

Presentation Pro

# Magruder's American Government

## CHAPTER 10 Congress

# Congress

**SECTION 1** The National Legislature

**SECTION 2** The House of Representatives

**SECTION 3** The Senate

**SECTION 4** The Members of Congress

# The National Legislature

- Why does the Constitution divide power between the two houses of Congress?
- What is a term of Congress?
- How have sessions of Congress changed over time?



# Two Houses of Congress

The Constitution creates a bicameral legislature for three reasons:

**Historical:** The British Parliament consisted of two houses since the 1300s, and many colonial assemblies were similar in form.

**Practical:** A bicameral legislature was necessary to compromise the Virginia and New Jersey plans of representation.

**Theoretical:** The Framers favored a bicameral Congress in order that one house might act as a check on the other.



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# Terms

A **term** is the length of time that officials serve after an election, as in a two- or six-year term.

The date for the start of each new term has been set by the Twentieth Amendment (1933) as “noon of the 3d day of January” of every odd-numbered year.



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# Sessions of Congress

A **session** is the regular period of time during which Congress conducts business.

- Congress **adjourns**, or suspends until the next session, each regular session as it sees fit.
- If necessary, the President has the power to **prorogue**, or adjourn, a session, but only when the two houses cannot agree on a date for adjournment.
- Only the President may call Congress into a **special session**—a meeting to deal with some emergency situation.



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# Comparative Government: Legislative Bodies

Legislative Bodies					
Country	Legislative Body	Houses if Bicameral	Number of Members	How Elected	Term of Office
 United States	Congress	House of Representatives	435	Direct popular vote	2 years
		Senate	100	Direct popular vote	6 years
 Costa Rica	Legislative Assembly		57	Direct popular vote	4 years
 France	Parlement	National Assembly	577	Direct popular vote	5 years
		Senate	321	Local electoral colleges	9 years
 Israel	Knesset		120	Direct popular vote	4 years
 Japan	Diet	House of Councillors	252	Direct popular vote	6 years
		House of Representatives	500	Direct popular vote	4 years
 Saudi Arabia	Consultative Council		90	Appointed by the king	4 years



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# Section 1 Review

- 1. The practical reason behind establishing a bicameral legislature was**
  - (a) the necessity to find compromise between the New Jersey and Virginia plans.**
  - (b) the need to mimic existing British institutions.**
  - (c) a desire to break from all tradition.**
  - (d) requirements set by the British monarchy.**
  
- 2. Special sessions of Congress**
  - (a) are called by the President to deal with some emergency situation.**
  - (b) are called whenever a senator filibusters.**
  - (c) are never called.**
  - (d) are used to handle the everyday business of Congress.**

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# The House of Representatives

- What are the size and terms of the House of Representatives?
- How are House seats reapportioned among the States after each census?
- How can we describe a typical congressional election and congressional district?
- What are the formal and informal qualifications for serving in the House?



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# Size and Terms

- The exact size of the House of Representatives, currently at 435 members, is determined by Congress.
- The Constitution provides that the total number of seats in the House shall be **apportioned** (distributed) among the States on the basis of their respective populations.
- Members of the House of Representatives serve two-year terms.
- Although there have been recent movements to limit terms, there are no limits set on the number of terms a representative may serve.



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# Reapportionment

Article I of the Constitution directs Congress to **reapportion**—redistribute—the seats in the House after each decennial census.

- As the United States grew in population, the number of representatives in the House also grew.
- The Reapportionment Act of 1929 set the “permanent” size of the House at 435 members, and provided for “automatic reapportionment.”



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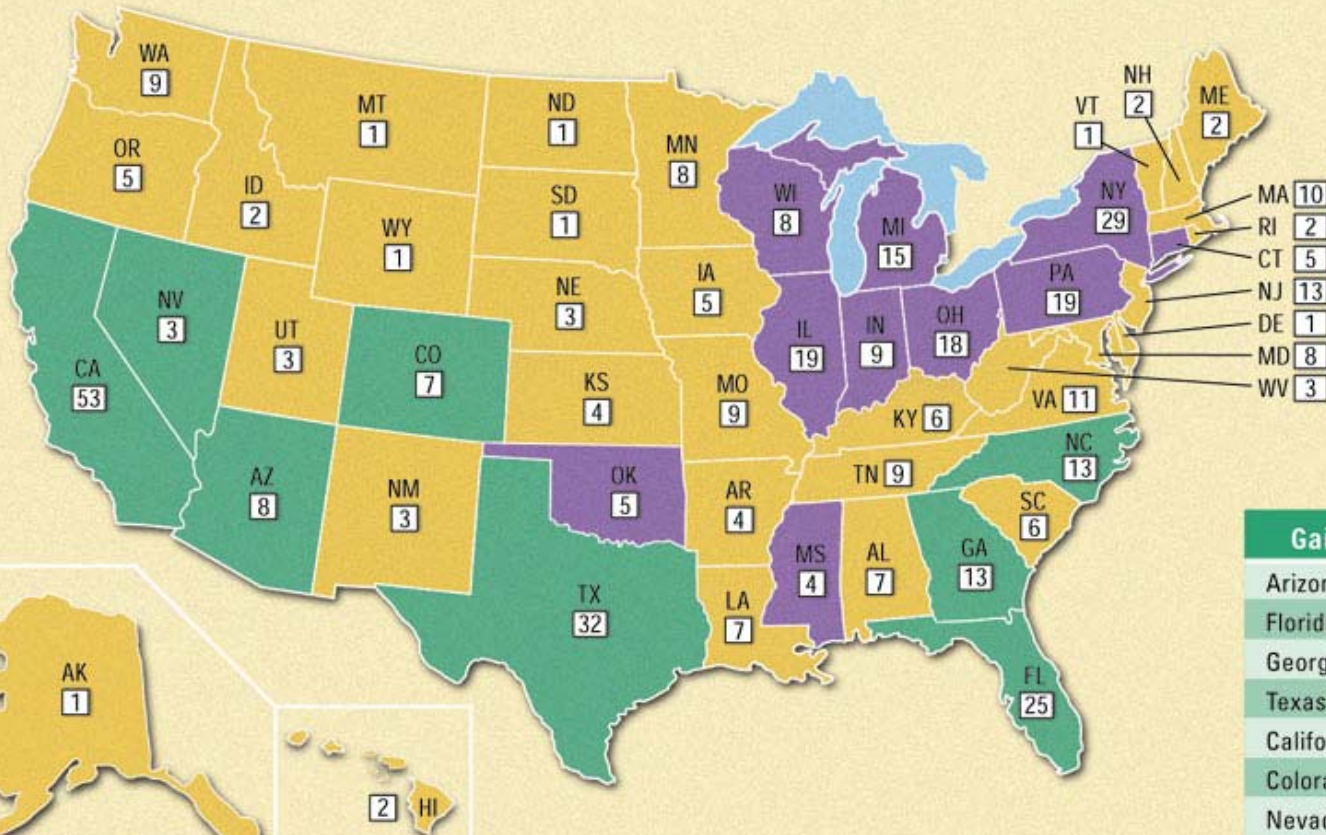
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# Current Apportionment

## Congressional Apportionment, 2003–2013



**KEY**

- Gained representation
- Lost representation
- No change
- 2 Number of Representatives

Gained Seats		Lost Seats	
Arizona	+2	New York	-2
Florida	+2	Pennsylvania	-2
Georgia	+2	Connecticut	-1
Texas	+2	Illinois	-1
California	+1	Indiana	-1
Colorado	+1	Michigan	-1
Nevada	+1	Mississippi	-1
North Carolina	+1	Ohio	-1
		Oklahoma	-1
		Wisconsin	-1

SOURCE: Census 2000



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# Congressional Elections

- Congressional elections are held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year.
- **Off-year elections** are those congressional elections held between presidential elections.



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# Districts and Gerrymandering

- Under the **single-member district** arrangement, the voter's in each district elect one of the State's representatives.
- The general-ticket system, no longer in use, provided that all of a State's seats were filled **at-large**.
- Districts that have unusual shapes or even defy description have sometimes been **gerrymandered**.
- Gerrymandering refers to the act of drawing congressional districts to the advantage of the political party that controls the State legislature.



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# Qualifications for House Members

- The Constitution says that a member of the House
  - (1) must be at least 25 years of age,
  - (2) must have been a citizen of the United States for at least seven years, and
  - (3) must have been an inhabitant of the State from which he or she is elected.
- The realities of politics also require some informal qualifications, such as party identification, name familiarity, gender, ethnic characteristics, and political experience.



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# Section 2 Review

1. **Members of the House of Representatives are elected for**
  - (a) two-year terms.
  - (b) six-year terms.
  - (c) four-year terms.
  - (d) five-year terms.
  
2. **The Constitution requires a member of Congress to be**
  - (a) an inhabitant of the State from which he or she is elected.
  - (b) a property-owning male.
  - (c) a natural-born citizen.
  - (d) at least 40 years of age.

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# The Senate

- How does the size of the Senate differ from the size of the House?
- How have States elected senators in the past and present?
- How and why does a senator's term differ from a representative's term?
- What are the qualifications for serving in the Senate?



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# Size, Election, and Terms

- The Constitution says that the Senate “shall be composed of two Senators from each State.” Today’s Senate consists of 100 Senators.
- Originally, the Constitution provided that senators were chosen by the State legislatures.
- In 1912 the Seventeenth Amendment was passed and called for the popular election of senators.
- Senators serve for six-year terms.
- The Senate is a **continuous body**, meaning that all of its seats are never up for election at the same time.



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# Qualifications for Senators

- The requirements for the U.S. Senate are higher than for the House of Representatives.
- The Constitution says that a Senator
  - (1) must be at least 30 years of age,
  - (2) must have been a citizen of the United States for at least nine years, and
  - (3) must be an inhabitant of the State from which he or she is elected.



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# Section 3 Review

1. **Senators are elected for**
  - (a) two-year terms.
  - (b) eight-year terms.
  - (c) four-year terms.
  - (d) six-year terms.
  
2. **The Senate is a continuous body, meaning that**
  - (a) Senators must continually reside in Washington, D.C.
  - (b) all of its seats are always up for election every six years.
  - (c) it never adjourns.
  - (d) all of its seats are never up for election at one time.

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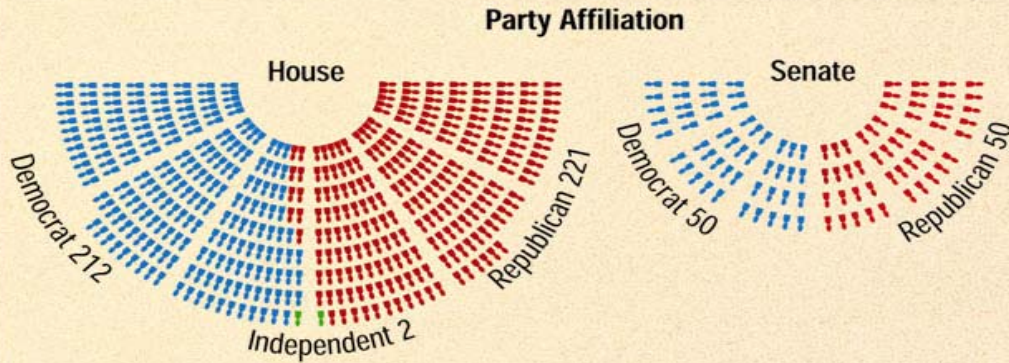
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# The Members of Congress

- What are the personal and political backgrounds of the current members of Congress?
- What are the duties of the job of serving in Congress?
- How are members of Congress compensated, and what privileges do they have?



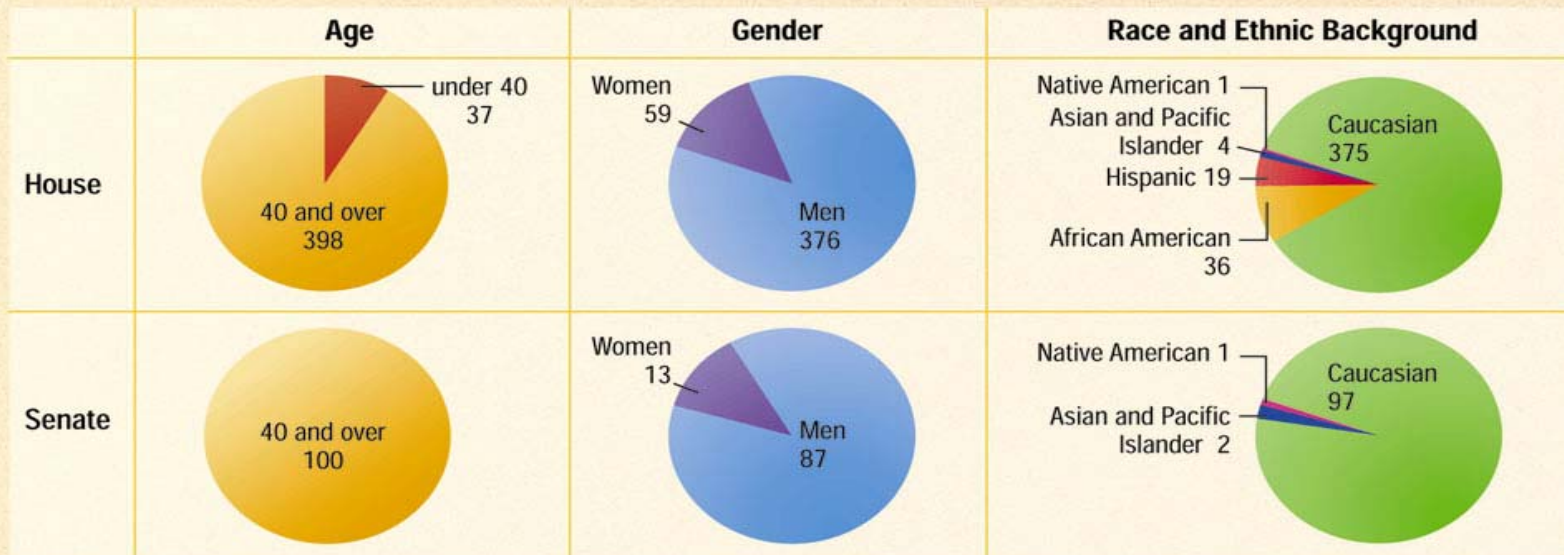
# Profile of the 107th Congress



## Educational Background\*

	House
Bachelor's degrees	399
Master's degrees	124
Law degrees	162
Doctoral degrees	20
Medical degrees	12

\*Sum is more than total membership because of members with more than one degree.



SOURCE: Congressional Research Service

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# Representatives of the People

Senators and representatives are elected to represent people. As legislators, they have four voting options:

<p><b><i>Trustees</i></b> <b>Trustees</b> believe that each question they face must be decided on its merits.</p>	<p><b><i>Delegates</i></b> Delegates see themselves as agents of the people who elected them.</p>
<p><b><i>Partisans</i></b> Lawmakers who owe their first allegiance to their political party are <b>partisans</b>.</p>	<p><b><i>Politicos</i></b> <b>Politicos</b> attempt to combine the basic elements of the trustee, delegate, and partisan roles.</p>

# Committee Membership and Public Servants

- As committee members, senators and representatives screen proposed laws before they are voted on.
- Another vital part of their committee work involves the **oversight function**.
- Oversight is the the process by which Congress, through its committees, checks to see that the agencies of the executive branch are working effectively.
- Members of the House and the Senate also act as servants of their constituents.
- Requests from voters vary widely, and members of Congress take heed to many of them. Ignoring their constituencies would not bode well in the next election.



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# Compensation

- Today, senators and representatives are paid a salary of \$141,300 a year. Certain members, such as the Speaker of the House and the Senate's president *pro tem*, are paid more.
- The **franking privilege** allows members of Congress to mail letters and other materials postage-free by substituting their facsimile signature (frank) for the postage.
- The Constitution says that Congress fixes its own "compensation." Therefore, the only real limits to congressional pay are the President's veto and fear of voter backlash against a pay increase.

# Membership Privileges

- Members of Congress are immune from arrest for noncriminal offenses while engaged in congressional business.
- More importantly, the Speech and Debate Clause (Article I, Section 6, Clause 1) protects representatives and senators from suits for libel or slander arising from their official conduct.

# Section 4 Review

1. Which of the following is a major role of members of Congress?
  - (a) law enforcement
  - (b) servant of their constituents
  - (c) serving in the military
  - (d) researching court cases
  
2. The franking privilege allows members of Congress to
  - (a) purchase as many hot dogs as necessary while in office.
  - (b) mail letters and other materials postage-free.
  - (c) vote on legislation.
  - (d) receive a pension upon retirement from Congress.

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