

Chapter 7 Congress

Pres party usually loses seats in mid-term elections

mechanics of cong power and context of leg d.m.

U.S. Cong is worlds longest running and most powerful leg
Capital- symbol of Am. Dem.

Public view of Cong: see it as incompetent, corrupt, divided by party, subject to special interests

yet usually we respect reps & sent.
yet we reelect them over and over

how explain: citizens have conflicting goals when comes to operations of cong

- 1) want reps in DC take care of their home interest in nat leg
- 2) want cong to take care of nat.'s business
- 3) rules of how cong works made by founder to be slow actions

Cong: Reps vs. Lawmaking

cong performs two major functions:

- 1) reps and lawmaking
local
- 2) nation interest
love local reps; think cong does bad job

4 Kinds of Reps:

- 1) work for constituency
- 2) policy reps- econ and soc interest of nat
- 3) allocative- get projects, grants for our district (bring bacon home)
- 4) case works- case for individual problems
constituency service, soc sec check, vets benefits, etc.

franking- postal service

4 symbolic reps, home, style, commencement, speaker

- I. NAT Lawmaking
check laws that serve the 'common good'

rep. and lawmaking
local interest = reelection

Cong power and resps.

local v. national po v. long
term nat, interest

Cong's power- in Art I sec 8 Const
tax, defense, welfare, etc

Difference H v. S =
109 Cong
bicameral- restrain each other
S- cool passion of H
tax bills originate in H
both pass and pres sign

Johnson and Clinton impeached by H but not convicted by S

S-confirms exec. appointments exec. and jud.
-shares treaty making

Cong- C&B
cong regulates commerce, raise \$ and spend \$, ads, declare war, ratify treaties,
support mil

Cong & Pres
Pres policy making "state of union" message, recommend measures to him
1998- 10% of judges seats empty

Cong & Courts
relation simple
cong makes laws
courts interpret them

Elections
rules for cong
win support of voters
H-2 yrs S-6 yrs
leg life spent running for reelection

how rules work?
cong dist = great compromise of 1787
each st = 2 senators
reps in house based on population
(435)
still actual count to reflect reps in H

way dist drawn- malapportionment
some more reps, others less
1964 SC = reps "one person one vote" principle

redistricting = pol process to make dist =

drawing lines affect who wins

Gerrymandering- draw lines to benefit one group vs. another

Racial gerrymandering- lines favor or disadvantage ethnic or racial group

1982- Voting Rights Act- dist lines max.

likely food of AA elected to Cong

NC 1st and 12th dist

AA- in congress in 1992- 2 members

SC- says race can't be predominant factor in drawing Cong lines

race is a suspect classification-

needs "strict scrutiny"

1996- SC rules gerrymandering as unconst. – race is 1st factor

race- (limited factor)

Run for Cong- 1) age and citizenship

2) res of state running from

why want job- serve the community

- 1) DC life is exciting and powerful
- 2) travel allowances, life insurance and health insurance
- 3) free mail/internet
- 4) videotaping
- 5) trips home
- 6) title honorable so and so

vs

- 1) work is awful hard and no job security
- 2) need 2 homes – distand DC
- 3) today say – job not fun anymore

How win?

- 1) strong commitment to public service, believe in it
- 2) experience
- 3) elective office, sports star, movie star

strategic politician – run at rt time

- 1) rt. dist., rt. state
- 2) incumbency advantage
 - a. incumbent already on seat
 - b. incumbent from other party in seat 94% win
 - c. open seat
- 3) do I have adequate funds
- 4) nat. tides running coat tail effect
- 5) mid-term election, out party wins seats 1998

Reps Body

House = People House, body

Senate = more elite inst. balance popular will

- 1) descriptive reps
legs mirror demographics of those they rep – Philly-aristocracy
- 2) occupations
cong- lawyers and businesspeople
Rep-from Bus & Banking, Banking
Dem- public service careers
- 3) ed- 2/3 have graduate degrees, some millionaires
- 4) race and gender- male white instit.

1991- year of the woman- Cong

Citizens want Cong to take care of local affairs

How Cong Works

Cong main job is lawmaking

not const service, or reelections

Pol Parties central to Cong

1st Cong org along party lines

maj party- decides the rules

Speaker of House

Maj Leader of Senate

chairs of committees and subs

party is mechanism for members advancement

Leadership

maj and min in each house elect their own leaders Congs power is decentralized

Leaders Structure

house speaker

majority leaders

minority leaders

whips

Senate

VP

Pres Pro Tempo

*Leaders

minority party

whips
Leadership
Sr sys – power based on length of service in office

1994- Rep Newt Gingrich R Ga
Speaker
Cons Agenda – “Contract With Am”
1998- reversable of midterm
election he resigns
Dennis Hastert replaced Newt
Dem win 2006 make Nancy Pelosi = Speaker

Work of leg- divided up among subject committees
12,000 bills
each session {
100,000 nominations

comm.. not mentioned in Const.
sr = expertise and specialization in policy areas

what comm. do?
leg is worked out
consider alternatives
draft legs
inform gatherers

- 1) Leg oversight
see that exec agencies are carrying out laws as Cong intended

Leg Reorg Act 1946
Leg Reorg Act 1970 usually a scandal involved

4 Types of Comm:

- H-19 1) standing – policy area, members-fairly stable
- S-16 2) 2 Houses stand comm. roughly parallel
- 3) House Rules- provides a rule for each bill- when it debated, how long, how amended, etc.
- 4) select com- not normal policy area- White Water
- 5) joint comm.- members of both chambers

bill must pass H&S in exact form, if not get "Conference Comm" to resolve differences
member chosen by leadership, grown rapidly recently

Get on rt. Comm:

- 3 goals of members?
 - 1) reelection
 - 2) lawmaking
 - 3) influence in cong

*get these three by comm. membership

Commerce, For Aff

tax- senate finance

house ways & means

influence in Cong = House Rules Comm

traffic cop in house

Senate Comm- App, Around Service, Finance, For Relat.

Comm Chairs

today chairs serve at pleasure of party caucuses and party leaders, suppose to serve average member

Cong Resources

need expertise and information

Cong Bur.

over 26,000 employees

it largest leg staff in world

Cong Staff:

sec

computer people

clerks

pros

work for individual members and committees

H = 18 workers each

S = 36 workers each

do leg work or constituency com staff H- 2,200 S- 1,200

fixing ideas

each party own staff or comm.

Cong Bureaucracy

experts and tech assist. not tied to parties

CRS

GAO
CBO

external environment affect cong sys
the pres proposes and cong disposes

Context of Cong policymaking

3 dist internal environment
characteristics

- 1) separate house, identical bills
- 2) fragmentation- policymaking. leg broken into bits
- 3) norms of conduct – folkways. works hard, specialization, reciprocate, inst pride

Bill to Law

how demands for solutions becomes law
consider: 1) the agenda- public focused on it
2) leg process

1. Pres
2. Leg Agenda
3. member interest

policy entrepreneurship = John McCain and campaign finance reform

Leg Process

- 1) bill introduced by member of Cong, get NO initial stage of comm. consider- H&S similar
 - referred to comm., standing com.
 - speaker send it where he wants them to sub comm.
 - most bills die in comm.
 - sub comm.- reviews if held are extensive = “makeup”

Going to House Floor

standing com. to Rules-
does speaker’s bidding-
get a rule – when and how bill considered
rules- gives bill a rule
open rule – can be amended
restrictive rules

Going to Senate Floor

senate bills usually get open
rule, maj & min leaders
make agenda, anyone can
introduce a rider

unlimited debate- filibuster
cloture 3/5 = 60 senators
control of senate need *60 senators

Final Challenge – bill to law

com H&S – to conference comm.
pres over-ride by 2/3 both chambers

1998 SC rules item veto unconst.

balance between reps and effective lawmaking

mechanics of cong DM:

Cong pol- very complex
LBJ

how member decides

member must chose
roll call = cong voting
open- make member accountable for their votes;
factors determining vote:
1) party ID
2) constituency
3) pres
4) other members
5) staff
6) IGs

way to influence bill's fate:
using rules, etc.

how well cong works?

1) too much party bickering
Great Depression- WPA, Soc Sec, CCC

1964- civil rts act
1965- voting rts act
Vietnam, Watergate
73 war powers act
74 cong budget and impoundment
founder- want not fast or w/o much study
today- cong not moves well!

Leg pol is complex balance of rules and processes- favor skilled politicians

Citizens increasingly negative view of cong

18% support Cong in 1992; in 2007

Why Cong disliked by people?

- 1) changing nature of campaigns *run for Cong. by running against it.
- 2) negative media coverage of Cong
- 3) \$ role in pol
- 4) practice of dem- not liked as it works out. diversity = dissent

Future of Cong:

many of people unhappy with cong – term limits finances – 2002 – McCain-Feingold- limit SIG cut amount soft money to parties, free of SIG and PACs institutional reforms

what is at stake?

Pres himself- get camp promises- enacted
Jim Jefford – R to 2001 election
2002- lose majority leaders seat
party fights Pre, H, S control