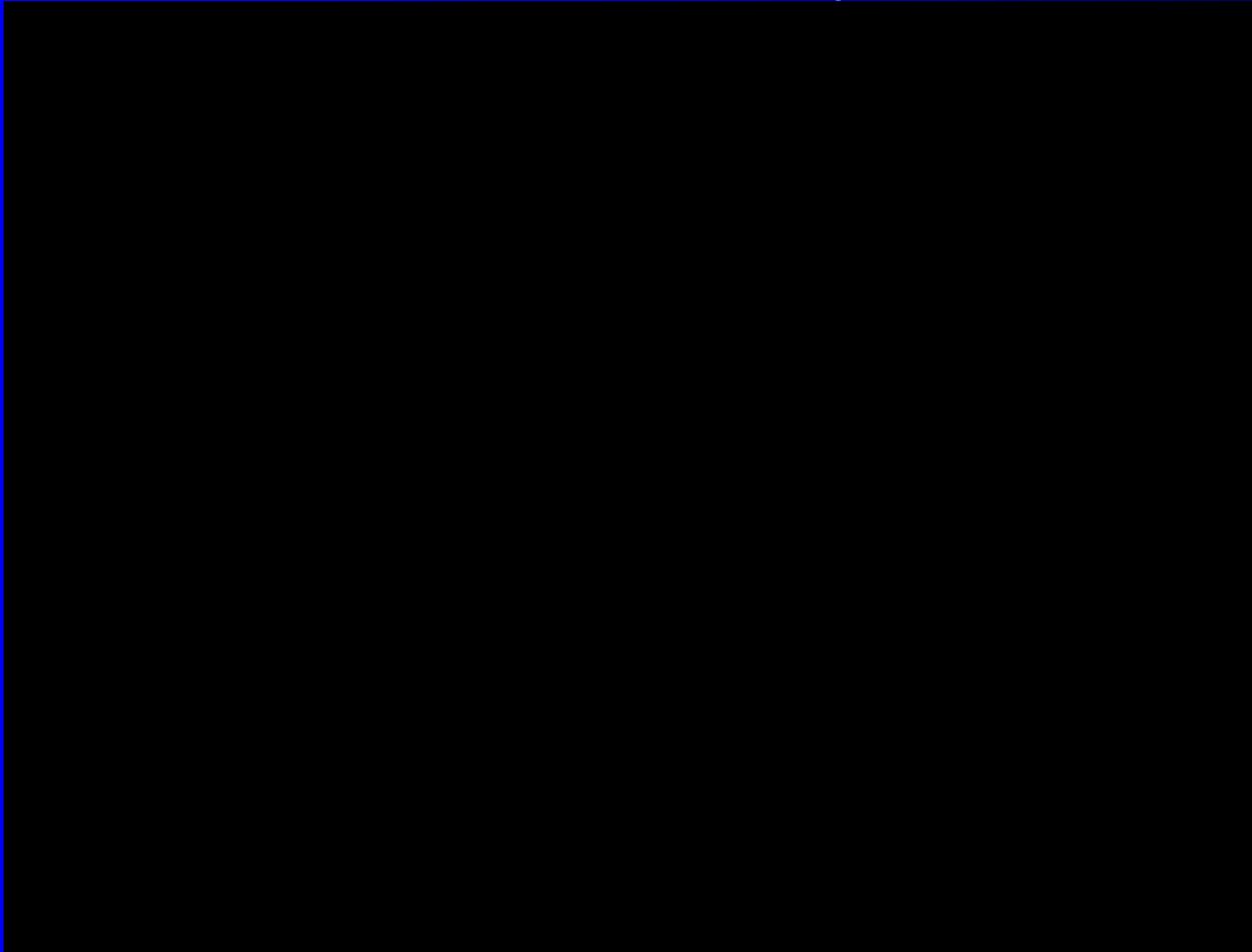
- Congressional Staff

- Personal staff: Work for the member. Mainly providing constituent service, but help with legislation too.
- Committee staff: organize hearings, research & write legislation, target of lobbyists.
- Staff Agencies: CRS, GAO, CBO provide specific information to Congress.

The Congressional Process

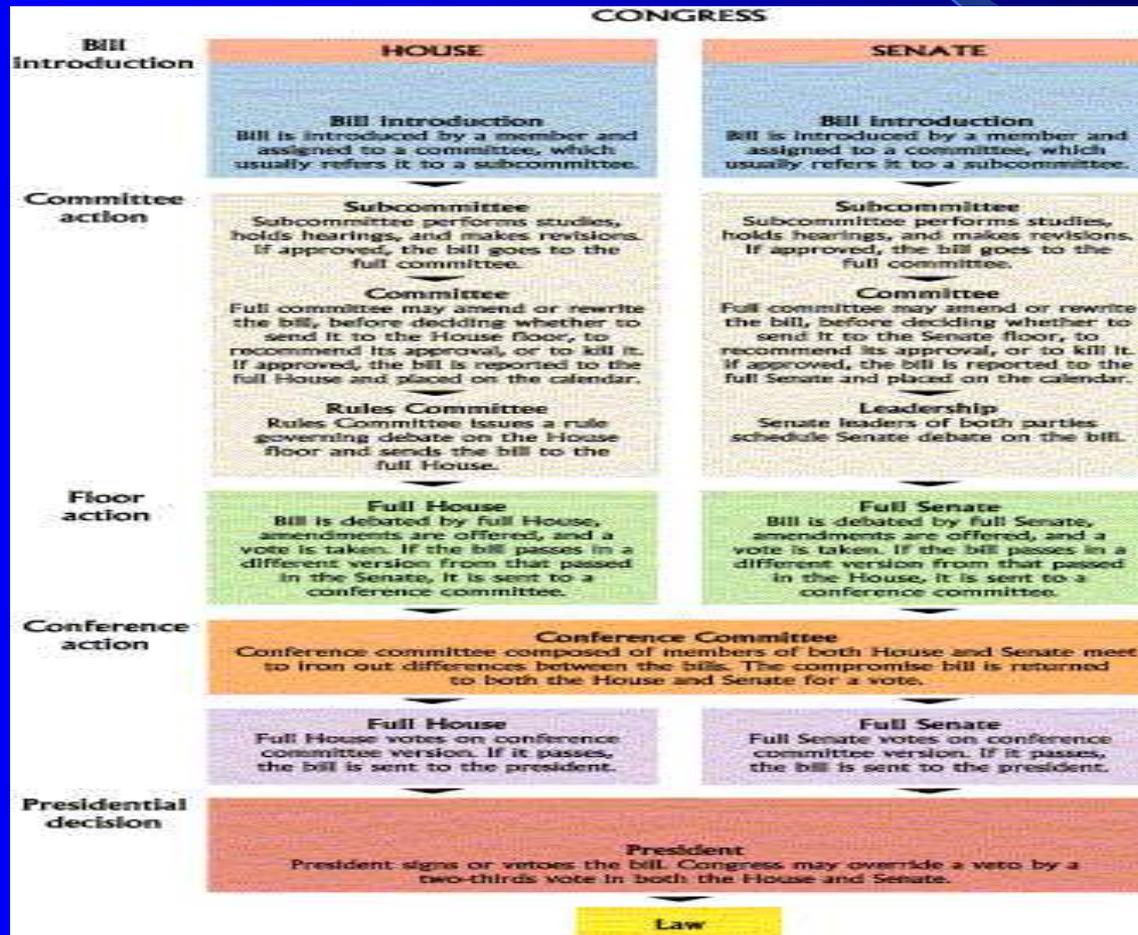
- Legislation:
 - Bill: A proposed law.
 - Anyone can draft a bill, but only members of Congress can introduce them.
 - More rules in the House than in the Senate.
 - Party leaders play a vital role in steering bills through both houses, but less in the Senate.
 - Countless influences on the legislative process.

How a Bill Becomes a Law



The Congressional Process

- How a Bill Becomes a Law (Figure 12.2)



The Congressional Process

- Presidents and Congress: Partners and Protagonists
 - Presidents have many resources to influence Congress (often called the “Chief Legislator”).
 - In order to “win” in Congress, the president must win several battles in each house.
 - Presidential leadership of Congress is at the margins and is most effective as a facilitator.

The Congressional Process

- Party, Constituency, and Ideology
 - Party Influence: Party leaders cannot force party members to vote a particular way, but many do vote along party lines.
 - Constituency versus Ideology: Most constituents are uninformed about their member. It is difficult for constituents to influence their member, but on controversial issues members can not ignore constituents.

The Congressional Process

- Lobbyists and Interest Groups

- There are several thousand lobbyists trying to influence Congress - the bigger the issue, the more lobbyists will be working on it.
- Lobbyists can be ignored, shunned and even regulated by Congress.
- Ultimately, it is a combination of lobbyists and others that influence members of Congress.

Understanding Congress

- Congress and Democracy
 - Leadership and committee assignments are not representative.
 - Congress does try to respond to what the people want, but some argue it could do a better job.
 - Members of Congress are responsive to the people, if the people make clear what they want.

Understanding Congress

- Congress and Democracy
 - Representation versus Effectiveness
 - Congress is responsive to so many interests that policy is uncoordinated, fragmented, and decentralized.
 - Congress is so representative that it is incapable of taking decisive action to deal with difficult problems.
 - Defenders argue because Congress is decentralized, there is no oligarchy to prevent comprehensive action.

Understanding Congress

- Congress and the Scope of Government
 - The more policies Congress works on, the more ways they can serve their constituencies.
 - The more programs that get created, the bigger government gets.
 - Everybody wants government programs cut, just not *their* programs.