

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?



Section 1 Vocabulary

- **Political Dictionary**
- term
- session
- adjourn
- prorogue
- special session

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?



Section 2 Vocabulary

- **Political Dictionary**
- term
- session
- adjourn
- prorogue
- special session

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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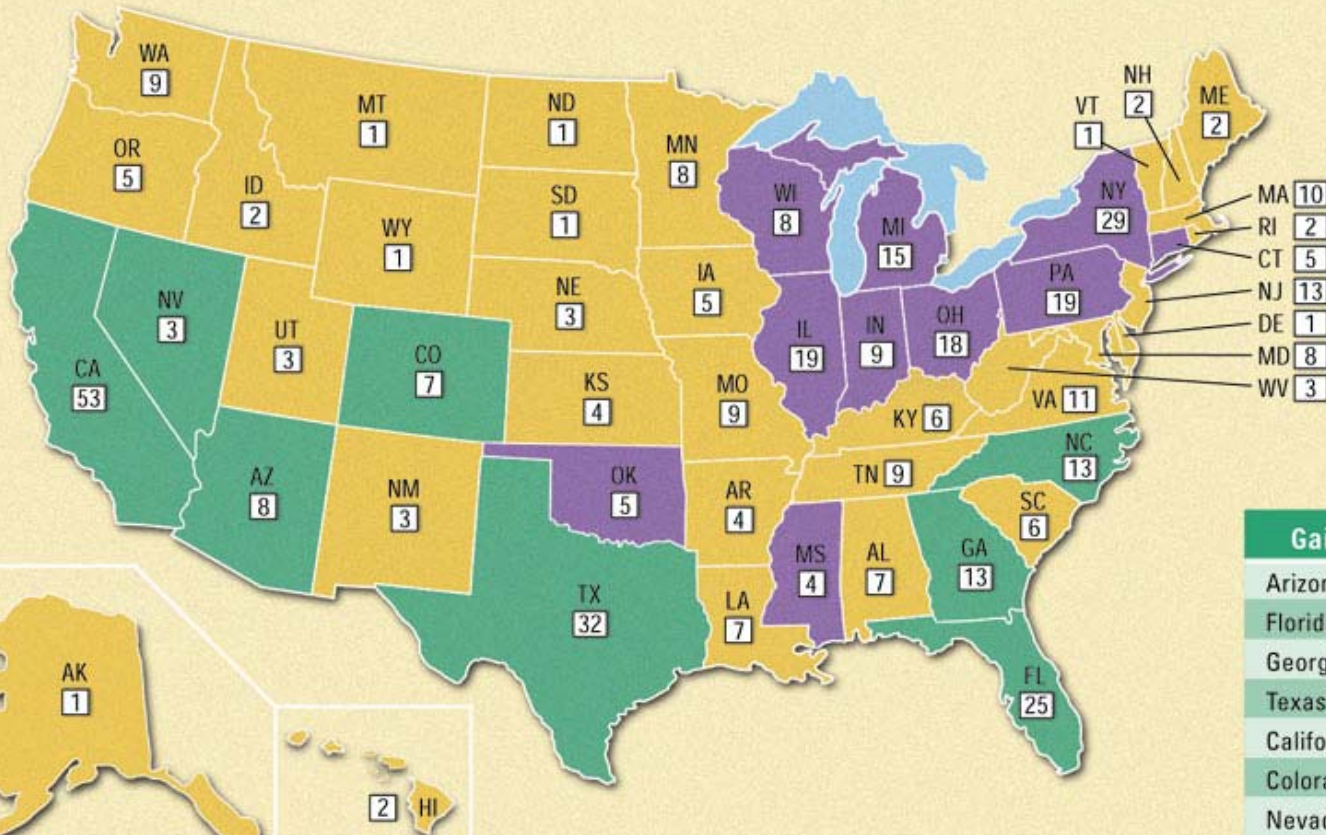
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Current Apportionment

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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Section 3 Vocabulary

- **Political Dictionary**
- continuous body
- constituency

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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The Members of Congress

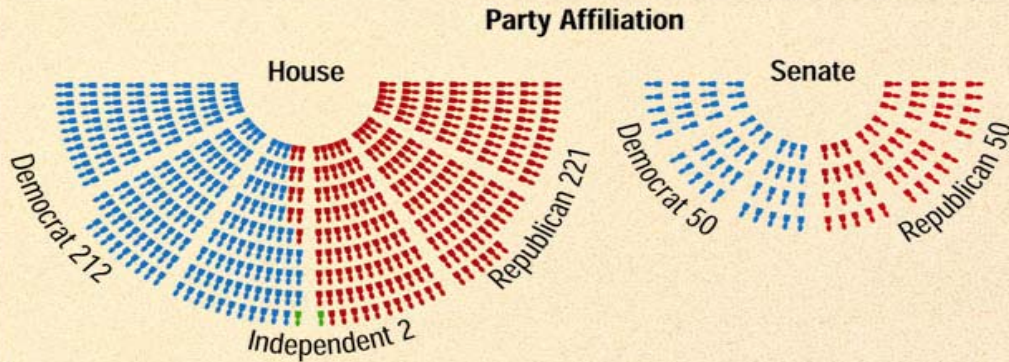
- What are the personal and political backgrounds of the current members of Congress?
- What are the duties of the job of serving in Congress?
- How are members of Congress compensated, and what privileges do they have?



Section 4 Vocabulary

- **Political Dictionary**
- trustee
- partisan
- politico
- oversight function
- franking privilege

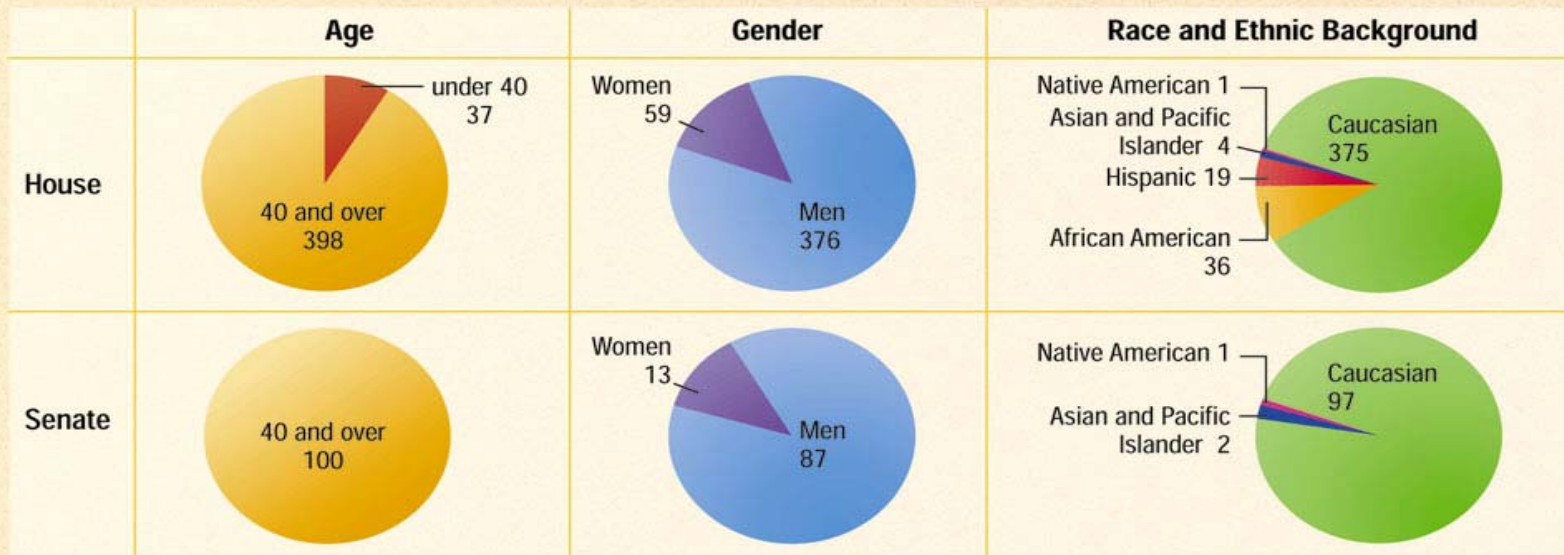
Profile of the 107th Congress



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><i>Trustees</i> Trustees believe that each question they face must be decided on its merits.</p> | <p><i>Delegates</i> Delegates see themselves as agents of the people who elected them.</p> |
| <p><i>Partisans</i> Lawmakers who owe their first allegiance to their political party are partisans.</p> | <p><i>Politicos</i> Politicos 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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