

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
AND POLITICS TODAY 2015-2016 EDITION



Chapter Eleven

The Congress

Learning Outcomes

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- 11.1 Describe the major powers of the Congress as granted by the U.S. Constitution.
- 11.2 Explain the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate with regard to their constituencies, terms of office, powers, and political processes.
- 11.3 Describe the processes of reapportionment and redistricting.
- 11.4 Discuss the importance of committees to the lawmaking process and to the ability of members of Congress to do their jobs.
- 11.5 Describe the leadership structure in each house of Congress, noting the differences between the House and the Senate.
- 11.6 Demonstrate how a bill becomes a law, and explain how the different processes in the House and the Senate influence legislating.
- 11.7 Explain how the federal budget is constructed and the legislative process for approving the budget.

The Functions of Congress

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- Homestyle and Hillstyle
- The Lawmaking Function
 - Logrolling
- The Representation Function
 - The Trustee View of Representation
 - The Instructed-Delegate View of Representation

The Functions of Congress

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ZUMA Press, Inc./Alamy

Congresswoman Janet Hahn visit one of her constituents, the proprietor of a small business, in her California district. This visit helps build Representative Hahn's homestyle.

The Functions of Congress

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- Service to Constituents
 - Casework
- The Oversight Function
- The Public-Education Function
- The Conflict-Resolution Function

The Powers of Congress

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- Enumerated Powers
 - Powers of the Senate
 - Constitutional Amendments
- The Necessary and Proper Clause
 - Article I, Section 8
- Checks on Congress

House-Senate Differences

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- Size and Rules
- Debate and Filibustering
- Prestige

Differences between the House and the Senate

HOUSE*	SENATE*
Constitutional Differences	
Members chosen from local districts	Members chosen from an entire state
Two-year term	Six-year term
Originally elected by voters	Originally (until 1913) elected by state legislatures
May impeach (indict) federal officials	May convict federal officials of impeachable offenses
Process and Culture	
Larger (435 voting members)	Smaller (100 members)
More formal rules	Fewer rules and restrictions
Debate limited	Debate extended
Less prestige and less individual notice	More prestige and more media attention
More partisan	More individualistic
Specific Powers	
Originates bills for raising revenues	Has power to advise the president on, and to consent to, presidential appointments and treaties

Congresspersons and the Citizenry: A Comparison

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- Age
- Race
- Previous Occupation
- Wealth
- Diversity

Characteristics of the 113th Congress, 2013–2015

	U.S. POPULATION, 2014	HOUSE	SENATE
Age (average)	36.8	57	62
Percent minority	28%	18%	4%
Religion			
Percent church members	60%	93%	92%
Percent Catholic	25.1%	31%	24%
Percent Protestant	51.3%	56%	55%
Percent Jewish	1.2%	7.3%	13%
Percent female	50.9%	17.5%	17%
Lawyers	0.4%	23.9%	37%
Blue-collar occupations	30%	1.6%	3%
Military veteran	7.6%	21.4%	28.9%
Percent households earning more than \$50,000	42%	100%	100%
Assets more than \$1 million	1%	42%	66%

Congressional Elections

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- Candidates for Congressional Elections
 - Congressional Campaigns and Elections
 - Presidential Effects
- The Power of Incumbency
- Party Control of Congress after the 2014 Elections

Congressional Apportionment

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- Apportionment
 - Reapportionment and redistricting
- Gerrymandering
- Redistricting after the 2010 Census

The Original Gerrymander

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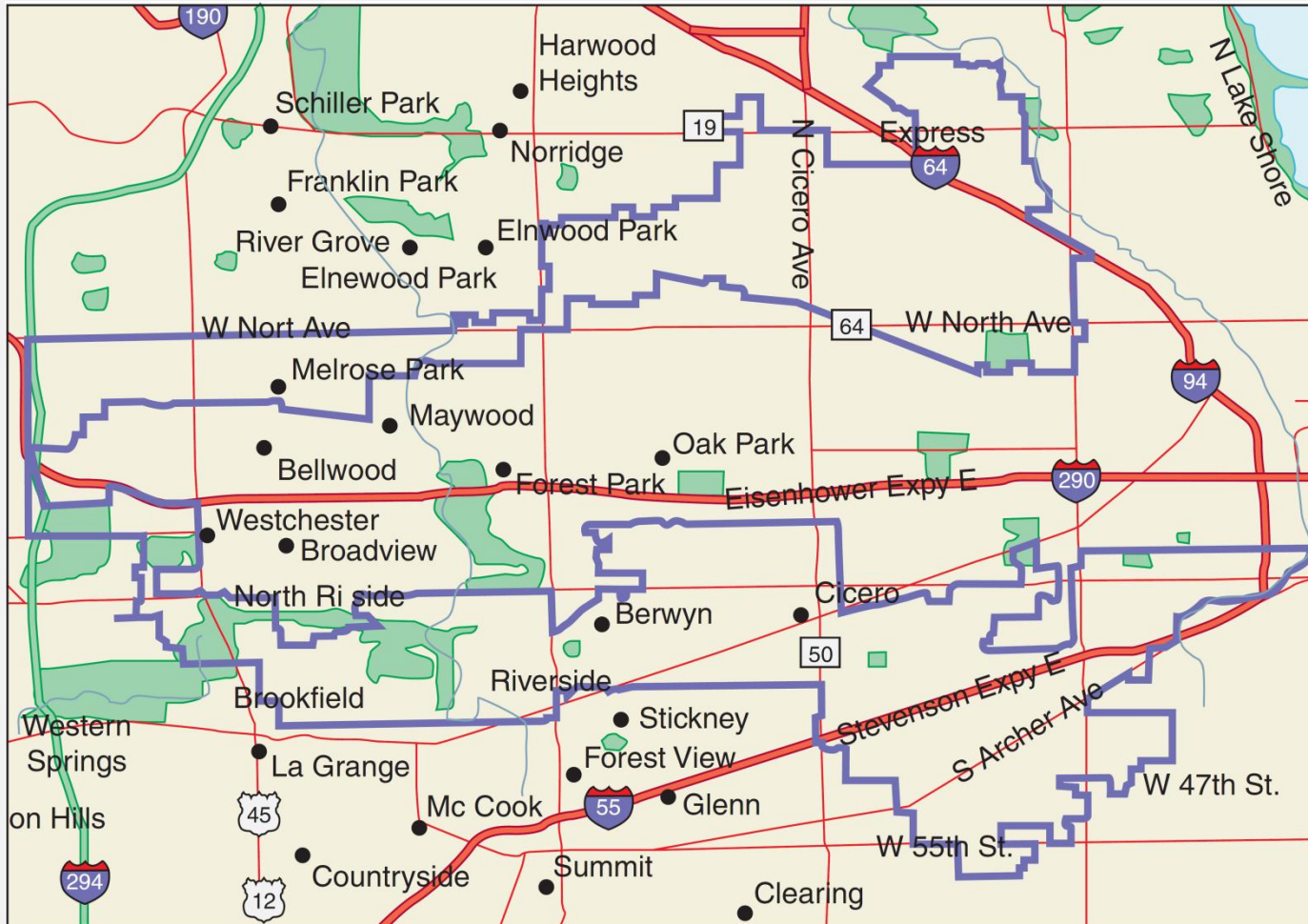
Source: Bettmann/CORBIS

Congressional Apportionment

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- “Minority-Majority” Districts
- Constitutional Challenges
- Changing Directions

The Fourth Congressional District of Illinois



Perks and Privileges

- Permanent Professional Staffs
 - More than 30,000 people
- Privileges and Immunities under the Law
- Congressional Caucuses: Another Source of Support
 - Party caucuses most important

Congressional Caucuses

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Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call/Getty Images

The Committee Structure

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- The Power of Committees
 - “Little legislatures”
 - Discharge petition

The Committee Structure

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- Types of Congressional Committees
 - Standing Committees
 - Select Committees
 - Joint Committees
 - Conference Committees
 - The House Rules Committee
- The Selection of Committee Members
 - Seniority system

The Formal Leadership

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Leadership in the House

- **The Speaker**
- Majority Leader
- Minority Leader
- Whips

Leadership in the Senate

- President pro tempore
- **Majority Leader**
- **Minority Leader**
- Whips

How Members of Congress Decide

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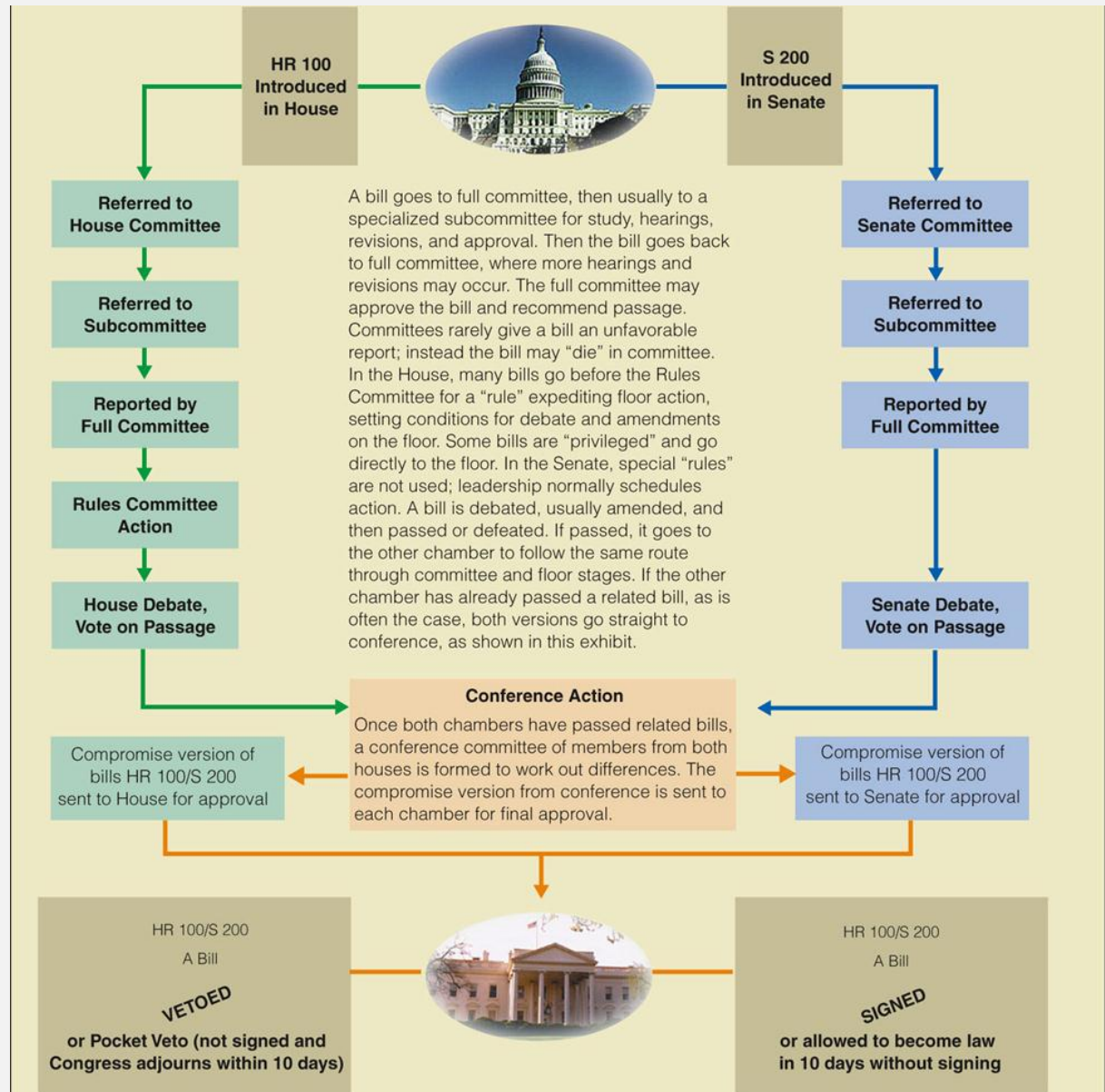
- The Conservative Coalition
 - Blue Dog Democrats
- Polarization and Gridlock
 - Divided government
- “Crossing Over”

How Members of Congress Decide

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- Logrolling, Earmarks, and “Pork”
- How a Bill Becomes Law
 - Money bills must be introduced in House
 - Similar steps in each chamber

How a Bill Becomes A Law



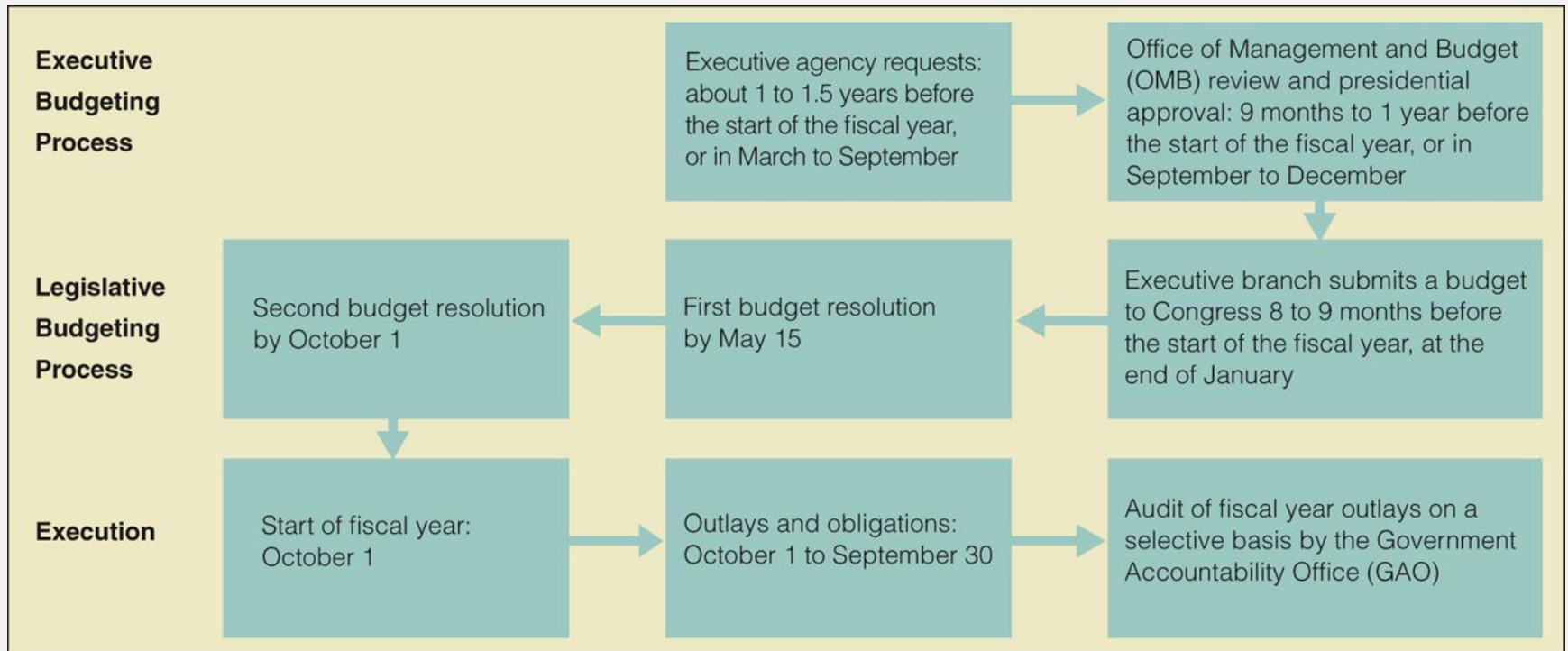
A compromise bill approved by both houses is sent to the president, who can sign it into law or veto it and return it to Congress. Congress may override a veto by a two-thirds majority vote in both houses; the bill then becomes law without the president's signature.

How Much Will the Government Spend?

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- Preparing the Budget
 - Fiscal year cycle
 - Spring review
 - Fall review
- Congress Faces the Budget
 - Authorization and appropriations
- Budget Resolutions

The Budget Cycle



Office of Management and Budget

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How important is it that U.S. citizens are aware of where to find the federal budget and other federal documents for reference?

Congress and Budget Deficit



Click picture to view video



Video Discussion Questions

1. Is the congressional budget process any smoother today than as shown in this news story? Why or why not?
2. Why is the budget process so partisan? What happens when there is no agreement?
3. Estimate the current federal budget deficit. How might this affect you?