**Chapter 5:**

**Congress ~ the Legislative Branch Notes**

**5.1 Congress**

* Essential idea
  + The voters elect members of Congress to represent them and to enact laws in their name. Congress plays a vital role in our government’s system of checks and balances.

Congress & the People

* “We the people” -> republic -> Congress
* Members of Congress must:
  + ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Keep in mind the needs of the country as a whole

Structure & Sessions

* ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + 2 houses: House of Rep & Senate
* Each term of Congress lasts 2 yrs
  + Each term divided into 2 sessions: 1 yr sessions with breaks/vacation
  + House & Senate
* House
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ members/seats
  + # of seats for states based on population (apportionment)
  + ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Senate
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ members/seats
  + 17th amendment allowed for direct election of senators
  + 6 year term

Checks & Balances

* Congress has important checks on the executive and judicial branch
  + Power of the­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - appropriate
  + Power of ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    - Treaties and presidential nominations
  + ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ power
  + ­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ power
  + Veto override
  + Oversight

**5.3 House of Representatives**

* Essential idea: The House, with its frequent elections and regular apportionment, is the more representative chamber of Congress. Its members carry out much of their work in committees

Membership of the House

* 435 members
* Membership based on population
* Qualifications
* ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Term of office
  + Nov. election of even # yrs
  + All members run for election every 2 yrs (90% reelection rate!)

Representation & Reapportionment in the House

* ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: population count every 10 yrs
* Pop determines new # of representatives each state is entitled: ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Limit 435, census determines how it is divided
* 320 million Americans = approx 735,000 people/representative

Congressional Redistricting

* [Redistricting](https://www.census.gov/mycd/): process of setting up new district lines after reappportionment
  + Done by state legislatures
  + 1 district per representative
* Often legislatures abuse power
  + [Gerrymandering](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcUDBgYodIE)
    - Political party that controls the st govt draws district boundaries to gain an advantage in elections
      * Irregular shapes, cracking, packing

One Person, One Vote

* Supreme Court has placed restrictions on gerrymandering in last 50 yrs
* ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_­­­
  + Congressional districts must within a state must have roughly equal population
* ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Gerrymandering that causes actual harm to a political party may violate the constitutional guarantee of equal protection of the law

Leadership in the House

* ­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Presiding officer of the House, most powerful
  + Majority party chooses at start of each session
  + Constitution silent on powers
  + Presides over floor debate, assigns bills to committee, assigns members to committees, 3rd in line of prez succession
* Majority leader
  + Speakers assistant
  + Floor leader of their party
  + Elected by majority party
* Whips
  + assistants to floor leaders
* Minority party also elects leaders & whips
* Party caucus is a mtg of all House members of a particular party

Purpose of Committees

* H of R & Senate depend on committees to consider bills to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* [Crash Course Committees](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evLR90Dx79M)
* Committees…
  + Allow members of Cong to divide their work among small grps
  + Sift thru bills from further consideration
  + Hold public hearings & investigations to help educate public

Types of Committees

* ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Permanent groups to oversee bills that deal with certain issues
* Subcommittees
  + Specialize in a subcategory of its standing comm. responsibility
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Temporary comm. That studies one specific issue and report findings to Senate/House
* Joint
  + Coordinates work of both houses
* Conference
  + Set up when houses have passed different versions of the same bill

House Committees

* 20 standing committees (pg 142)
  + Usually 4 subcommittees each
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + All tax legislation must start in the House
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Serves as traffic officer in house to direct flow of major legislation
  + After bills go to committee they go to Rules
  + Will either be moved ahead quickly or held back

Choosing Committee Members

* Assignments to Committees
  + PP in House & Senate assign members to standing committees
* Committee Chairperson’s Role
  + Most powerful members of Congress along with party leaders
  + Make key decisions about work of committees
  + Seniority system guides chairperson selection
    - Member of majority party with longest uninterrupted service gets to be chairperson

**5.4 The Senate**

* Essential idea: Senators represent entire states, have longer terms, and follow different rules of debate. These features help give the Senate its reputation as a more weighty and careful body than the House

Membership in the Senate

* 2 senators, 2 for each state, 100 members
* Qualification
* ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Term
  + Elections in Nov of even yrs
  + 6 year terms, 1/3 of Senators run for election every 2 yrs

Senate Leadership

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is president of Senate
  + Can’t debate, casts tie vote
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Presides in absence of VP
  + Senate elects, usually majority party/senior measure
* Majority leaders
  + Elected by parties
  + Steer party bills, plan schedule
* Minority leader
  + Develop criticism
* Majority/minority whips

Committees in the Senate

* 16 standing committees (pg 146)
* Dozens of subcommittees
* Committee chairs determined by seniority rule

Rules and Traditions in the Senate

* Discipline
* Vacancies
* [Filibuster](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3fSV8Ky77c)
  + Unlimited debate on Senate floor
  + One way for senators can defeat bill is to filibuster against it
  + Filibuster: ­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Can be stopped by cloture: 3/5 of Senate votes to limit each senator to 1 hr
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8urcMLGFyU>