

# EQ # 23-How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- The US Congress organizes its work by committee
- Why Committees? - Like a factory model, committees specialize on one policy area; this allows for expertise
- Dividing work among members of Congress
  1. Increases efficiency and
  2. Allows members to focus on a few key policy areas deeply, NOT all areas.

# How Congress is Organized to Make Policy-Committees

- There are FOUR main types of committees
  - Standing committees
  - Joint committees
  - Conference committee
  - Select committees

# 1. Standing Committees

- Are permanent committees in both the House (20) and Senate (16)
- They are organized based on subject matter to handle different policy areas.
- Members are on 1-3 only (NOT all)
- All proposed bills are sent to the standing committee that deals with that policy issue.

# Standing Committees in Congress

## Standing Committees House of Representatives

1. Agriculture
2. Appropriations \*
3. Armed Services
4. Budget
5. Education and the Workforce
6. Energy and Commerce
7. Ethics
8. Financial Service
9. Foreign Affairs
10. Homeland Security
11. House Administration
12. Judiciary
13. Natural Resources
14. Oversight and Government Reform
15. Rules \*
16. Science, Space and Technology
17. Small Business
18. Transportation and Infrastructure
19. Veterans Affairs
20. Ways and Means \*

## Standing Committees Senate

1. Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
2. Appropriations
3. Armed Services
4. Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
5. Budget
6. Commerce, Science and Transportation
7. Energy and Natural Resources
8. Environment and Public Works
9. Finance
10. Foreign Relations
11. Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
12. Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
13. Judiciary
14. Rules and Administration
15. Small Business and Entrepreneurship
16. Veterans Affairs

# The House Rules Committee

- Is a very POWERFUL standing committee in the House only.
- Controlled by MAJORITY party and led by SPEAKER.
- Is used to control the flow of ALL legislation/bills by allowing bills to move forward or die before consideration by full House.
- Favors the MAJORITY party.

## 2. Joint Committee

- Is made up of members from BOTH H & S
- There are only a few of these for specific policy areas
- Examples...
  - Economic
  - Congressional Library
  - Taxation
  - Printing

## 3. Select Committee

- Is a committee set up for a specific purpose
- It may be temporary and disbanded after issue is resolved.
- Some are permanent (Intelligence Committee)
- Some are joint committees

## 4. Conference Committee

- Is a joint committee used at the end of the bill-to-law process.
  - Bills typically differ significantly after passing the House and then Senate. They need to read the same before they can become law.
- Here, members work out one final version of the bill with unified language that both the H and S agree to.



# Activity-Types of Committees

- Watch the film <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-government-and-politics/interactions-among-branches-of-government/structures-powers-and-functions-of-congress/v/how-a-bill-becomes-a-law>
- Use the grid to review and record examples of the various types of committees found in Congress.
- List **THREE** examples of each type of committee

# How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

- Committees & Subcommittees have TWO functions:

## 1. Legislation- Write Laws

- Committees work on the 11,000 bills every session.
- Committees research, assess and revise bills

## 2. Oversight

- Committees provide Oversight—investigating;
- Involves hearings and other methods of checking the actions of the executive branch.
- As the size of government grows, oversight grows

# Getting on a Standing Committee

- Getting on a Standing Committee
  - Members want committee assignments that will help them get reelected, gain influence, and get laws passed.
  - New members express their committee preferences to the party leaders.
  - Assignments are awarded based on interests of the state represented and area of expertise/ experience of each member of congress

# How Congress is Organized to Make Policy

## SENATE COMMITTEES

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry	Energy and Natural Resources	Judiciary
Appropriations	Environment and Public Works	Rules and Administration
Armed Services	Finance	Small Business and Entrepreneurship
Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs	Foreign Relations	Veterans' Affairs
Budget	Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions	
Commerce, Science, and Transportation	Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs	

## HOUSE COMMITTEES

Agriculture	Foreign Affairs	Science and Technology
Appropriations	Homeland Security	Small Business
Armed Services	House Administration	Standards of Official Conduct
Budget	Judiciary	Transportation and Infrastructure
Education and Labor	Natural Resources	Veterans' Affairs
Energy and Commerce	Oversight and Government Reform	Ways and Means
Financial Services	Rules	

# Committee Chairs and Seniority System

The COMMITTEE CHAIR is the most powerful & important committee member

\*Can control legislation.

\*Always from the MAJORITY party

SENIORITY rule/system is the general rule

\*Those with most time in Congress have most powerful leadership positions.

- Seniority more important in HOUSE

# Friday 1/10

- What is the legislative Process in Congress?
- How are the rules and processes similar and different in the House and Senate?

I'm Just a Bill

# What is a bill?

- A bill is any proposed legislation or policy idea designed to fix a problem or address a need.
- EXAMPLE- Fixing the I5 Bridge between Oregon and Washington
- Thousands of bills may be introduced in a year, but very few become law



# Watch Film and Complete Grid as we go

- We will stop at each step and write in pairs
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZNZY32\\_i98](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZNZY32_i98)

# Monday 1/14

- News Quiz
- Wrap up Bill-Law process (finish graphic organizer)
- Activity - Review Process with cards
- Activity- Review Differences between the House and Senate (use graphic org and cards)

# Floor in the House of Reps- Debate and Vote Rules

- After committee, the bill goes to the House of Representatives Floor where all members can debate, change and vote on the bill
- Debate time is limited in the House by rule
- Additions to the bill here must be germane (directly related) to the bill
- A simple majority vote moves the bill on

# Debate in the Senate

- After committee, each Senator may debate, change and vote on the bill.
- Changes or additions do not have to be germane to the bill's subject
- A RIDER is an addition unrelated to bill
- Debate is UNLIMITED in the Senate

# DEBATE IN THE SENATE

FILIBUSTER- tactic used by the minority party to prevent a vote on the floor that they will lose.

Talk bill to death by not yielding the floor

CLOTURE- Ends a filibuster; takes 60/100 Senators (3/5) to stop a filibuster; hard to get.

# Unanimous Consent

- A senator may request unanimous consent on the floor to set aside a specified rule of procedure so as to expedite proceedings.
- If no Senator objects, the Senate permits the action, but if any one senator objects, the request is rejected.



# Conference Committee

- If a bill makes it through the H and S, it goes to Conference Committee.
- Members of both H and S here
- They re-write the House and Senate's versions of the bill to make sure language is consistent.
- Bill is referred back to H and S for final vote to approve final language.

# President's Desk

- Final Step; P has FOUR options
  1. SIGN INTO LAW- becomes law
  2. VETO- Reject; kills bill but can be overridden with 2/3 vote in H and S; NOT easy to do.
  3. IGNORE –becomes law within 10 days
  4. POCKET VETO-ignore and kills bill if it's the last 10 days of Congress' session.



# The Congressional Process: So What?

- Policymaking process is slow and tedious
- The final bill often changes significantly from the original bill
- The process was designed to prevent rash decisions and to encourage compromise in law making

# Finish Graphic Organizer

- I will check for points
- Paste into INB

# Debrief-

## The Legislative Process

1. True or False, the President can introduce a bill for consideration? Explain.
2. Where do bills spend the most time in the process? Why?
3. How many votes does it take to pass a bill out of committee? On the floor of the House and Senate?
4. Describe TWO ways the Senate is LESS formal than the House in terms of rules.

# Activity- Bill to Law Process

- Organize the steps of the bill-law process with a partner
- We'll check in FIVE minutes



# Review: Power and Committees in House & Senate

- Who is most powerful in the House? In the Senate?
- Which environment is more formal? Why?
- What are THREE key powers specific to the House?
- What are THREE key powers specific to the Senate?

# Rules Differences between House and Senate

- Debate and legislative process rules differ between the House and the Senate

Define EACH rule below tell if H or S has it.

- Filibuster
- Holds
- Unanimous Consent
- Germaneness-
- Rules Committee-

# Activity-Graphic Org Compare House & Senate

- Use the graphic organizer handout to compare House and Senate
- Decide if the description is for H or S
- Check with me when you're done
- Develop reasons to explain why and write them up (collaborate thinking)



# Tuesday 1/12

- Finish Grid (pairs)
- Review for Ch 12 Quiz
- Ch 12 Quiz
- Congressional powers activity (after the quiz; due tomorrow)

# Final Review

- Discuss questions
- Complete grid
- Password
- Quiz
- After quiz, begin the Congressional Powers Activity. Read and list powers of Congress on graphic organizer; due tomorrow in class!