

Congress and Its Members 20th Edition PDF

Visit the link below to download the full version of the ebook

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)



Scan to Download
or Type the Link

ebook.ac/congress20e

ROGER H.
DAVIDSON

WALTER J.
OLESEK

FRANCES E.
LEE

ERIC
SCHICKLER

JAMES M.
CURRY

CONGRESS AND ITS MEMBERS

TWENTIETH EDITION



Congress and Its Members

20th Edition

For Janet, Mark, Eric, and Melissa

—W. J. O.

For Emery and Beverly

—F. E. L.

For Sam and Cora

—E. S.

For Jill, Louise, and Henry

—J. M. C.

Congress and Its Members

20th Edition

Roger H. Davidson

University of Maryland

Walter J. Oleszek

Congressional Research Service

Frances E. Lee

Princeton University

Eric Schickler

University of California, Berkeley

James M. Curry

University of Notre Dame

 Sage





FOR INFORMATION:

2455 Teller Road
Thousand Oaks, California 91320
E-mail: orders@sagepub.com

1 Oliver's Yard
55 City Road
London, EC1Y 1SP
United Kingdom

Unit No. 323-333, Third Floor, F-Block
International Trade Tower
Nehru Place, New Delhi – 110 019
India

18 Cross Street #10-10/11/12
China Square Central
Singapore 048423

Acquisitions Editor: Christy Sadler
Content Development Editor: Jessica Meyer
Production Editor: Neelu Sahu
Copy Editor: Diane DiMura
Typesetter: Lumina Datamatics
Cover Designer: Scott Van Atta
Marketing Manager: Jennifer Haldeman

Copyright © 2026 by CQ Press, an imprint of Sage. CQ Press is a registered trademark of Congressional Quarterly Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

All third-party trademarks referenced or depicted herein are included solely for the purpose of illustration and are the property of their respective owners. Reference to these trademarks in no way indicates any relationship with, or endorsement by, the trademark owner.

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Control Number:
2025028315

ISBN: 978-1-0719-8193-1

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

25 26 27 28 29 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Brief Contents

Preface		xix
Acknowledgments		xxiii
About the Authors		xxv
Part I	In Search of the Two Congresses	1
Chapter 1	The Two Congresses	3
Chapter 2	Evolution of the Modern Congress	15
Part II	A Congress of Ambassadors	41
Chapter 3	Going For It: Recruitment and Candidacy	43
Chapter 4	Making It: The Electoral Game	71
Chapter 5	Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles	107
Part III	A Deliberative Assembly of One Nation	141
Chapter 6	Leaders and Parties in Congress	143
Chapter 7	Committees: Workshops of Congress	177
Chapter 8	Congressional Rules and Procedures	211
Chapter 9	Decision Making in Congress	247
Part IV	Policymaking and Change in the Two Congresses	279
Chapter 10	Congress and the President	281
Chapter 11	Congress and the Bureaucracy	311
Chapter 12	Congress and the Courts	343
Chapter 13	Congress and Organized Interests	373
Chapter 14	Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policymaking	395
Chapter 15	Congress and National Security Policies	421

Part V	Conclusion	441
Chapter 16	The Two Congresses and the American People	443
Appendix A		471
Appendix B – Internships: Getting Experience on Capitol Hill		475
Endnotes		479
Index		581

Detailed Contents

Preface	xix
Acknowledgments	xxiii
About the Authors	xxv
Part I	
In Search of the Two Congresses	1
Chapter 1 The Two Congresses	3
The Dual Nature of Congress	6
Legislators' Tasks	6
Popular Images	7
The Constitutional Basis	8
Back to Burke	9
The Two Congresses in Comparative Context	10
Divergent Views of Congress	12
Chapter 2 Evolution of the Modern Congress	15
Antecedents of Congress	16
The English Heritage	16
The Colonial Experience	17
Congress in the Constitution	19
Powers of Congress	20
Limits on Legislative Power	22
Separate Branches, Shared Powers	23
Legislative–Executive Interdependence	23
Impeachment	24
Interbranch “No-Fly Zones”	25
Judicial Review	26
Who Is the Final Arbiter?	26
Bicameralism	27
Institutional Evolution	28
Workload	29
The Size of Congress	30
Conflict With the Executive Branch	31
Partisan Interests	32
Members' Individual Interests	34
Evolution of the Legislator's Job	36

viii Congress and Its Members

The Congressional Career	36
Professionalization	38
Constituency Demands	39
Conclusion	39

Part II A Congress of Ambassadors 41

Chapter 3 Going For It: Recruitment and Candidacy 43

Formal Rules of the Game	45
Senate Apportionment	45
House Apportionment	46
Role of the Census	46
Census Politics	47
Districting in the House	50
Malapportionment	52
Gerrymandering	53
Partisan Gerrymandering	54
Majority-Minority Districts	56
The Supreme Court Enters the Game	57
Consequences of Majority-Minority Districts	58
Becoming a Candidate	59
Called or Chosen?	59
Amateurs and Professionals	62
Amateurs	62
Professionals	63
Finding Quality Candidates	64
The Incumbency Factor	64
Female Candidates	65
Nominating Politics	67
Rules of the Nominating Game	67
Parties and Nominations	68
Sizing Up the Primary System	68
Conclusion	69

Chapter 4 Making It: The Electoral Game 71

Campaign Strategies	73
Asking the Right Questions	73
Choosing the Message	74
Campaign Resources	75
Campaign Finance Regulations	76
Candidates' Campaigns	76
Independent Expenditures	77
Incumbents Versus Challengers	79

Allocating Resources	81
Organizing the Campaign	82
Campaign Techniques	83
The Air War: Media and Other Mass Appeals	83
Positive Themes	83
Negative Themes	83
Evolving Mass Media	84
The Ground War: Pressing the Flesh and Other Forms of Close Contact	85
The Parallel Campaigns	86
Who Votes?	87
Reasons for Not Voting	88
Biases of Voting	89
How Voters Decide	89
Party Loyalties	90
Partisan Resurgence	90
Midterm and Presidential Election Years	91
The Appeal of Candidates	94
Incumbency Advantage	94
Senate and House	96
Strategic Politicians	97
Issue Voting	97
Congressional Party Platforms	97
Issues and Partisanship	98
Issues and Campaigns	100
Election Outcomes	100
Party Balance	100
Shifting Majorities	100
Regional Patterns	102
Polarized Parties, Polarized Voters?	103
Turnover and Representation	104
Conclusion	104
Chapter 5 Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles	107
Hill Styles	109
Who Are the Legislators?	109
Education and Occupation	110
Race	111
Gender	112
Sexual Orientation	113
Religion	113
Age and Tenure	113
Equal Representation of States	114
Collective Representation	115
Congressional Roles	115

X	Congress and Its Members	
	Legislator	116
	Constituency Servant	118
	Partisan	119
	How Do Legislators Spend Their Time?	119
	The Shape of the Washington Career	121
	Looking Homeward	122
	Independent Judgment or Constituency Opinion?	122
	What Are Constituencies?	123
	Geographic and Demographic Constituencies	124
	Political and Personal Constituencies	126
	Home Styles	127
	Presentation of Self	127
	Explaining Washington Activity	129
	Constituency Careers	129
	Office of the Member Inc	131
	Road Tripping	131
	Constituency Casework	131
	Personal Staff	133
	Staff Organization	133
	Staff Functions	134
	Members and the Media	135
	Mail	135
	Feeding the Local Press	136
	Social Media	138
	Conclusion	139

Part III A Deliberative Assembly of One Nation 141

	Chapter 6 Leaders and Parties in Congress	143
	Leaders of the House	146
	Evolution of the Speakership	149
	The Speaker's Influence: Style and Context	153
	House Floor Leaders and Whips	155
	Leaders of the Senate	158
	Presiding Officers	158
	Floor Leaders	158
	Senate Leadership: Individualism and Partisanship	162
	Selection of Leaders	164
	Leadership Activities	165
	Institutional Tasks	165
	Organizing the Chamber	165
	Scheduling Floor Business	165
	Consulting the President	166

Party Goals	167
Organizing and Uniting the Party	167
Winning and Holding Chamber Majorities	168
Advancing the Party's Policy Goals	170
Party Caucuses, Committees, and Informal Groups	170
Party Caucuses	171
Party Committees	171
Informal Party Groups	172
Party Continuity and Change	173
Intense Party Conflict	173
Advances in Coalition Building	174
Conclusion	175
Chapter 7 Committees: Workshops of Congress	177
The Purposes of Committees	179
Evolution of the Committee System	180
Types of Committees	181
Standing Committees	181
Sizes and Ratios	181
Subcommittees	183
Select or Special Committees	185
Joint Committees	186
Conference Committees	186
The Assignment Process	186
The Pecking Order	187
Preferences and Politicking	188
How Assignments Are Made	190
Formal Criteria	190
Informal Criteria	192
Seniority	193
Approval by Party Caucuses and the Chamber	195
Committee Leadership	195
Policymaking in Committee	196
Overlapping Jurisdictions	197
The Policy Environment	200
Multiple Referrals	200
Where Bills Go	201
Hearings	201
Markups	203
Reports	204
Committee Staff	204
Committee Reform and Change	206

xii	Congress and Its Members	
	Constricting the Authority of Committee Chairs	206
	“Gangs”	208
	Bypassing Committees	208
	Conclusion	209
	Chapter 8 Congressional Rules and Procedures	211
	Introduction of Bills	214
	Drafting	217
	Referral of Bills	218
	Scheduling in the House	220
	Suspension of the Rules	221
	Special Rules and the House Rules Committee	222
	Arm of the Majority Leadership	223
	Type of Rules	225
	The Emergence of Creative Rules	226
	Other Ways to the Floor	229
	House Floor Procedures	231
	Adoption of the Rule	231
	Committee of the Whole	232
	General Debate	232
	The Amending Phase	232
	Voting	233
	Recommit and Final Passage	233
	Scheduling in the Senate	234
	The Motion to Proceed	234
	Unanimous Consent Agreements	235
	Other Ways to the Floor	238
	Senate Floor Procedures	239
	General Practice	239
	Holds, Filibusters, and Cloture	240
	Filibusters and Cloture	240
	Holds	244
	Resolving House–Senate Differences	244
	The Conference Committee Process	244
	Amendments Between the Houses	245
	Openness and Bargaining	246
	Conclusion	246
	Chapter 9 Decision Making in Congress	247
	The Power to Choose	250
	Types of Decisions	251
	Specializing	251

Timing of Decisions	252
Taking the Lead	252
Taking Part	254
Offering Amendments	255
Casting Votes	256
What Do Votes Mean?	258
Determinants of Voting	259
Party and Voting	259
Ideology and Voting	264
Constituency and Voting	268
The Presidency and Voting	270
Cue-Givers and Roll Call Votes	272
Legislative Bargaining	273
Implicit and Explicit Bargaining	273
Implicit Bargaining	273
Explicit Bargaining	274
Logrolling	275
Bargaining Strategy	276
Conclusion	278

Part IV Policymaking and Change in the Two Congresses 279

Chapter 10 Congress and the President	281
Constitutional Powers	284
Veto Bargaining	285
Veto Processes	285
Veto Threats	286
The Pocket Veto	286
Post-Veto Action	286
The Line-Item Veto	287
The Administrative President	287
Signing Statements	291
Patronage	291
Leadership	292
The President's Power to Persuade	292
Going Public: The Rhetorical President	295
Congressional Opinion Leadership	299
The "Two Presidencies"	300
Sources of Legislative–Executive Conflict and Cooperation	302
Party Loyalties	303
Public Expectations	305
Different Constituencies	306

xiv	Congress and Its Members	
	Different Time Perspectives	307
	The Balance of Power	307
	Conclusion	309
	Chapter 11 Congress and the Bureaucracy	311
	Congress Organizes the Executive Branch	314
	Senate Confirmation of Presidential Appointees	316
	Bypassing Advice and Consent	319
	The Personnel System	321
	Pay and Other Legal Standards	323
	Size of Government	323
	The Rulemaking Process	325
	Statutory Standards for Rulemaking	327
	Legislative–Executive Clashes	327
	Regulatory Review	329
	Congressional Control of the Bureaucracy	331
	Hearings and Investigations	332
	Direct Member Outreach to Agencies	333
	Congressional Vetoes	334
	Mandatory Reports	335
	Nonstatutory Controls	335
	Inspectors General	336
	The Appropriations Process	337
	Impeachment	338
	Oversight: An Evaluation	338
	Conclusion	341
	Chapter 12 Congress and the Courts	343
	The Federal Courts	344
	The Supreme Court as Policymaker	346
	“Judicial Activism”	347
	Interbranch Conflict: Separation of Powers	348
	Federalism	351
	Statutory Interpretation	352
	Legislative Checks on the Judiciary	355
	Withdrawal of Jurisdiction	355
	Impeachment of Judges	356
	Size, Procedure, and Pay	357
	Constitutional Amendments	359
	Advice and Consent for Judicial Nominees	360
	Supreme Court Nominations	361
	The Lower Courts	367
	Conclusion	371

Chapter 13 Congress and Organized Interests	373
American Pluralism	374
A Capital of Interests	375
A Nation of Joiners	376
Biases of Interest Representation	377
Pressure Group Methods	378
Direct Lobbying	379
Social Lobbying	381
Coalition Lobbying	382
Grassroots Lobbying	383
Digital Lobbying	384
Groups and the Electoral Connection	384
Groups and Campaign Fundraising	385
Groups and Advocacy Campaigns	385
Rating Legislators	386
Groups, Lobbying, and Legislative Politics	387
The Role of Money	387
Lobbying and Legislation	388
Subgovernments	389
Regulation of Lobbying	390
The 1946 Lobbying Law	390
The Lobby Disclosure Act of 1995	391
The Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007	391
Foreign Lobbying	393
Conclusion	394
Chapter 14 Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policymaking	395
Policymaking Processes	397
Setting the Agenda	397
Formulating Policy	398
Adopting Policy	398
Implementing Policy	400
Types of Domestic Policies	400
Distributive Policies	400
Earmarks	401
Regulatory Policies	402
Redistributive Policies	403
Characteristics of Congressional Policymaking	403
Bicameralism	403
Localism	404
Piecemeal Policymaking	405
Symbolic Policymaking	405

Reactive Policymaking	405
Congressional Budgeting	406
Authorizations and Appropriations	408
Backdoor Spending Techniques	411
The Challenge of Entitlements	411
Tax Expenditures	413
Debt and Deficits	413
The 1974 Budget Act	414
Concurrent Budget Resolution	415
Reconciliation	416
The Byrd Rule	417
Shifting Processes and Fiscal Realities	418
Conclusion	420
Chapter 15 Congress and National Security Policies	421
Constitutional Powers	423
The President Proposes	423
Congress Reacts	424
Who Speaks for Congress?	425
The National Interest: Types of National-Security Policies	427
Structural Policies	427
The Military–Industrial–Congressional Complex	428
Weapons Systems	429
Trade Politics	429
Strategic Policies	432
Global Threats	432
Treaties and Executive Agreements	433
Other Policymaking Powers of Congress	434
Advising, Prodding	434
Oversight	434
Legislative Mandates	435
Crisis Policies: The War Powers	435
Constitutional Powers	436
The War Powers Resolution	437
Conclusion	439
Part V Conclusion	441
Chapter 16 The Two Congresses and the American People	443
Congress as the “Broken Branch”	446
Ambition and Conflict	447
Ethics and Transparency	449

Deliberation and Processes	452
Attacks on Congress	454
The “Broken Branch” and the Two Congresses	454
Congress’s Vital Role	457
Representation	457
Geographic Representation	457
Reflecting the Nation	458
Expressive Representation	459
Policymaking	460
Congress Is Still Productive	461
Bipartisanship Is Still the Norm	462
Congress’s Impact	463
Twenty-First-Century Challenges	464
A Crisis of Confidence	465
Checks and Imbalances?	466
Executive Hubris	467
Judicial Lawmaking	468
Conclusion	469
Appendix A	471
Appendix B – Internships: Getting Experience on Capitol Hill	475
Endnotes	479
Index	581

Preface

As authors of the twentieth edition of a book that first appeared in 1981, we are performe believers in the maxim that in politics six months is a long time and four years practically a lifetime. Events of recent years surely bear out this wisdom. The roller-coaster reversals of government and politics require frequent updates of any text on the U.S. Congress that aims to be both current and comprehensive.

The 2024 elections brought a return to unified government in Washington, with Republicans winning the White House and the Senate, while holding onto their narrow majority in the House. The Republican victory concluded a two-year period of divided control characterized by extremely narrow margins in both chambers. House Republicans had struggled to maintain unity as a faction of hard-core conservatives repeatedly refused to back party leaders on the spending and debt ceiling compromises necessitated by the need to share power with a Democratic Senate and president. These divisions culminated in the unseating of Speaker Kevin McCarthy in October 2023 and his replacement, three weeks later, by Mike Johnson of Louisiana. While Johnson survived the remainder of the 118th Congress, he often depended on large numbers of Democratic votes to keep the government running. Even so, Congress did achieve several noteworthy legislative successes, including passage of a major bill providing assistance to the government of Ukraine, as well as a massive spending bill that included substantial new funds for disaster assistance.

The new Trump administration offered both opportunities and challenges for the Republican majorities in the House and Senate. Unified party control set the stage for a major legislative push to undo aspects of President Biden’s legacy—such as his climate initiatives—and to make permanent the tax cuts adopted when Trump first took office in 2017. At the same time, Trump and his team hit the ground running with a series of executive orders and unilateral actions that challenged Congress’s core power over spending, shuttering an agency outright and cancelling programs that had been created and funded by law. Furthermore, the cuts pushed by Trump’s new “Department of Government Efficiency” threatened programs that had significant constituencies in many Republican members’ districts. A key question for the 119th Congress will be whether Republican leaders will be able to maintain the extremely high unity required to enact Trump’s legislative priorities, and whether members will eventually push back against the administration’s expansive power claims. A 2026 midterm election in which control of the House will be very much up in the air and a handful of Republican Senate seats will be vulnerable to Democratic challenges also looms over

the 119th Congress. The window of opportunity for new presidents to enact their legislative agenda has proven short amid the narrow, shifting majorities in recent decades.

The precarious fortunes of recent presidents and congressional majorities are a reminder of the pervasive pluralism of the U.S. political system, with its diverse viewpoints and interests. Presidents and congressional leaders see their perceived mandates collide with the founders' intricate "auxiliary precautions" for preventing majorities from winning quick or total victories. Not the least of the system's attributes is what we call the "two Congresses": Congress is both a conduit for localized interests and a maker of national policy.

In this edition, we discuss new developments and fresh research on nearly every aspect of Congress. When the first edition of this book came out, political scientists were still seeking to explain the decline of party unity in Congress. Today, the strength of partisanship is the most salient reality of Capitol Hill. Congress is a vortex of the so-called permanent campaign, in which electioneering is interlocked with the process and content of lawmaking. Individual incumbents work tirelessly for reelection, and just as importantly, the two parties engage in an all-out battle to win or maintain majority control of each chamber. We record shifts in party leaders, the committee system, floor procedures, and the Capitol Hill community. Complex, interdependent relationships with presidents, bureaucrats, and the courts put Congress at the center of the entire federal government.

In the midst of fundamental political change, there remain underlying constants in Congress's character and behavior. Most important is the dual nature of Congress as a collection of career-minded politicians and as a forum for shaping national policy. We employ the two-Congresses theme to explain the details of congressional life as well as scholarly findings regarding legislators' behavior. Colorful personalities and interesting events are never in short supply on Capitol Hill. We strive to describe recent developments and trends; more importantly, we try to place them in broader historical and conceptual contexts.

These are troubling times for those of us who believe in representative democracy. True, Congress has, with varying levels of success, absorbed astonishing changes in its membership, partisan control, structural and procedural arrangements, and policy agendas. Yet Congress has all too often retreated from its constitutional mandate to initiate national policy and oversee government operations. Its prerogatives are under siege from executive decision makers, federal judges, and elite opinion makers, who constantly belittle its capacities, ignore its authority, and evade its scrutiny. Congress, in short, faces challenges on all sides. Lawmakers themselves are to blame for reinforcing disdain of the institution, and for substituting partisan allegiance for independent judgment and critical thinking. Today's Congress all too often falls short of the founders' vision as the "first branch of government"—for reasons that this book explains.

This edition, like its predecessors, is written for general readers seeking an introduction to the modern Congress, as well as for college or university students taking

courses on the legislative process or national policymaking. We try to present accurate, timely, and readable information, along with insights from scholars and practitioners. Although wrapped around our core theme, the book's chapters are long on analysis. We make no apologies for this. Lawmaking is an arduous, complicated business; those who would understand it must master its details and nuances. At the same time, we hope to convey the energy and excitement of the place. After all, our journalist friends are right: Capitol Hill is the best beat in town.

Acknowledgments

This edition marks the first in which our longtime collaborator, Walter Oleszek, has not directly participated. Walter, along with Roger Davidson, wrote the first edition of *Congress and Its Members* in 1981. Together, they developed the “Two Congresses” framework that has guided our understanding of the institution over the past four decades. The premier authority on congressional rules and procedures for several decades, Walter is the author of numerous important books and articles. His *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process* has long been a critical resource for practitioners and scholars alike. Walter was a senior specialist in the legislative process at the Congressional Research Service. On a more personal level, he stood out as a kind and generous colleague—always eager to help answer big questions and small ones. His legacy is one that extends not only to the multiple congressional reorganization efforts that he advised, but also to generations of congressional scholars who have been enriched by his insights. This legacy includes his son, Mark, a political scientist who joined the Congressional Research Service soon after completing his Ph.D.

We have incurred more debts to friends and fellow scholars than we could ever recount. We thank especially our colleagues at the Congressional Research Service and elsewhere: Christina Bailey, Christopher Davis, C. Lawrence Evans, Louis Fisher, William Heniff Jr., Gary C. Jacobson, Emery Lee, Megan Lynch, Jennifer Manning, Molly Reynolds, Elizabeth Rybicki, James Saturno, Jim Thurber, and Donald Wolfensberger. The views and interpretations expressed in this book are in no way attributable to the Congressional Research Service.

Our friends at CQ Press deserve special appreciation. We thank Anna Villarruel and Christy Sadler for keeping us on track as we revised the book to reflect the most recent developments. Jessica Meyer for her thoughtful work on photo research, artwork development, and permissions. Diane DiMura did a skilled and probing copyedit of the new edition. And we thank Jessica Meyer, who supervised the book’s production.

Our deep appreciation for our families, for their love and support, cannot be fully expressed in words. As a measure of our affection, this book is dedicated to them.

—Frances E. Lee
Princeton, New Jersey

—Eric Schickler
Berkeley, California

—James M. Curry
South Bend, Indiana

About the Authors

Roger H. Davidson was professor emeritus of government and politics at the University of Maryland and served as visiting professor of political science at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He was a senior fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration. During the 1970s, he served on the staffs of reform efforts in both the House (Bolling-Martin Committee) and the Senate (Stevenson-Brock Committee). For the 2001–2002 academic year, he served as the John Marshall chair in political science at the University of Debrecen, Hungary. His books include *Remaking Congress: Change and Stability in the 1990s*, co-edited with James A. Thurber (1995), and *Understanding the Presidency*, 7th ed., co-edited with James P. Pfiffner (2013). Davidson was co-editor with Donald C. Bacon and Morton Keller of *The Encyclopedia of the United States Congress* (1995).

Walter J. Oleszek is a senior specialist in the legislative process at the Congressional Research Service. He has served as either a full-time professional staff aide or consultant to many major House and Senate congressional reorganization efforts beginning with the passage of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970. In 1993, he served as policy director of the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress. A former adjunct faculty member at American University, Oleszek is a frequent lecturer to various academic, governmental, and business groups. He is the author or co-author of several books, including *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process*, 11th ed. (2020), and *Congress Under Fire: Reform Politics and the Republican Majority*, with C. Lawrence Evans (1997).

Frances E. Lee is professor of politics and public affairs in the School of Public and International Affairs and the Department of Politics at Princeton University. She has been a research fellow at the Brookings Institution and an APSA congressional fellow. Most recently, she is co-author of *The Limits of Party: Congress and Lawmaking in a Polarized Era* (2020) and *In Covid's Wake: How Our Politics Failed Us* (2025). She is also the author of *Insecure Majorities: Congress and the Perpetual Campaign* (2016) and *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles, and Partisanship in the U.S. Senate* (2009) and co-author, with Bruce I. Oppenheimer, of *Sizing Up the Senate: The Unequal Consequences of Equal Representation* (1999). Her articles have appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Politics*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, and *American Journal of Political Science*, among others.

Eric Schickler is Jeffrey & Ashley McDermott Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of three books that have won the Richard F. Fenno Jr. Prize for the best book on legislative politics: *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the U.S. Congress* (2001), *Filibuster: Obstruction and Lawmaking in the United States Senate* (2006, with Gregory Wawro), and *Investigating the President: Congressional Checks on Presidential Power* (2016, with Douglas Kriner; also a winner of the Richard E. Neustadt Prize for the best book on executive politics). His book *Racial Realignment: The Transformation of American Liberalism, 1932–1965* was the winner of the Woodrow Wilson Prize for the best book on government, politics, or international affairs published in 2016, and is co-winner of the J. David Greenstone Prize for the best book in history and politics from the previous two calendar years. His most recent book is *Partisan Nation: The Dangerous New Logic of American Politics in a Nationalized Era* (with Paul Pierson).

James M. Curry is professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame. He is coauthor of *The Limits of Party: Congress and Lawmaking in a Polarized Era* (2020); author of *Legislating in the Dark: Information and Power in the House of Representatives* (2015); and winner of the Alan Rosenthal Prize, the E. E. Schattschneider Award, and the Carl Albert Award. His research appears in the *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Politics*, *Perspectives on Politics*, and *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, among other outlets. He received his Ph.D. in government and politics from the University of Maryland, and he previously worked on Capitol Hill in the offices of Rep. Daniel Lipinski and the House Appropriations Committee.

Part

In Search of the Two Congresses

Chapter 1

The Two Congresses



Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., picks apples on his farm, outside of Sunnyside, Washington.

Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call/Getty Images

“I guess I assumed that Republicans would stand behind him, Dan,” said a county GOP leader to Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) in August 2024. “I was hurt, I was disgusted, I was dismayed when you came out and voted to impeach the man.”¹ Newhouse was meeting with a group of Republicans in the back room of a local pizza joint in his central Washington district in the lead-up to the 2024 primary elections. As one of the ten House Republicans who had voted to impeach President Donald J. Trump in the wake of the January 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, Newhouse had been faced with many similar questions from his constituents over the past three years. Maintaining a respectful tone, Newhouse replied that the Capitol riot had occurred just days after he had taken an oath of office to defend the Constitution. “I took that [oath] very literally,” said Newhouse. “I think I made the right choice for upholding the Constitution. It’s not political.”²

Newhouse would go on to finish second in the primary five days later. The first-place finisher was Navy veteran and former NASCAR driver Jerrod Sessler, who had been endorsed by President Trump. Just the weekend before the election, Trump took to his social media platform to denounce Newhouse as “a weak and pathetic RINO [Republican In Name Only] who stupidly voted to impeach me for absolutely no reason.”³ Despite finishing behind Sessler in the primary, Newhouse was not finished. He benefited from Washington state’s unusual “top two” primary system, in which all candidates from any party compete in a single primary and then the two candidates receiving the most votes advance to the general election in November.

The 2024 primary was not the first time Newhouse had faced a serious challenge from within his own party. In 2022, in the immediate aftermath of his impeachment vote, he had also faced a competitive primary featuring another Trump-backed opponent. Facing six Republican challengers, Newhouse managed to eke out a primary win with just 25.5 percent of the vote. With a Democrat coming in second in the top two, Newhouse was easily able to dispatch his opponent in the 2022 general election. But after coming in second in the 2024 primary, Newhouse had to face down a Trump-backed Republican as his sole opponent in the 2024 general election—in one of the most reliably Republican districts in the country.

Washington’s Fourth Congressional District encompasses the whole central part of the state from Canada to the Oregon state line. Encompassing no major cities, the district is heavily agricultural. It produces most of the nation’s apples, along with many other crops, including grapes, wheat, potatoes, and hops. Clearly set on one side of the deep rural-urban divide in American politics, the district is a Republican bastion. No Democratic presidential candidate has won even one county in the district since Bill Clinton in 1992. None of the district’s other counties have voted for a Democrat since 1964. Trump carried the district by more than 15 percentage points in 2016, 2020, and 2024.

Clearly, Washington’s Fourth District is not friendly territory for a Trump “impeacher.” To make matters more difficult, Newhouse staked out positions on other national issues unusual for a conservative Republican. He supported a path to legal status for undocumented immigrants.⁴ He was one of only thirty-nine House Republicans to vote for the Respect for Marriage Act requiring the federal government and all U.S. states and territories to recognize same-sex marriages.⁵ Against conservative Republican opposition, Newhouse advocated for the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank, a credit agency that assists in financing and facilitating U.S. exports.⁶ Newhouse opposes tariffs, another source of friction with President Trump.⁷ Since his election to the House in 2014, Newhouse has often found himself at odds with Republican hardliners on prominent issues.

No one could question Newhouse’s deep roots in the district, however. A third-generation farmer, he grew up in a Yakima Valley family. He graduated from Washington State University with a degree in agricultural economics. Before entering politics, he operated an 850-acre farm near Sunnyside growing hops,

grapes, and alfalfa. He is a former president of the Hop Growers of America. He served as Washington's Director of Agriculture from 2009 to 2013, under both a Republican and a Democratic governor. He has detailed positions on an array of regional issues, from his support for maintaining the federal hydropower dams on the Snake River to his opposition to reintroducing grizzly bears to the North Cascades ecosystem. Clearly, Newhouse has deep knowledge of the district and its principal industry.

The 2024 race in Washington's Fourth Congressional District featured one of the most competitive challenges to a House incumbent, even though, with two Republicans competing against one another, the outcome would have no effect on party control of the House of Representatives. Different Republican factions took stands on the race. Newhouse's opponent Sessler had the endorsement of Trump, the Washington State Republican party,⁸ and the pro-Trump conservative House Freedom Caucus's campaign arm.⁹ Newhouse had the support of the Main Street Caucus, a faction of mainstream House Republicans.¹⁰ Speaker Mike Johnson and House Majority Leader Steve Scalise also flew out to visit Newhouse's district to support him in the last week before the election.¹¹ Recognizing that Trump would win the district in a landslide, Sessler constantly touted his Trump endorsement and promised to be Trump's "greatest ally."¹² Meanwhile, Newhouse campaigned on his understanding of local issues. "It's tough to make a buck in agriculture," he said. "That's why I think it's so important that we have a strong representative that knows agriculture. And I'm a farmer. Those are my issues."¹³

Faced with the choice, Washington's Fourth District voters reelected Newhouse with 52 percent of the vote. "The results from this election show the people want a results-driven leader who understands the unique challenges facing Central Washington," concluded Newhouse.

Newhouse's wins in 2022 and 2024 illustrate the central theme of this book. The work of Congress is conducted not only in Washington, DC but also in states and districts hundreds or thousands of miles away. Members of Congress gain and hold office not just by virtue of their stances on national issues but on the basis of their capacity to forge and maintain voters' trust. Newhouse's deep roots in his district afforded him some leeway to deviate from conservative orthodoxy on a number of national issues. But ambitious challengers were always waiting in the wings, ready to take advantage of any opportunity. In an overwhelmingly pro-Trump district, Newhouse's support for Trump's impeachment put his seat at severe risk. The decision has dogged him for years and will likely cause him trouble in the future, should he decide to run for reelection again. Nevertheless, his local ties and bonds of constituency trust have thus far enabled him to fend off Trump's efforts to purge him from Congress. He must continue to nurture and renew these personal relationships and open lines of communication if he is to have any hope of staying in Congress beyond 2026. Constituents may not always understand the details of national politics and policy, but they know whom they trust—and whom they doubt.

The Dual Nature of Congress

Dan Newhouse's reelection victories underscore the dual nature of Congress. Members of Congress continually inhabit two very different but closely linked worlds, attempting to strike a difficult balance between them. In Newhouse's case, there are, on the one hand, the unique needs and issues of central Washington, with its conservative rural voters, its reliance on agriculture, its dependence on international trade, and its appreciation for someone who knows and understands local ways of life. On the other hand, there is the world of national politics, where Newhouse has found himself in conflict with influential factions in Republican party politics and on the front pages of the newspapers as one of a handful of House Republicans who supported his own president's impeachment. These tensions highlight the dual character of the national legislature—Congress as a national policymaking institution and Congress as an assembly of local representatives.

In this sense, there are two Congresses. One is the Congress of textbooks, of "how a bill becomes a law." It is Congress acting as a collegial body, performing constitutional duties, and debating legislative issues that affect the entire nation. This Congress is a fascinating arena in which all of the forces of U.S. political life converge—presidents, cabinet members, career bureaucrats, activists, lobbyists, policy wonks, military leaders, and ambitious political entrepreneurs of every stripe. This Congress is more than a collection of its members at any given time. It is a mature institution with a complex network of rules, organizations, and traditions. Norms mark the boundaries of the legislative playing field and define the rules of the game. To be effective legislators, individual members generally must accept Congress on its own terms and conform to its established ways of doing things.

A second Congress exists as well, and it is every bit as important as the Congress portrayed in textbooks. This is the representative assembly of 541 individuals (100 senators, 435 representatives, 5 delegates, and 1 resident commissioner). This Congress includes men and women of many different ages, backgrounds, and routes to office, all doing what is necessary to maintain political support in their local constituencies. Their electoral fortunes depend less on what Congress produces as a national institution than on the policy positions they take individually and the local ties they build and maintain. "As locally elected officials who make national policy," observes Paul S. Herrnson, "members of Congress almost lead double lives."¹⁴

The two Congresses are, in many ways, separated by a wide gulf. The complex, often insular world of Capitol Hill is far removed from most constituencies, in perspective and outlook as well as in miles. Lawmaking and representing are separate tasks, and members of Congress recognize them as such. Yet these two Congresses are bound together. What affects one affects the other—sooner or later.

Legislators' Tasks

The duality between institutional and individual duties permeates legislators' daily activities and roles. As Speaker Sam Rayburn, D-Tex., once remarked, "A congressman

has two constituencies—he has his constituents at home, and his colleagues here in the House. To serve his constituents at home, he must also serve his colleagues here in the House.”¹⁵

No problem vexes members more than that of juggling constituency and legislative tasks. For maintaining local connections, members know that there is no substitute for being present in their states and district. Congressional calendars allow for lengthy recesses, termed district work periods, and most legislative weeks are scheduled from Tuesday to Thursday. “I can tell you based on my experience . . . that time spent in our districts is not ‘time off,’” observed Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah.¹⁶ On average, between 2010 and 2022, Congress was in session for 134 days a year, about one out of every three days.¹⁷ Members spend much of the rest of their time at home among their constituents.

Reelection is the paramount operational goal of members of Congress. As a former representative put it, “All members of Congress have a primary interest in getting reelected. Some members have no other interest.”¹⁸ After all, politicians must win elections before they can achieve any long-range political goals. “[Reelection] has to be the proximate goal of everyone, the goal that must be achieved over and over if other ends are to be entertained,” David R. Mayhew observed in *Congress: The Electoral Connection*.¹⁹

Individual legislators vary in how they balance the twin roles of legislator and representative. Some legislators devote more time and resources to lawmaking while others focus almost entirely on constituency tending. With their longer terms, some senators stress voter outreach and fence mending during the two years before reelection and focus on legislative activities at other times. Yet senatorial contests normally are more competitive and costlier than House races, and many senators now run for reelection all the time—like most of their House colleagues.²⁰ Most senators and representatives would like to devote more time to lawmaking and other Capitol Hill duties, but the press of constituency business is relentless.²¹

Popular Images

The notion of two Congresses also conforms to the average citizen’s perceptions. The public views the U.S. Congress differently from the way it sees individual senators and representatives. Congress, as an institution, is perceived primarily as a lawmaking body. It is judged mainly on the basis of citizens’ overall attitudes toward politics, policy processes, and the state of the Union. Do people like the way things are going or not? Do they feel that Congress is carrying out its duties effectively? Are they optimistic or pessimistic about the nation’s future?

In contrast with their expectations of Congress as a whole, citizens view their legislators in great part as agents of local concerns. People judge individual legislators by yardsticks such as communication with constituents, their positions on prominent issues, service to the district, and home style (the way officeholders present themselves

in their districts or states). In judging their senators or representatives, voters ponder questions such as, “Is the legislator trustworthy? Does the legislator communicate well with the state (or district) by being visible in the constituency and offering timely help to constituents? Does the legislator listen to the state (or district) and its concerns?”²²

The public’s divergent expectations of Congress and its members send conflicting signals to senators and representatives. Congress, as a whole, is judged by the processes it uses and the policies it adopts (or fails to adopt), however vaguely voters understand them.²³ But individual legislators are regularly nominated and elected to office on the strength of their personal qualities, the positions they take, and their constituency service. In response to this incongruity, officeholders often adopt a strategy of opening as much space as possible between themselves and those other politicians back in Washington.

The Constitutional Basis

Congress’s dual nature—the dichotomy between its lawmaking and representative functions—is dictated by the U.S. Constitution. Congress’s mandate to write the nation’s laws is found in Article I of the Constitution. By contrast, Congress’s representational functions are not specified in the Constitution, although these duties flow from the constitutional provisions for electing senators and House members.

It is no accident that the Constitution’s drafters devoted the first article to establishing the legislature and enumerating most of the government’s powers. Familiar with the British Parliament’s prolonged struggles with the Crown, the authors assumed the legislature would be the chief policymaking body and the bulwark against arbitrary executives. “In republican government, the legislative authority necessarily predominates,” observed James Madison in *The Federalist Papers*.²⁴

Although in the ensuing years the initiative for policymaking has shifted many times between the legislative and executive branches, the U.S. Congress remains virtually the only national assembly in the world that drafts, in detail, the laws it passes instead of simply debating and ratifying measures prepared by the government in power.

The House of Representatives was intended to be the most representative element of the U.S. government. House members are elected directly by the people for two-year terms to ensure that they do not stray too far from popular opinion. As Madison explained, the House should have “an immediate dependence on, and an intimate sympathy with, the people.”²⁵ For most representatives, this two-year cycle means nonstop campaigning, visiting, and looking after constituents.

The Senate was initially one step removed from popular voting. Some of the Constitution’s framers hoped the Senate would temper the popular passions expressed in the House, so under the original Constitution, state legislatures selected senators. But this original vision was ultimately overruled in favor of a Senate that, like the House, directly expresses the people’s voice. In 1913, the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution was adopted, providing for direct popular election of senators.

Although elected for six-year terms, senators must stay in close touch with the electorate. Like their House colleagues, senators typically regard themselves as constituency servants. Most have transformed their office staffs into veritable cottage industries for generating publicity and handling constituents' inquiries.

Thus, the Constitution and subsequent historical developments affirm Congress's dual functions of lawmaker and representative assembly. Although the roles are tightly bound together, they nonetheless impose separate duties and functions.

Back to Burke

On November 3, 1774, in Bristol, England, the British statesman and philosopher Edmund Burke set forth in a speech the dual character of a national legislature. The constituent-oriented parliament, or Congress, he described as

a Congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates.

The parliament of substantive lawmaking he portrayed in different terms. It was a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole—where not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole.²⁶

Burke preferred the second concept and did not hesitate to let his voters know it. He would give local opinion a hearing, but his judgment and conscience would prevail in all cases. “Your faithful friend, your devoted servant, I shall be to the end of my life,” he declared. “A flatterer you do not wish for.”²⁷

Burke's Bristol speech is an enduring statement of the dilemma legislators face in balancing their two roles. Burke was a brilliant lawmaker. (He even sympathized with the cause of the American colonists.) But, as might be said today, he suffered from an inept home style. His candor earned him no thanks from his constituents, who turned him out of office at the first opportunity.

Burke's dilemma applies equally on this side of the Atlantic. U.S. voters tend to prefer their lawmakers to be delegates who listen carefully to constituents and follow their guidance. During an encounter in Borger, Texas, an irate Baptist minister shouted at then-representative Bill Sarpalius, D-Tex., “We didn't send you to Washington to make intelligent decisions. We sent you to represent us.”²⁸ Sarpalius was later defeated for reelection.

Representing local constituents is not the whole story, of course. Burke's idea that legislators are trustees of the nation's common good is still extolled. In a 1995 decision, U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens noted that, once elected, members of Congress become “servants of the people of the United States. They are not merely delegates appointed by separate states; they occupy offices that are integral and essential components of a single national government.”²⁹

Many talented individuals seek public office, often forgoing more lucrative opportunities in the private sector, precisely because they believe strongly in a vision of what government should do and how it should do it. For such legislators, winning office is a means to a larger end. It is reasonable to assume that elected officials “make an honest effort to achieve good public policy.”³⁰

Burke posed the tension between the two Congresses so vividly that we have adopted his language to describe the conceptual distinction that forms the crux of this book. From Burke, we have also drawn the titles for Part II, “A Congress of Ambassadors,” and Part III, “A Deliberative Assembly of One Nation.” Every member of Congress, sooner or later, must come to terms with Burke’s dichotomy; citizens and voters will also have to form their own answers.

The Two Congresses in Comparative Context

A look around the world reveals that most democracies differ from the United States in how they elect legislators. Members of Congress are selected using the oldest form of elected democratic representation: a plurality vote within geographic constituencies. By contrast, most other advanced democracies elect legislative representatives under systems of proportional representation (PR), a more recent innovation in democratic institutions. Many varieties of PR are in use, but compared with the U.S. electoral system, these systems tend to tie legislators more closely to their political parties than to local constituencies. In this way, PR systems alleviate the difficult trade-offs that members of Congress face as they attempt to balance national lawmaking with attention to local constituencies.

PR systems rest on the basic principle that the number of seats a political party wins in the legislature should be proportional to the level of support it receives from voters. If a political party wins 40 percent of the vote overall, then it should receive about 40 percent of the seats. In other words, these systems explicitly assume that political parties are more important than geographic locales to voters’ values and political interests.³¹ Most commonly in these systems, the parties put lists of candidates before the electorate. The number of a party’s candidates to be seated in the legislature from those lists then depends on the percentage of voters supporting that party in legislative elections. To a greater extent than is true of members of the U.S. Congress, candidates elected in PR systems thus serve as representatives of their party’s policy goals and ideological commitments.

Legislators in PR systems face fewer dilemmas about how to balance local constituency politics with national party platforms. Indeed, some PR systems, such as those in Israel and the Netherlands, do not tie representatives to local geographic constituencies at all; legislators represent the entire nation. Other countries, such as Austria and Sweden, elect multiple representatives from regional districts. Multimember districts are not captured by a single party on a winner-take-all basis. (The United States, by

contrast, employs single-member districts, meaning that each constituency elects a representative on a winner-take-all basis.) In countries with multimember districts, constituencies in which more than one political party enjoys a meaningful level of voter support will elect representatives from more than one party, with each legislator thus representing those voters who supported their party. Some countries, such as Germany, Italy, and New Zealand, use a mixed system, with some representatives elected in individual geographic constituencies and others drawn from party lists to ensure proportionality. In all PR cases, citizens and legislators alike recognize that the system is primarily designed to ensure that voters' party preferences are proportionally represented.

Members of the U.S. Congress, by contrast, officially represent all residents of their geographic constituency—a difficult task. The constituents grouped within congressional districts often have little in common. Indeed, constituencies can be very diverse in terms of race, class, ethnicity, religion, economic interests, and urbanization. The largest states are microcosms of the whole nation. Some constituencies are narrowly divided in terms of partisanship and ideology, forcing representatives to cope with continual local controversies about their stances on national issues. A few members of Congress face the challenge of representing constituents who lean toward the opposing party.³²

In attempting to represent their whole state or district, some senators and House members attempt a “lowest common denominator” form of representation, deemphasizing their party affiliation and their opinions on controversial national issues. Instead, they advertise their accessibility to constituents; focus on narrow, localized concerns; and dodge hot-button questions whenever they can.³³ This strategy is most appealing to members representing swing or cross-pressured states and districts. But, to an important extent, the U.S. system of representation encourages a focus on parochial matters among lawmakers generally. Members see themselves, at least to some degree, as attorneys for their constituencies.

Even though the U.S. system of representation does not recognize the importance of political parties in the way that PR systems do, members of Congress have nevertheless become more closely tied to their parties in recent decades. Lawmakers vote with their parties far more reliably than they did in the decades spanning the 1950s through the 1980s. The sources of this increased partisanship are many, but it has corresponded with an increasingly partisan ideological polarization in the activist base of both political parties. “The American public has become more consistent and polarized in its policy preferences over the past several decades,” writes Alan I. Abramowitz, “and this increase in consistency and polarization has been concentrated among the most politically engaged citizens.”³⁴ At the same time, the politically engaged public has also sorted itself into more ideologically coherent political parties, with fewer liberals identifying with the Republican Party and fewer conservatives identifying with the Democratic Party.³⁵ Consequently, few voters split their tickets today by voting for one party's presidential candidate and another party's congressional candidate. These

trends have reduced the cross-pressures that members face as they attempt to balance their roles as constituency representatives and national policy makers. More members can cooperate with their national party leaders without endangering the support of an electoral majority in their constituency. At the same time, a body of members responding to this more polarized activist base may have a harder time engaging in genuine deliberation and crafting workable legislative compromises.

All members must constantly cultivate the local roots of their power as national legislators. Yet Congress is one body, not two. The same members who attempt to forge national legislation in committee and on the floor must rush to catch planes back to their districts, where they are plunged into a different world of local problems and personalities. The same candidates who sell themselves at shopping centers also shape the federal budget or military weapons systems in the nation's capital. The unique character of Congress arises directly from its dual role as a representative assembly and a lawmaking body.

Divergent Views of Congress

Congress is subject to intense scrutiny, as the huge array of books, news outlets, and articles devoted to it attest. Many of its features make Congress a favorite object of scholarly attention. For one thing, it is relatively open and accessible, so it can be approached by traditional means—journalistic stories, case studies, normative assessments, and historical accounts. It is also amenable to the analytic techniques of social science. Indeed, the availability of quantitative indicators of congressional work (e.g., floor votes) permits elaborate statistical analyses. Its rule-governed processes allow it to be studied with sophisticated formal models. And Congress is, above all, a fascinating place—the very best location from which to view the varied actors in the U.S. political drama.

Writers of an interpretive book on the U.S. Congress thus can draw on a multitude of sources, an embarrassment of riches. In fact, studies of Congress constitute a vast literature. This is a mixed blessing because all of this information must be integrated into a coherent whole. Moreover, scholarly writing is often highly detailed, technical, and theoretical. We have tried to put such material in perspective, make it accessible to all interested readers, and use illustrative examples wherever possible.

Meanwhile, a gaping chasm exists between this rich scholarly literature and the caricature of Congress prevalent in the popular culture. Humorists from Mark Twain and Will Rogers to Stephen Colbert and Anthony Borowitz have found Congress an inexhaustible source of raw material. Citizens tend to share a disdain toward the legislative branch—especially at moments of furor over, say, ethics scandals or difficult legislative fights. When legislators are at home with constituents, they often reinforce Congress's poor image by portraying the institution as out of touch with reality. As Richard F. Fenno puts it, members “run *for* Congress by running *against* Congress.”³⁶

The picture of Congress conveyed by the media is scarcely more flattering. Journalistic hit-and-run specialists perpetuate a cartoon-like stereotype of Congress as “a place where good ideas go to die in a maelstrom of bureaucratic hedging and rank favor-trading.”³⁷ News magazines, editorial writers, and nightly news broadcasts regularly portray Congress as an irresponsible and somewhat disreputable gang, reminiscent of Woodrow Wilson’s caustic description of the House as “a disintegrated mass of jarring elements.”³⁸ A common refrain is that today’s Congress is a “broken” institution where little happens save partisan bickering.³⁹

To comprehend how the two Congresses function—both the institution and individual members—popular stereotypes must be abandoned and the complex realities examined. Citizens’ ambivalence toward the popular branch of government—which goes back to the beginnings of the Republic—says something about the milieu in which public policy is made. We believe we know our subject well enough to understand why Congress works the way it does, yet we try to maintain a professional, scholarly distance from it.

According to an old saying, two things should never be viewed up close: making sausages and making laws. Despite this warning, we urge readers to take a serious look at the workings of Congress and form their own opinions. Some may recoil from what they discover. Numerous flaws can be identified in members’ personal or public behavior, in their priorities and incentive structures, and in lawmaking processes generally. Recent Congresses especially have displayed troubling tendencies, including rushed legislation, extreme partisanship, frequent gridlock, and abdication of legislative power to the executive branch.⁴⁰

Yet careful observers will also discover much behavior in Congress that is purposeful and principled and many policies that are reasonable and workable. We invite students and colleagues to examine with us what Congress does and why—and to ponder its values and its prospects.

Chapter 2

.....

Evolution of the Modern Congress



The United States Capitol Dome was constructed more than 150 years ago from a design by architect Thomas U. Walter. The Dome recently underwent a major renovation to restore its original grandeur, which had been gradually eroded by age and weather. Just as the physical appearance of the Capitol has undergone many changes over the years, the institutions of Congress have developed over many decades as members have adapted to new challenges and opportunities.

Library of Congress/Contributor/Getty Images

The First Congress met in New York City in the spring of 1789. Business couldn't begin until April 1, when a majority of the fifty-nine House members finally arrived to make a quorum. Members then chose Frederick A. C. Muhlenberg of Pennsylvania as Speaker of the House. Five days later, the Senate achieved its first quorum, although its presiding officer, Vice President John Adams, did not arrive for another two weeks.

New York City, the seat of government, was then a bustling port on the southern tip of Manhattan Island. Congress met in Federal Hall at the corner of Broad and Wall Streets. The House of Representatives occupied a large chamber on the first floor

and the Senate a more intimate chamber upstairs. The new chief executive, George Washington, was still en route from Mount Vernon, his plantation in Virginia; his trip had become a triumphal procession, with crowds and celebrations at every stop. To most of his countrymen, Washington—austere, dignified, the soul of propriety—embodied a government that otherwise was no more than a plan on paper.

The two houses of Congress did not wait for Washington's arrival. The House began debating tariffs, a perennial legislative topic. In the Senate, Vice President Adams, a brilliant but self-important man, prodded his colleagues to decide on proper titles for addressing the president and himself. Adams was dubbed "His Rotundity" by a colleague who thought the whole discussion absurd.

On inauguration day, April 30, Adams was still worrying about how to address the president when the representatives, led by Speaker Muhlenberg, burst into the Senate chamber and seated themselves. Meanwhile, a special committee was dispatched to escort Washington to the chamber for the ceremony. The swearing-in was conducted on an outside balcony in front of thousands of assembled citizens.¹

Then, a nervous Washington reentered the Senate chamber and haltingly read his inaugural address. After the speech, everyone adjourned to nearby St. Paul's Chapel for a special prayer service. Thus, the U.S. Congress became part of a functioning government.²

Antecedents of Congress

The legislative branch of the new government was untried and unknown, searching for procedures and precedents. And yet, it grew out of a rich history of development—stretching back more than five hundred years in Great Britain and no less than a century and a half in North America. If the architects of the U.S. Constitution of 1787 were unsure of how well their new design would work, they had firm ideas about what they intended.

The English Heritage

The evolution of representative institutions on a national scale began in medieval Europe. Monarchs gained power over large territories where inhabitants were divided into social groupings, called *estates of the realm*—among them, the nobility, clergy, landed gentry, and town officials. The monarchs brought together the leaders of these estates, not to create representative government but to fill the royal coffers.

These assemblies later came to be called parliaments, from the French *parler*, "to speak." Historians and political scientists have identified four distinct stages in the evolution of the assemblies of estates into the representative legislatures of today. The first stage saw the assemblies representing the various estates gathering merely to approve taxes for the royal treasury; they engaged in little discussion. During the second stage,

INDEX

A

ACA, 346–47, 403
administrative agencies, 27, 287–88, 314, 332, 334
Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 290, 327
advertisements, pro-candidate, 78
affairs committees, 200, 389
Afghanistan, 300–301, 419, 436, 438–39, 467
African Americans, 57–58, 88, 111–12, 355
African Americans citizenship, 359
agenda in congress, 138, 299
agenda items, 98, 208, 397
agreement, 146, 154, 200, 203, 208, 235, 238, 248, 274–75, 277–78, 433–35
 unanimous-consent, 239
Agriculture, 5–6, 179, 181–82, 187, 190, 194, 197, 219, 254, 408, 410, 415
Agriculture Committee, 190, 209, 219, 254, 389
alleged rules violations by members and report, 392
allies, legislative, 388–89
amendments to bills, 157, 255
amendment tree, 239, 256
American democracy, 445–46, 457, 464, 466
American Politics, 60, 62, 93, 459
American troops, 437–38
APA (Administrative Procedure Act), 290, 327
appellate-court experience in Supreme Court nominations, 368
appointments, presidential, 28, 314, 319
appropriations, 21, 151, 175, 178, 181–82, 184, 187–89, 191–92, 197, 406–11, 414
appropriations and authorizations, 406, 410
appropriations bills, 28, 38, 220, 227, 286, 406–10, 414, 435, 453

 must-pass, 409
 regular, 410
 separate, 406, 410–11
Appropriations Committee, 178, 312, 337, 405, 410
Appropriations Committee ranking member, 184
appropriations process, 337, 341, 406–8, 465
Appropriations Subcommittee, 184, 337
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation for spending on transportation projects, 197
approval, president's, 24, 100
Arizona state legislators, 357
Arizona state senator, 364
Article II, 23–24, 284, 316, 319, 338, 350, 356, 360, 436
assemblies, 6, 16–17, 141, 445, 452, 457
assessment of Congress and American democracy, 464
assigning members to committees, 149
assignment for GOP congressional leaders, 265
assignment panels, 190, 193–94
assignments, 120, 167–68, 178, 184–91, 194–95, 209, 265, 389
 particular committee, 189
AUMF, 438–39
Authorization bills, 409–10
authorizations and appropriations, 408
average House constituency, 36
average House district, 124
average member of congress, 114
average tenure in years of House committee staff directors, 205

B

balance of power, 101, 210, 224, 268, 307–8, 341
balance of power in congress, 210
Barrett, 348, 362–64

- Congressional Budget Act, 407, 465
 - Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act, 32
 - congressional budgeting, 406, 414
 - congressional budgeting process, 188
 - Congressional Budget Office (CBO), 30, 197, 403, 405–6, 469
 - Congressional Budget Office, nonpartisan, 32
 - congressional campaigns, 63, 79, 82, 105, 368
 - Congressional Career, 36, 125
 - congressional caucuses, 388
 - congressional Democrats, 153, 309, 312, 326, 336, 358, 379, 398
 - congressional elections, 52, 56, 61–62, 72, 75, 87–88, 92, 100, 104–5, 119, 388
 - congressional election sets, 186
 - Congressional Ethics, 449–50
 - congressional GOP leaders, 379
 - congressional government, 19, 308
 - congressional history, 30, 178, 448, 463
 - congressional internships, 469–70
 - congressional investigations of presidents, 299
 - congressional lawmakers, 470
 - congressional leaders, 153, 165, 167, 170, 208, 247, 375, 396, 400, 434–35, 444
 - congressional parties, 97, 119, 154, 170, 173, 175, 192, 448, 451, 459–60, 463
 - congressional policy, 278, 283, 381
 - Congressional Review Act (CRA), 290, 326
 - congressional roll call votes, 270
 - congressional subpoenas, 339–40, 349
 - Congress's output of landmark legislation, 462
 - Congress's powers, 21–22, 32, 346, 355, 396–97
 - Congress's role, 24, 179, 446
 - Congress's role in American democracy, 446
 - congresswoman, long-time, 156
 - Consensus Calendar, 220, 229–31
 - constituency servants, 9, 115, 118, 128
 - constituents, 7–9, 11–12, 36, 39, 75–76, 96–97, 109–10, 112, 115–20, 122–23, 127–35, 138, 178–79, 250–51, 257, 259, 281–83, 331–32, 400–401, 456–58
 - Constitution, 3, 8–9, 19–28, 32, 44–47, 49–50, 52, 283–85, 287, 291–92, 314–16, 319–20, 331, 344–48, 350, 352, 359–60, 409, 423–24, 433–34
 - constitutional amendments, 21, 26, 45, 51, 215, 220, 258–59, 352, 355, 359–60, 469
 - constitutionality, 346, 356, 391
 - constitutional powers, 284, 292, 397, 423, 436–37, 439
 - Consumer Financial Protection Board. *See* CFPB
 - contemporary Congress, 29–30, 38, 40, 119, 173, 262, 266, 453–54, 457, 459
 - country, 10–11, 21, 71–72, 103–5, 116–17, 137–38, 219, 268–69, 288–89, 297–99, 301–2, 332, 383–84, 419–20, 428–32, 445–46, 457–58
 - Court-curbing legislation, 356
 - court of appeals nominees, 370
 - courtroom, 358–59
 - courts and congress, 371
 - CRA (Congressional Review Act), 290, 326
 - creation, 30, 55, 58–59, 160, 165, 185, 344, 402–3, 414
 - creation of House and Senate budget committees, 414
 - cross-pressured states and districts, 11
 - Crown, 8, 17–20
- ## D
- DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), 289–90
 - DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans), 290
 - DCCC (Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee), 1–2, 75, 447
 - debate party and legislative rules and policies, 171
 - decision-making objectives and guidelines for committees, 200
 - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), 289–90
 - Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA), 290
 - defiance of presidential leadership in foreign affairs, 424
 - Democratic activists, 358
 - Democratic administrations, 338, 340

Energy and Commerce Committee, 167, 201

Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 219

Environmental Protection Agency. *See* EPA

Environment Committee, 218

EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), 175, 289, 327–28, 352

ethics rules for Supreme Court, 358

Excessive partisanship in districting, 54

exchanges, 17, 134, 223, 250, 272–76, 281, 286, 296, 346

extended Congress's authority and resources, 332

extended Congress's authority and resources for oversight, 332

extracted substantive concessions in bills in exchange, 223

F

faces, challenges Congress, 445–46

FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), 25, 317, 426

FEC (Federal Election Commission), 76–77, 85, 385, 450

federal agencies, 313, 319, 323, 326, 331–32, 335–38, 393, 400, 402, 406–10, 415

Federal Bureau of Investigation. *See* FBI

federal-court jurisdiction, expanded, 355

federal courts, 21, 50, 54–55, 57, 135, 339, 344–46, 352, 355, 359, 361

Federal Election Commission. *See* FEC

federal laws, 26, 44, 344, 358, 450

federal spending, 167, 311, 324, 407, 411–12

Fetterman, 84

filibuster, 35, 163, 188, 239–43, 248, 277, 286, 362, 369, 453, 466

partisan, 453

First Congress, 15, 22, 28, 40, 186, 212, 222, 278, 307

First Continental Congress, 18, 135

foreign affairs, 182, 197, 300–302, 423–25, 467

foreign policy, 215, 300–302, 305, 423–27, 434–35, 469

former longtime House member Mike Pence, 295

former President Donald Trump, 87, 107, 123, 144

Former president Trump, 68, 165

former Senate majority leader Trent Lott, 114

Fourteenth Amendment, 22, 47–49, 52, 57, 359

G

GAO (Government Accountability Office), 197, 323, 380, 469

gavel, 144, 146–47, 152, 170, 196, 233

GDP, 324, 412–13, 419

gerrymandering, 53–56

racial, 56, 58–59

gerrymanders, 53–56

Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV), 73, 86

Gingrich, 150–51, 165, 194, 206–7, 217

GOTV (Get-Out-the-Vote), 73, 86

government, 8–10, 15–17, 19–20, 22–23, 49–50, 264–65, 277, 283–84, 303, 305–7, 313–15, 323–27, 332–33, 338–41, 350, 374–76, 395–99, 403–4, 409–11, 446–50

Government Accountability Office (GAO), 197, 323, 380, 469

Government Reform Committee Elijah Cummings, 339

grassroots lobbying, 383

gravitate to committees for constituency, 179

group memberships, 109

H

high-stakes issues, 152, 245

history, legislative, 354

HLOGA (Honest Leadership and Open Government Act), 390–91, 451

home states and districts, 120

home styles, 7, 107, 127–28, 130–31, 139, 456

member's, 127–30

Honest Leadership, 390–92, 451

Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (HLOGA), 390–91, 451

hot-button issues, 100, 130, 328

House Administration, 182–83, 192, 194

House Administration Committee exercises jurisdiction, 183

Judiciary Committee, 167, 184, 187, 198, 200, 340, 344, 369
 junior members, 34, 121, 131, 158, 161, 193
 jurisdiction, 21, 181, 184, 197, 201, 218–20, 229, 232, 238, 253, 355, 405, 408
 committee's, 191, 200

K

Kennedy, President John F., 38, 216, 289
 key members, 380, 434

L

lawmakers and presidents, 287
 laws enacted in congress, 463
 laws in particular cases, 26
 lawsuits, 49–50, 313, 349, 359
 leader in scheduling bills, 172
 leaders and campaign committee staffs, 61
 Leaders and Parties in Congress, 145
 leadership positions, 34, 131, 146, 161, 164, 187, 194, 245
 legislating, 117–18, 174, 208–9, 212, 214, 235, 238–39, 242, 299, 306, 452
 legislation Congress, 287
 legislation to committees, 147
 legislation to grant Congress, 335
 legislative agendas, 117, 121, 153, 183, 196, 217, 293, 360, 448, 463
 legislative authority, 8, 185, 438
 legislative branches, 12, 16, 24, 35, 208, 303–5, 309, 315, 325, 332, 423
 legislative changes, dictated, 206
 legislative decisions, 97, 173, 198–99, 250, 278
 legislative districts, 48–49, 51, 53
 legislative goals, 145, 174
 Legislative institutions, 30, 35, 299
 legislative process, 31, 33, 121, 160–61, 201, 206, 209, 212–13, 277–78, 331, 381, 451–52, 456
 Legislative Reorganization Act, 34–35, 131, 206, 331, 390
 Legislative Studies Quarterly, 456
 legislative support agencies, 205, 398
 legitimacy, 445, 452, 469
 legitimate legislative purpose, 349

level of partisanship on committees, 200
 levels of partisan voting and conflict in Washington, 96
 leverage, reduced Senate Democrats, 319
 liberal membership groups, 384
 lists Congress's powers, 23
 litigation, 290, 349, 371
 Lobbying Law and Ethics Rules Changes, 393
 lobbyists, 6, 134, 138, 203, 205, 214, 374–75, 379–94, 401, 447, 450
 registered, 381, 391, 393

M

majoritarian House of representatives, 277
 majority leadership, 148, 181, 221, 223, 227, 229
 majority-minority districts, 56–59, 103, 269
 majority party, 33–34, 144, 147, 155–58, 181–84, 224–26, 229, 231, 234, 239, 242, 245, 262, 264, 463
 majority party lawmakers in Congress to monitor, 339
 Maloney, 1–4, 51
 Manchin, 269, 276
 McCarthy, 143–44, 146–47, 152–53, 207, 227
 McCarthy, Kevin, 144–45, 147, 152, 169, 207
 McConnell, 64, 161–63, 247–50, 277, 295, 320, 362–63, 379, 444–45
 McConnell and Senate Republicans, 362
 Mean Years, 37
 measures
 committee-reported, 206, 229
 unreported, 230
 Medicaid, 346, 351, 403, 407–8, 412
 Medicaid programs, 351–52
 megabills, 174–75, 245
 average House, 36, 134
 backbench, 299
 member's knowledge and perceived expertise on issues, 251
 members of Congress start, 110
 members of Congress work, 447
 members of standing committees, 195
 members sacrifice time, 447

organized interests, 100, 262, 373–94
 organized senatorial parties, 160
 outreach, senators stress voter, 7
 oversight, 121, 128, 178–79, 182, 186,
 189, 228, 331–33, 336, 338–41,
 434–35
 oversight duties in laws and House and
 Senate rules, 331

P

PAC contributions, 77, 387
 package, 84, 275, 287, 324, 417
 PACs (political action committees), 60,
 76–78, 82, 384–87, 394
 PACs, multicandidate, 77
 PACT Act, 382
 panels, 152, 180–81, 183, 185–88, 190–96,
 201, 203–4, 207, 224, 229, 266–67,
 337, 426
 parliaments, 9, 16–17, 20, 302
 participants, 67, 130, 276, 406
 active, 109
 participation, 28, 30, 68, 178, 194, 209,
 250, 254–55, 323, 432
 democratic, 209
 participation rate, 257
 parties and chambers, 171, 336
 Parties and Nominations, 68
 parties and organized groups, 77
 parties control, 303, 309
 partisan bickering, 13, 446, 464
 partisan colleagues, 164, 169, 263
 partisan conflict, 173, 420, 446, 448–49,
 469
 intense, 400
 partisan differences, 73, 104
 partisan gerrymandering, 54–55, 58, 355,
 466
 partisan interests, 29, 32, 305, 338
 partisan issue, 312, 358, 433
 partisan outcome of congressional elec-
 tions, 100
 partisan polarization, 278
 partisan rules changes, 34
 partisans, 82, 90, 171, 176, 262, 269, 303,
 306, 453, 462–63, 469
 president's, 286
 partisanship, 11, 55, 58, 82, 90, 98, 107,
 262, 266, 297, 305
 partisanship on committees, 200

partisan ties, 119, 303, 305
 partisan warfare, 53, 243
 party and committee leaders, 220, 398,
 425
 party and committee leaders in congress,
 411
 party assignment committees, 193–94
 party caucuses, 34, 119, 164–65, 170–71,
 195
 party committees, 29, 60–61, 76–77,
 171–72, 202
 party control, 67, 75, 97, 170, 268, 277,
 299–300, 303, 390, 465, 467
 divided, 305, 424
 party in congress, 63, 153, 166, 303, 333
 party leadership positions, 117, 164
 party leaders in congress, 153, 293
 party members, 119, 146–47, 153, 155–56,
 167, 170–71, 190, 262, 276, 303,
 439
 ranking minority, 196
 party members and leaders, 171
 party positions, 119, 169, 172, 194
 party rules set subcommittee assignment
 limits, 184
 party unity votes, 259–60
 pass legislation, 176, 196, 222, 396, 437,
 453
 patchwork of committee, 405
 patchwork of committee and subcommit-
 tee jurisdictions, 405
 Pelosi, 147, 151, 157, 166–70, 175, 207,
 217
 Pennsylvania, 15, 47–48, 55, 64, 84, 103,
 123, 269
 Pentagon, 193, 297, 304, 318, 325, 335,
 390, 408, 428, 438
 people, 7, 9, 22–23, 48, 50, 56, 58–59, 61,
 86–87, 89, 115, 123–24, 377–78,
 381–82, 384–85
 Permanent Select Intelligence Commit-
 tees, 194
 personal relationships, 295, 381
 persons, 27, 31, 47–49, 52–55, 83, 128,
 131–32, 377, 383, 390–91, 433,
 438
 pervasive effect, 119
 pervasive effect on congressional elec-
 tions, 119
 phases of congressional elections, 61
 plaintiffs, 50, 57, 346–47

programs, 32, 34, 179, 181, 274–75, 287,
289–90, 294, 298–99, 331–32,
334–37, 339–41, 344, 351–54,
407–12

programs and agencies, 332, 408–10

Progressive Democrats, 265, 348, 453

proportional representation (PR), 10

provisions, 19–21, 24–25, 201, 204, 228,
231, 243, 246, 253, 255, 344,
352–54, 416–18, 450, 452

PR systems, 10–11

public expectations, 303, 305–6

public opinion, 24, 39, 122, 170, 291,
296–300, 397, 403, 405–6, 425,
434

Public Works Committee, 197, 276

Q

quality candidates, 64

R

races, 1–3, 63–65, 74, 77–78, 81, 89, 96,
100, 112

radio, 43, 60, 74, 81–84, 127, 135–37,
169–70

rank-and-file lawmakers, 145, 209, 411

rank-and-file members, 34, 154–55, 175,
212, 229, 293–94, 398

ranking members, 178, 184, 190, 193,
196, 253, 273

ranking minority members, 120, 181, 187,
195, 203, 208, 220, 228, 232, 239,
245

ranking minority party members on com-
mittees, 196

rate, 87–88, 252, 262, 382, 384–85, 412,
455

ratios, 47, 181–83, 204, 245, 411

Rayburn, 127, 150, 153–54, 223–24

Reagan, 89, 267, 287–88, 291, 303, 351,
356, 466

reapportionment, 36, 46, 48–49

reassert congressional power, 469

recess appointments, presidential, 319

recommit, 157, 228, 233

reconciliation, 18, 188, 407, 415–18

reconciliation bill, 256, 416–18

Reconstruction laws and constitutional
amendments, 26

recruitment, 43–44, 61, 64, 205

redistricting process, contentious, 51

Reed's Rules, 33–34, 40, 149

reelection, 5, 7, 9, 94, 104, 123–24, 126,
139, 178–79, 188–89, 192–93,
214, 221, 429, 431

 president's, 304

reelection campaigns, 81, 126, 385, 401

reelection constituency, 126, 129

Reelection-oriented members, 188

reelection rates, 65, 95, 104

regulation of lobbying, 390

regulations, 21, 26–27, 76, 323, 325–27,
329, 331, 338, 383, 390–91, 393,
399

 significant, 329

regulatory policies, 402

relatively small number of committee
 chairs, 149

Rep, 1, 82–85, 111, 120, 122, 130–31,
150–51, 191, 193, 250–52, 356–57,
444–45, 448

repeal, 170, 290, 308, 326, 437–39

Representatives for two Congresses, 101

Republican Campaign, 148, 159

Republican Congresses, 355

Republican control, 199, 219, 467

Republican-controlled Congress, 290,
352, 439

Republican-controlled House of Repre-
 sentatives, 301

Republican districts, 4, 103, 128

Republican House majority, 101

Republican leaders, 144, 146, 158, 164,
168, 174, 222, 253–54, 260,
264–65, 283

 legendary Senate, 278

Republican-leaning states, 89

Republican-majority House, 399

Republican Members, 144, 172, 184

 state's, 118

Republican Policy Committee Chm, 148

Republican president's nominee, 363

Republican presidents provoke, 297

Republican Senate's confirmation, 361

Republican senators, 129, 258, 298, 317,
364, 444

Roosevelt, 350, 465–66

 President Franklin D., 92, 185, 323, 344

rule changes, 319

Rules and Administration, 182, 185, 191

- Senate Republicans to Trump's allegations, 445
 - Senate rules, 34, 190–91, 245–46, 264, 331–32, 404, 417, 450
 - precedents trump, 242
 - Senate Select Ethics Committee, 450
 - Senate's filibuster rules, 166
 - Senate's history, 453
 - Senate's key committees and leadership positions, 161
 - Senate votes on President Obama's Supreme Court nominations, 363
 - senatorial changes, internal, 161
 - senatorial courtesy, 368–70
 - Service Employees International Union (SEIU), 86
 - SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), 407
 - southern Democrats, 153, 161, 223, 265, 268, 294
 - conservative, 180
 - speaker, 33, 143–44, 146–55, 165, 167, 169–70, 183, 185–86, 192, 194, 201, 220–24, 227, 230–33, 248–49
 - Speaker and Senate majority leader, 166
 - Speakership, 68, 147, 151, 153, 156, 308
 - special committees, 16, 185
 - statutory interpretation, 346, 352–54, 391, 469
 - Steering Committee, 190–92, 194
 - strategic calculations of presidents and senators, 243
 - strategic policies, 427, 432–34
 - strategies, legislative, 174, 195, 277
 - Structural policies, 427
 - structured rules, 223, 225–27, 229
 - structures and procedures, 435
 - subcommittee by formal action, 184
 - subcommittee chairmanship, 121
 - subcommittee chairs, 134, 150–51, 184, 187, 339
 - designated, 184
 - Subcommittee chairs and assignments, 184
 - subcommittees, 27, 32, 38, 115–16, 171, 173–75, 179, 187, 189, 191, 193, 400, 469
 - subpoena power, unbounded congressional, 349
 - subpoenas, 339, 348–49
 - subsidies, 275, 352, 400, 403, 413
 - success
 - presidential, 271–72, 294
 - president's, 303, 305
 - Super PACs, 78, 87
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), 407
 - support, 5, 74, 144–46, 151–56, 164–66
 - swing states, 87
 - sympathetic informal congressional groups, 388
- T**
- Tax Cut and Jobs Act (TCJA), 346
 - taxes, 16, 18, 20–21, 86, 88, 187–88, 218, 265–66, 346, 348–49, 373–74, 376, 398–99, 412–16, 418
 - TCJA (Tax Cut and Jobs Act), 346
 - television, 81–84, 86, 137, 147, 169–70, 457
 - tenure, 113–14, 121, 147, 189, 383
 - Term-limited committee chairs, 390
 - Transportation Committee, 197, 209
 - treaties, 24, 189, 234, 423, 425–26, 430, 433–34
 - Truman, 350, 431, 466
 - President Harry S., 288, 375, 437
 - Trump and congressional Republicans work, 309
 - Trump presidency, 103, 283, 293, 298, 301
 - Trump's tweets, 298
 - Two Congresses of intensive institutional change, 40
 - two-presidencies thesis, 300, 302
- U**
- UC. *See* unanimous consent
 - UCAs (unanimous-consent agreements), 235
 - Ukraine, 207, 247–50, 257–58, 278, 301, 439, 467–68
 - unanimous consent (UC), 201, 218, 220, 241, 244
 - unanimous-consent agreements. *See* UCAs
 - understanding of congressional elections, 72
 - undocumented immigrants, 4, 48–50, 286, 290, 309, 382