

The Legislative Branch

Legislative Branch Review

1. *Function:*
Make the Laws

2. *Congressional Joint Powers*

3. Levy and collect taxes
- A. Raise and maintain military
 - B. Grant statehood
 - C. Control national lands
 - D. Regulate interstate trade
 - E. Naturalize citizens
 - F. Declare war
 - G. Control making of currency

Legislative Branch Review

3. Members

A. Senate

1. Qualifications

- a. 30 Years Old
- b. American citizen for 9 years
- c. Resident of state elected

2. Method of Selection - Election by the people

3. Term of office - 6 years

4. Members per state - 2

5. Powers reserved for Senate only

- a. Confirm Presidential appointments
- b. Approve/reject treaties
- c. Jury for impeachment trial

Legislative Branch Review

B. House of Representatives

1. Qualifications

- A. 25 years old
- B. U.S. Citizen for 7 years
- C. Resident of state elected

2. Method of Selection - Election by the people

3. Term of Office - 2 years

4. Members per State - Based on population – 435 total

5. Powers reserved for the House only

- A. Originates money bills (taxes)
- B. Begins impeachment process
- C. Elects President if Electoral College fails to do so

Voting Options



- Trustees- each decision is made on its merits. Judge independently.
- Delegates- vote the way “the folks back home” would want.
- Partisans- vote with your party
- Politicos- balance of the above

The U.S. Congress in Brief

- Bicameral
- Senate
 - 100 members
 - Six years
 - More prestigious
- House
 - 435
 - 2 years
 - Reapportioned after each census



Congressional Duties

- 1. Legislatures
- 2. Committee members
- 3. Representatives of their constituents
- 4. Politicians



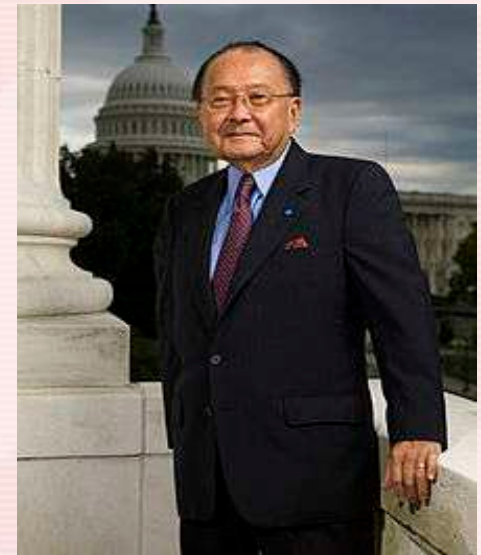
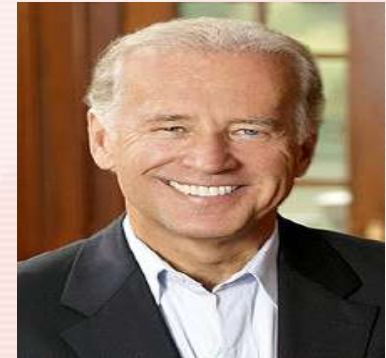
Officers of the Legislative Branch

- **Speaker of the House**
 - **Currently: John Boehner of Ohio**
 - **Presiding officer of the House**
 - **Job: acknowledges speakers, signs bills, appoints committees, calls a vote.**



Officers of the Legislative Branch

- President of the Senate-
 - V.P.
 - Less power
 - Presiding officer but may not speak or debate
- President pro tempore
 - Resides in V.P.'s absence
 - Elected by the Senate
 - Majority Party
 - Currently: Ted Stevens



Officers of the Legislative Branch

- Floor leaders:
 - majority and minority in the House and Senate
 - Legislative strategists
- Committee Chairmen
 - Heads of standing committees
 - Chosen by majority
 - Usually by seniority rule

Committees in Congress

- Standing committee: permanent groups which all similar bills could be sent. (Ex. Budget committee)
- Select committee- a special group set up for a specific purpose for a limited time. (ex. Senate Watergate Committee)
- Joint Committees- members from both houses.

Committees in Congress

- Informal groupings- Black caucus, democratic study group, House Republican study group, pro-Life caucus, etc.
- Conference Committee- temporary joint body to iron out different versions of a measure

How does a Bill become a law?

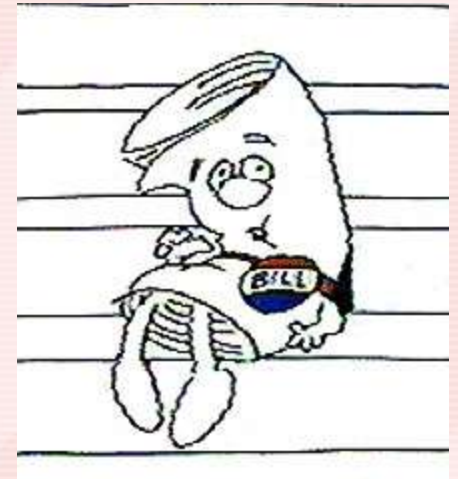
- Bills- proposed laws, or drafts of laws presented to the House or Senate for enactment.
- Two types:
 - Public- measure applying to the nation as a whole- (tax bills)
 - Private-only apply to certain persons or places rather than to the nation generally.

How does a Bill become a law?

- Only members may introduce bills to the house.
- The clerk of the house numbers each bill and gives it a short title
- The bill is referred to a standing committee, where most bills die.
- Discharge petition: enables members to force a bill that has been in committee 30 days.

How does a Bill become a law?

- Subcommittees: divisions of existing committees, holds public hearings or may take a junket, or trip to an area affected by a measure.
- Committee's choices
 - "do pass"
 - Pigeonhole: refuse to report
 - Support with unfavorable recommendation.
 - Report a committee bill



How does a Bill become a law?

- The House Debates the bill
- The House votes on the bill
 - Amendments can be added during this time.
 - Voting is now electronic
- Same process in the Senate
- If versions are the same it goes to the president.
- If versions are different it goes to a conference committee.

- Filibuster: an attempt to “talk a bill to death.” in the senate.
- Record: Senator Strom Thurmond: held the floor for 24 hours in an attempt to kill the Civil Rights Act of 1957.

