

Presentation Pro

Magruder's American Government

CHAPTER 11 *Powers of Congress*

Powers of Congress

SECTION 1 The Scope of Congressional Powers

SECTION 2 The Expressed Powers of Money and Commerce

SECTION 3 Other Expressed Powers

SECTION 4 The Implied Powers

SECTION 5 The Nonlegislative Powers

The Nonlegislative Powers

- What is Congress's role in amending the Constitution and in deciding elections?
- What is Congress's impeachment power, and how has it been used in the past?
- What are Congress's executive powers?
- What is Congress's investigatory power?



Constitutional Amendments and Electoral Duties

Constitutional Amendments

- Article V gives Congress the power to propose amendments by a two-thirds vote in each house.

Electoral Duties

- In certain circumstances, the Constitution gives Congress special electoral duties.
- If no candidate for President receives a majority in the electoral college, the House decides the election.
- If no candidate for Vice President receives a majority in the electoral college, the Senate decides the election.
- Also, if the vice presidency is vacated, the President selects a **successor**, who faces congressional approval by a majority vote in both houses.



Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

5

Chapter 11, Section 5

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Impeachment Power

- The Constitution grants Congress the power of removing the President, Vice President, or other civil officers from their office through impeachment.
- The House has the sole power to **impeach**, or bring charges against the individual.
- There is then a trial in the Senate. A two-thirds vote of the senators present is needed for conviction.
- The penalty for conviction is removal from office.



Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

5

Chapter 11, Section 5

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Executive Powers

Appointments

- All major appointments made by the President must be confirmed by the Senate by majority vote.
- Only 12 of 600 Cabinet appointments to date have been declined.
- “Senatorial courtesy” is the practice in which the Senate will turn down an appointment if it is opposed by a senator of the President’s party from the State involved.

Treaties

- The President makes treaties “by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate,... provided two thirds of the Senators present concur.”
- Presently, the President often consults members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.



Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

5

Chapter 11, Section 5

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Investigatory Power

Congress may choose to conduct investigations through its standing committees for several reasons:

(1) to gather information useful to Congress in the making of some legislation;

(2) to oversee the operations of various executive branch agencies;

(3) to focus public attention on a particular subject;

(4) to expose the questionable activities of public officials or private persons;

(5) to promote the particular interests of some members of Congress.



Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

5

Chapter 11, Section 5

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Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

5

Chapter 11, Section 5

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