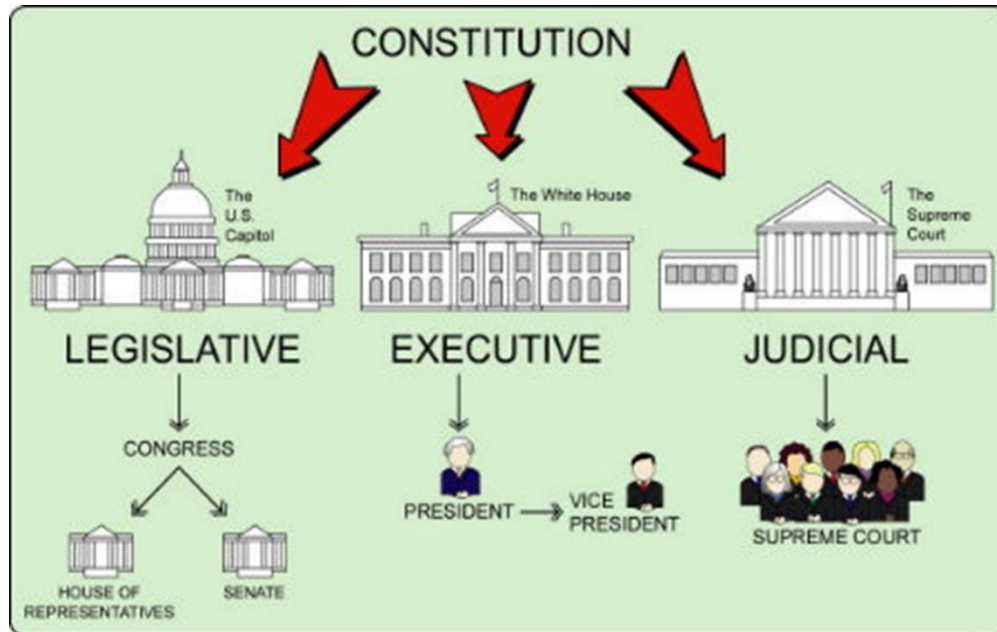


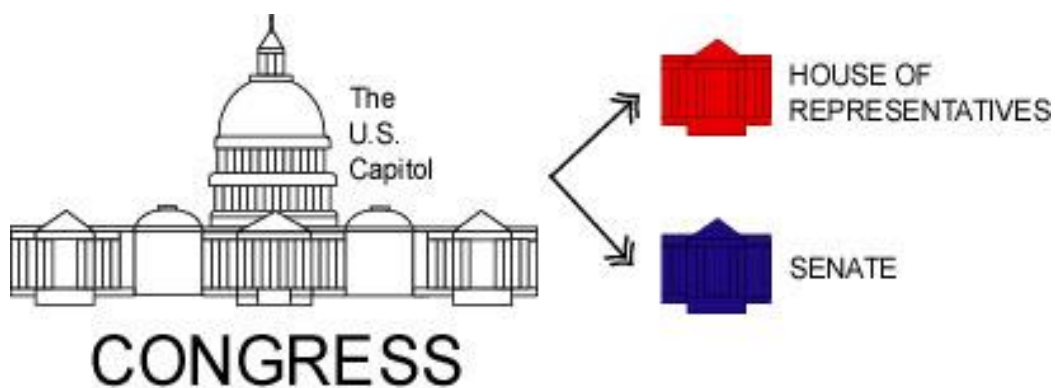
Legislative Branch

OBJECTIVES

- Outline the qualifications to be a member of the House of Representatives or the Senate.
- Compare and contrast the duties and responsibilities of senators and representatives.



- Congress is the **legislative**, or lawmaking, branch of the National Government
- Made up of 2 houses:
 The Senate and the House of Representatives
- Congress makes laws
- Laws can spell out **national policy**: a plan of action designed to achieve a certain goal



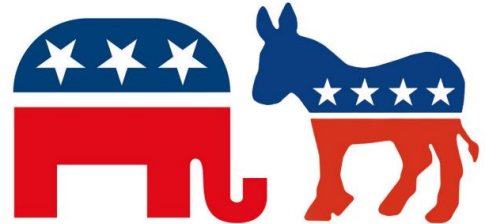
Local vs. National Needs

- Each member of Congress represents a group of citizens much smaller than the nation
- **Constituents:** the people a Congressman represents
 - Constituents expect Senators and Representatives to listen to their ideas about problems and issues and to be their voice in Congress
 - Responsibility to the whole nation
- Congress makes laws that affect the whole nation

Example: wheat growing region, law may please local wheat farmers, but anger nation...raises bread prices

Political Parties

- Member of Congress has responsibility to his/her political party
- **Political party:** an organization of people who share certain ideas about what government should do
- Most today belong to Republican Party or Democrat Party
- Party works to get candidate elected
 - In turn, the Congressman works to support the positions of the Party on a particular issue



Interest Groups

- Election or re-election campaigns
- Congressmen need to gain support and raise money for campaigns
- Help often comes from **interest groups:** groups of people who work together for similar interests or goals
- Interest groups can supply both votes and money
 - Examples: National Rifle Association, American Farm Bureau, American Medical Association



Interest Groups

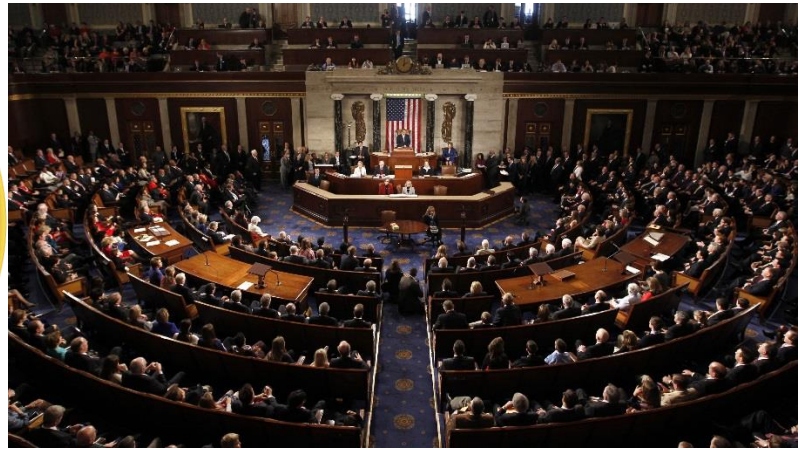
- Often work to convince senators and representatives to support bills that help its members and to oppose bills that hurt them
- **Lobbyists:** people who represent interest groups
- Congressmen often supports the goals of a particular interest group
 - In return, that group encourages its members to vote for him or her in the next election

Members of Congress at Work

- Congressmen try to be on the floor of the House or Senate Chambers as much as possible
- What do they do on the floor?
Give speeches, listen to speeches, vote on bills
- What else do they do?
Meet with fellow Congressmen, with lobbyists, and with constituents
Prepare bills, study reports, read letters from constituents, meet with committees

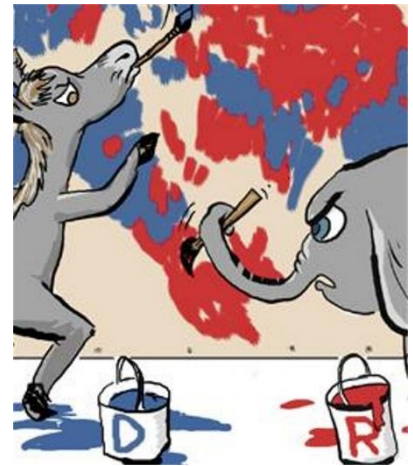
Congressional Staff

- Members of congress rely heavily on their personal staff
 - Administrative assistants run a member's offices in his/her home state and in Washington D.C.
 - Legislative assistants study bills
 - **Caseworkers** handle requests from constituents



House of Representatives

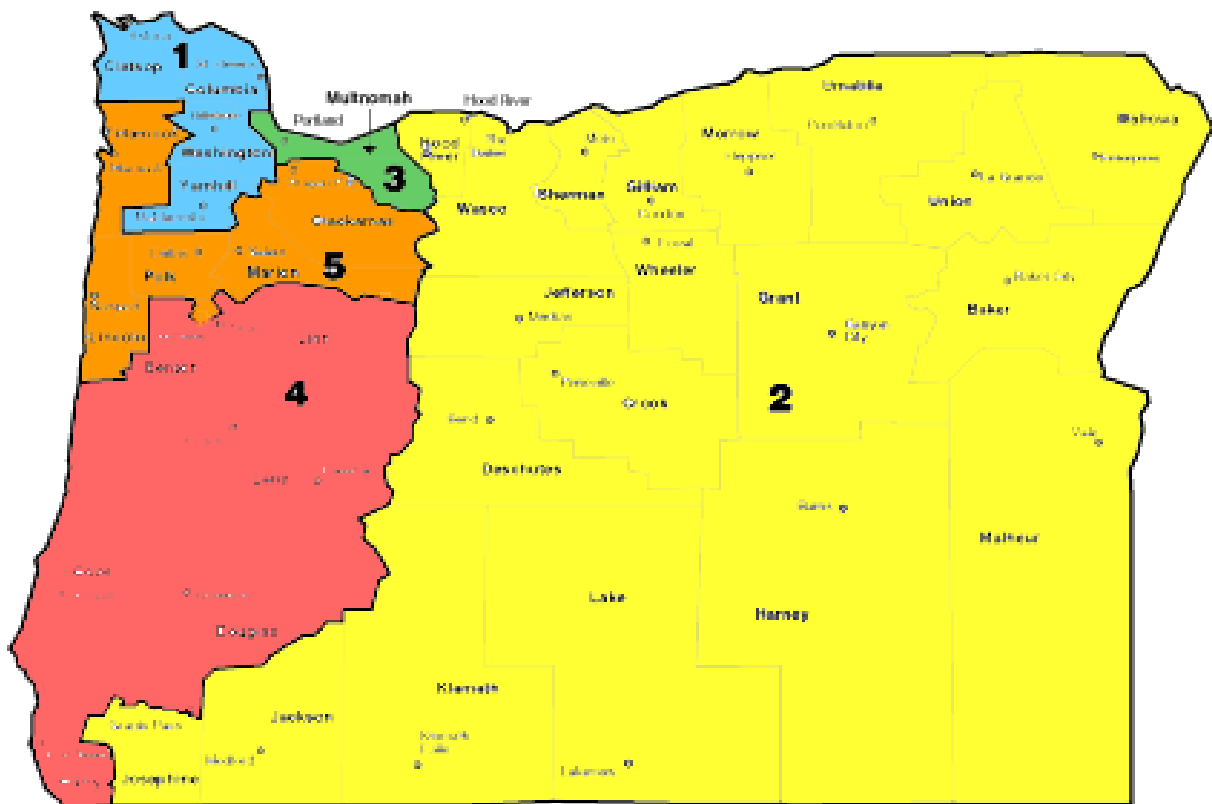
- **Apportionment:**
 - Representation is based on state's population
 - Census taken every 10 years to determine population
- **Redistricting:** When population shifts, so does the representation
- **Gerrymandering:** Redistricting by the majority party to gain an advantage
 - Congress gives each state a fair portion of the 435 seats in the House of Reps
- All 435 members run for re-election every 2 years
- 90% of **incumbents** are re-elected



Representatives

- An area that a member of the House represents is called a **congressional district**
- State divided into **congressional districts**
- By law, cong. districts have the same number of people
 - Average district today contains 647,000 people
- The drawing of **congressional districts** can often lead to major disagreements
 - Why? Some districts can be created to favor one party over another...if one party controls a state gov't, it can draw up boundaries to favor one party

Oregon's Five Districts



Representatives

- Term of Office:
 - Reps serve for two years
 - All 435 reps end their terms of office on January 3rd
 - Every two years they must run for re-election or retire
- Requirements:
 - At least 25 years old
 - Citizen of the United States for 7 years
 - Legal resident of the state you represent



Senators

- Each state is represented by two senators
- Senators pay attention to the state as a whole, rather than districts
- Terms of Office:
 - Elected for terms of six years
 - One third of the senators are elected every two years
 - Terms of senators overlap
 - Why? The framers thought that making longer, overlapping terms would make senators less sensitive to the shifting moods of the people than representatives

Senators

- Requirements:
 1. At least 30 years old
 2. Citizen of the United States for 9 years
 3. Legal resident of the state you represent
- Term of Office:
 - Six year term
 - Every two years 1/3 of the Senators come up for re-election

Requirements, Salary, Benefits

- Senators and representatives must live in the states in which they are elected
- Reps must be at least 25 years old
- Senators must be at least 30 years old
- Rep must have been a U.S. citizen for at least 7 years
- Sen must have been a U.S. citizen for at least 9 years

Requirements, Salary, Benefits

- Members of Congress receive an annual salary of \$162,100 a year

Benefits:

- Members have 2 offices: one in D.C. another in home state
- Congressmen are given allowances for:

...running both offices and paying staff salaries

...traveling home to meet with constituents

- Congressmen get free postal service to send mail to constituents

Protections:

- The members are free from arrest except in cases of treason or felony convictions

OBJECTIVES

Outline the qualifications to be a member of the House of Representatives or the Senate.

Compare and contrast the duties and responsibilities of senators and representatives.

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Powers of Congress

- These powers are known as delegated powers
- Each power reflects one or more of the goals stated in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

To form a more perfect union

Establish justice

Insure domestic tranquility

Provide for the common defense

Promote the general welfare

Secure the blessings of liberty



Promoting the General Welfare

- *General welfare* refers to the needs of all the people of a nation
- Congress promotes the general welfare by making laws that help people to live better
 - Most deal with powers to regulate commerce, or business, with foreign nations and between states
 - Setting up agencies to regulate various things
 - Congress also has the power to collect taxes and to borrow money
 - Any bill having to do with money has to begin in House of Reps

Promoting the General Welfare

- Congress also has the power to decide how the money it collects will be spent
- Education, space programs, medical research, law enforcement, etc...
- Congress has final approval of the government's budget
- *Budget*: plan for raising and spending money
 - Congress acts as a check to the Executive Branch
- President can do very little unless Congress provides the money



Providing for Defense

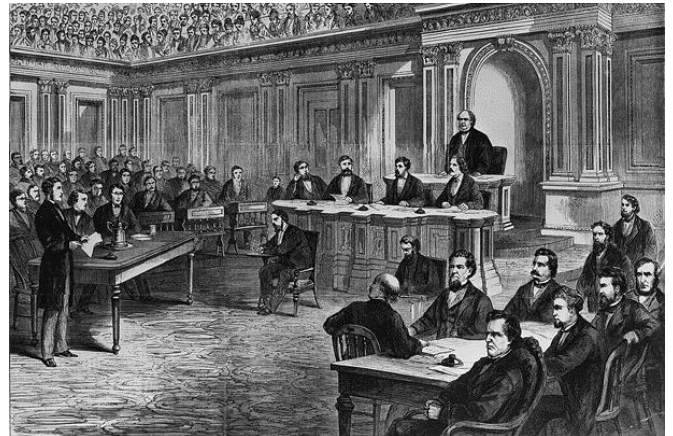
- Congress has the power to establish and maintain an army and navy to defend the nation
- Congress has sole power to declare war

Establishing Justice

- Congress has the power to create federal courts below the level of the Supreme Court
- Appointments to these courts and to the Supreme Court must be approved by the Senate
- Congress has the power to impeach an official, such as a President

Impeach: to accuse

- Only the House can impeach
- The Senate has the power to put the impeached official on trial
- If found guilty, the official is removed from office



Unlisted Powers

- *Elastic clause*: clause in the U.S. Constitution which allows Congress to make all laws that are "necessary and proper"
 - Gives Congress room to stretch its powers
 - Makes gov't flexible enough to carry out it's work and change with the times

Nonlegislative Powers

- Power to impeach
- Power to approve treaties
- Power to approve appointment of federal judges
- Power to propose amendments to the Constitution
- Conduct investigations

Limits on Powers of Congress

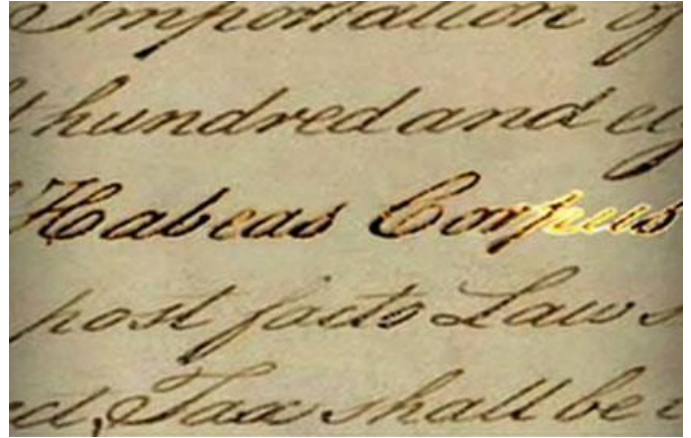
- Checks and Balances

Executive branch can veto proposed laws

Judicial branch can declare laws unconstitutional

Limits on Powers of Congress

- If you are held in jail without a charge, you can submit a writ of *habeas corpus*
- Orders the police to bring you to court
- Court then decides if the police have enough evidence to keep you in jail. If not, you must be released.
- Constitution says that Congress cannot take away right to *habeas corpus* unless in times of invasion or civil war
- *Bill of attainder*: a law that convicts a person of a crime without a trial
 - Congress cannot pass a bill of attainder
- *Ex post facto* laws are illegal



Leadership in Congress

- House of Representatives must choose a presiding officer called the *Speaker of the House*
- Vice President of the United States is to serve as the presiding officer, or president, of the Senate

President pro tempore is chosen to preside over the Senate when Vice President is absent

- *Majority Party* – party with the most members in House or Senate

Majority party chooses *Speaker of the House* and *President Pro Tem*

- *Minority Party* – party with the least members in House of Senate



Leadership in Congress

- *Speaker of the House*
 - Most powerful member of the house
 - Presides over sessions, decides the order of business and who may speak
 - Appoints members of committees and refers bills to committees
 - Great influence over which bills pass or fail in the House

Leadership in Congress

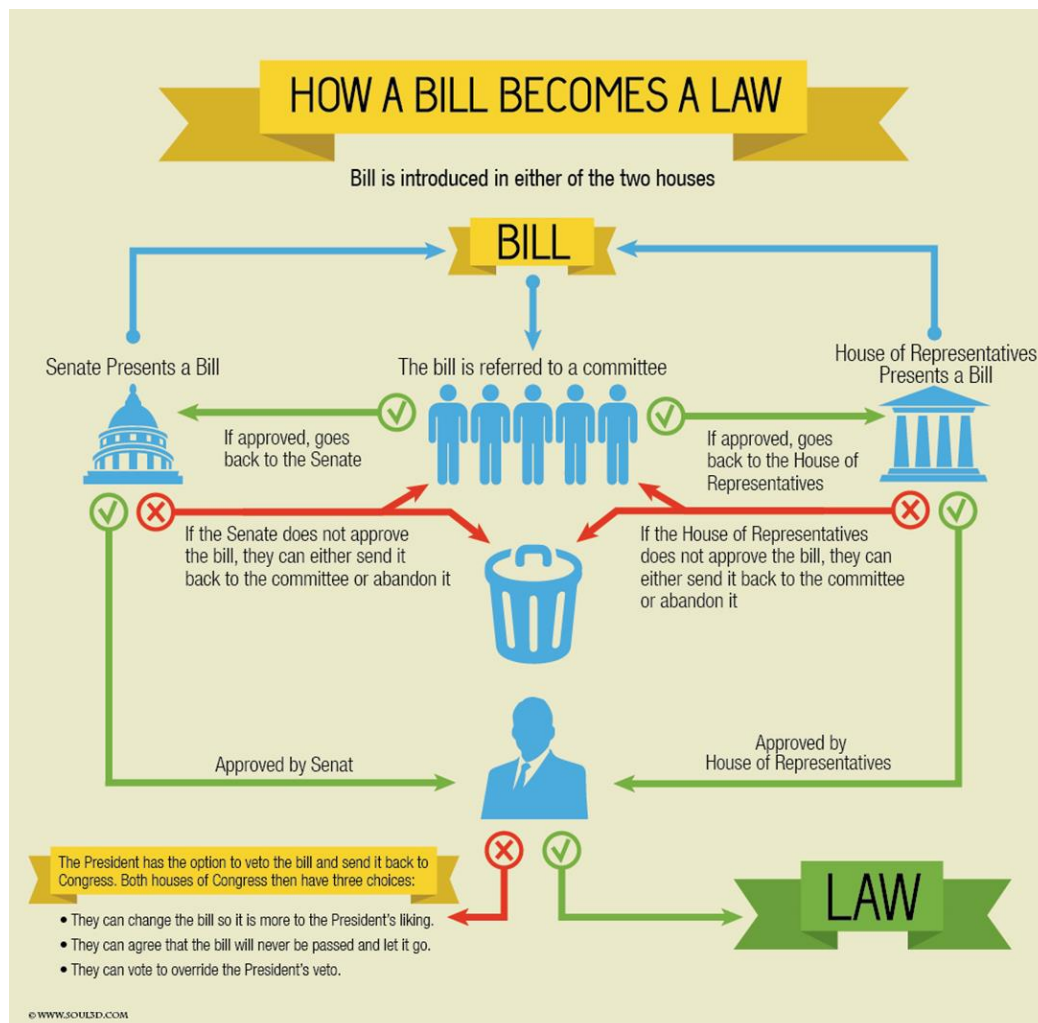
- *President of the Senate*
 - Presiding officer of the Senate
 - In charge of sessions
 - Cannot take part in debates
 - Can vote only in case of a tie



Leadership in Congress

- *Floor Leaders*
 - Chief officers of the majority or minority parties in each house
 - Responsible for guiding bills through Congress
 - Floor leaders work closely with committee leaders and party members to persuade them to accept compromises or trade-offs in order to win votes on bills
- Assistant floor leaders are called *whips*.
 - Whips try to persuade members to support the party's position on key issues

How a Bill Becomes a Law



How a Bill Becomes a Law

