CONGRESS

I. Institutional Foundations
II. Key Functions
III. Organization
IV. Legislative Process
V. Members of Congress
VI. An Effective Legislature?
### Constitutional Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSE</th>
<th>SENATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Year Term</td>
<td>6 Year Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>435 Members (Proportional Representation)</td>
<td>100 Members (Equal Representation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiates all “Money Bills” (Taxation and Spending)</td>
<td>“Advice and Consent” on Appointments and Treaties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiates Impeachment Proceedings</td>
<td>Tries Impeached Officials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since 1950, the South and West have been gaining House seats at the expense of the Northeast and Midwest.
## Operational Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSE</th>
<th>SENATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More Centralized</td>
<td>Less Centralized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Leadership and Impersonal Rule</td>
<td>Collegiality and Personal Interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules Committee Determines Time for Debates (Open, Closed and Restrictive Rules)</td>
<td>Debate by ‘Unanimous Consent’ or Cloture Vote (60 Senators needed) <em>FILIBUSTER!!</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germane Amendments ONLY</td>
<td>Non-Germane Amendments Allowed (Riders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Specialize/Committee Decisions</td>
<td>Members More Generalists/Committees Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions More Influential/Floor Debate</td>
<td>Influential/Floor Debate More Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4: More Important

FILIBUSTER!!
Major Functions of Congress

- **Representation**
  - Delegate v. Trustee
  - Individually Responsive, not Collectively Responsible
  - Pork Barrel and Logrolling

- **Lawmaking**
- **Oversight authority**
- **Consensus building**
- **Confirmation powers (in the Senate)**
Organization: Congressional Committees System

• Standing committees
  – House 19 (w/89 subcommittees)
  – Senate 17 (w/69 subcommittees)
  – Authorization and Appropriation

• Joint committees

• Special or select committees

• Conference committees

Woodrow Wilson: “Congress in session is Congress on exhibition; Congress in committee is Congress at work.”
Organization: Congressional Leadership Positions

• Speaker of the House of Representatives
• Majority leaders (House and Senate)
• Minority leaders (House and Senate)
• Whips (House and Senate)
• President Pro Tempore (Senate)
• Vice-President (President of Senate)
Organization: Congressional Leadership Positions

- Speaker of the House of Representatives

Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)
Organization: Congressional Leadership

- Majority and Minority Leaders (House)
  Steny Hoyer (D-MD)  John Boehner (R-OH)
Organization: Congressional Leadership

• Majority and Minority (Chief) Whips
  
  James Clyburn (D-SC)  
  Roy Blunt (R-MO)
Organization: Congressional Leadership

President of the Senate
Dick Cheney (R-WY)

President Pro Tempore of the Senate
Robert Byrd (D-WV)
Organization: Congressional Leadership

- Majority and Minority Leaders (Senate)
  Harry Reid (D-NV)   Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
Organization: Congressional Staff

- Personal Staff
- Committee Staff
- Support Organizations
  - Congressional Budget Office (CBO)
  - Congressional Research Service (CRS)
  - Government Accountability Office
How a Bill Becomes a Law

“I’m just a Bill....Yes I’m Only a Bill...and I’m sitting here on Capitol Hill...”
How a Bill Becomes a Law

FLOOR DEBATE
House: Rules Committee
Senate: Unanimous Consent
Determinants of Voting

- Own Political Views/Ideology
- Constituents Interests
- Colleagues Influence (Committee Members [Report]; Congressional Staff)
- Interest Groups
- Presidential Pressures
- Party Leadership
Members of Congress

• Traits:
  – Mostly White, Male, Professional (i.e., lawyers, business), Wealthy

• Day-to-Day Work:
  – Committee Work
  – Constituency Work
  – Media and Interest Group Events
  – Campaigning and Fundraising
Criticisms of Congress

- Inefficient
- Unrepresentative
- Unethical
- Lack of collective responsibility
Figure 6-8 Americans’ Contradictory Views: Praise for Incumbents but Disdain for Congress

Percentage approving

Source: American National Election Studies.

Note: Question about incumbent not asked in 2002.