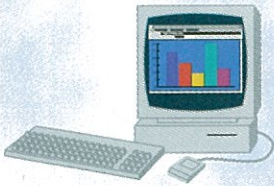


Multimedia Activities



Surfing the "Net"

The Electoral College

When you studied general elections in Chapter 7, you read about the Electoral College. You learned that when a person votes for a Republican or Democratic presidential candidate, he or she is really voting for a Republican or Democratic elector. The following Internet activity will help you learn about your state's electoral votes.

Getting There

Follow the steps below to find information about your state's electoral votes.

1. Go to your favorite search engine.
2. Type in the phrase *Electoral College*. Following this phrase, enter words like those below to focus your search:

votes

electors

The search engine should provide you with a number of links to follow. Links are pointers to different sites on the Internet and commonly appear as blue underlined words.

What to Do When You Are There

1. Click on the links to navigate through the pages of information.
2. Using a word processor, create a fact sheet that answers the following questions:
 - How many electors does your state have?
 - How many electoral votes did the winning candidate receive in the last presidential election?
 - How many electoral votes did the losing candidate receive?



Focus on Government

A Nation of Immigrants

The United States is often called a "nation of immigrants." Many Americans today can look at their own personal heritage and trace their roots outside of the United States. The **Focus on Government** programs referenced below show Ellis Island in New York harbor as the entry point for millions of immigrants when they arrived in the United States. Also, the program explains the naturalization process by which immigrants can become citizens.



Side 1, Chapter 8
Electronic Field Trip, Ellis Island

Setting Up the Video

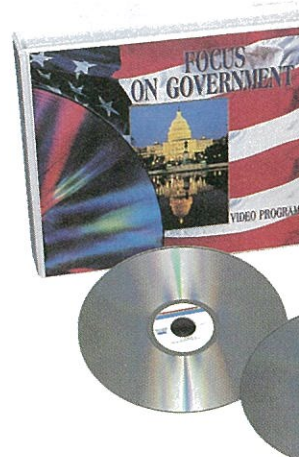
Using a bar code reader or an electronic keypad, work with a group of your classmates to view these video segments of the videodisc **Focus on Government**:



Side 1, Chapter 9
Lecture Launcher:
Citizenship in the United States

Hands-On Activity

Work with a group of your classmates to determine the national origin of students in your group. Have each group member do a short report on one of these countries. Present the reports to the class.



UNIT 4

The National Government

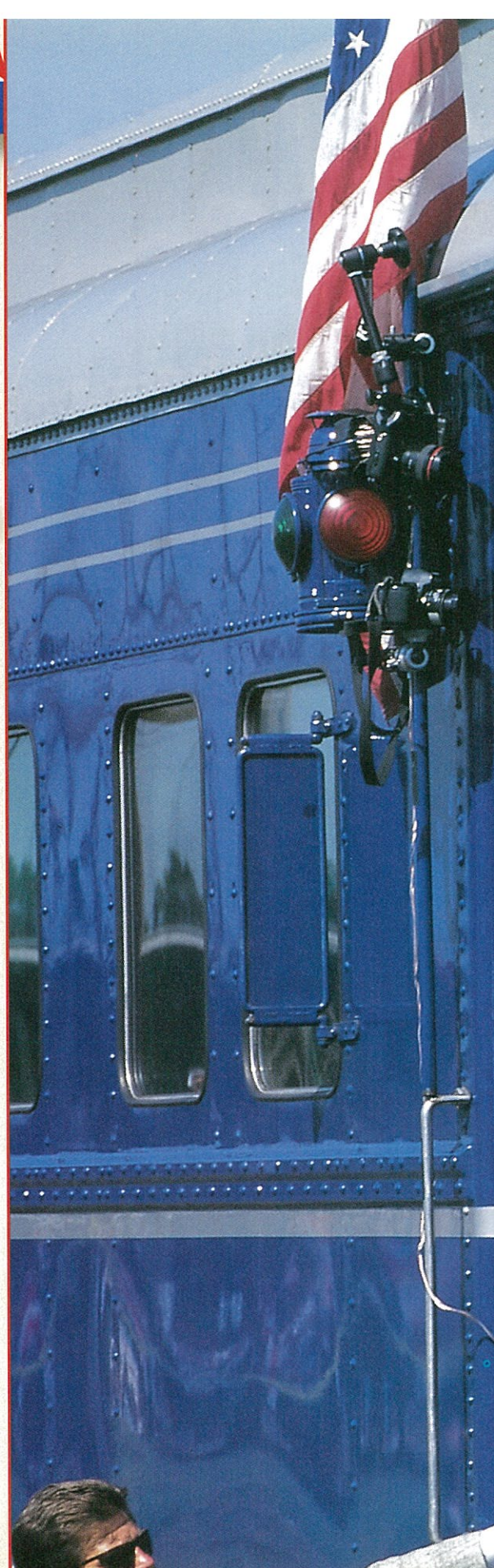
YOUR ROLE AS A CITIZEN

Under our federal system, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches share the responsibility of governing the nation. They derive their power from the American people. As citizens, we have a responsibility to learn about the officials who represent us and to express our views through voting.

In Unit 4 you will study the branches of government and learn how government works. ■

CHAPTERS IN THIS UNIT

- 9 Congress
- 10 The Presidency
- 11 The Executive Branch
- 12 The Judicial Branch





Congress

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Congress is the most direct expression of American democracy. When citizens express their views to their representatives in Congress, they actually become part of the lawmaking process. Contact the offices of your representative in Congress and of one of your senators. Find out what legislation they currently support and if they plan to introduce

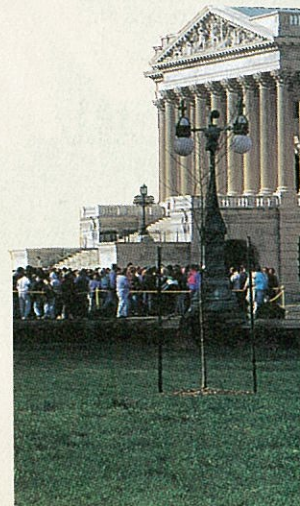
any new bills in Congress.

Working in Your Community

Make an outline of the positions of your senator and representative. Share the information with your neighbors. Find out what your neighbors think about legislation pending in Congress. Encourage them to express their views to their members of Congress. ■

Your Civics Journal

As you study about Congress, pay attention to the important national issues discussed in newspapers and on television. Consider how you would deal with these issues if you were a member of Congress. Write your ideas in your civics journal.







How Congress Is Organized

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

bicameral, gerrymandering, constituent, franking privilege, immunity, expulsion, censure, session

OBJECTIVES

- List the qualifications and terms of office for members of **the House of Representatives**.
- List the qualifications and terms of office for members of **the Senate**.
- Describe the **salary, benefits, and privileges** members of Congress receive.
- Identify the three types of **congressional sessions**.

As you learned in Chapter 3, one of the major conflicts at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 concerned state representation in the new Congress. Delegates from the smaller states wanted each state to have equal representation. Delegates from larger states wanted representation to be based on population, which would give them a greater voice in government.

The Great Compromise, which established a **bicameral**, or two-house, Congress, settled the dispute. In the upper

house, the Senate, each state would have an equal number of representatives—two. In the lower house, the House of Representatives, each state's population would determine its representation.

Although Article I of the Constitution makes some distinctions between the powers of the two houses, the houses are more alike than different. Each house is made up of elected members who carry out similar duties and enjoy similar privileges.

The House of Representatives

According to the Constitution, members of the House of Representatives, known as representatives, must meet only three qualifications: they must be at least 25 years old, they must have been United States citizens for at least 7 years, and they must live in the states they represent. In practice, however, representatives usually meet several other

Congressional Representation

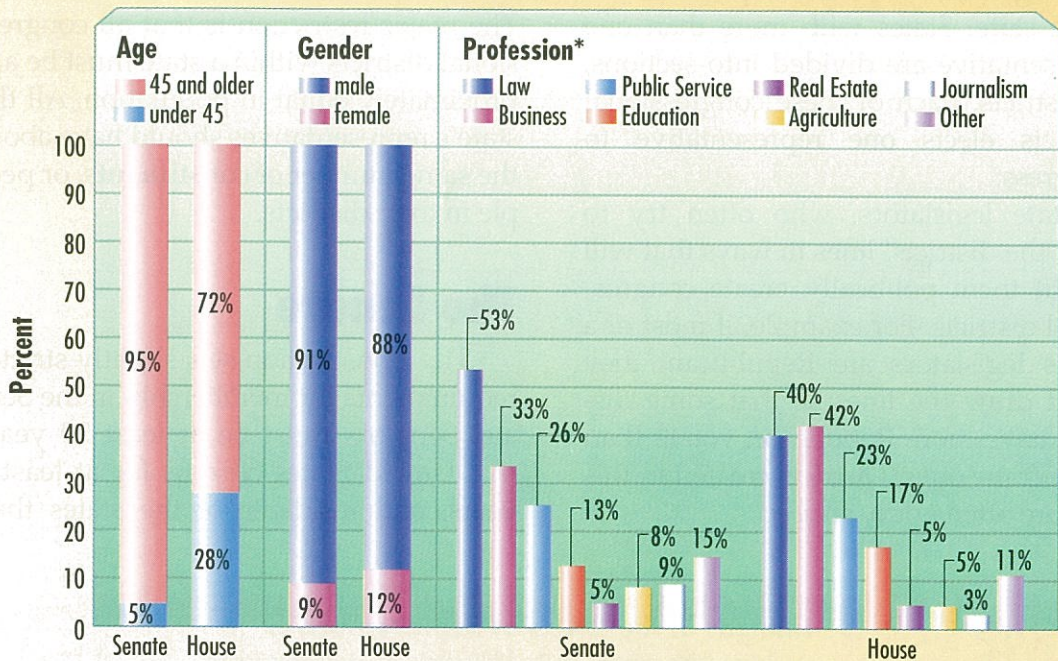
Congressman John Conyers of Michigan meets with constituents in his Washington office.

How are the number of representatives for each state determined?





Profile of the 105th Congress The members of Congress represent a cross section of American society. *What percentage of the representatives and of the senators are women?*



Source: *Congressional Quarterly Special Report*, January 4, 1997.
 *Totals more than 100% because some members have more than one profession.

qualifications as well. Most representatives have had successful careers in law or business. Many have also had experience in state and local government or in other forms of public service.

Representatives are elected for two-year terms. Because these terms all begin and end at the same time, it is possible for the House to have an entirely new membership every two years. In reality, however, this never happens. In recent elections, 70 to 80 percent of the current House members have been reelected.

The Constitution does not limit the number of terms a representative may serve. In recent years, however, public opinion has increasingly favored term limitations. A number of states have already passed laws limiting the terms of

representatives. Congress is considering a constitutional amendment that would set term limits.

The number of representatives is fixed at 435. The Constitution guarantees each state at least one representative, but the number of additional representatives depends on the state's population. Some small states, such as Wyoming and Vermont, have only one representative. California, the state with the largest population, has 52.

When the Census Bureau counts the population every 10 years, it studies population changes to see whether each state's number of representatives needs to be adjusted. After the 1990 census, for example, some states such as Florida, Texas, and California gained some



Senate Leaders Tom Daschle and Trent Lott One-third of the senators run for reelection every two years. *How many years is the term of office for senators?*

represent. Most senators also have a great deal of government experience; many are former members of the House of Representatives.

Senators serve six-year terms, but not every senator's term begins at the same time. Every two years, one-third of the senators must run for reelection. As a result, at least two-thirds of the Senate always consists of experienced members. There is currently no limit to the number of terms a senator may serve, but a constitutional amendment being considered would set a two-term limit.

Two senators represent each state. The Senate therefore has 100 members. Unlike representatives, senators do not represent specific districts. The entire state elects each senator.

Salary, Benefits, and Privileges

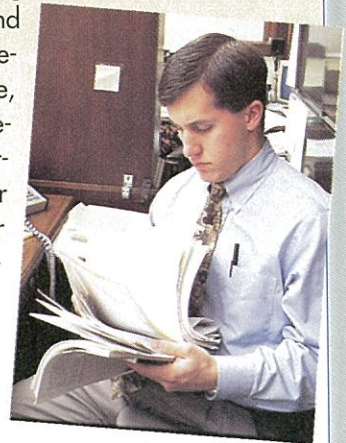
Although members of Congress get to set their own salary, they rarely give themselves a raise. They are afraid of the public's response to such an action. Early in 1989, for example, Congress was considering a salary increase of 51 percent. Protests from angry voters caused the

DID YOU KNOW?

Congressional Mail

Each year, members of Congress receive tons of mail from their constituents. That does not include the approximately 5,000 mailings they receive daily from lobbying groups. In 1993 Senator Barbara Boxer of California received more mail than any other member of Congress—more than 10,000 letters each day from her constituents.

Congressional aides have the daunting task of opening, sorting, and responding to this mail. They also must respond to letters sent electronically by computer. Letter-opening machines help open envelopes. Aides must then remove the letters from the envelopes, sort them according to subject, read them (sometimes while deciphering handwriting), and write replies. Despite the challenge, aides try to respond to every letter—electronic or otherwise. After all, letters to Congress are an important way for the citizens of the country to be heard.



Congressional aide with mail

House and the Senate to vote down the raise, but a compromise was reached later that year. The yearly salary of both senators and representatives is currently \$133,600 a year.

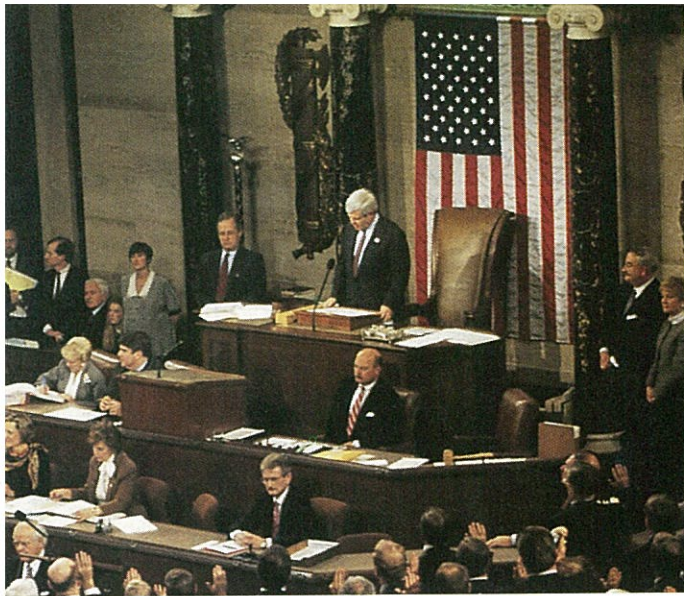
In addition to their salary, members of Congress receive other benefits. They are given free office space, parking, and trips to their home state. They have budgets to pay for assistants, office staff, and supplies. They receive discounts on many services such as medical care, video production, and even haircuts. They are also given a **franking privilege**, the right to send job-related mail without paying postage. Recent criticism of many congressional privileges has led to calls for reform. When Republicans took control of Congress in January 1995, they cut staff and reduced other privileges of members.

The Constitution grants senators and representatives **immunity**, or legal protection, in certain situations. For example, members of Congress may not be arrested while doing their job, or while traveling between home and work, unless they have committed a very serious crime. They also may not be sued for anything they say or write while carrying out their duties. This immunity allows members of Congress to say and do what they believe is right, without fear of interference from outsiders.

Of course, the guarantee of immunity does not mean that members of Congress are free to break the law. Senators and representatives are expected to set an example of good, honest behavior for the rest of the country. A member of Congress who acts dishonestly or irresponsibly may face **expulsion** and be forced to

Congressional Benefits Representative Susan Molinari of New York meets with members of her staff. *Who pays the salaries of congressional aides?*





Oath of Office Members of the 104th Congress take their oath of office at the opening of the new session. *How many sessions does each Congress have in which to do its work?*

leave Congress. Expulsion requires a two-thirds vote of either house and is reserved for only the most serious crimes. **Censure**, or formal disapproval, punishes less serious offenses. Members who are censured must endure the embarrassment of having their misbehavior made public.

Congressional Sessions

The entire House of Representatives is elected every other year, and each “new” Congress is given a number to identify its two-year term. For example, the first Congress met in 1789, and the 105th Congress began meeting in 1997.

Congress carries out its work in two regular time periods, or **sessions**. One session is held each year of the two-year term. In the early years of the Republic, each session of Congress lasted only a few months. Today, however, Congress meets regularly for most of the year. Ses-

sions begin on January 3 and continue until November or December, although recesses, or vacations, interrupt them.

In addition to regular sessions, Congress may also meet in special sessions. In times of crisis, the President has the power to call Congress into session to deal with pressing problems. Special sessions have been rare in recent times because Congress is already in session during most of the year.

On some occasions, the House and the Senate may meet together in a joint session of Congress. Little real work can be accomplished at a joint session, so its value is mostly ceremonial. A joint session is held each year when senators and representatives gather to hear the President’s State of the Union address.

★ SECTION 1 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define bicameral, gerrymandering, constituent, franking privilege, immunity, expulsion, censure, session.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are the qualifications and terms of office for members of the House of Representatives?
- 2 What are the qualifications and terms of office for members of the Senate?
- 3 What salary, benefits, and other privileges do members of Congress receive?
- 4 What are three types of congressional sessions?



How Congress Works

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

majority leader, minority leader, party whip, speaker of the house, president *pro tempore*, standing committee, subcommittee, select committee, joint committee, conference committee, seniority system

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the roles of the **congressional leaders**.
- Identify three types of **congressional committees**.
- Explain the rules and traditions that determine **committee membership** in the House and the Senate.

Over the years, Congress has found it increasingly difficult to accomplish its work. This difficulty is due partly to the growing complexity of modern life and partly to the size of the two houses. The Senate, which began with 26 members in 1789, has 100 members today. The increase in the House has been even greater—from 65 to 435 members.

Such large groups are not always able to work together smoothly. As a result, the House has developed strict rules to help it conduct its business. These rules specify when bills can be introduced,

how long they can be debated, and most other parts of the lawmaking process.

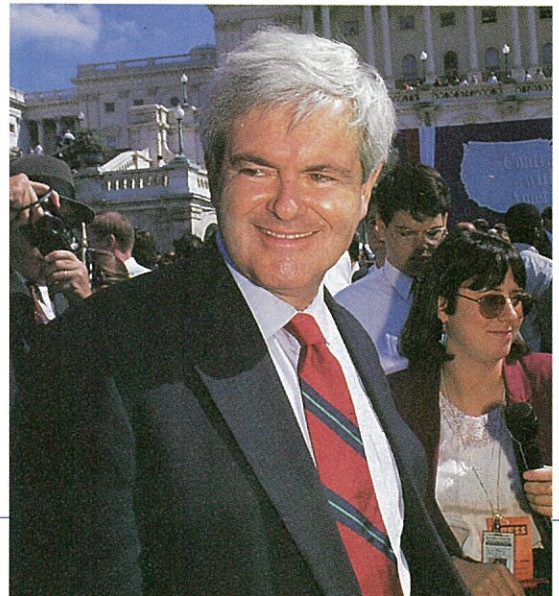
The Senate also has rules to help it work efficiently. Because it is much smaller, however, it can operate on a more informal basis. Few of the rules by which the House and Senate operate are in the Constitution. These regulations, however, have become a permanent part of how our government works.

Congressional Leaders

The Democratic and Republican leaders in each house decide much of what happens in Congress. Within the Senate and the House of Representatives, the party to which more than half the members belong is called the majority party. The other party is called the minority party.

At the beginning of each congressional term, the members of each party meet to choose new leaders. Among the leaders they choose are floor leaders and party whips.

Newt Gingrich A member of the majority party, Republican Newt Gingrich became speaker of the house in 1995. *What does the speaker of the house do?*



Floor Leaders and Party Whips

Floor leaders try to make sure that the laws Congress passes are in the best interests of their own political party. Each house of Congress has two floor leaders—a Democrat and a Republican. The majority party's floor leader is called the **majority leader**; the minority party's floor leader is called the **minority leader**.

A **party whip** assists each floor leader. The whip's job is to keep track of how party members vote and to persuade all members of his or her party to vote together on issues.

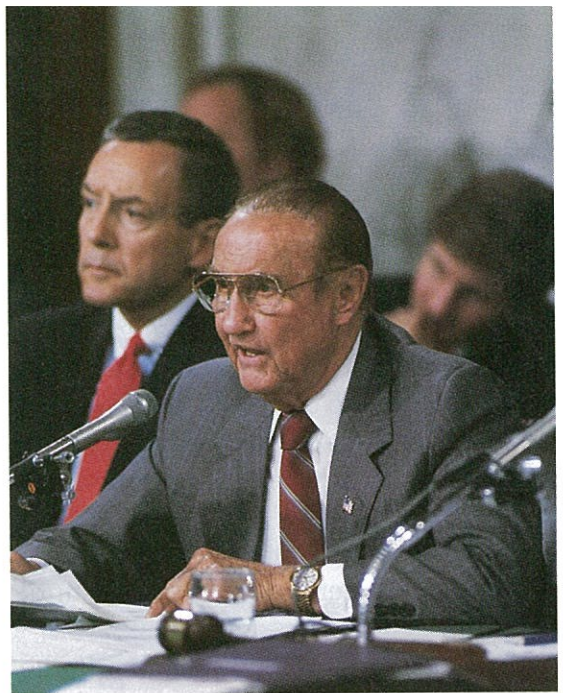
Speaker

In addition to these party leaders, each house of Congress also has one overall leader. In the House of Representatives, this leader is the **speaker of the house**. A member of the majority party, the speaker is usually an experienced, respected member of the House. The speaker is in charge of nearly everything that occurs while the House is in session.

President Pro Tempore

According to the Constitution, the official leader and president of the Senate is the Vice President of the United States. The Vice President, however, takes no part in the legislative process of the Senate. Moreover, the Vice President may only vote when there is a tie.

Because of other duties, the Vice President is rarely present while the Senate is in session. The **president pro tempore**, or president "for the time being," handles day-to-day leadership of the Senate. By tradition, this largely honorary position goes to the most senior member of the majority party.



President Pro Tempore Following the 1994 elections, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina assumed this position in the Senate. *What is the role of the president pro tempore?*

Congressional Committees

Each house of Congress must consider thousands of bills, or proposed laws, in the course of a session. To make it possible to handle so many bills at one time, each house has developed a system of committees. Every new bill goes to a committee, where it is researched, discussed, and often revised. The committee then decides whether the full House or Senate should vote on the bill.

Congress has three types of committees: standing committees, select committees, and joint committees. A **standing committee** is a permanent committee that specializes in a particular topic. For example, both the Senate and the House have standing committees to deal with agriculture, commerce, and veterans' affairs. When a bill dealing

with any of these topics is introduced, it is sent immediately to the appropriate committee.

Standing committees are divided into **subcommittees**, smaller groups that handle more specialized problems. In the Senate, for example, the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee has subcommittees to deal with each area.

Both the Senate and the House sometimes form temporary committees to deal with issues that need special attention. These **select committees** meet for a few months or perhaps a few years, until they complete their assigned task.

Occasionally, the Senate and the House form **joint committees**, which include members of both houses. Like se-

lect committees, joint committees usually meet for a limited period of time to consider specific issues. A special type of joint committee, called the **conference committee**, helps the House and the Senate agree on the details of a proposed law. You will learn more about conference committees later in the chapter.

Committee Membership

Most members of Congress have strong preferences about which committees they would like to serve on. In general, certain committees are considered more desirable than others.

A senator who belongs to the Foreign Relations Committee, for example, is




CHART STUDY

Congressional Committees Most of the legislative work of Congress is done in committees. *Which committee deals with Native American issues?*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES		SENATE	
Standing Committees			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agriculture ■ Appropriations ■ Banking and Financial Services ■ Budget ■ Commerce ■ Economic and Educational Opportunities ■ Government Reform and Oversight ■ House Oversight ■ International Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Judiciary ■ National Security ■ Resources ■ Rules ■ Science ■ Small Business ■ Standards of Official Conduct ■ Transportation and Infrastructure ■ Veterans' Affairs ■ Ways and Means 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry ■ Appropriations ■ Armed Services ■ Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs ■ Budget ■ Commerce, Science, and Transportation ■ Energy and Natural Resources ■ Environment and Public Works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Finance ■ Foreign Relations ■ Governmental Affairs ■ Indian Affairs ■ Judiciary ■ Labor and Human Resources ■ Rules and Administration ■ Small Business ■ Veterans' Affairs
Select and Special Committees			
Intelligence		Aging ■ Ethics ■ Intelligence	
Joint Committees			
Economic	Library	Printing	Taxation



Labor and Human Resources

Nancy Landon Kassebaum of Kansas served as chair of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources in the 104th Congress.

Who chooses committee members?

likely to influence international affairs. In contrast, a senator who serves on the Labor and Human Resources Committee—which selects and oversees government employees—is not likely to accumulate a significant amount of fame or power.

Role of Party Leaders

The leaders of the political parties control committee membership. By tradition, the chairperson of each committee is almost always a member of the majority party. Each chairperson is a powerful leader who controls the committee's activities.

The majority party is also allowed to select more than half of the committee members. For example, if 60 percent of House members are Democrats, 60 percent of each House committee will be Democratic as well. As a result, the majority party has a great deal of control over what takes place in each committee as well as in each house of Congress.

Seniority System

Party leaders traditionally make committee assignments according to the **seniority system**. In this system the most desirable committee assignments are given to the senators and representatives who have served the longest in Congress. Moreover, within each committee, the member with the longest record of service is almost always made chairperson. Many people—especially younger members of Congress—feel that the seniority system is unfair. The most influential representatives and senators, who earned their status through seniority, are unwilling to reduce their own authority by changing the system. However, in 1995 the House voted to limit a committee chairperson to three consecutive terms.

★ SECTION 2 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define majority leader, minority leader, party whip, speaker of the house, president *pro tempore*, standing committee, subcommittee, select committee, joint committee, conference committee, seniority system.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are the roles of the congressional leaders?
- 2 What are three types of congressional committees?
- 3 What rules and traditions determine committee membership in the House and the Senate?



How to Write Your Representative

If you need help dealing with a federal agency or getting information about the government or if you want to voice your opinion about an issue, you can write your House representative or your senators. Members of Congress depend heavily on mail to find out how we, their constituents, feel about issues.

The Congressional Directory

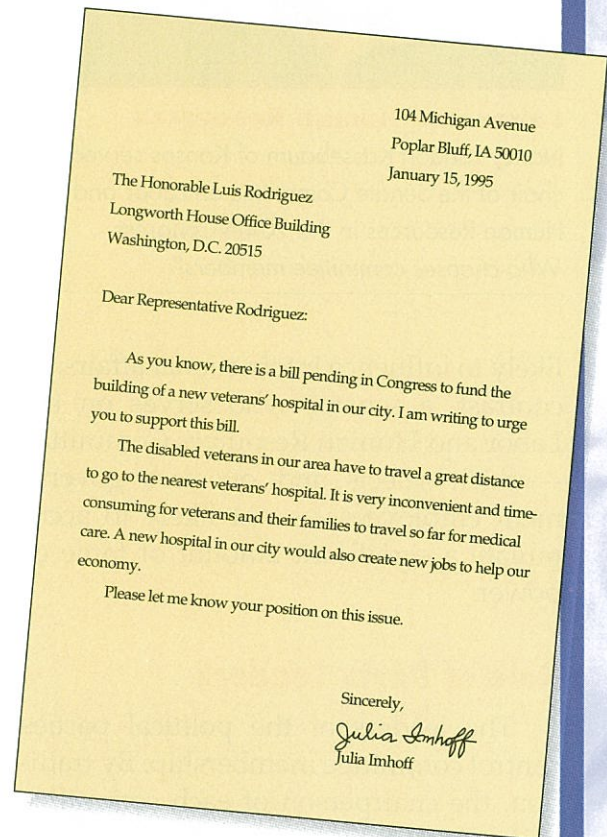
If you do not know the name of your senators or representative, you can find out from your local library or county election bureau. You can also refer to the *Congressional Directory*, a book containing detailed information about Congress. This book is found in most libraries throughout the United States.

Suggestions to Follow

- Address the member of Congress as “The Honorable” (Name) on the envelope and the letter, and use the title *Representative* or *Senator* in the salutation.
- Address a letter to your representative to the Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. Address letters to senators to the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510.
- If you are writing to express an opinion on an issue, be courteous and stick to the subject.
- If you are writing for help with a problem, explain the problem clearly and enclose photocopies of

documents that help prove your case.

- Be sure to include your return address.



Letter to a representative

CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION

- 1 What are three reasons why people write to their representatives in Congress?
- 2 Name an issue about which you would like to write your congressional representatives.



Congressional Powers

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

expressed powers, impeach, appropriations

OBJECTIVES

- Explain both the **expressed and implied powers** of Congress.
- Name and describe two **non-legislative powers** of Congress.
- List four **special powers of Congress**.
- Summarize the three basic **limits to congressional power** in the Constitution.

The writers of the Constitution believed strongly in the principle of limited government. As a result, they placed clear limits on the powers of Congress. These restrictions determine what Congress and each of its houses may or may not do. You have already learned about congressional powers and their limits in Chapter 3.

Expressed and Implied Powers

Expressed powers, also known as delegated powers, are one type of congressional power. Expressed powers are those listed specifically in Article I of the

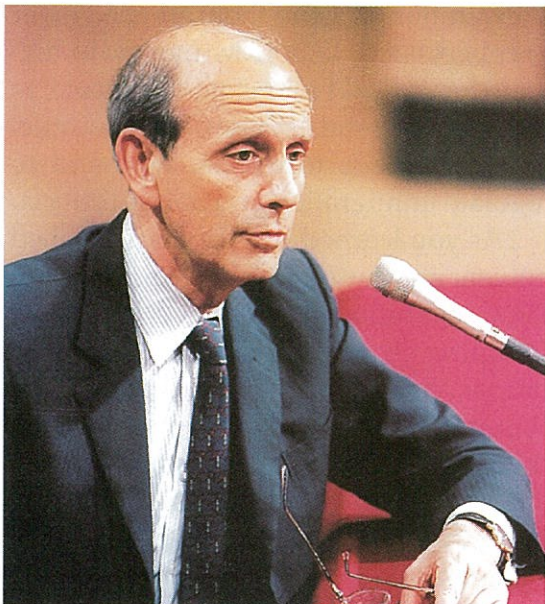
Constitution. Among them are the power to collect taxes, to borrow money, to regulate foreign and interstate commerce, to set up a postal system, to maintain armed services, to declare war, and to regulate immigration and naturalization.

As you learned in Chapter 3, implied powers are those not stated explicitly in the Constitution. The implied powers of Congress come from the necessary and proper clause, often called the elastic clause. The clause is called elastic because it allows Congress to stretch its authority to carry out its expressed powers.

For example, one expressed power of Congress is to maintain an army and a navy. Using its implied powers, Congress has expanded this expressed power and has built a huge military network, including service academies and intelligence-gathering organizations in addition to the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines.

Implied Powers United States troops landed in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on September 14, 1994. *On which power is the extensive military network based?*





Presidential Appointments Steven Breyer testified at the hearing on his nomination to the Supreme Court. *Why does the Senate hold hearings on presidential nominees?*

Nonlegislative Powers

The Constitution also grants Congress a number of nonlegislative powers. These enable the government to operate more effectively and help Congress serve as a check on the other branches of government. One such power, the power to propose amendments to the Constitution, was discussed in Chapter 4.

Congress also has the power to investigate. Most congressional hearings and fact-finding commissions are part of the lawmaking process. Congress needs to gather information to use in drafting and evaluating legislation, but it can also use its investigative powers in another way. It can review the activities of the executive branch to find out whether the government is administering the laws efficiently and as intended by Congress.

One of Congress's most important nonlegislative powers is the power to

impeach—to accuse government officials of wrongdoing, put them on trial, and if necessary remove them from office. Any federal official—including the President, the Vice President, or a judge—can be impeached if suspected of committing a serious crime.

The impeachment process begins in the House of Representatives, where a list of charges against the accused official is drawn up. If a majority of members vote to accept these charges, the Senate then has the power to act as a jury and decide the official's guilt or innocence. A two-thirds vote in the Senate is necessary to convict and to remove a person from office.

Special Powers of Congress

The Constitution has reserved special powers for each house of Congress. One of the House of Representatives' special powers, the power to begin impeachment proceedings, has just been discussed. The House also has the power to choose the President if no candidate wins a majority in the Electoral College. This has happened only twice—after the elections of 1800 and 1824.

One of the House's most important special powers is to introduce tax bills and **appropriations** bills, bills that involve money. The Senate votes on money bills, but all such bills must start in the House. For this reason, the political party that controls the House also has a great deal of control over the nation's purse strings.

The special powers of the Senate include acting as the jury in an impeachment trial and ratifying treaties with other nations. Although the President

American Profiles

Patsy Mink

Early in her youth, Patsy Takemoto Mink decided to devote her life to public service. In 1964 she was elected a United States representative from her home state of Hawaii. She lost a bid for the Senate in 1976, but she returned to the House in 1990.

Mink has been a tireless champion of such issues as equal rights for women and for people with disabilities, educational funding for young people, and fairness in the private and public sectors.

Throughout her years in public service, Mink has found strength in our nation's diversity. She once declared that America's "strength lies in all our diversities

converging in one common belief, that of the importance of freedom as the essence of our country."



PROFILE REVIEW

- 1 What groups have received most of Patsy Mink's attention?
- 2 Does Patsy Mink think our nation's diversity is a strength or a weakness?

may sign a treaty, it is not binding unless a two-thirds vote in the Senate ratifies it.

The Senate also has the power to approve or reject the President's appointments of certain high government officials. The Senate usually accepts the President's choice, but there are exceptions. In 1989, for example, the Senate refused to approve President Bush's appointment of John Tower as secretary of defense. The Senate expressed doubts about Tower's character and his ability to handle the job. In 1993 the nomination of

Zoë Baird, President Clinton's appointee for attorney general, was withdrawn before the Senate had a chance to vote. At issue was her hiring of illegal aliens and failure to pay social security taxes on their wages.

Limits to Congressional Power

As you may remember, the Constitution includes some clear statements about things Congress may *not* do.

CHART STUDY

Powers of Congress Congress has three types of power. Which type is used in impeachment proceedings?

Expressed Powers

- Collect taxes and borrow money
- Regulate foreign and interstate commerce
- Coin money and regulate its value
- Create federal courts
- Regulate immigration and naturalization
- Exercise authority over the District of Columbia
- Set up a postal system
- Declare war
- Raise and support an army and navy
- Organize the militia

Implied Powers

Make all laws “necessary and proper” for carrying out its expressed powers

Nonlegislative Powers

- Ratify treaties (Senate)
- Approve presidential appointments (Senate)
- Propose amendments to the Constitution
- Bring impeachment charges against federal officials (House)
- Try impeachment cases (Senate)
- Investigate

According to Article I, Congress may not favor one state over another, tax interstate commerce, or tax exports.

Article I also forbids Congress from enacting laws that would interfere with the legal rights of individuals. Congress may not pass bills of attainder and ex post facto laws or suspend the writ of habeas corpus. These important legal rights will be discussed in Chapter 16.

The Constitution also reserves many powers for the states. Congress cannot interfere with these powers, which include the right to make marriage and divorce laws. The Bill of Rights and other

amendments also deny Congress certain powers. (See Chapter 4.)

Additional restrictions on congressional power come from the Constitution’s system of checks and balances. As you will see later in this chapter, the President has the power to veto a bill passed by Congress. The Supreme Court can also declare a law unconstitutional. This process will be discussed in Chapter 12.

A final restriction on the power of Congress is a result of economics. Nearly every law requires the government to spend a certain amount of money. Some government programs, such as social security, cost billions of dollars. While the government’s budget is huge, it is still limited. Therefore, Congress cannot pass every law it might like to pass, simply because the money is not available. The need to set priorities and to consider what laws and programs the government can best afford limits the power of Congress.

★ SECTION 3 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define expressed powers, impeach, appropriations.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What are Congress’s expressed and implied powers?
- 2 What are two nonlegislative powers of Congress?
- 3 What are four special powers of Congress?
- 4 What are the three basic limits to congressional power in the Constitution?



How a Bill Becomes a Law

FOCUS

TERMS TO KNOW

pigeonhole, filibuster, cloture, voice vote, standing vote, roll-call vote, pocket veto

OBJECTIVES

- Explain the procedure for **introducing a bill** in Congress.
- Describe **the work of committees**, including three actions a committee can take when it receives a bill.
- Discuss the rules for **debating a bill** in the House and in the Senate.
- Identify three methods of **voting on a bill**.
- Outline a President's options for **signing or vetoing a bill**.

Each year, Congress considers thousands of bills. Of these, only a few hundred become laws. Congressional committees, negative votes in one or both houses of Congress, or presidential vetoes kill the rest. The process by which a bill becomes a law is complicated and may require a great deal of time and effort.

Every bill starts with an idea. Some of these ideas come from members of Congress. Citizens who write to their representatives suggest some. Many ideas

come from lobbyists representing various interest groups. Others come from the President or from officials in the executive branch. A senator or representative must sponsor a bill before Congress will consider it.

Introducing a Bill

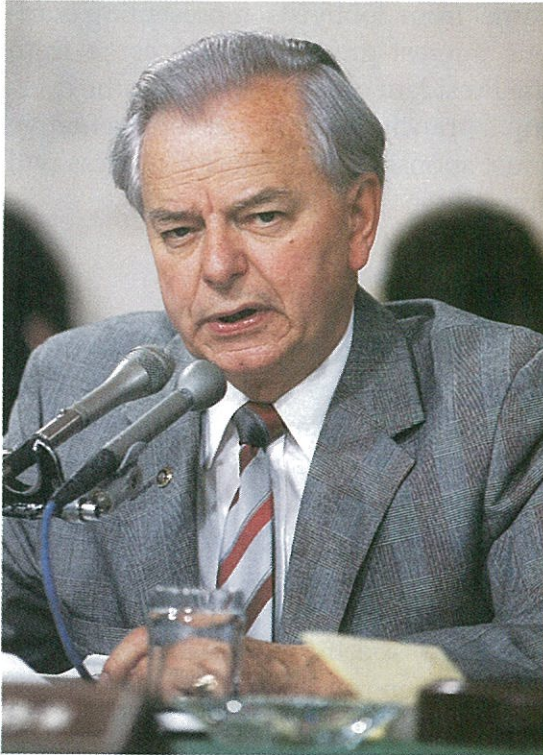
A member of Congress who wants to sponsor a bill has to draft it, or put the idea in written form. The representative's or senator's staff usually drafts the bill.

A senator introduces a bill by making a formal announcement in the Senate. In the House, a representative introduces a bill by dropping it into the "hopper," a box used specifically for this purpose. The bill then receives a number. A House bill might be called HR 1266.

After a bill is introduced, it is sent to the standing committee that is concerned with the subject of the bill. For example,

Consumer Lobbyist Many ideas for bills come from lobbyists representing interest groups. *How are these bills introduced in Congress?*





Senator Robert Byrd—A Filibuster Expert Senators can prevent discussion of a bill by talking endlessly until the bill’s sponsor withdraws it. *How else can a bill be killed?*

a bill dealing with airline safety would probably be sent to the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee in the Senate or the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in the House.

The Work of Committees

A committee has several options when it receives a bill. If the committee members dislike the bill, they can “kill,” or reject, it immediately, or they can **pigeonhole** it—set it aside without even considering it. This is what happens to most bills in committee.

Suppose, however, that most committee members favor the bill. The committee might decide to keep the bill as it is, or it might decide to make some

changes. It might even decide to throw out the bill and write a new one dealing with the same subject.

At this point, the bill would be passed to a subcommittee for further work and study. By law, the subcommittee must hold public hearings at which people affected by the bill can express their opinions. These people have an opportunity to present arguments in support of or against the bill.

Based on information from hearings and from other research, the subcommittee might make other changes in the bill. When the subcommittee has finished its work, the bill is returned to the full committee. The full committee may make additional changes before voting on the bill. If a majority of the committee votes to approve the bill, it is sent to the full Senate or House for consideration.

Debating a Bill

Because the House of Representatives has many members and a great deal of work to do, it can devote only a small amount of time to any one bill. The Rules Committee of the House helps to schedule the consideration of bills. This committee can decide when a bill will be debated and for how long. It can even kill a bill by refusing to give it time for debate.

The rules for debate in the House are fairly complicated. In some cases, the House speeds up the debate process by meeting as a “Committee of the Whole,” a special gathering of all House members. The rules for debate within a committee are more informal, so debates can proceed more quickly and easily.

In the Senate, the debates are freer. For one thing, senators are allowed to speak for an unlimited amount of time.

This freedom means that one or more senators may kill a bill by talking until the bill's sponsor withdraws it. This tactic is known as a **filibuster**.

A vote for cloture, which requires the support of 60 members of the Senate, can end a filibuster. **Cloture** limits a senator to one hour of debate. Cloture votes are rare, however, and a filibuster is often an effective way to kill a bill.

Voting on a Bill

After a bill has been debated, it is brought to a vote. Voting is done in one of three ways. The simplest is a **voice vote**, in which those who support a bill say yea, and those opposed say nay. A voice vote is usually used for bills that are clearly popular or unpopular.

A more exact method of voting is the **standing vote** in which members who support a bill are asked to stand and be counted. Then members who oppose the bill are asked to stand and be counted.

Roll-call Votes

A third method is the roll-call vote. In a **roll-call vote**, each member's name is called individually, and he or she is asked to vote yea, nay, or present. (A vote of "present" means "no opinion.") In a roll-call every person's vote is a matter of public record, so constituents can find out how their representatives in Congress have voted on an issue. This knowledge may have an effect on the way a senator or representative votes.

Conference Committees

Often, the House and Senate pass different versions of the same bill. For example, the House version of a bill on airline safety might require aircraft to be



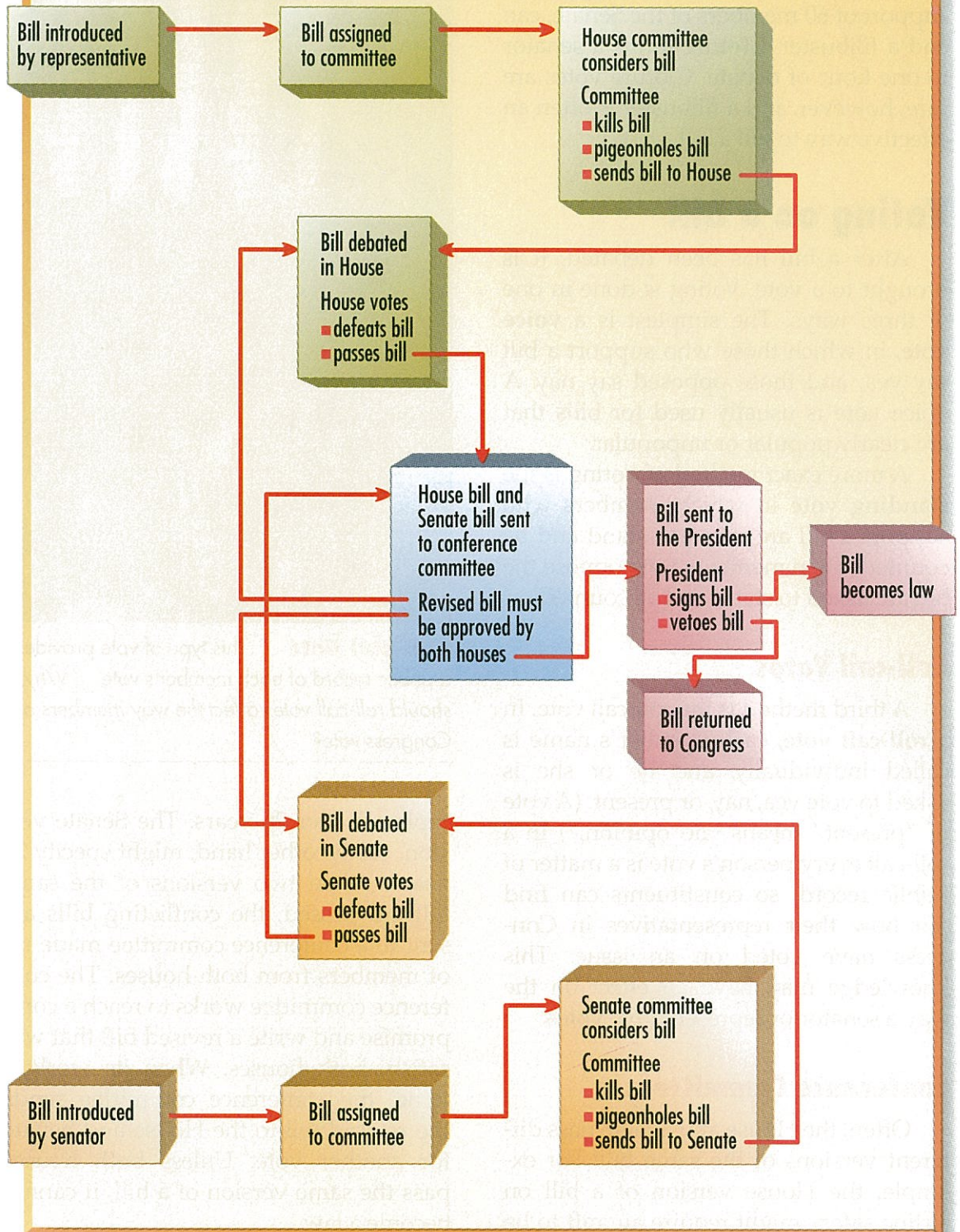
Roll-call Vote This type of vote provides a public record of each member's vote. *Why should roll-call votes affect the way members of Congress vote?*

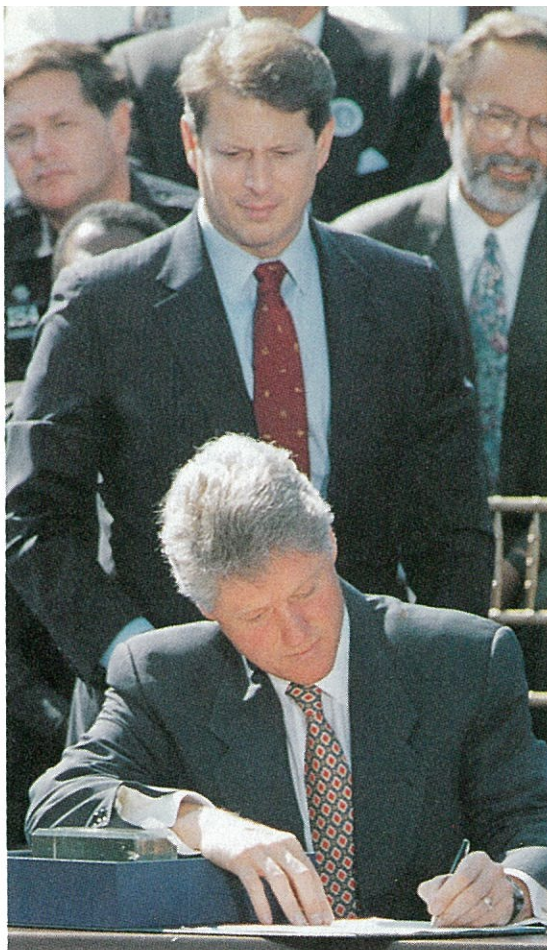
replaced after 20 years. The Senate version, on the other hand, might specify 25 years. When two versions of the same bill are passed, the conflicting bills are sent to a conference committee made up of members from both houses. The conference committee works to reach a compromise and write a revised bill that will satisfy both houses. When its work is done, the conference committee sends the revised bill to the House and Senate for another vote. Unless both houses pass the same version of a bill, it cannot become a law.



CHART STUDY

How a Bill Becomes a Law The process by which a bill becomes law is complex. *Who can introduce bills into Congress?*





Signing a Bill Into Law President Clinton signed the Crime Bill on September 13, 1994. *How can the President prevent a bill from becoming law?*

Signing or Vetoing a Bill

After both houses of Congress pass a bill, it is sent to the President. If the President approves of the bill and signs it, the bill becomes a law. The President, however, may also decide to veto the bill. Many bills survive months of work and debate in Congress only to be killed by a presidential veto.

A President may also choose to do nothing about a bill. If the President lets 10 days pass without signing a bill, and Congress is in session, the bill becomes a law without the President's signature. If

Congress is not in session, the bill is considered dead after the 10 days. Killing a bill in this way is called a **pocket veto**.

Presidents sometimes use the pocket veto for political reasons. The President may want to veto a particular bill but knows that the veto would be unpopular with the public. In that case, the President might prefer to let the bill die quietly.

If the President vetoes a bill, Congress has one last chance to save it. Congress can override the President's veto by a two-thirds vote in each house. Only the most popular bills can be rescued in this way, however. To keep a good relationship with the President, many members of Congress prefer not to challenge a veto—especially if the President is a member of their own party.

★ SECTION 4 REVIEW ★

UNDERSTANDING VOCABULARY

Define pigeonhole, filibuster, cloture, voice vote, standing vote, roll-call vote, pocket veto.

REVIEWING OBJECTIVES

- 1 What is the procedure for introducing a bill in Congress?
- 2 What are three actions a congressional committee can take when it receives a bill?
- 3 What are the rules for debating a bill in the House and in the Senate?
- 4 What are three methods of voting on a bill?
- 5 What are a President's options for signing or vetoing a bill?

Identifying Key Terms

Choose the vocabulary term that best completes each of the sentences below. Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

censure impeach appropriations
pigeonhole filibuster pocket veto

1. By not acting on the bill for 10 days, the President was using his _____.
2. The congressional committee members decided to _____ the bill when they set it aside without consideration.
3. Only rarely have the House and Senate used their power to _____ government officials and remove them from office.
4. Without a three-fifths vote, the Senate was unable to stop the senator's _____.
5. The senators voted to _____ their colleague for conduct unbecoming a senator.
6. All _____ bills, those involving the spending of money, must start in the House.

Reviewing the Main Ideas

SECTION 1

1. What qualifications does the Constitution require for United States representatives and senators?
2. What happens in the House of Representatives after the Census Bureau has counted the population?

SECTION 2

3. Describe the responsibilities of floor leaders and party whips.

4. Explain the difference between standing committees and select committees.

SECTION 3

5. Describe three special powers the Constitution grants to Congress.
6. Explain the difference between expressed and implied powers.

SECTION 4

7. How are bills introduced in the Senate and in the House of Representatives?
8. Identify three methods of voting on bills in Congress.

Critical Thinking

SECTION 1

1. **Analyzing Information** Why do you think the Constitution did not include other qualifications for members of Congress?

SECTION 2

2. **Evaluating Information** Do you think that government by committee makes the role of individual members of Congress less important? Why or why not?

SECTION 3

3. **Developing a Point of View** Do you think Congress has enough power to assume its responsibilities and accomplish its work? Explain.

SECTION 4

4. **Evaluating Information** Do you think the people should play a greater role in making the laws that govern them? Why or why not?

Reinforcing Citizenship Skills

Identify a state or national issue that is important to you. Find out the names of your United States representative and senators. Then compose a letter to one of them about the issue. Explain your opinion clearly and courteously. Be sure to use correct letter format.

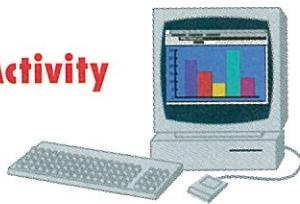
Cooperative Learning

With a group of five, select one of the congressional committees listed on page 220. Find out more about this committee and what bills it is currently studying. Choose one of these bills and make recommendations on whether the bill should be rejected, pigeonholed, or sent to Congress for consideration. Present your report to the class. Ask the class to role-play the part of Congress and vote on the issue.

Technology Activity

Using a Word Processor

Review your journal on your ideas about how you would deal with issues if you were a member of Congress. Then use a word processor to write a persuasive essay that describes your goals, explains your reasons, and encourages readers to vote for you when you run for election. Remember as you write your essay that a major responsibility of a member of Congress is to reflect the opinions of the voters.



Focusing on Your Community

Find out about an issue Congress debated during the last year that has had an impact on your community. Find out what your representative's and senators' stands were on this issue and how they voted on any related bills.

Analyzing Visuals

Until recently, most members of Congress were white males. Now things are beginning to change. Study the table below. Then answer the questions.

1. Which group has shown the largest increase in Congress?
2. In which year were the greatest increases seen?
3. Based on the information in this table, what do you think might happen in future elections?

Minority Representation in Congress

	1991	1993	1995	1997
Women	31	54	57	60
African Americans	26	40	40	38
Hispanic Americans	12	19	18	18
Native Americans	1	1	1	1
Asian Americans	7	9	8	5

Source: *Congressional Quarterly*.

The Presidency

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

The presidency is the nation's highest elected office. To carry out their responsibilities, Presidents rely on the offices and departments of the executive branch. Contact a federal information center to find out about the responsibilities of various divisions of the Executive Office of the President. Be sure to obtain addresses and phone

numbers. Find out what these offices can do to help citizens.

Working in Your Community

Use the information you obtain to prepare a brochure that lists the executive offices, outlines their roles, and provides addresses and phone numbers. Distribute this brochure in your neighborhood. ■

Your Civics Journal

During the next week, pay attention to the news to find what actions the President has taken on different issues. Write down your findings in your civics journal. Next to each entry, indicate your stand on the issue and whether or not you agree with the President's actions.