

# 7

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## Congress

### I. Reviewing the Chapter

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#### Chapter Focus

The central purpose of this chapter is to describe the Framers' understanding of the role of Congress and to describe the roles and organization of Congress today. You should pay particular attention to the effects of organizational characteristics on the behavior of members of Congress and on the way that the House and the Senate perform their functions. After reading and reviewing the material in this chapter, you should be able to do each of the following:

1. Explain the differences between Congress and Parliament.
2. Describe the role that the Framers expected Congress to play.
3. Pinpoint the significant eras in the evolution of Congress.
4. Describe the characteristics of members of Congress.
5. Outline the process for electing members of Congress.
6. Identify the functions of party affiliation in the organization of Congress.
7. Explain the effect of committee reform on the organization of Congress.
8. Describe the formal process by which a bill becomes a law.
9. Identify the factors that help to explain why a member of Congress votes as he/she does.
10. Explain the ethical problems confronting Congress.

#### Study Outline

- I. Uniqueness of the U.S. Congress
  - A. Only democratic government with a legislative branch
  - B. Comparison with British Parliament
    1. Parliamentary candidates are selected by party
      - a. Members of Parliament select prime minister and other leaders
      - b. Party members vote together on most issues
      - c. Re-nomination depends on loyalty to party
      - d. Principal work is debating national issues
      - e. Very little power, very little pay
    2. Congressional candidates run in a primary election, with little party control
      - a. Vote is for the man or woman, not the party
      - b. Result is a body of independent representatives

- c. Members do not choose the president
  - d. Principal work is representation and action
  - e. Great deal of power; high pay; parties cannot discipline members
- II. The Evolution of Congress
- A. Intent of the Framers
    - 1. To oppose concentration of power in a single institution
    - 2. To balance large and small states: bicameralism
    - 3. To have Congress be the dominant institution
  - B. General characteristics of subsequent evolution
    - 1. Congress generally dominant over the presidency for more than 140 years; exceptions: brief periods of presidential activism
    - 2. Major struggles were *within* Congress
  - C. After 200 years, House has usually embraced the view that power of individual members should be protected versus opportunities for leadership
    - 1. Flirted with strong party leadership in late 19th and early 20th centuries
    - 2. When Republicans gained control in 1995, party leadership reasserted itself
    - 3. Of late, the power of party loyalty has grown in House, while it has become weaker among voters
  - D. The decentralization of the Senate
    - 1. Never flirted with tight organization
    - 2. Always insisted on unlimited debate
    - 3. 1913 amendment permitting direct election (17th Amendment)
- III. Who is in Congress? (see CHAPTER BOX)
- A. House characteristics
    - 1. 435 member based on population (census every decade)
    - 2. Northeast has lost seats; South/Southwest has gained in recent years
    - 3. Two-year terms, elected in districts about equal in population
  - B. Senate
    - 1. Constitution-mandated two senators per state
    - 2. Six-year terms, staggered elections
  - C. Sex and race
    - 1. Average: middle-aged white males
    - 2. Number of women has increased (49 in House, 8 in Senate)
    - 3. Number of blacks has increased (39 in House, 1 in Senate)
    - 4. Importance of personal characteristics varies with issues (e.g., blacks and civil rights)
  - D. Incumbency
    - 1. Low turnover rates and safe districts common in Congress before 1980s
    - 2. Incumbents increasingly viewed as professional politicians and out of touch with the people by the 1980s
    - 3. Call for term limits; however, natural forces were doing what term limits were designed to do by the mid-1990s
    - 4. Influx of new members should not distort incumbents' advantage
    - 5. Incumbents' advantage due to name recognition and credit for local projects
  - E. Party
    - 1. Prior to 1950s, Democrats were beneficiaries of incumbency
    - 2. Incumbents—particularly, Democrat—associated with the “mess in Washington” (e.g., budget deficits, scandals, bickering, special privileges)
    - 3. Republicans control House and Senate after 1995

- IV. Getting elected to Congress
  - A. Need to win at least a plurality of votes under a party label
  - B. Winning the primary
    - 1. Collect signatures on petition to enter primary
    - 2. Some states have run-off primary
    - 3. Reduces influence of political party
    - 4. Candidates run personalized campaigns; offers them independence from party in Congress
- V. The organization of Congress: Parties and Interests
  - A. Party organization—majority/minority leaders elected by own party members
  - B. The Senate
    - 1. President pro tempore presides; member with most seniority in majority party
    - 2. Leaders are the majority leader and the minority leader, elected by their respective party members
    - 3. Party whips keep leaders informed, round up votes, count noses
    - 4. Policy Committee schedules Senate business
    - 5. Committee assignments
      - a. Democratic Steering Committee
      - b. Republican Committee on Committees
  - C. The House of Representatives
    - 1. Leaders have more power due to chamber size and rules
    - 2. Speaker of the House, as leader of majority party, presides over House
      - a. Decides who to recognize to speak on the floor
      - b. Rules of germaneness of motions
      - c. Decides to which committee bills go
      - d. Appoints members of special and select committees
      - e. Has some patronage power
    - 3. Majority party chooses majority leader; minority party, minority leader
    - 4. Each party has a whip
    - 5. Democrats use Steering and Policy Committee for assigning committee slots and scheduling; Republicans divide responsibility between two committees
    - 6. Each party has a congressional campaign committee
  - D. Party voting
    - 1. Problems in measuring party votes (90% or 50% opposition figure can be used)
    - 2. Party voting quite low by either measure
    - 3. Ideology an important variable explaining party voting
    - 4. Congressmen need advice on floor voting since they have little information—another variable behind party voting
  - E. Caucuses: rivals to parties in policy formulation
    - 1. By early 1980s, more than seventy
    - 2. House black caucus particularly well known
- VI. The Organization of Congress: Committees (see CHAPTER BOX)
  - A. Legislative committees—most important organizational feature of Congress
    - 1. Consider bills or legislative proposals
    - 2. Maintain oversight of executive agencies
    - 3. Conduct investigations

- B. Types of committees
    1. Select committees—groups appointed for a limited purpose and limited duration
    2. Joint committees—those on which both representatives and senators serve
    3. Conference committee—a joint committee appointed to resolve differences in the Senate and House versions of the same piece of legislation before final passage
  - C. Standing committees (permanent)—most important type of committee
    1. Majority party has majority of seats on the committees
    2. Each member usually serves on two standing committees
    3. Only committees that can report legislation
    4. Chairs are elected, but usually the most senior member of the committee is elected by the majority party
    5. The House, under leadership of Gingrich (1994–98), ignored seniority in chair selection
    6. Committee “bill of rights” of 1970s changed several traditions
      - a. Opened more meetings to the public
      - b. Allowed television coverage of meetings
      - c. Effort to reduce number of committees in 1995–1996
      - d. Greater rights for minority members
    7. Republican-sponsored changes in 1995 reduced further the powers of committee chairs (e.g., six-year limits and election by secret ballot)
  - D. Committee styles
    1. Decentralization has increased individual member’s influence
      - a. Less control by chairs
      - b. More amendments proposed and adopted
    2. Ideological orientations of committees vary, depending on attitudes of members
    3. Certain committees tend to attract particular types of legislators
      - a. Policy-oriented members
      - b. Constituency-oriented members
- VII. The Organization of Congress: Staffs and Specialized Offices
- A. Introduction
    1. In 1900s, congressmen had little staff support
    2. Since 1947, *five-fold* increase in staff size
  - B. Tasks of staff members
    1. Personal staff focuses on constituency service, perhaps explaining re-election success
    2. Committee staff vary in terms of partisanship
    3. Personal staff see themselves as advocates for boss, assuming entrepreneurial function
    4. Reliance on staff makes Congress less collegial and deliberative
  - C. Staff agencies offer specialized information
    1. Congressional Research Service (CRS) supplies information
    2. General Accounting Office (GAO) audits and recommends
    3. Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) evaluates policy impact on technology
    4. Congressional Budget Office (CBO) advises on impact of spending
  - D. Reasons for a more polarized Congress
    1. Way congressional districts are drawn

2. Voters becoming more partisan
  3. Role of Seniority
- VIII. How a Bill Becomes Law (see CHAPTER BOX)
- A. Introducing a bill
    1. Introduced by a member of Congress
    2. Much legislation has been initiated in Congress
    3. Presidentially-drafted legislation is shaped by Congress
    4. Resolutions
      - a. Simple—passed by one house affecting that house
      - b. Concurrent—passed by both houses affecting both
      - c. Joint—passed by both houses, signed by president (except for constitutional amendments)
  - B. Study by committees
    1. Bill is referred to a committee for consideration by either Speaker or presiding officer
    2. Revenue bills must originate in the House
    3. Hearings are often conducted by several subcommittees: multiple referrals (replaced by sequential referral system in 1995)
    4. Committee reports a bill out to the House or Senate
      - a. If bill is not reported out, the House can use the discharge petition
      - b. If bill is not reported out, the Senate can pass a discharge motion
    5. House Rules Committee sets the rules for consideration
      - a. Closed or restrictive rule: sets time limit on debate and restricts amendments
      - b. Open rule: permits amendments from the floor
      - c. Use of closed or restrictive rules growing
      - d. Rules can be bypassed by the House
      - e. No direct equivalent in Senate
  - C. Floor debate, House
    1. Committee of the Whole—procedural device for expediting House consideration of bills but cannot pass bills
    2. Committee sponsor of bill organizes the discussion
  - D. Floor debate, Senate
    1. No rule limiting debate or germaneness
    2. Entire committee hearing process can be bypassed by a senator
    3. Cloture—three-fifths of Senate must vote for a cloture petition
    4. Both filibusters and cloture votes becoming more common
  - E. Methods of voting
    1. To investigate voting behavior, one must know how a legislator voted on amendments as well as on the bill itself
    2. Procedures for voting in the House: voice, division, teller, and roll call
    3. Senate voting is the same except no teller vote or electronic counter
    4. Differences in Senate and House versions of a bill
      - a. If minor, last house to act merely sends bill to the other house, which accepts the changes
      - b. If major, a conference committee is appointed
        - (1) Decisions are made by a majority of each delegation; Senate version favored
        - (2) Conference reports back to each house for acceptance or rejection

5. Bill, in final form, goes to the president
    - a. President may sign it
    - b. If president vetoes it, it returns to the house of origin
      - (1) Either house may override the president by a vote of two-thirds of those present
      - (2) If both override, the bill becomes law without the president's signature
- IX. How Members of Congress Vote
- A. Representational view (vote pleases constituents) has some merit under certain circumstances
    1. Correlation strong on civil rights bills
    2. Correlation weak on foreign policy measures
    3. "Passionate" issues (e.g., gun control, abortion) difficult vote for members
    4. Constituency influence more important in Senate votes
    5. Public opinion not strong and clear on most congressional votes to support this view
  - B. Main cues for organizational voting (vote pleases fellow members) are party and ideological affinity
  - C. Attitudinal view (vote based on own ideology)
    1. Democrats and Republicans differ along liberal/conservative lines
    2. Opinions of House members closer to average voter; Senators less so
    3. Democrats more ideologically divided
    4. Conservative coalition, when formed usually wins (e.g., Reagan years)
  - D. What It all Means
    1. Members have localistic view
    2. Policy making is decentralized
    3. Members are individualist, with highly partisan views
    4. Does not often engage in careful consideration
- X. Ethics and Congress (see CHAPTER BOX)
- A. Separation of powers and corruption
    1. Fragmentation of power increases number of officials with opportunity to sell influence
    2. Forms of influence: money and exchange of favors
  - B. Problem of defining unethical conduct
    1. Violation of criminal law is obviously unethical
    2. Problems are raised over types of employment, income, campaign, contributions, or intervention with an executive agency
  - C. House and Senate ethics code
    1. Rules are directed at financial transactions
    2. Seem to favor wealthy over members of modest means
- XI. The Power of Congress (see CHAPTER BOX)
- A. Reassertion of congressional power in 1970s
    1. Reaction to Vietnam and Watergate
    2. War Powers Act of 1973
    3. Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974
    4. Increased requirement for legislative veto
  - B. Congressional power never as weak as critics have alleged
  - C. Presidential-congressional conflicts
    1. Especially sharp when different parties control the two branches

2. Basic willingness of Congress to follow president on budget, foreign affairs
3. Congress reluctant to criticize a popular president

### Key Terms Match

Match the following terms and descriptions:

#### Set 1

- |  |          |   |
|--|----------|---|
| a. attitudinal view of representation      | 1. ____  | A means by which the House can remove a bill stalled in committee.  |
| b. bicameral legislature                   | 2. ____  | The theory of congressional voting behavior which assumes that members make voting decisions in order to please fellow members and obtain their goodwill.                                 |
| c. closed rule                             | 3. ____  | An assembly of party representatives that chooses a government and discusses major national issues.   |
| d. cloture                                 | 4. ____  | A Senate rule offering a means for stopping a filibuster.   |
| e. conservative coalition                  | 5. ____  | A rule issued by the Rules Committee that does not allow a bill to be amended on the House floor.   |
| f. discharge petition                      | 6. ____  | A means by which senators can extend debate on a bill in order to prevent or delay its consideration.   |
| g. filibuster                              | 7. ____  | An alliance of conservative Democrats with Republicans for voting purposes.   |
| h. organizational view of representation   | 8. ____  | The extent to which members of a party vote together in the House or the Senate.  |
| i. parliament                              | 9. ____  | A theory of congressional voting behavior that assumes that members make voting decisions based on their perception of constituents' wishes to ensure their own reelection.               |
| j. party vote                              | 10. ____ | A theory of congressional voting behavior which assumes that members vote on the basis of their own beliefs because the array of conflicting pressures on members cancel one another out. |
| k. party whip                              | 11. ____ | Unrelated amendments added to a bill.   |
| l. president <i>pro tempore</i>            | 12. ____ | A position created in the Constitution to serve as presiding officer of the Senate in the absence of the vice president.  |
| m. representational view of representation | 13. ____ | An individual who assists the party leader in staying abreast of the concerns and voting intentions of the party members.   |
| n. riders                                  | 14. ____ | A lawmaking body composed of two chambers or parts.   |

## Set 2

- |                          |          |  |
|--------------------------|----------|--|
| a. caucus                | 1. ____  | A special type of joint committee appointed to resolve differences in the House and Senate versions of a piece of legislation. |
| b. concurrent resolution | 2. ____  | The legislative leader elected by party members holding the majority of seats in the House or Senate.                          |
| c. conference committee  | 3. ____  | A congressional voting procedure in which members stand and are counted.   |
| d. division vote         | 4. ____  | A permanent committee of each house with the power to report bills.  |
| e. double-tracking       | 5. ____  | The ability of members of Congress to mail letters to their constituents free of charge.                                       |
| f. franking privilege    | 6. ____  | An association of members of Congress created to advocate a political ideology or a regional, ethnic, or economic interest.    |
| g. joint committee       | 7. ____  | A congressional voting procedure that consists of members answering yea or nay to their names.                                 |
| h. joint resolution      | 8. ____  | The legislative leader elected by party members holding a minority of seats in the House or Senate.                            |
| i. majority leader       | 9. ____  | A committee on which both representatives and senators serve.  |
| j. minority leader       | 10. ____ | A resolution used to settle housekeeping and procedural matters in either house but not having the force of law.               |
| k. open rule             | 11. ____ | A resolution used to settle housekeeping and procedural matters that affect both houses.                                       |
| l. roll call vote        | 12. ____ | A resolution requiring approval of both houses and the signature of the president and having the same legal status as a law.   |
| m. simple resolution     | 13. ____ | An order from the Rules Committee in the House that permits a bill to be amended on the legislative floor.                     |
| n. standing committee    | 14. ____ | A method of voting used in both houses in which members vote by shouting yea or nay.   |
| o. teller vote           | 15. ____ | A congressional voting procedure in which members pass between two tellers, first the yeas and then the nays.                  |
| p. voice vote            | 16. ____ | This is when the Senate temporarily puts aside a bill during a filibuster so it can move on to other business.                 |

### Did You Think That...?

A number of misconceptions are listed below. You should be able to refute each statement in the space provided, referring to information or argumentation contained in this chapter. Sample answers appear at the end of the *Study Guide*.

1. "The Founders desired and expected the president and Congress to have equal authority."

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2. "By the 1980s, the public was not concerned that turnover rates had declined in Congress and that members may be out of touch with constituents."

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3. "In Congress, Democrats and Republicans are loyal to their respective parties and vote accordingly."

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4. "Congressional staffs have little opportunity to affect policy because they are closely supervised by senators or representatives."

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5. "A good, strong code of ethics would largely eliminate problems of corruption in Congress."

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## Data Check

### Figure 7.1: Party Votes in the House, 1870–2000

1. Using the 50 percent versus 50 percent measurement, which year did Congress witness the largest number of party votes?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Using the same measure as in the previous question, in which year did Congress witness the smallest number of party votes?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What has happened with party voting over the past three Congresses?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## II. Practicing for Exams

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**True/False.** Read each statement carefully. Mark true statements *T*. If any part of the statement is false, mark it *F*, and write in the space provided a concise explanation of why the statement is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The principal work of a congress is representation.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Members of a parliament, such as the British Parliament, have little independent power.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Until the twentieth century, the struggles for national political power that occurred periodically in American history were between Congress and the president.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Despite the ups and downs of party leadership, the power of party loyalty has grown in the House in the 1990s.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In explaining how members of Congress vote, factors such as age, sex, and race are as important as seniority, partisanship, ideology, and constituency preferences.  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The number of House members who have served one or two terms has been decreasing since 1992.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. There has been no concern about establishing term limits for members of Congress.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. A candidate for the Senate or House must win a majority of votes cast.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Americans tend to dislike both their legislators and the Congress.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Candidates today tend to emphasize party identification and party organization in their party primaries.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Real leadership in the Senate is in the hands of the majority and minority leaders, not the president *pro tempore*.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The most important person in the House is the party whip.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Ideological differences between party members in the House are more important than regional differences.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Just because one party has a majority in the House or Senate does not mean that it “controls” that chamber.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Congressional caucuses are rivaling the parties as a source of policy leadership.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Most of the power in Congress is found in the party organizations.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Standing committees are more permanent and more important than select committees.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. To a considerable degree, selecting committee chairmen by vote of a party caucus results in strong legislative leadership.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Congressional committees, although directed by the majority party, develop policies on the basis of verifiable evidence within the party context.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. In recent years, the fastest-growing bureaucracy in Washington, D.C. has been the executive branch.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Congressional staffers often wield considerable political clout.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. The president himself cannot introduce legislation.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. It is difficult for Congress to obtain a comprehensive view of an issue that cuts across committee boundaries.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. The House Rules Committee usually goes along with the desires of the majority-party leadership.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. A filibuster is the means by which cloture is invoked.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. How a member of Congress voted on key amendments to a bill is often more important than how that member voted on the bill itself.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. One-half of the members present must vote to override a presidential veto.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Legislators are more likely to vote as their constituents want on foreign policy measures than on domestic policy issues.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Most congressional votes are not known to most citizens.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. In the 1970s, but not in the 1980s, senators tended to be more liberal than members of the House.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. The spirit of individualism in Congress has increased the power of party leadership.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. Most bills are not carefully deliberated by legislators.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. Compared to a unitary system, a federal system with separation of powers limits opportunities for corruption.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. Illegal payoffs to members of Congress appear to be the most frequent types.
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- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. Congress is not bound by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or by several other laws that affect everyone else.
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**Multiple Choice.** Circle the letter of the response that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. A person ordinarily becomes a candidate for representative or senator by:
  - a. appealing to party leaders.
  - b. serving first in the state legislature.
  - c. running in a primary election.
  - d. serving first in a government agency.
2. In Great Britain's parliamentary system, candidates for Parliament are selected by:
  - a. other members of Parliament, as in a private club.
  - b. the people through primary elections.
  - c. delegates to the party conventions.
  - d. the party.
3. A basic difference between a parliament such as Great Britain's and the U.S. Congress is that:
  - a. the principal role of Congress is to debate national issues.
  - b. members of a parliament have more power and higher pay.
  - c. members of Congress are more likely to "vote the party."
  - d. Congress does not select a president.

4. One important effect of bi-cameralism is that it:
  - a. ensures a separation of federal powers.
  - b. balances large and small states.
  - c. ensures the dominance of Congress over the executive and judicial branches of government.
  - d. makes Congress subject to the powers of the Supreme Court.
5. Under the original Constitution, members of the House, unlike members of the Senate, were selected by:
  - a. the people.
  - b. the president.
  - c. state legislatures.
  - d. primary runoffs.
6. The general trend in power distribution and decision-making throughout the evolution of Congress has been toward:
  - a. centralization—more power for leadership.
  - b. decentralization—more power for leadership.
  - c. centralization—more power for individual members.
  - d. decentralization—more power for individual members.
7. Article I, section 8, of the Constitution confers on Congress all of the following powers except the power to:
  - a. veto bills.
  - b. collect taxes.
  - c. declare war.
  - d. establish courts.
8. “Democratization” of the Senate in this century came about in large part through:
  - a. the popular election of its members.
  - b. rules to place fewer limits on the filibuster.
  - c. new restrictions placed on cloture motions.
  - d. an end to the seniority system.
9. In terms of the composition of its membership, the House since 1950 has become:
  - a. less male and less white.
  - b. less male and more white.
  - c. more male and less white.
  - d. more male and more white.
10. Today House membership has become less of a career with a(n):
  - a. higher turnover of members.
  - b. decrease in marginal districts.
  - c. increase in safe districts.
  - d. lower turnover of members.
11. If democratic representation is valued, which of the following might be a concern?
  - a. Fewer women and blacks are being elected to Congress.
  - b. Fewer contested elections are occurring.
  - c. Party identification is declining.
  - d. Congress is made up of a large number of academicians.

12. The increasing percentage of U.S. House members serving only their first or second terms in 1995 can be credited to all of the following reasons *except*:
  - a. redrawing of congressional district lines after the 1990 census to the disadvantage of incumbents.
  - b. voter disgust at a variety of Washington political scandals.
  - c. decreasing use of seniority as criteria for selection of committee chairpersons.
  - d. conversion of the South from being solidly Democratic to a Republican stronghold.
13. Probably the major reason why the tendency of voters to return incumbents to office has helped Democrats more than Republicans is that:
  - a. Democrats have more effectively organized the media and various interest groups to support their incumbents.
  - b. the advantages of incumbency began to take effect at a time when Democrats controlled Congress.
  - c. Democrats have been able to use their power more effectively to change election rules.
  - d. the powers of incumbency tend to be more closely associated with “Democratic causes,” such as civil rights.
14. A candidate running for Congress today is *most* likely to attempt to instill among voters a high opinion of the:
  - a. democratic system.
  - b. home district.
  - c. candidate.
  - d. candidate’s party.
15. The real leadership in the Senate rests with the:
  - a. majority leader.
  - b. president *pro tempore*.
  - c. vice president.
  - d. Senate whip.
16. From the standpoint of the ambitions of a newly elected Democratic senator, the most important element in party organization is the:
  - a. Steering Committee.
  - b. party whip.
  - c. Foreign Relations Committee.
  - d. president *pro tempore*.
17. The most important aspect of the process of selecting Senate members for key leadership and committee positions is:
  - a. paying off political debts and returning political favors.
  - b. finding the best person available for the job.
  - c. selecting individuals who make an effective television appearance.
  - d. achieving ideological and regional balance.
18. Among the many powers of the House Speaker is that he:
  - a. decides to which committee bills go.
  - b. assigns party members to the various committees.
  - c. keeps party leaders informed about the opinions of their party members.
  - d. schedules legislation.

19. Assessments using either a weak or a strong measure of party voting in the House has been found to be:
  - a. increasing.
  - b. steady.
  - c. declining.
  - d. nonexistent.
20. One reason why members of Congress tend to support the policy positions of their party is that:
  - a. those positions often coincide with their own ideology.
  - b. congressional rules require party support on all “partisan issues.”
  - c. support for the party position is essential in the eyes of most voters.
  - d. the party pays most of their campaign expenses.
21. A growing rival to the parties in Congress as a source of policy leadership is (are) the:
  - a. junior members.
  - b. Democratic Study Group.
  - c. General Accounting Office.
  - d. Congressional caucuses.
22. The most important organizational feature of Congress is the:
  - a. party caucus.
  - b. Floor leader.
  - c. committee structure.
  - d. Congressional campaign committee.
23. Because they are usually the only ones that can report out bills, the committees that are the most important are the:
  - a. joint committees.
  - b. conference committees.
  - c. standing committees.
  - d. select committees.
24. Since the 1970s, the chairpersons of House committees have been chosen by:
  - a. secret ballot.
  - b. voice vote.
  - c. seniority.
  - d. the committee on committees.
25. If you were a newly elected member of the House of Representatives interested in becoming an expert on a particular policy, and in influencing your colleagues on this policy, you would *probably* ask to be assigned to the:
  - a. Rules Committee.
  - b. Ways and Means Committee.
  - c. Public Works and Transportation Committee.
  - d. Ethics Committee.

26. One effect of the growth in congressional staff has been to:
  - a. speed up legislation.
  - b. give members of Congress more control over legislation.
  - c. shift the advocacy of new programs to staff members.
  - d. decrease reliance on lobbies as sources of information.
27. The complexity of the legislative process gives a strong advantage to:
  - a. opponents of new policies.
  - b. supporters of new policies.
  - c. both opponents and supporters of new policies.
  - d. neither opponents nor supporters of new policies.
28. Which of the following statements about introducing a bill in Congress is correct?
  - a. A bill not passed during the life of one Congress cannot be introduced again during the next Congress.
  - b. Bills are initiated by the president, not by Congress.
  - c. A bill not passed during the life of one Congress is dead.
  - d. Most bills introduced today are private rather than public bills.
29. Which of the following statements about most joint resolutions is correct?
  - a. They require the approval of both houses but not the signature of the president.
  - b. They require the approval of one house only along with the signature of the president.
  - c. They must be approved by a two-thirds vote of each house.
  - d. They require the approval of both houses and the signature of the president.
30. The effect of allowing bills to be debated under open rather than closed or restrictive rules is to:
  - a. reduce the time needed to vote on a final bill.
  - b. give greater control to the committees.
  - c. set a time limit on debate.
  - d. increase the number of amendments.
31. Unlike the House, the scheduling of legislation in the Senate is:
  - a. controlled by the Rules Committee.
  - b. initiated by means of a discharge petition.
  - c. governed by closed rather than open rules.
  - d. determined by the majority and minority leaders.
32. Which of the following statements about different methods of voting for a bill in the House and Senate is correct?
  - a. Roll-call votes in the House are handled orally.
  - b. Individual votes may be recorded or not.
  - c. Roll-call votes are less numerous today than they were forty years ago.
  - d. A division vote involves member shouting “yea” or “nay.”
33. Which of the following statements about conference committee reports is correct?
  - a. They can be amended but cannot be rejected.
  - b. They can neither be rejected nor amended.
  - c. They must be approved by a majority of each party delegation.
  - d. They tend to favor the House version of a bill.

34. The explanation for congressional voting behavior that assumes that members vote to please their constituents is referred to as:
  - a. representational.
  - b. conventional.
  - c. organizational.
  - d. attitudinal.
35. As a member of Congress, you vote for a dairy-support bill because it is consistent with your thinking as a liberal Democrat. Political scientists would describe your vote as:
  - a. attitudinal.
  - b. organizational.
  - c. representational.
  - d. conventional.
36. Over the past three decades, senators, compared with the average voter, were consistently more:
  - a. conservative.
  - b. liberal.
  - c. conservative in the 1970s and liberal in the 1980s and 1990s.
  - d. liberal in the 1970s and conservative in the 1980s and 1990s.
37. Which of the following aspects best characterized the structure of the House of Representatives during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s?
  - a. powerful committee chairpersons; long apprenticeship for new members; small congressional staffs.
  - b. localized viewpoint; decentralized policy making.
  - c. centralized party leadership; rapid turnover of membership; many amendments and filibusters.
  - d. decentralized and weak party leadership; fewer amendments and filibusters; broad, national viewpoint.
38. Rules that assume money is the only source of political corruption fail to account for:
  - a. the role of education.
  - b. the influence of parties.
  - c. political alliances and personal friendships.
  - d. income derived from speaking and writing.
39. Recent ethics rules in Congress appear to favor:
  - a. liberals over conservatives.
  - b. members supported by wealthy interest groups.
  - c. persons who were wealthy before entering Congress.
  - d. members of Congress who earn large fees on the lecture circuit.
40. Congress was moved to reassert its authority beginning in the early 1970s as a consequence of:
  - a. Watergate and the energy crisis.
  - b. Vietnam and Watergate.
  - c. rampant inflation and Vietnam.
  - d. the energy crisis and rampant inflation.

**Essay.** Practice writing extended answers to the following questions. These test your ability to integrate and express the ideas that you have been studying in this chapter.

1. What role did the Founders expect Congress to play in national policy making? Do you think that Congress has generally played that role?
2. Analyze the factors that have led to the decline in party influence in Congress.
3. Discuss three theories that purport to explain why members of Congress vote as they do.
4. A democratic government is based on the idea that the will of the people prevails. Does Congress act this way? In answering, consider elections to Congress, how Congress operates, and the factors that influence the voting behavior of members.

### III. Applying What You've Learned

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The legitimacy of republican government depends on the degree to which elected representatives express the will of their constituents. The view that unless majority opinion is enacted in legislation, the people cannot be said to rule is much too simplistic, however. Representatives must also resist temporary impulses that consume the public. The majority can sometimes be swayed by irrational emotions, especially during times of crisis. In such instances, obeying popular opinion could threaten the national welfare.

Members of Congress have a difficult balancing act to perform when deciding whether to yield to popular preferences in situations in which their personal convictions are in disagreement. But why should members of Congress even worry? Fewer than half of Americans of voting age know the name of the person representing them in Congress, and 81 percent cannot say how their representative voted on any piece of legislation in the last two years. Because more than 90 percent of the members of Congress are re-elected to office, it would seem that legislators have little to fear from their constituents no matter how they vote.

Is the concept of representative government a farce in the United States? This question can be answered only by examining how members of Congress actually vote. The text outlines three theories of the voting process in Congress: representational, organizational, and attitudinal. Review the chapter to become familiar with these three versions of congressional voting behavior. According to the text, each view has merits as well as flaws.

John Kingdon has developed a model that incorporates elements from each theory of how members in Congress make up their minds on voting decisions. [Randall Ripley, *Congress: Process and Policy*, 4th ed. (New York: Norton, 1988), p. 133.] The model takes into account most aspects of Congress, from staff to party leadership to constituents, and thus provides a useful framework for structuring the material in the chapter. The model is based on three assumptions:

1. Members search for information about a decision they must make only if they define that decision as having some kind of problem associated with it.
2. Members have no problems with, or difficulty in making, many decisions. This is true when (a) all the forces that normally affect members' decisions (interest groups, staff, constituencies, administration, party leadership, other members, and

personal attitudes) agree that a given decision is proper, (b) members feel very strongly about the matter at hand, or (c) members have well-established voting records on the issue or ones that are similar.

3. Members make up their minds in a “consensus mode of decision” most of the time. They first determine whether a vote is controversial; if it isn’t, any decision is relatively cost free. When the potential for controversy is perceived, members will check their “fields of forces” to see how much conflict exists. If the actors in the fields of forces all agree on the proper decision, a member will go along with them. If only one actor is out of line, most of the time the member will vote against the actor (93 percent of the time in Kingdon’s data). If two actors are out of line, the chances of going with the minority forces rise (17 percent of the time in Kingdon’s data). It is worth noting that the force called “own attitude” is by far the most potent in explaining members’ defections from the majority view of fields of forces in disagreement with their views. Members use a calculus—which varies in detail from person to person—in arriving at decisions. The calculus allocates weight both to outside forces and to the members’ own judgments.

The model combines many topics discussed in the chapter in an integrated fashion. Consider the following issues raised by the model:

1. It is only on controversial questions that members even consider what relevant actors (or forces) think about a voting decision. If few votes fall into this category, how do members decide on votes that are non-controversial? The chapter provides numerous clues. Reread the material on the legislative process, focusing on how most decisions are made in Congress.

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2. Kingdon assigns almost equal weight to each force. Does any material presented in the chapter suggest that certain actors may be more significant at times? Does the issue involved in a particular vote enhance the importance of one actor over that of others?

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3. Kingdon indicates that members' personal beliefs are especially important in voting decisions. Are there any reasons for members' values to operate to the advantage of constituents rather than outside forces?

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4. The text enumerates many flaws in the three views of voting behavior in Congress. Does Kingdon's model possess any of these deficiencies?

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5. Does Kingdon's model apply equally to voting habits in both the House and the Senate? Keep in mind that outside forces operate quite differently on the members of each chamber.

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6. How would you amend Kingdon's model in light of these considerations?

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#### IV. Research and Resources

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##### Suggested Readings

Arnold, R. Douglas. *The Logic of Congressional Action*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990. Explains why Congress enacts the policies it does, especially those that serve general as opposed to special interests.

Davidson, Roger H. and Walter J. Oleszak. *Congress and Its Members*, 5th ed. Washington, D.C.: Congress Quarterly Press, 1996. Good nonpartisan summary of how people get to Congress and how they behave while there.

- Dodd, Lawrence C., and Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds. *Congress Reconsidered*, 7th ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 2001. Recent studies on congressional politics.
- Fenno, Richard F., Jr. *Congressmen in Committees*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1973. Study of the styles of twelve standing committees.
- Maass, Arthur. *Congress and the Common Good*. New York: Basic Books, 1984. Insightful account of congressional operations, especially those involving legislative-executive relations.
- Malbin, Michael J. *Unelected Representatives*. New York: Basic Books, 1980. Study of the influence of congressional staff members.
- Mayhew, David R. *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. New Haven: Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974. Argues that a member of Congress's desire to win reelection shapes his/her legislative behavior.
- Oleszek, Walter J. *Congressional Procedure and the Policy Process*, 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1995. Clear, factual summary of how Congress operates.
- Rhode, David W. *Parties and Leaders in Postreform House*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991. An account of the increase in partisanship in the House of Representatives since the 1970s.

### Resources on the World Wide Web

House of Representatives: [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

Senate: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

Library of Congress has two web sites about Congress:

[thomas.loc.gov](http://thomas.loc.gov)

[lcweb.loc.gov/global/legislative/congress](http://lcweb.loc.gov/global/legislative/congress)

For news about Congress:

Roll call magazine: [www.rollcall.com](http://www.rollcall.com)

C-SPAN programs about Congress: [www.c-span.org](http://www.c-span.org)