

Introduction to Political Science: American Politics

POLI 10

Week 4, Day 7

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Wednesday, July 20th, 2016

Agenda for Today



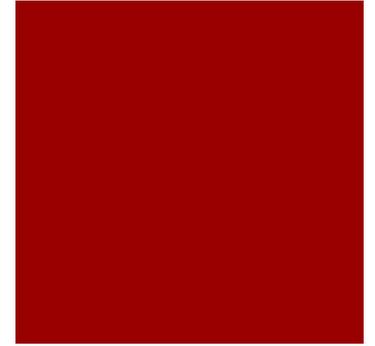
Congress

- Overview of roots, history and modern usage
 - Congress in the Constitution
- Who serves in Congress? Today's Congress
- The electoral Connection: Member as a strategic politician
- The basic problems of legislative organization

- Weekly Reading Quiz

- Get out early – woohoo!

Article I, Section 1 of the Constitution



All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

--Legislative power is vested in the Congress

Article I, Section 2

House of Representatives

Clause 1

The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Legislature.

-- Composition and the Election of the Members in the House of Representatives

Clause 2

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

-- Qualifications of the Members of the House of Representatives

Article I, Section 3

Senate

Clause 1

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

-- Composition and the Election of the Senators

Clause 2

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the Expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the Expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the Expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if Vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the Recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next Meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

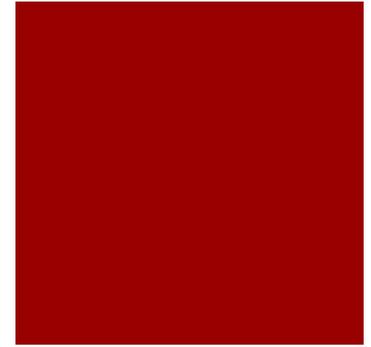
-- Classification of Senators; Vacancies

Clause 3

No Person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

-- Qualifications of the Members of the Senate

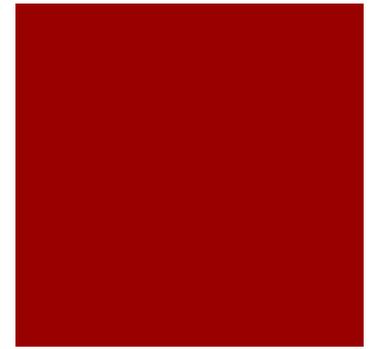
Congress in the Constitution



- The structure of Congress is the product of the Great Compromise at the Constitutional Convention.
- Balancing the demands of the large states for national representation against those of the small states for protection of states' rights, the Framers established in the Constitution:
 - A House of Representatives, with seats allocated by population and members elected by the citizenry, and
 - Representatives would be “popularly elected” in even numbered years .
 - A Senate composed of 2 members from each state chosen by the state legislature***
 - The Senate, by contrast, would be much more insulated from transient shifts in the public mood, since they would be elected by state legislatures and not the public.
 - Also, since the term of office was set at 6 years, continuity was ensured by requiring that 1/3 of the Senate's membership was up for election every two years.

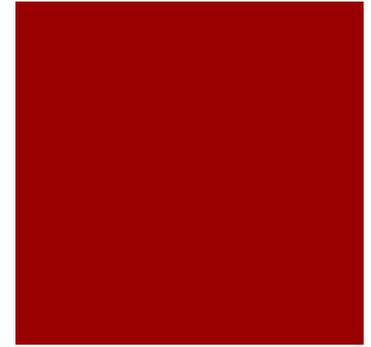
*** This no longer is the process by which Senators are chosen. In 1913, the process was changed so that citizens also elected Senators. (Due to a climate of bribery that shadowed Senate elections in 7 states in 1905).

Structure of Congress



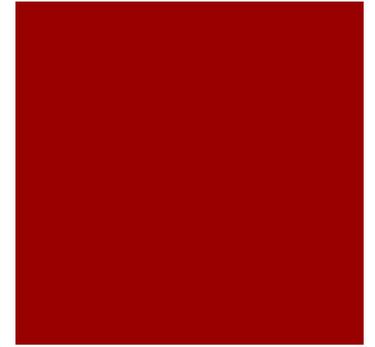
	Qualifications	Number of members	Term	Term limits
House	-- at least 25 years of age. -- US citizen for at least 7 years -- Live in the state they represent	435	2 years	None
Senate	-- at least 30 years of age. -- US citizen for a least 9 years. -- Resident of the state they represent	100	6 years	None

Powers of Congress



- The Constitution established a truly national government by giving Congress **broad** powers.
 - Recall:
 - Article I, Section 8– Congress can imposed taxes, coin and borrow money, regulate interstate and foreign commerce, and spend money for the “common defense” and the “general welfare.” (In addition to a lot of other powers).
 - Article I, Section 8 – necessary and proper clause
 - Article I, Section 8 – declare war, raise and finance an army
 - (Note: Senate was granted some powers over foreign relations – in its advice and consent capacity, the Senate ratifies treaties and confirms presidential appointments of ambassadors).
- In distributing power between the Hose and Senate, the delegates sought a proper balance of authority.

The Electoral System



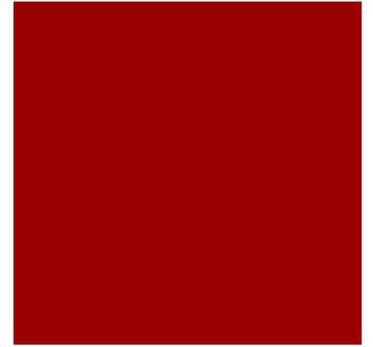
- Two choices made by the Framers regarding the electoral system have profoundly affected the development of Congress.
 1. Members of Congress and the President are elected separately.
 - a) In the United States, voters are presented separate choices for senator, representative, and the President.
 2. Members of Congress are elected from states and congressional districts by plurality vote – that is, whoever gets the most vote wins.

Congressional Districts



- After the first census in 1790, each state was allotted one House seat for every 33,000 inhabitants for a total of 105 seats.
- Total membership was finally fixed at its current ceiling of 435 in 1911, when House leaders concluded that further growth would impede the House' work.
- Since 1911, states have both lost and gained seats to reflect population shifts between the 10 year censuses.

Gerrymandering

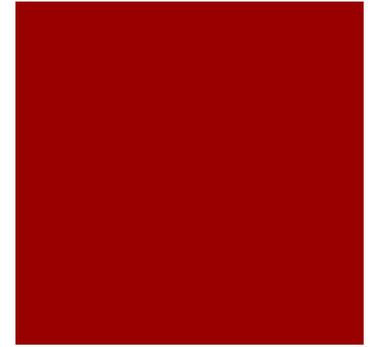


Unequal Representation in the Senate



- The 50 Senate constituencies – entire states – may not change boundaries with each census, but they vary greatly in size of population.
- The 9 largest states are home to 51% of the entire population, while the smallest 26 states hold 52% of the Senate seats though only constitute 18% of the population

Congress and electoral politics



- The modern Congress is organized to serve the goals of its members.
- The primary goal for most of them is to keep their jobs → REELECTION.
- Since voters have the final say in their hiring and firing, a career in Congress depends on members winning the voters' endorsement at regular intervals.
- Electoral imperatives thus shape all important aspects of congressional life.

The Electoral Connection

- David Mayhew
- “When we say “congressman Smith is unbeatable,” we do not mean that there is nothing he could do that would lose him his seat. Rather we mean, “Congressman Smith is unbeatable as long as he continues to do the things he is doing.”
- Mayhew: Members of Congress behave like single-minded seekers of reelection.
- Incumbents win because they work hard at it.
- Incumbents may have more control of their fate than challengers.
 - Constituent service: casework
 - Title
 - Legislating
 - Public platform

C★NGRESS

THE ELECTORAL CONNECTION

DAVID R. MAYHEW

With a new Foreword by R. Douglas Arnold and a new Preface by the author

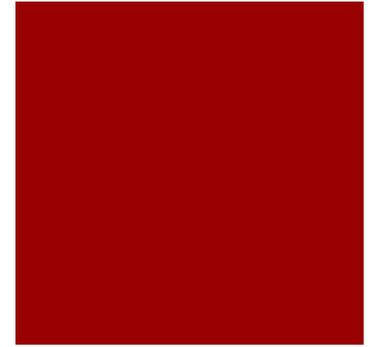
SECOND EDITION

What legislators do

- Advertising
 - Disseminating your name in a positive fashion.

- Credit Claiming
 - Generate the belief that you are responsible for good things.

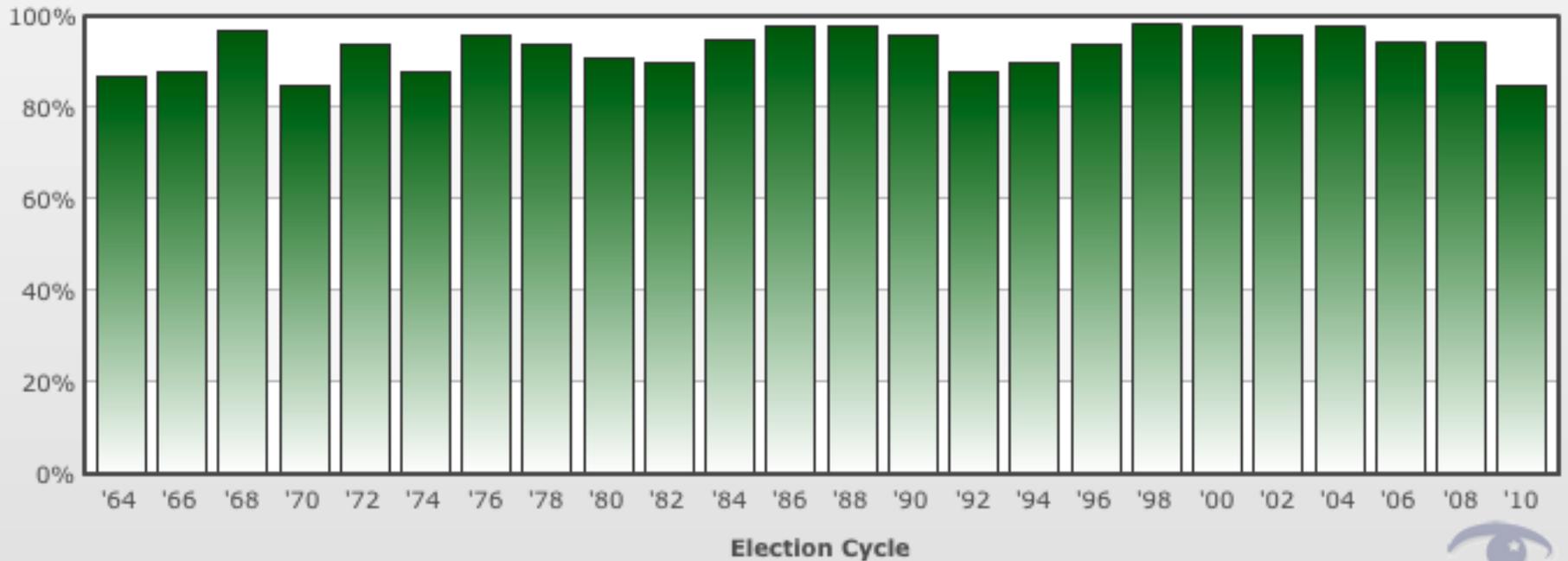
- Position taking
 - Public statement of a position.
 1. **Speeches** as position taking
 - Since the rise of C-SPAN, speeches given in congressional committees and to empty chambers for the benefit of the public.
 - Try to be covered on local district TV.
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgguY0xSX2c>
 2. Voting as the ultimate form of position taking in Congress
 - Both in committees and on the floor
 - Challengers will use unpopular positions or abstention against you.
 - Every vote is a test.
 - Possibility of upsetting public opinion!
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcowuYkQTNY>



Incumbents rarely lose



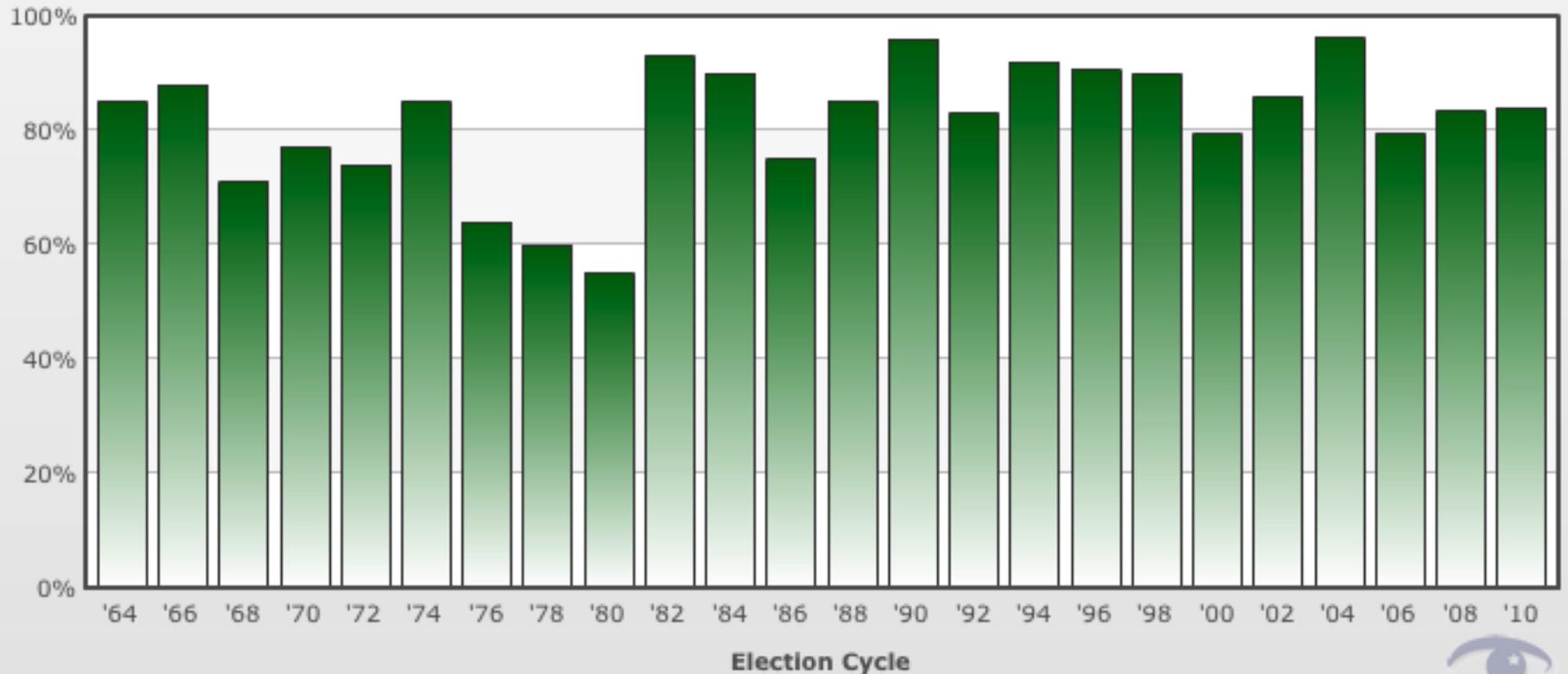
US House Reelection Rates, 1964-2010



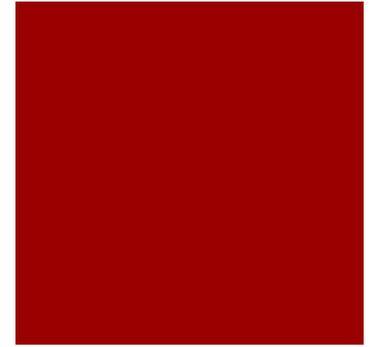
Same goes for the Senate



US Senate Reelection Rates, 1964-2010



The incumbency advantage



- Incumbents possess perks of office that challengers do not:
 - Resources such as staff
 - Brand name
 - Experience
 - Power (pork barrel, other legislation)
- Challengers have some advantages as well
 - Clean record
 - Outsider status
 - ...newness...?

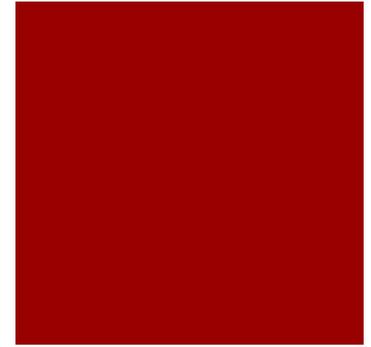
The incumbency advantage

- Maybe incumbents win because they are... good at winning?
- If incumbents do their jobs well, why should they lose?
- Reelecting the incumbent also depends on the challenger.

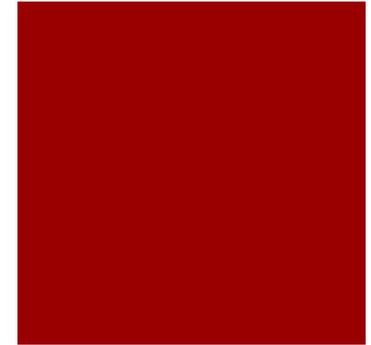
- Incumbents have a small chance of losing, but they must weather this chance *every election*.

- Most goals of members of Congress can only be achieved if they remain in office.
 - Power and prestige, if in office.
 - Policy, if in office.
 - Higher office, if demonstrated ability to win.

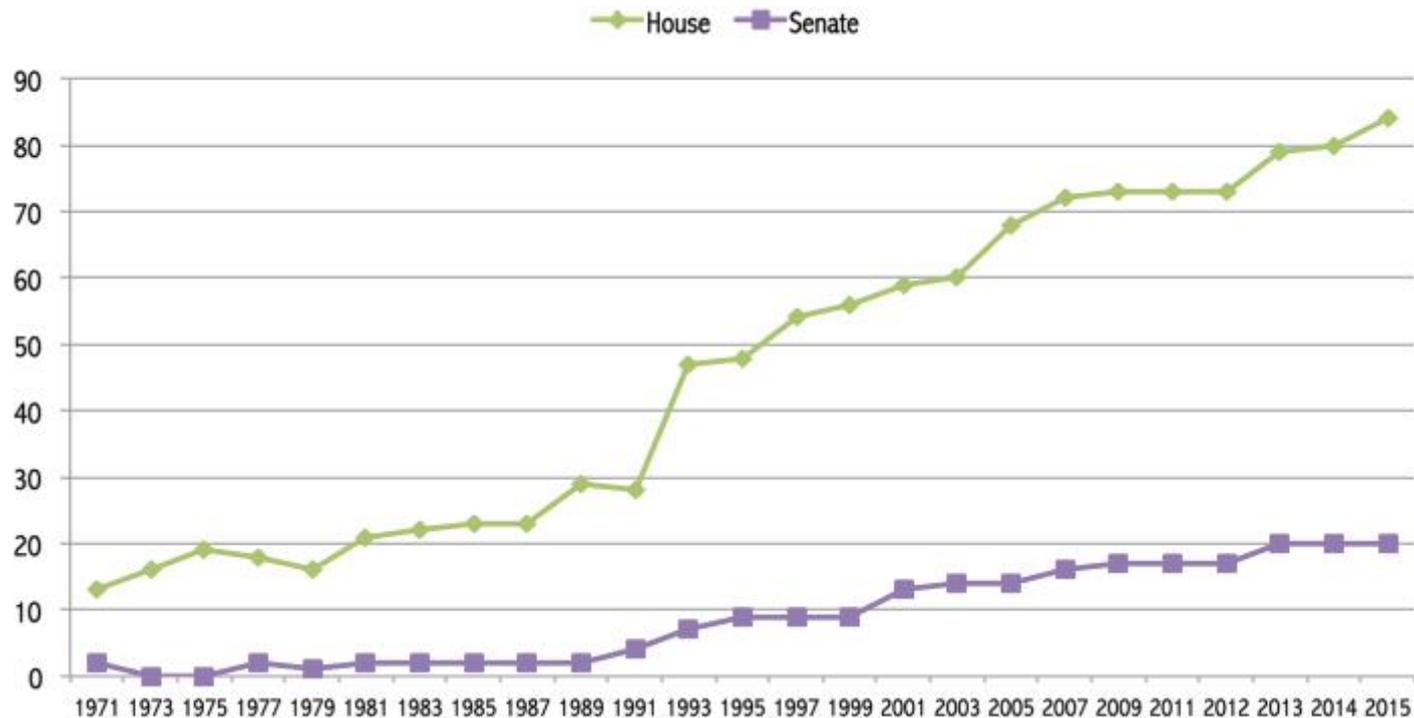
- Thus, electoral considerations shape almost all decisions in Congress.
- Do elections undermine or promote representation?



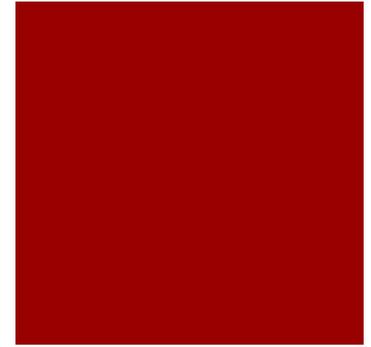
Who serves in Congress?



- The people who win in the Senate and House are by no means “representative” of the American people in any demographic sense.
- While **0.6%** of the U.S. adult population are lawyers, **41%** of the 113th Congress are.
 - Members of Congress are sixty-eight times as likely as all American adults to have practiced law.
- Over **95%** of members of Congress have completed a bachelor’s degree or higher; **only 28%** of the general population has.
- Of the 74 new members of the House and Senate elected in November, 18 percent are women



The basic problems of legislative organization



- The Constitution established a basic framework for a national legislature, but today's Congress is the product of more than 2 centuries of institutional development

- The delegates in Philadelphia created and empowered a national legislature – on paper at least.

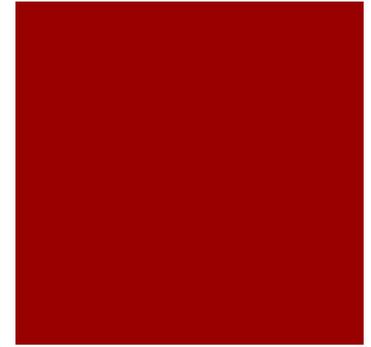
- It was up to the members of Congress to make the words into an institutional reality.

- To exercise the powers conferred on them by the Constitution, the House and the Senate had to solve some basic problems:
 - How to acquire information
 - How to coordinate action
 - How to resolve conflicts
 - How to get members to work for common as well as personal goals.

The need for information

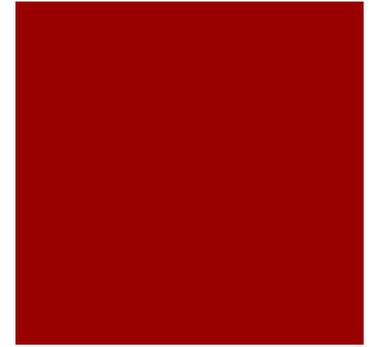
- As the United States has become more and more complex – socially, economically, and technologically – and the activities of the federal government have expanded...
 - The informational demands on Congress have grown tremendously.
- Congress has responded with a solution common to the problem of performing complex social tasks efficiently: **division of labor** and **specialization**.
 - **Division of Labor:**
 - Has given rise to the committee and subcommittee systems, large personal and committee staffs, and specialized research agencies
 - **Specialization:**
 - Specialists are able to attain a deeper understanding of the domain.
 - By becoming specialists themselves or by drawing on the knowledge of other specialists, MOC can make better informed decisions and Congress itself becomes a more effective institution.

Organizing Congress



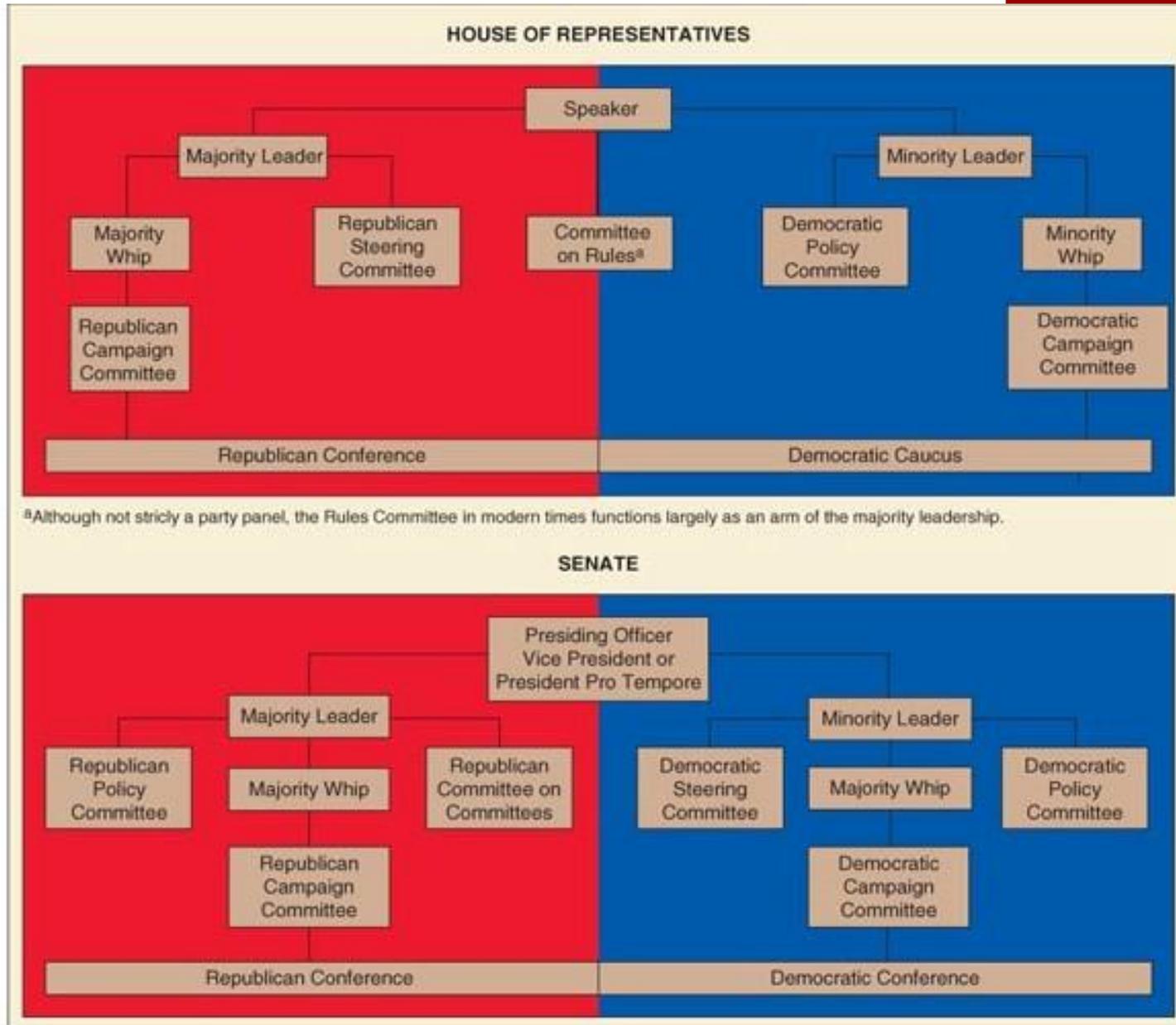
- To preserve the House and Senate as the powerful legislative bodies envisioned in the Constitution, MOC have devised means to overcome the formidable barriers to effective collective action:
 - PARTIES
 - INCREASED PARTISANSHIP
 - COMMITTEES
 - CONGRESSIONAL STAFF AND SUPPORT GROUPS

Parties



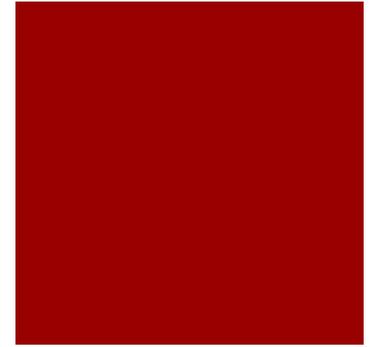
- Decisions in the House and Senate are made by majority vote.
- Majorities not only enact bills are also set rules, establish procedures, choose leaders and decide how to organize their respective houses.
- This reality creates powerful incentives for members to join and form powerful coalitions.
- Parties are a way that people do this. (solution = Parties)

Structure of Congress



Parties

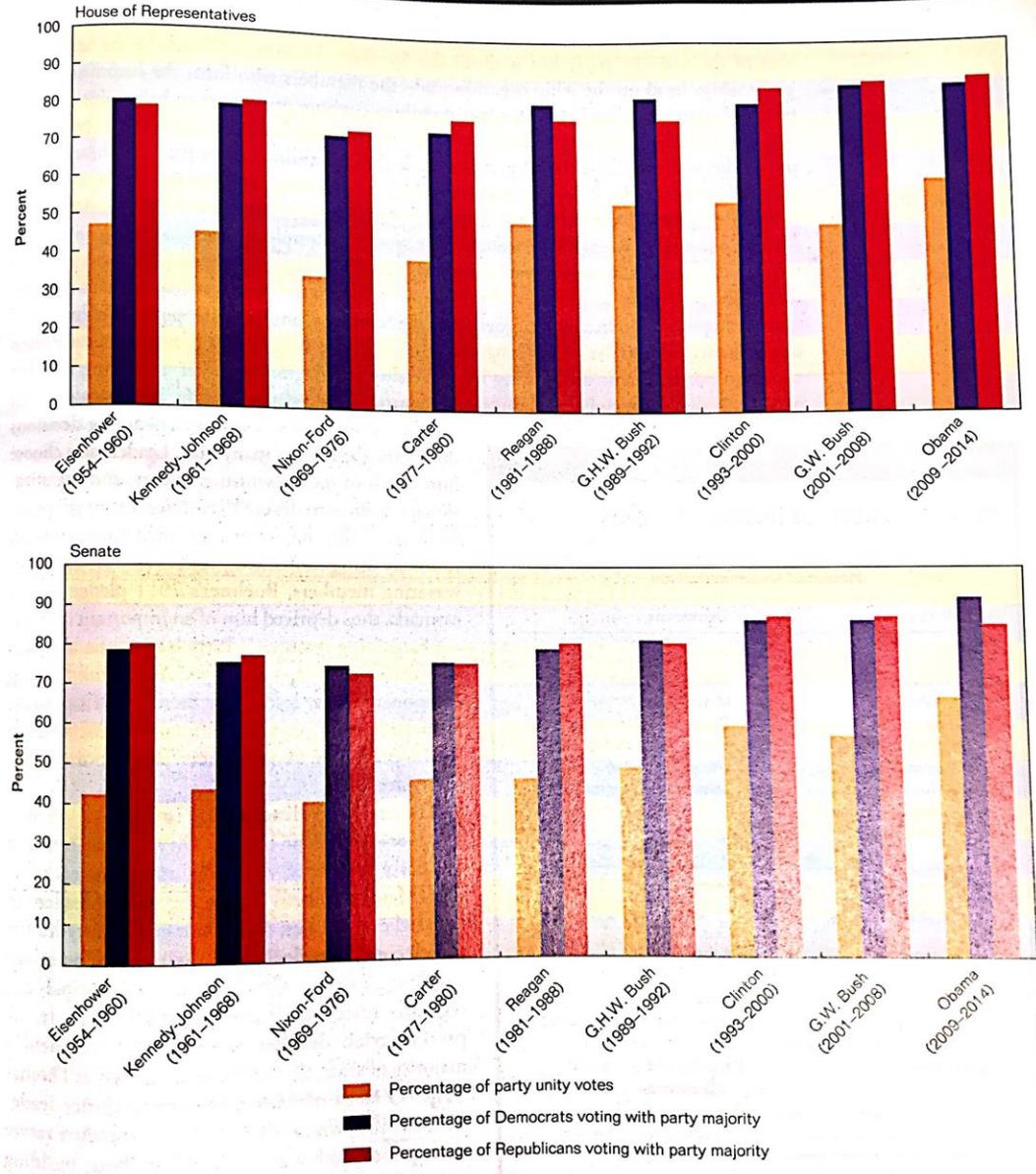
- Parties do not arise spontaneously
- Like other coalitions, political parties are formed when people recognize that it is in their best interests to cooperate despite their disagreements.
- Party coalitions are assembled and maintained by party leaders.
- The Speaker of the House is the majority's party's leader and agent.
 - The Speaker is second in the United States presidential line of succession.
 - The Speaker of the House is a leadership position and the office-holder actively works to set the majority party's legislative agenda.
 - The Speaker holds a variety of powers over the House and is the highest-ranking legislative official in the US government.



Increased Partisanship

- The decline and resurgence of congressional partisanship since the 1950s.

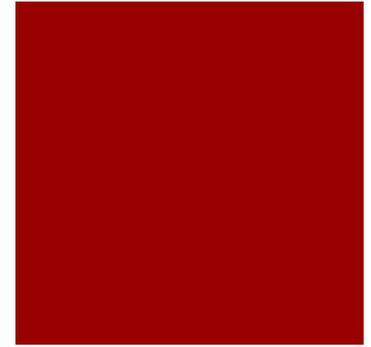
Figure 6-6 Rising Party Unity in Congress



Source: CQ Weekly, March 16, 2015, 37.

Note: Party unity votes are those votes on which party majorities took opposite positions.

Congressional Committees



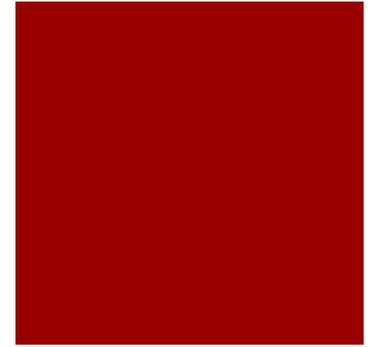
- The committee systems of the House and Senate are the second organizational pillar upholding the institutional power of Congress in the federal system.
- The first Congresses delegated authority to committees sparingly
 - Instead the House would turn itself into a Committee of the Whole
 - From the Start, this process was intolerably cumbersome.
- Thus, the House began to delegate more and more work to permanent committees.
- 10 were in place by 1809, 28 by 1825.
- After the Senate's parties assumed the right to make committee assignments, seniority became the criterion for selecting committee chairs: the office was awarded to the majority party member with the longest term of service on the committee

Congressional committees



TABLE 7.3 COMMITTEES OF THE 109TH CONGRESS (WITH SUBCOMMITTEE EXAMPLES IN ITALICS)		
<i>Standing Committees</i>		
<i>House</i>	<i>Senate</i>	
Agriculture	Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry	
Appropriations	Appropriations	
Armed Services	Armed Services	
Budget	Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs	
Education and the Workforce	Budget	
Energy and Commerce	Commerce, Science, and Transportation	
Financial Services	Energy and Natural Resources	
Government Reform	Environment and Public Works	
Homeland Security	Finance	
House Administration	Foreign Relations	
International Relations	Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions	
Judiciary	Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs	
<i>Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property</i>	Judiciary	
<i>Immigration, Border Security, and Claims</i>	<i>Administrative Oversight and the Courts</i>	
<i>Commercial and Administrative Law</i>	<i>Antitrust, Competition Policy, and Consumer Rights</i>	
<i>Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security</i>	<i>The Constitution, Civil Rights, and Property Rights</i>	
<i>Constitution</i>	<i>Corrections and Rehabilitation</i>	
Resources	<i>Crime and Drugs</i>	
Rules	<i>Immigration, Border Security, and Citizenship</i>	
Science	<i>Intellectual Property</i>	
Small Business	<i>Terrorism, Technology, and Homeland Security</i>	
Standards of Official Conduct	Rules and Administration	
Transportation and Infrastructure	Small Business and Entrepreneurship	
Veterans Affairs	Veterans Affairs	
Ways and Means		
<i>Select, Special, and Other Committees</i>		
<i>House</i>	<i>Senate</i>	<i>Joint Committees</i>
Permanent Select Intelligence	Indian Affairs	Economics
Select Homeland Security	Select Ethics	Printing
Select Bipartisan Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina	Select Intelligence	Taxation
	Special Aging	Library

Congressional Committees



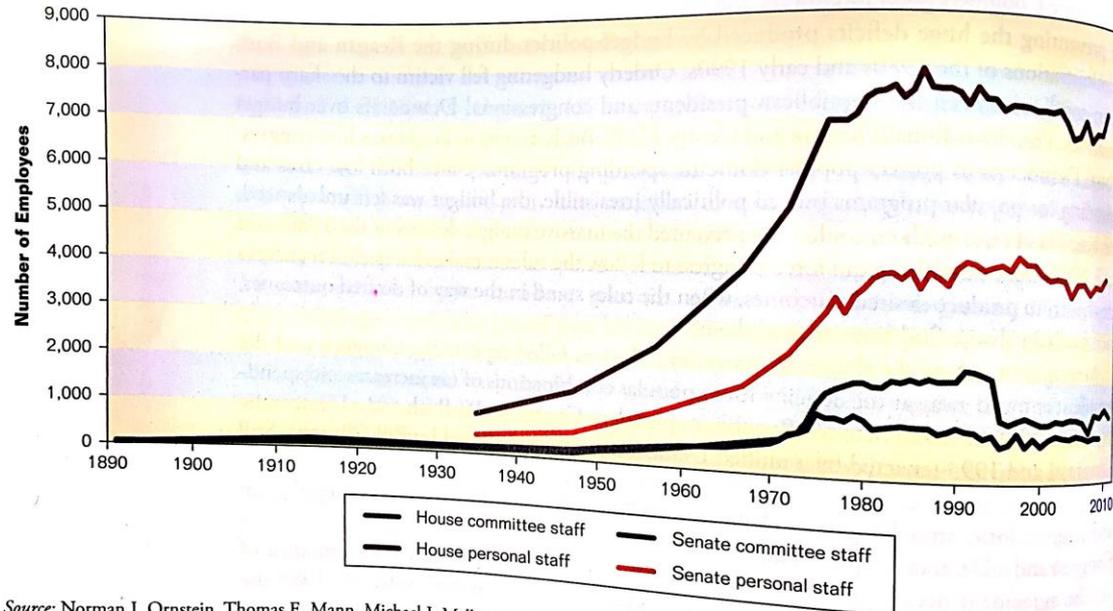
- Used to be where the power was. Committee chair the ultimate position.
- Most desirable: Ways and Means, Appropriations, Rules, Energy and Commerce, Armed Services.
- Today, much is done outside of committees.

- Committees are not in the constitution
 - Informational rationale.
 - Only one vote on each issue, not weighted.
 - Power is concentrated in desirable committees.

Congressional Staff

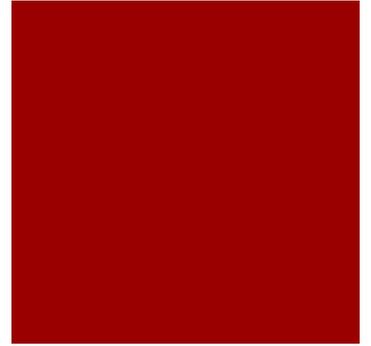
- In addition to relying heavily on its committee system, Congress has sought to cope with its expanding workload by adding staff and specialized research agencies.
- Staff doubled between the mid-1950s and the late 1970s, the numbers then remained stable until 1999, when House Republicans reduced staff by 30 percent.

Figure 6-8 Expanding Congressional Staff



Source: Norman J. Ornstein, Thomas E. Mann, Michael J. Malbin, Andrew Rugg, and Raffaella Wakeman, *Vital Statistics on Congress* (Washington, DC: Brookings), Tables 5-1 and 5-5, at www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2013/07/vital-statistics-congress-mann-ornstein.

Congress and the mainstream media



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATuB3rdqH8o>

The growth of staff, committees, and house members from 1930 onwards

