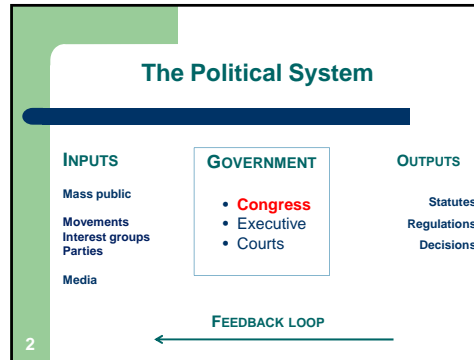


Ch. 9: Congress

A **Disconnect** between Political Elites and the Mass Public

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Which is the Constitutional role for Congress?

- A. Make federal laws
- B. Act as a “watchdog” over the executive branch
- C. Both
- D. Neither

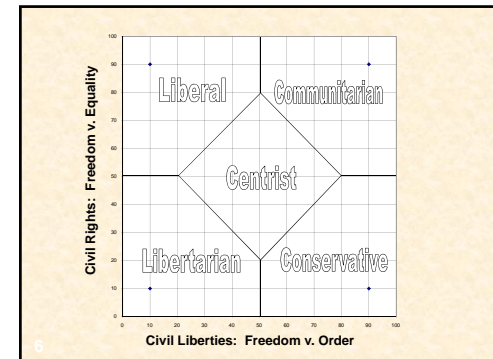
Which was the original intent of the Framers?

- A. President dominant
- B. Congress dominant
- C. Supreme Court dominant
- D. An equal balance between the three branches

The disconnect between political elites & the public

- Political **polarization** in elites:
 - Parties
 - Interest groups
 - Government
- Political **moderation** in the mass public

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Previous era of disconnect between elites & public

- Pre-Civil War era
- Polarizing issues for elites
 - Nation building
 - Slavery

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Sources of elite polarization

1. Changes in election rules
 - Liberal reform: “power to the people”
 - Conservative reform: “freedom of political speech”
2. Changes in Congressional careers
 - Redistricting
 - Compensation
 - Scope of powers exercised
3. **Wealth gap** between Congress & public

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Public v. Congressional Wealth

MEDIAN NET WORTH OF AMERICAN FAMILIES	YOUR ODDS OF BEING A MILLIONAIRE
\$120,000	1 IN 22
MEDIAN NET WORTH FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS	MEMBER OF CONGRESS' ODDS OF BEING A MILLIONAIRE
\$912,000	NEARLY 1 IN 2

Sources: Center for Responsive Politics; US Census; Edward Wolff, Bard College.
<http://www.federalreserve.gov/publications/2007/sep2007home.html>
<http://www.opensecrets.org/pdfs/overview.php?Type=W&year=2009&filter=C>
<http://www.opensecrets.org/news/2011/11/congressional-members-get-rich.html>

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10 richest members of Congress (all 10 voted to extend Bush's tax cuts for the rich)

MEMBER	MAX. EST. NET WORTH
Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.)	\$451.1 million
Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.)	\$435.4 million
Rep. Vern Buchanan (R-Fla.)	\$366.2 million
Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.)	\$294.9 million
Rep. Jared Polis (D-Colo.)	\$285.1 million
Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.)	\$283.1 million
Sen. Herb Kohl (D-Wisc.)	\$231.2 million
Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas)	\$201.5 million
Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.)	\$136.2 million
Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.)	\$108.1 million
COMBINED NET WORTH:	\$2.9 BILLION

<http://www.opensecrets.org/pds/index.php>
<http://politics.nytimes.com/congress/votes/111/senate/2/7/?ref=politics>
<http://politics.nytimes.com/congress/votes/111/house/2/6/>

10

The most important Congressional decisions are made where?

- A. On the chamber floor
- B. In chamber committees
- C. Both
- D. Neither

Which are the permanent committees in Congress?

- A. Standing
- B. Select
- C. Joint
- D. Conference
- E. All of the above

Which resolve differences between House & Senate bills?

- A. Standing committees
- B. Select committees
- C. Joint committees
- D. Conference committees
- E. All of the above

Earmarks are legislative provisions that approve

- A. Funds for specific projects
- B. Tax loopholes
- C. Pork barrel
- D. All of the above
- E. None of the above

Constituents have the most influence in which model?

- A. Delegate model
- B. Trustee model
- C. Organizational model
- D. Politico model
- E. All of the above

There are more "safe" seats in which chamber?

- A. House
- B. Senate
- C. About equal numbers in both

Our Congress is best described as having:

- A. Localized representation
- B. Decentralized processes
- C. Heavy committee workloads
- D. Little floor deliberation
- E. All of the above

Which currently have term limits?

- A. The U.S. Congress
- B. The U.S. president
- C. Both
- D. Neither