THE GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS INSTITUTE
at Georgetown University

STRICTLY CONGRESS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

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About the Government Affairs Institute

The Government Affairs Institute (GAI) has been conducting courses on Capitol Hill since 1965. For thirty years GAI was part of the federal government, and in 1995 was privatized by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. In 1997 GAI became affiliated with Georgetown University and is now part of the McCourt School of Public Policy.

GAI's mission is to provide participants with practical knowledge about congressional process, organization, and practices, and about selected legislative policy issues. By better understanding the functions and organization of Congress, executive branch personnel and others with a direct interest in federal programs can more effectively plan, manage, and budget for those programs, and better represent those programs before Congress.

In addition to a curriculum of **Core Courses** that focus on the organization and process of Congress, we also offer **Tailored Courses** customized to the legislative interests of specific departments and agencies, as well as other organizations. Institute courses are designed to provide participants with a hands-on understanding of how Congress actually works and how it affects the operations of every department and agency in the executive branch. GAI conducts many of its courses on Capitol Hill so participants receive on-site experience and analysis of the workings of Congress, including the opportunity to meet and interact with key players in the legislative policy process.

In recent years GAI has expanded its offerings to include more specialized **Advanced Courses** that focus on specific areas of legislative, budget and appropriations processes, and on executive-legislative relations; as well as **Workshops** that provide participants with practical skills in preparing and delivering congressional testimony, in communicating with Congress, and in writing congressional budget justifications.

The **Certificate Program in Legislative Studies** provides individuals with the knowledge and skills to become more effective in a wide range of interactions with Congress, as well as enabling individuals to better understand developments and actions taken in the legislative arena. The Certificate Program requires the completion of six GAI courses, and in each case is tailored to the interests and needs of the individual participant.

The **Capitol Hill Fellowship Program** provides executive branch personnel with

full-time assignments on the staff of a Member of Congress or congressional committee for a full year or seven months. It provides an unparalleled opportunity to participate first-hand in the legislative process.

Tailored Courses can be designed to include content from our **Core Courses** for groups that would benefit from a more basic understanding of Congress, or content from our **Advanced Courses and Workshops** for groups that require more specialized knowledge and skills. **Tailored Courses** can be designed from a half-day to five days in length, and can be conducted in Washington, DC, or anywhere around the country.

All GAI courses are planned, designed, and conducted by the Institute's faculty, who are each expert on Congress, and bring both a wealth of academic expertise and experience, as well as considerable practical experience working in both the executive branch and on Capitol Hill.

For more information visit our website at gai.georgetown.edu. We also invite you to follow us on Twitter @GAIGeorgetown.

Introduction

The United States Congress is one of the greatest inventions in modern civil society and remains one of the most accessible government institutions in the world. It is still very open to public scrutiny and public participation. Its members and their staffs take very seriously their roles of representing the American people.

In order to get the most out of a visit to Capitol Hill, it is helpful to appreciate both the physical features that make up the Congress – the Capitol, the House and Senate office buildings, and the Library of Congress buildings – as well as the unique organization and processes that make the United States Congress the greatest deliberative body in the world. A visitor can appreciate the history and tradition of Fenway Park– but the experience will be much fuller if one understands how the game of baseball is played.

This guide to Congress is intended to help you understand both the Capitol and the other buildings that house the Congress, as well as provide information on how the House and Senate really work. It is designed to help you take advantage of your access to the buildings, the people, and the legislative process. It contains information about the history of Congress, the everyday workings of federal lawmaking, and lots of practical advice for navigating and understanding Capitol Hill.

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Congress and the Constitution

The Framers built a new government for the United States of America once they realized that the wartime Articles of Confederation were not sufficient to meet the challenges confronting the new nation. Meeting in Philadelphia in 1787, they looked back into history and to the lessons of Enlightenment thinkers to create a system of separate branches – legislative, executive and judicial- that shared power. Why did they create this complex system that favors gridlock and slow movement?

The Framers' experiences - growing up as English subjects, living in North America as colonial subjects, and as citizens in a loose confederation of fledgling nations - reinforced a reading of history and philosophy that led them to prefer gridlock, if need be, to tyranny. As 18th century English subjects, the Framers lived under a mixed system of government, which combined a hereditary monarchy that was limited in its authority by a legislature consisting of elements of aristocracy (House of Lords) and democracy (House of Commons). The value of this balancing of power was reinforced by their understanding of the English Civil War, in which power first tipped too far toward the monarchy under Charles I, and then too far toward parliament, leading to Cromwell's military dictatorship. As colonial subjects, the Framers enjoyed the same balance of power between their colonial assemblies and the royal governors, and watched as that balance eroded after 1763, as King George III sought to tighten its control over the colonies. Most of the Declaration of Independence is devoted to a list of grievances against him. After the war, many of the new fledgling nations reduced executive power in their new constitutions, tipping the balance of power toward the new legislative bodies, as did the Articles of Confederation.

When the Framers met to revise the Articles of Confederation in 1787, these experiences made them wary of unchecked power, either executive or legislative. The objective of the Framers was to preclude a "faction" from gaining monopoly control of the government. As Madison argued in the Federalist Papers, tyranny was "the accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands." The Framers sought not only to separate the functions of government into independent branches, but also to provide each branch with the ability to stand as a check against the others.

Of these three branches, the Framers saw the legislative branch as most important, describing its functions first in Article One. But even the legislature was designed to be self-limiting. The Framers did this in two ways:

- They gave Members two responsibilities–serving as national lawmakers and local representatives.The twin responsibilities conflict frequently, forcing each member into a difficult, constantly changing balancing act between meeting their national responsibilities while attending to the needs of their local constituents.
- They created a bicameral institution, giving the House and the Senate very different identities. The House is large, boisterous, and close to the people, with short, two-year terms designed to make the chamber highly responsive to the will of the majority of the citizens. The Senate is smaller, with longer terms and an ability to rise above day-to-day political pressures and balance local and national interests. Thus House and Senate tend to seek different solutions to political challenges-automatically limiting Congress, which cannot pass laws unless both of these very different chambers can find a compromise.

Congress also has enormous capacity to influence the work of executive branch agencies. The Constitution empowers Congress to conduct oversight to ensure its laws are being implemented as intended. Congress passes appropriations every year to pay for the activities of the government – if they don't vote for the money, it can't be spent. And Congress is responsible for the structure of the agencies – it is by a delegation of authority from Congress that every agency has a mission to accomplish. These three powers are very difficult to use, so Congress has trouble using all of its capacity – but these powers derive from their constitutional role, so they are tools every agency employee should be familiar with as every agency is under oversight scrutiny, budget evaluation, and organizational review by Congress all the time.

Students interested in learning more about the structure and powers of Congress should consider enrolling in a Congressional Operations Seminar, or in GAI's advanced courses on legislative process, budget, and appropriations process, or in one of GAI's research seminars.

Congress Comes to Washington

The first order of business for the first Congress of the United States was to sit around and wait for everyone to show up. Although the House and Senate each met on March 4, 1789, neither house had enough members to form a quorum. Each day, until April 1 (in the House) and April 6 (in the Senate), the only thing to do was record a new member's arrival and adjourn until the next day.

Once a sufficient number of members showed up, however, the House of Representatives got down to business. The members presented their credentials, elected their leadership, set up a rules committee, selected doorkeepers and a clerk, and swore themselves in under oath as required by the Constitution.

As soon as the last senator needed showed up on April 6, the Senate informed the House of a quorum and invited those House members present over to their chamber. Together, both houses watched John Langdon count the votes for the presidential election that certified George Washington and John Adams as the winners of the presidency and vice-presidency in a landslide victory.

Since that first joint meeting in 1789, Congress has grown and developed in ways that the Founders could not have imagined. The major difference between the first Congress and o ur current o ne is size. There were 22 senators in 1789; now there are 100. There were 59 representatives in 1789; now there are 435. There would be even more representatives, but Congress passed a law in 1929 to cap the number at 435. Rather than add more members, seats were reapportioned every ten years following the national census.

That led to another congressional transformation: district size. In 1789, each representative served a constituency of 30,000 people. Following the 2010 census, that number is approximately 720,000. A member serving today has more than 23 times as many constituents as James Madison did when he served as a Representative from Virginia.

Another difference between the experiences of these two members is the location of Congress during their service. The Founders wrote a provision in the Constitution (Article 1, Section 8) to establish a "District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States... become the Seat of the Government of the United States," but they did not specify where this district was to be located. Heated debate broke out among Virginians, New Yorkers, and Pennsylvanians, all of whom argued that their states should be the site of the new federal district.

The claims were that New York was the largest city, Philadelphia had been the site of the Constitutional Convention, and Virginia was a central location. But the real dispute was one for power between the North and the South. Southerners were afraid that if the government were located in the North, they would lose their power to a northern government monopoly. They also knew that if the capital were located in Maryland and Virginia, two slave states, the North would not be able to raise objections to slavery.

After disagreement during three sessions of Congress, the issue was put to rest at a small dinner party. The President asked the gentlemen present to accept a compromise that benefited all sides: Congress would be located in New York and Philadelphia for a period of ten years, and then move south, to the Potomac River, where the construction of a new federal district would be underway. Known as the Compromise of 1790, this bargain was made in exchange for congressional votes. A few Southerners agreed to switch their votes to support the assumption of state debts by the federal government, in exchange for a southern capital.

The northern states thought the compromise would be to their benefit because Congress would settle in and decide not to move to its next location. Much to their dismay, however, Washington's original plan was carried out, and in 1800, the Congress moved to the district that would eventually bear his name.

Powers of Congress: Write Laws, Declare War, Monitor Federal Agencies

Congress's legislative powers are defined in Article 1 of the Constitution. A Senate and a House of Representatives are chosen by direct election. There are two senators from each state and they serve six-year terms. One-third of them are elected every two years and senators from the same state are not elected in the same year.
The federal census determines each state's portion of 435 representative seats, and in most states, the legislature determines congressional district boundaries for each representative, who serves a two-year term. A Congress begins on January third of each odd-numbered year. It lasts two years and is divided by year into a first and second session. Elections for Senate and House seats are held in November of even-numbered years. Special elections may be held throughout the year to fill vacancies created by the death or resignation of a member of Congress.

The Vice President of the United States presides over the Senate and only votes to break a tie but belongs to no standing committees. The Speaker presides over the House, which elects him/her by majority vote, meaning the majority party selects a person who has great legislative and political power. The Speaker need not be an elected Representative.

Congress not only writes federal laws but has the power to investigate matters of public concern and monitor federal agencies and programs. It is empowered to declare war, approve treaties, regulate interstate and foreign commerce, raise or lower federal taxes, coin and appropriate money, approve top federal agency and judicial appointments, and impeach federal officials, including the President and Vice President. A two-thirds majority vote in each chamber will override a presidential veto. Each chamber is the sole judge of its members' qualifications.

Congress is also a representative body. It is an assembly of 535 local representatives and six delegates who come from diverse ages, races, ethnicities, locations, and backgrounds. Although the representative function is not specifically mentioned in the Constitution, it is implicit in members elected from specific districts.

Congressional Leaders

Speaker of the House

The Speaker is both the presiding officer of the House of Representatives and the leader of the majority party. They are also second to the Vice President in the line of succession to the Presidency. The Speaker plans and implements the legislative agenda of the House, has administrative control over most operations of the House, and controls appointments to special committees and delegations. The Speaker also refers legislation to committees, may place deadlines on committee action, and chairs the committee that appoints majority party members to their committee assignments.

House Majority Leader

The Majority Leader acts as deputy to the Speaker and schedules legislation for the floor, taking into account political timing as well as policy importance. They act as a spokesperson for the party position during floor debate, plan legislative and political strategy for their party, mediate political disputes among majority party members, and negotiate agreements with the minority, all under the direction of the Speaker. The role is "Chief Operating Officer."

House Majority Whip

The Majority Whip advises party leaders how majority members intend to vote on upcoming bills. The Whip has a team of members who act as assistants, gathering intelligence on members' positions, and responding to leadership requests for head counts on specific bills. The Whip takes the lead in actively encouraging party discipline and unity, persuading rebellious members to vote with the party, and notifying members with alerts on floor schedules and timing of votes.

House Minority Leader

The Minority Leader is the minority party's chief spokesperson, both during floor debate and as a representative in negotiations with the majority leadership and with the White House. They plan the party's

legislative and political responses to the majority's initiatives, direct the process of assigning minority members to committees, and appoint minority members to conference negotiations with the Senate.

House Minority Whip

The Minority Whip performs the same functions for the minority party as their majority counterpart.

Senate Majority Leader

The Senate Majority Leader is leader of the majority party in the Senate and is responsible for scheduling the Senate's annual and daily legislative schedule, in consultation with the Senate Minority Leader. They have the authority to adjourn and recess the Senate's daily session, select legislative priorities for each session and decide which legislation to bring up for floor consideration. The Majority Leader negotiates agreements on the floor schedule, agenda, and parliamentary procedures with the Minority Leader and announces them to the Senate. They also consult with the Speaker of the House to arrange joint sessions and events. The Majority Leader represents the Senate on ceremonial occasions, hosts special events on behalf of the Senate, and welcomes official visitors and foreign guests to the Senate.

Senate Majority Whip

The Majority Whip is the chief assistant to the Majority Leader. They work with assistants who are responsible for keeping track of how the party's senators will be voting on upcoming issues, rounding up the party's senators for scheduled floor votes and quorum calls, and substituting for the Majority or Minority Leader as needed on the Senate floor.

Senate Minority Leader

The Senate Minority Leader is the minority party's spokesperson on the Senate floor and to the outside world. They maintain a working relationship with the Senate Majority Leader and negotiate legislative and procedural agreements on behalf of their party. The Senate Minority Leader works with party colleagues to define the party's policy priorities

and seeks to insert them into the Senate's legislative agenda. They monitor the Senate's daily floor proceedings to ensure that the party's procedural rights are protected. The Minority Leader stays in continuous contact with the party's ranking members on each Senate committee and seeks to coordinate their work to advance the party's overall agenda.

Both the Majority and Minority Leaders encourage unity among the senators on their side of the aisle. Each party leader is also expected to reconcile personal and policy differences among the party's senators.

Senate Minority Whip

The Senate Minority Whip is the chief assistant to the Minority Leader and his or her duties are similar to those of the Senate Majority Whip.

Why Are There Whips?

The whip position is designed to be a two-way channel of communication between the leadership and the membership of their party. The Whip is assisted by selected members who canvass their colleagues and gather intelligence about who is supporting what legislation and how strongly. This information is vital to the leadership in deciding whether to bring a bill to the floor. The Whip's Office is also responsible for getting their members to the floor for key votes and making sure that enough of them vote the way the leadership wants them to vote. This task becomes tougher as the majority's margin becomes narrower.

Both parties use Whips. There are numerous deputy and regional Whips in both parties and these positions comprise the lower rungs of the leadership ladder. Before a vote on a major piece of legislation, both parties will "whip" the bill, reminding members of its importance to the respective parties and in turn reporting their numbers back to the leadership. Whipping a bill is much simpler in the smaller Senate.

The name is borrowed from British parliamentary usage and has an interesting history. It is actually a fox hunting term. The "whipper in" is the person designated to keep the hounds from wandering off during a fox hunt. Of course, in the British House of Commons, this analogy makes more sense; party discipline is much stricter and members of

Parliament who choose not to support the party position too often will find themselves denied the opportunity to stand for reelection. In the U.S. context, though, the term is a bit of a misnomer. There is minimal coercive power behind the Whips' directives, and there is not the same electoral punishment for voting against the leadership in Congress.

Given the different factions within the two parties in the House, the Whip Offices are very active as the task of corralling votes is a formidable challenge.

Party Leadership in Congress

Party leaders in the House and Senate are responsible for organizing the chamber's legislative business. How that happens depends on a number of institutional and political factors.

Because the House is a majoritarian institution, majority party leadership sets the agenda and determines the legislative schedule. The Speaker may consult with the Minority Party Leader, but doing so is a courtesy, not an obligation. Generally speaking, the Speaker and the leadership team develop the party's legislative agenda and framework for action. In order to move the party's agenda forward, leaders typically work closely with committee chairs. The relationship between leaders and chairs can be tense; leaders tend to view legislation through a political lens, and chairs tend to view bills through a policy lens. The Speaker wants to bring bills that will pass to the floor and chairs favor straightforward policy. When these goals conflict, leadership wins out. Unless a bill has the Speaker's support, it is unlikely to get a floor vote.

House rules (which are adopted by majority vote) allow the Speaker and the leadership team to control the chamber's legislative activities. A Speaker's institutional strength, however, depends on their personal style and a number of other internal and external factors. A Speaker's style typically reflects their personality. Some are aggressive and hard-charging, while others take a more understated approach. A Speaker's preference to build coalitions or lead the charge, back slap or make threats, go public or remain behind the scenes, is personal. A Speaker's ability to lead also depends upon various institutional and political factors, over which they may have little control.

Does the Speaker's party control the Senate and White House? How popular is the president? Is it an election year? How complex are the major issues of the day and how engaged is the public? And perhaps most important, how big and how cohesive is the Speaker's majority?

When the margins between parties are narrow (as they have been in the House since 1994), party leaders tend to exercise more power over their members. Narrow margins put majority control within reach for the minority party every two years. Conversely, the majority party is at risk of losing control of the chamber every two years. If party members share common policy preferences and face an opposition party that holds sharply different views, leaders are typically empowered to advance an agreed-upon agenda. A cohesive party has a better chance of holding (or gaining) majority control. When party members hold diverse policy and political views, the Speaker's job becomes much more difficult. Dissent within the party forces the Speaker to focus on bridging differences rather than leading; it also puts the party's majority status at risk.

Because the Senate emphasizes minority rights and equal power between the states (and the Senators who represent them), the chamber's leaders face a different set of challenges. Put simply, the Majority Leader's ability to lead is dependent on the willingness of other Senators to follow. The Majority Leader can establish a legislative agenda and a framework for moving that agenda forward, but every other Senator has the ability to stop it, either temporarily or permanently. For this reason, ongoing consultation between the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders is an institutional norm. If the Majority Leader wants to bring a bill to the Senate floor, they will inform the Minority Leader of their intent to do so. The Minority Leader will negotiate legislative and procedural agreements on behalf of their party, to which the Majority Leader may or may not agree.

Senate leaders encourage unity among their party's members for the same reason that House leaders do—leading a cohesive party is easier than leading a divided one. But Senate rules and precedents allow individual Senators vastly more power than individual Representatives. Every Senator has the ability to challenge the Senate Majority Leader's decisions. Because a challenge can result in a filibuster, the Majority Leader must negotiate or move forward knowing that they may lose the vote if they can't find 60 votes to override a filibuster.

While the Speaker of the House can pass bills as long as he or she can come up with 218 votes, the Senate Majority Leader has to worry about how every one of their 99 colleagues intends to vote. As some Majority Leaders have noted, the job's title should be Majority Pleader!

The Committee System

Article I of the Constitution provides few specifics about how the legislative branch should be organized beyond "[e]ach House may determine the rules of its proceedings." Both the House and the Senate have devised a system of committees based on issue areas in order to break legislative tasks into more manageable pieces. They are known as "standing committees" because they usually continue from one Congress to the next with most of their membership intact. Committee members and their staffs are repositories of subject-matter expertise and provide the institutional memory so vital in an institution with a constant influx of new members facing complex topics, many for the first time.

Although any member can introduce legislation, those serving on a committee with jurisdiction over that area will have a better opportunity to shape it. All members serve on committees, which is where most of the work--investigating issues, developing legislation, and conducting oversight--of Congress gets done. Committees are comprised of both Democrats and Republicans with the ratio roughly reflecting the parties' relative strength in the chamber. Most representatives serve on two or three committees simultaneously, while a senator may serve on four or five. Most committees are further divided into subcommittees, and members of the subcommittees must be on the "full" committee as well. This allows greater specialization and additional opportunities for leadership, but it also fragments members' time and attention.

The "chair" of each committee (and of each of its subcommittees) comes from the majority party, very often among its most senior members. To a large extent, committees reflect the style and policy preferences of their chairs, who play a major role in shaping the committee's agenda, hiring most of its staff, and setting the tone for its work. The most senior member of the minority party on each committee is called the "ranking

member," meaning the person who would be chair if/when his or her party is in the majority. Committee rosters are not in alphabetical order but reflect seniority. New members join committees on the "bottom rungs" of the ladder, but with each reelection, they can climb a step or two higher because their tenure on the committee parallels their tenure in the chamber. Republicans impose a six-year limit on their chairs in each chamber, guaranteeing plenty of shuffling for gavels; Democrats have no such limit, to the frustration of junior members "waiting their turn."

The chambers determine—and can alter—the number of committees and their jurisdiction, size, and membership. In recent years, both chambers have had about a dozen and a half standing committees. There are parallels between the chambers' jurisdiction in their respective committees, but they are not identical. Moreover, although a committee's jurisdiction is spelled out (and available on its website) it is not uncommon for other committees to try to assert jurisdiction over the same subject because greater jurisdiction allows more influence, which in turn means more power. As one former member put it, "TURF is probably the dirtiest word on Capitol Hill!"

What determines a member's committee assignments? Members arrive on the Hill with a "wish list" of their preferred committees based mostly on which issues are most salient to their constituents. Fortunately, beauty is in the eye of the beholder and not everyone wants to serve on the same committees.

In the House, each party has a special committee comprised of approximately three dozen members (including leadership) that conducts "auditions" in which new members from that party explain why they would be the best choice. Several considerations come into play, including professional background, state legislative experience, personal relationships with other members, impact on the district, input from interest groups, diversity considerations, and political vulnerability. Of course, it would be simpler to just add seats to a committee to accommodate new members, but the more experienced members are loathe to do so. An individual representative's power, prestige, and identity in the House is affected by committee assignments, and no member wants to see their voice "diluted" by adding a handful of members to a committee. New

members have to find a vacancy from among the slots available to each party.

In the Senate, the assignment process is based strictly on seniority and the Majority and Minority Leaders have no influence—and therefore less leverage than the Speaker or Minority Leader in the House. While committees serve the same purpose as they do in the House, a senator's influence is considerable regardless of his or her committee assignments. The Senate's rules allow far more opportunities for an individual to affect legislation directly on the floor of the chamber. On the House side, any legislation with a chance of making it to the floor for a vote is crafted either in committee or by leadership.

With the exception of the Appropriations Committee, standing committees are known as "authorizing" committees because they authorize laws and the government agencies responsible for their implementation. They are sometimes also called "legislative" or "oversight" committees. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees are designed to allocate funds according to the authorizing committees' guidance, although the appropriators often make their own adjustments. As appropriators are fond of pointing out, the Constitution says only that "No money shall be drawn from the treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by law"--there is no mention of authorizing legislation.

The Rules Committee

For major bills, the Rules Committee is the last stop before reaching the floor in the House of Representatives. It dictates which bills will receive consideration on the floor, the length of debate, if amendments will be allowed, among a variety of other conditions that govern House floor procedures. Today, it is a central mechanism in House operation.

The Committee's only jurisdiction is over House rules. It does not have any substantive policy jurisdiction. Its only purpose is to manage and determine House floor operations. While it does not draft policy, it is extremely important to the passage of major policy proposals.

Most importantly, the Rules Committee determines which bills are considered in the House. Today, most major or contentious bills reach the floor by way of a "special rule." Most bills considered by the House do not

have "privileged" status. In other words, they cannot interrupt the normal operation of the House to debate and pass. In order to receive that status, the Rules Committee must make it in order to call the bill on the House floor. A special rule, if adopted by majority vote in the chamber, allows the bills it designates to have privileged status on the House floor. This gives the Committee enormous power over which bills will receive the chamber's attention. And as a result, it is a primary means through which the House passes legislation.

In addition to setting the agenda, the Committee also sets the terms of debate. It sets the length of debate, which members will control debate time, if amendments are allowed, and which points of order are available or waived during debate. In making these determinations, the Committee can often structure victories on the House floor. It can prevent "poison pill" amendments or points of order that may threaten a bill's passage. Conversely, the Committee may also allow amendments that may make a bill's passage more likely. By allowing votes on specific amendments, the committee can add votes to a bill that may not pass in its original form.

Its ability to manipulate the House debate, amendments, and agenda is a hugely important tool for party leadership. Unsurprisingly, the Committee's seats heavily favor the majority party, far more so than other House standing committees. Since the late-1970s the Committee's membership was capped at 13 members, with nine majority members and only four minority members. In addition to the heavy majority bias, the committee assignment process also favors the party leaders. Its members and chair are selected by their respective party leaders. This ensures the majority not only dominates committee votes, but also that the party leaders have a heavy influence on the Committee's operation. Since the late-1970s, the Committee has served as an arm of the party leadership. It is at the heart of the party's power in the House.

Congressional Staff

Bright, dedicated, and hard-working, congressional staffers play a key role in the representative and legislative functions of Congress. Staffs are categorized as either personal (those working for a specific individual Member) or committee (those working for all members of that committee.) Both types of staff assume much of the responsibility for the work of Congress, which is delegated by the elected Members. Staffers serve "at the Members' pleasure," meaning that their job security is low. If a Member loses a reelection bid or retires, the staffer must find a new position. Changes in committee leadership can also lead to wholesale staffing changes. Turnover is high and pay is modest, but staff jobs are in high demand. Having "Hill experience" on a résumé is valuable and many staffers use it as a stepping stone to future careers.

Until recently, Congress was exempt from many workplace regulations. The Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 applied most Federal employment laws to the Hill, including those dealing with employment discrimination, family and medical leave, fair labor standards, worker retraining, and intimidation.

Personal Staff

Each representative and senator maintains an office on Capitol Hill and at least one office in their state or congressional district. The Washington office is the headquarters for legislative activity, while the field offices (also known as District Offices or DOs in the House) are responsible for constituent service (also known as casework) such as interceding with a federal agency on behalf of a constituent. In the House, Members may hire a total of not more than 18 full-time and 4 part-time staff, funded by their "Members' Representational Allowance (MRA)" that comes from the annual Legislative Branch appropriation. Personal staffs reflect the preferences of their Members, who are free to hire whomever they choose. Usually there will be at least one staffer (and often many) from the state or district in the Washington office. The typical staff size is 15, with around half the staff deployed to work in the DO. All representatives have at least one DO, and some have as many as six; the average is two. Salaries and job descriptions are negotiated individually by each office.

There is no limit on the number of personal staffers a senator may hire. Funds are allocated to each senator based on state population. The average size of a Senate personal staff is 40, with about a third working in the field offices; the average number of field offices is four. Because senators often serve on four or five committees, as compared with typically two committee assignments per representative, their staffs are larger and more specialized than in the House.

Personal Staff Positions

• **Chief of Staff (CoS):** is in charge of the office. They advise the Member and sometimes act as a surrogate, appearing on the Member's behalf. The CoS hires and supervises the staff, serves as the Member's chief policy advisor, and is responsible for coordinating the Member's political, legislative, communications, and constituent services agendas.

• **Legislative Director (LD)**: executes the Member's legislative strategy, analyzing legislative proposals, drafting bills and amendments, and providing voting recommendations. The LD oversees the legislative staff and sometimes has a portfolio of issues of special concern to the Member.

• **Legislative Assistant (LA):** tracks legislation on a variety of topics. An LA researches, writes speeches and position papers, and reviews legislation. If a Member has a particular interest in a topic, they may assign an LA to handle it exclusively, although that degree of specialization is a luxury in the House. Many Members do designate a Military Legislative Assistant (MLA) to pay special attention to defense and national security issues.

• **Legislative Correspondent (LC):** is a link between constituents and the Member's office. An entry-level position, it is nonetheless vital. The LC responds to all constituent correspondence regarding policy issues, working closely with the legislative staff to accurately convey the Member's views.

• **Communications Director (or Press Secretary):** maintains relations between the Member and the public. Their main responsibility is dealing with the media. The Communications Director responds

to queries, issues press releases, and manages the Member's social media presence.

• **Scheduler:** handles the daunting task of organizing the Member's calendar.Typically the scheduler also functions as an executive assistant, arranging travel, speaking engagements and media appearances. If you arrange a meeting with a Member, the scheduler will tell you when it may take place and how long it will last.

• **Office Manager:** coordinates the day-to-day office administrative functions. In the House this job may be merged with the scheduler.

• **Systems Administrator:** takes care of the technological needs in a Member's office, including network administration and website maintenance.

• **Staff Assistant:** is often the first and only contact that constituents have with the Member's office. They pass on constituent concerns to the Member and staff, oversee interns, and facilitate tours of the Capitol and other landmarks.

• **District Director (DD)** or **State Office Director:** is the liaison between the Washington office and the Member's offices "back home." Like the CoS in Washington, the District Director may represent the member at local functions and manages the district office. In some House offices, the DD is also the CoS and a Deputy CoS runs the Washington office.

• **Field Representative:** represents the Member in the district to constituents and helps with casework when necessary.

• **Caseworker** or **Constituent Services Representative:** is responsible for handling the needs of individual constituents, and is usually based in district offices.

Committee Staff

No two committee staffs are exactly alike. After the Legislative Branch appropriation determines the number of staff for each committee based on needs and requests, the committee itself determines the composition of its staff. Most staffs are split along political party lines and divided between majority and minority. In the House, the majority controls two-thirds of the resources and staff slots, and the minority gets one-third. In the Senate, the split has more often reflected the actual percentage difference between the parties in the chamber. Technically, staffers are hired (and fired) by either the committee chair or the ranking member, to whom they owe their allegiance. Committees often share limited, nonpartisan staff in clerical roles.

Majority staff have the bulk of the responsibilities - setting the agenda, running the hearings, and drafting the bills - but minority staff are busy, too, because they are spread much more thinly. Committee staff are often hired for their substantive expertise and constitute a valuable component of the legislative branch's institutional memory. Many have advanced degrees, and on average they are older than personal staff. It is not uncommon for committee staff to have served in an executive branch department or agency. Likewise, their tenure on the Hill is significantly longer than that of personal staffers. One senator called his committee staff "the idea factory" because they can be a major source of legislation. Unlike personal staff, they have the luxury of focusing on a more limited range of issues.

Key Committee Staff Positions

• **Staff Director:** (sometimes referred to as **Majority Staff Director**) is the head of their party's staff on the committee and serves as a link to the chair. In addition to general management responsibilities, they often have the power to hire and fire. The Staff Director works closely with the committee chair to develop the committee's agenda, conduct hearings, and work through pending legislation. On the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, the Staff Director is known as the Clerk. The Minority Staff Director oversees minority staff and answers to the ranking member. Each subcommittee has its own staff director.

- **Counsels:** are usually lawyers, and may serve in a variety of functions including interpreter of the law and parliamentarian. General Counsel or Chief Counsel sometimes serves as committee Staff Director. Other titles are Counsel, Associate Counsel, Counsel to the Chair, Senior Counsel, and Investigative Counsel. There may also be Minority Counsel.
- **Communications Director**: performs the same task for the committee as his or her counterpart in personal offices does. Committee Communications Directors often have greater contact with specialized media outlets such as professional journals or trade press.
- **Professional Staff Member (PSM):** drafts legislation, recruits witnesses, arranges hearings, writes talking points, and does the day-to-day work of the committee while keeping a low profile so that the focus remains on the elected officials. The PSM is to the committee staff what the LA is to the personal staff, but the PSM usually has deeper knowledge of a narrower range of issues. Some PSMs are known as Policy Analysts, and the term Counsel is appropriate if the staffer has a law degree. Other titles include Economist, Senior Policy Advisor, Legislative Assistant, or Policy Coordinator. SPSM designates senior committee staffers.
- **Clerk:** functions as the keeper of the paper. They record the votes and amendments at markup and ensure hearings are properly published.
- **Staff Assistant:** performs all the clerical/support tasks necessary to keep the committee functioning. Their duties include scheduling and maintaining publications, files, and websites.

Many of these positions are likely to have their own assistants, as well, so one may see "Deputy," "Assistant," "Associate," "Majority," and "Minority" in front of these titles.

Leadership Staff

In order to maintain effective control of the House and Senate, the leadership in each house has its own staff. Their titles are similar to those of committee staff, and they serve the party organizations and the highest-ranking Members, including the Speaker of the House and the Senate Majority Leader.

Communicating with Congress

Executive branch personnel communicate with Members of Congress or congressional staff in a variety of venues, including their department's programs, policies, funding, and proposed or pending legislation. Federal officials regularly interact with congressional staff regarding congressional report requirements, requests for information, and other elements of the congressional oversight process, including planning or performing follow-up activities related to congressional committee hearings.

In addition, federal officials often brief Members or staff on new initiatives or update them on existing programs or policies. Finally, federal agencies may arrange for Members or staff to conduct site visits to field locations in order to better acquaint them with programs and activities across the country, or even overseas.

Over the last four decades we've seen an "information explosion" on Capitol Hill as the size of the federal budget and the number of federal programs has skyrocketed. Outside interest groups, the lobbying community, and industry have increasingly inundated Congress with information in support of the programs and policies that they represent or in opposition to those that they oppose. It's estimated that the Washington lobbying community has grown into a billion dollar industry, with thousands of lobbyists vying for the attention of Members of Congress and congressional staff. Many of the lobbyists are themselves former staffers, or even former Members, and they are highly skilled at plying their craft.

Federal officials have a responsibility to educate Members and staff about their agency's programs and policies, and to not cede the playing field to outside interests. Congressional staff are generally eager to meet with agency officials, especially those that actually manage or work in the programs under their jurisdiction. It's important, therefore, that executive branch personnel identify, gain access to, and educate those congressional staff who are responsible for their agencies so that Congress can make the best possible decisions regarding those programs and policies.

In order to be most effective in this environment, federal officials need to

have a thorough understanding of congressional process and procedure, as well as a sophisticated understanding of the nature or culture of Congress. They need to understand how and when to access the right staff and they need to understand how to package and present information to staff.

It's widely known that executive branch personnel are prohibited from "lobbying" Congress, but what that means is frequently misunderstood. Prohibited lobbying activity, for the most part, limits those who attempt to influence others to contact Members of Congress or congressional staff in support of or in opposition to pending legislation. Providing information directly to Members or staff is clearly permitted, and is a regular and necessary part of the policy process.

Federal officials as well as nonfederal entities that receive federal funds should, however, be aware of what sort of activities are prohibited. There are several provisions of federal law and regulation that place limitations or restrictions on federal personnel with respect to lobbying Members of Congress or congressional staff. There are also restrictions on nonfederal personnel who are employed by organizations that receive federal funds from using those funds to lobby Congress.

The principal statutory restriction is Title 18, Sec. 1913, of the US Code, popularly known as the "Anti-Lobbying Act." The act, which was initially passed in 1919 but amended in 2002, applies to career federal officials, including SES and Schedule C employees, but not to PAS appointees (presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed). It prevents indirect communication such as urging or encouraging others to contact Members of Congress on behalf of pending legislation.

In addition to Title 18, Sec. 1913, Congress almost always includes riders to the annual appropriations bills that limit spending federally appropriated funds on certain lobbying activities, or for publicity or propaganda campaigns by federal agencies. Appropriations prohibitions may also apply to nonfederal entities that receive federal funds but are generally limited to the specific use of federal funds for lobbying, and not to other monies that an organization may receive.

Title 31, Sec. 1352 of the Code - popularly known as the Byrd Amendment to the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) - places restrictions regarding lobbying by federal grant, contract, or cooperative agreement recipients.

OMB Circular A-122, titled "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations," prohibits nonprofits from using federal funds to engage in certain lobbying activities at both the federal and state levels. Individual departments and agencies maintain their own rules, restrictions, and guidance on lobbying, which may be even narrower and stricter than existing statutes or regulations.

Congressional Support Agencies

Government Accountability Office

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is the audit, evaluation, and investigative arm of Congress. GAO exists to support Congress in meeting its constitutional responsibilities and to help improve the performance and ensure the accountability of the federal government for the American people. GAO examines the use of public funds, evaluates federal programs and activities, and provides analyses, options, recommendations, and other assistance to help Congress make effective oversight, policy, and funding decisions. GAO can initiate investigations but the bulk of its work is at the request of committees. Chairs and Ranking Members are given equal attention.

Congressional Budget Office

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) aims to provide Congress with the objective, timely, nonpartisan analyses needed for economic and budget decisions and with the information and estimates required for the congressional budget process. Compared with the missions of Congress's other support agencies, CBO's mandate is relatively narrow. But its subject matter gives it a broad reach, reflecting the wide array of activities that the federal budget covers and the major role the budget plays in the US economy.

Congressional Research Service

Congress created the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in order to have its own source of nonpartisan, objective analysis and research on all legislative issues. Indeed, the sole mission of CRS is to serve Congress. CRS has been carrying out this mission since 1914.

CRS is committed to providing Congress comprehensive and reliable analysis, research, and information services that are timely and confidential, thereby contributing to an informed national legislature.

How a Bill Becomes a Law

The Founders designed the process to make it much easier to block legislation than to enact it, and in that regard they were very successful. In a typical two-year Congress, somewhere in the range of 9,000 to 14,000 bills will be introduced, but fewer than 5 percent will become law.

Sources of Legislation

Only Members of Congress may introduce a piece of legislation, but the idea (or the actual written document) may come from a variety of sources: the Administration; the personal interest of the Member, such as an area of specialization or district concern; interest groups and trade associations; or constituents.

Types of Legislation

- To become a law a bill must be passed in identical form by both the House and the Senate, and then be signed by the President. Bills are identified by the initials of the chamber where they were introduced and a number, e.g., H.R. 6161 or S. 222.
- Joint Resolutions (J.Res.) are virtually interchangeable with bills and must pass both chambers and be signed by the President. This form is used for constitutional amendments.
- Concurrent Resolutions (Con.Res.) do not become laws, but are used to "bind" the Congress in internal workings. They must be passed in identical form by both the House and the Senate, but do not go to the President. The best known example of a concurrent resolution is the annual budget resolution.
- House or Senate Resolutions (H.Res., S.Res.) establish policy or procedure only for the chamber that passes them. They are used for rules and to set committee assignments. They do not go to the other chamber or to the President.

To Start the Process

A Member introduces a bill by physically placing it into a box known as the hopper. The parliamentarian then decides to which committee(s) it will be referred. In the Senate, the bill is given to the committee with predominant jurisdiction in the subject area. In the House, a bill may be referred to just one committee or to multiple committees by one of the following methods:

- Split referral: Different portions of the bill are referred to different committees.
- Sequential referral: The bill is initially referred to one committee, then sequentially to one or more other committees (usually for limited time periods).
- Joint referral: The full bill is referred to more than one committee simultaneously, with no committee designated as primary. (This is not a common occurrence.)

In Committee

This is where the greatest culling of legislation occurs. Only about 15 percent of the bills referred to a committee ever get reported out because committees do not have enough time to proceed with more than just a small percentage of the bills referred to them. Any bill the committee does proceed with may be assigned to a subcommittee. As a courtesy, a copy of the bill is sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and to the appropriate agency for comment. (These "executive comments," however, are merely advisory in nature and are not binding on the committee.) The subcommittee then holds hearings on the bill to place information and positions of witnesses and Members on public record and to begin the legislative history of the bill.

Many hearings are almost completely staged. Witnesses are invited to hearings with their views already known and their testimony submitted in advance. When the subcommittee members are ready to consider the bill, they hold a mark-up session. A clerk reads the bill section by section, and members vote whether to approve the language as written, amend it, delete provisions from it, or add provisions to it.

The clerk marks up the bill with the language the subcommittee decides on. When the subcommittee is through, it votes to report the bill back to the full committee.

The full committee, if it chooses to act on the bill, may repeat any or all the steps that occurred at the subcommittee level, or it may just vote to approve the bill the way the subcommittee marked it up. It is at this point – when the bill leaves the committee and goes to the floor – that the processes in the House and Senate differ dramatically.

Characteristics of the Senate

Floor procedure generally operates on the principle of collegiality. Rules and practices are frequently bent or ignored to accommodate even one senator's wishes. The principle of unlimited debate means that once a senator is recognized, they may talk on any subject, and may continue to hold the floor for as long as they wish. Senators may also offer amendments on any subject and at any time to any piece of legislation under debate unless there is a unanimous consent agreement that would prohibit that for a specific piece of legislation.

These two factors give each senator enormous leverage to delay or completely obstruct legislation. Therefore, collegiality and a consensus orientation dominate the Senate. It is the Majority Leader who is responsible for seeking consensus among senators and setting the agenda for the floor.

The presiding officer of the Senate has little power in the chamber beyond keeping order. They must recognize the first senator standing to seek recognition. However, tradition has been to give priority recognition to the Majority Leader or Minority Leader if either seeks it.

If an individual senator gains the floor and uses it to mount a filibuster, the Majority Leader's only means to halt it is to file a cloture petition, which requires the signature of 16 senators. Two days later a vote may be held on a motion to invoke cloture. If at least 60 senators vote for this motion, any further debate is limited to 30 additional hours. Then the matter being filibustered can be put to the Senate for a vote.

Calling up a Senate Bill

A bill reported out by a Senate committee goes on one of two calendars – the Executive Calendar (for treaties and nominations) or the Legislative Calendar (for everything else). Any bill on a calendar may be taken off and brought to the Senate floor for action by one of three means.

- Unanimous consent occurs if no senator objects to taking up the bill. There are no time restrictions on debate, any section of the bill can be amended at any time, and amendments to the bill do not have to be germane.

- A unanimous consent agreement (UCA) could limit debate time on the bill, allow only specified senators to offer amendments, permit amendments only on certain issues, and/or require all amendments to be germane. The key difference between UCA and a rule from the House Rules Committee is that it requires unanimous consent, not just a majority vote.

- A motion to proceed to consideration of the bill requires only a simple majority to take up the bill. This is the least favorite and least used method of bringing a bill to the floor. If the Majority Leader cannot get everyone to agree to a unanimous consent agreement, it means at least one senator has a problem with the bill and probably would filibuster against it. That senator would have two chances to filibuster. The motion to proceed is itself debatable and therefore subject to filibuster, and if a filibuster on the motion is averted or terminated, the bill itself is also open to filibuster.

Characteristics of the House

Rules and precedents are numerous and strictly followed. The Speaker controls floor proceedings with near absolute power. Members do not have "privilege," the automatic right to be recognized to speak on whatever they wish. Certain bills, resolutions, motions, and special calendar items do have privilege, and must be considered on the floor whenever they are presented.

The Speaker may recognize whomever they choose and may ask for what purpose a Member rises to speak (for a speech, to offer a privileged resolution, to make a specified motion) before deciding whether or not to recognize him or her for that purpose. A quorum consists of a majority of the House, 218 Members. Usually, one hour of debate is allowed on each matter before the House, divided between the proponents and the opponents.

To expedite floor consideration of major bills, the House usually "transforms" itself into "The Committee of the Whole." This lowers the quorum requirement to 100 Members, and allows 10 minutes of debate divided between the proponents and the opponents on each amendment offered. Amendments must be germane, and can normally be made only when the section of the bill they seek to amend is under debate.

The Committee of the Whole cannot vote final passage; when all amendments have been accepted or denied, the Committee must dissolve and the House must reconvene for the final vote on the bill.

Calling up a House Bill

Legislation reported from committee is placed on the Union, House, or Private Calendar. Bills that raise revenue, authorize, or appropriate the expenditure of public funds go on the Union Calendar. Bills that do not raise or appropriate money go on the House Calendar. Bills that are not of a public nature but affect an individual (usually immigration cases or claims for financial relief) go on the Private Calendar.

Minor and uncontroversial bills come to the floor by two primary methods: 1) by a unanimous consent request that the House now turn to the consideration of that bill (if no Member objects, the bill is before the House) or 2) under "suspension of the rules." A bill called up under suspension of the rules is debatable for 40 minutes only with the time equally divided between the majority and minority, and with no amendments allowed. A bill needs a two-thirds majority vote of those present to pass under this procedure. If it does not get enough votes, it goes back on the calendar from which it came, and can be considered under other House procedures.

Major bills, most of which are controversial by nature, can come to the floor by two primary methods: 1) a rule from the Rules Committee, or 2) by their "inherent privilege." Usually the chair of the committee that reported the bill goes to the Rules Committee and requests a special rule, which will set the length of time for debate on the bill.

The rule will also determine how the bill may be amended on the floor. A "closed rule" permits no amendments; an "open rule" allows anyone to offer an amendment; a "modified" or "structured rule" specifies which amendments may be offered, which Members may offer amendments, how long each amendmant can be debated; and/or the order in which amendments may be offered. A rule from the Rules Committee may also waive any of the other rules of the House, thereby prohibiting otherwise valid points of order.

While some liken this to moving the goalposts during the game, it is worth remembering that the House's rules are a means to an end. If the majority is willing to dispense with customary procedures in the interest of expediting legislation, it can usually prevail.

A rule from the Rules Committee takes the form of a House Resolution. Just like any piece of legislation from any other committee, it must be voted on by the entire House. Rules are debatable for no less than one hour, and can't be amended.

At the end of the hour, the Member controlling debate will "move the previous question." The House votes, and if the previous question is defeated, the minority gets to offer an alternative rule. If the previous question passes, however (and it almost always does), the rule will be voted on and adopted, and the bill may then come to the floor under the terms specified by the rule.

Some major bills such as those concerning appropriations, internal processes, the budget, and certain other issues may come to the floor without a rule from the Rules Committee because, according to the rules of the House, they have "inherent privilege." Any of these bills must be called up whenever the committee that reported it wishes it to come to the floor. In practice, most of these bills go to the Rules Committee before they are called up so that they can get a rule prohibiting unwanted amendments from being offered.

Resolving House-Senate Differences

Bills have to pass both the House and the Senate in identical form before they can be sent to the President. Sometimes amendments exchanged between the houses can reconcile the differences; the other method is by conference committee. The only rule about the make-up of a conference committee is that it must be composed of members from both chambers.

How many conferees the chamber will send and who those members will be are decisions that the leaders of the respective chambers must make. Regardless of how large the House or Senate delegations are in relation to one another, each chamber gets only one vote on any question before the committee.

Once the conference committee meets, it attempts to iron out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill. On each part of the bill where the versions differ, the committee may choose to adopt the House position, the Senate position, or any position in between.

The final version of the bill must be agreed to by both a majority of the conferees from the House and a majority of the conferees from the Senate. The conference version then goes to the floor of both chambers for a vote. If it passes in both, it is sent to the President to be signed into law. If the President vetoes it, the Congress needs a two-thirds majority in both the House and the Senate to override the veto, a very stringent standard.

Attending Hearings and Observing Floor Action

Committees are where the real work of Congress gets done. As Woodrow Wilson wrote in *Congressional Government,* "It is not far from the truth to say that Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition, whilst Congress in its committee rooms is Congress at work."

Attending a hearing is easy. Most of them are open to the public: one does not need a pass or federal ID to attend one. Generally, the only hearings closed to the public are those that will cover confidential information (usually concerning national security). The daily schedule is available online on house.gov and senate.gov.

Enter the hearing room quietly and take a seat. You do not have to attend the entire hearing; you may enter the room after the hearing has begun

and you may leave whenever you like. No food or drinks are allowed in the hearing room, and conversation should be kept to a minimum. You are allowed to take notes during the proceedings, and you are not required to check briefcases or other materials. A limited number of copies of the testimony may be available to the public at a side table or from a committee staffer.

Do not expect to see more than just a few Members at the hearing. With jam-packed schedules – attending multiple committee hearings, meeting with constituents, participating in floor debate, all at the same time – Members of Congress generally drop in and out of hearings. In their absence, Members usually assign personal staffers to cover the proceedings for them. Only when there is heavy media coverage or when there is a mark-up session (where the Members vote to determine the provisions of the bill) are you likely to see a full panel of members.

Types of Hearings

Legislative hearings – These are hearings where there is a bill under consideration. Witnesses, both pro and con, give their (or their organization's) views on the bill's provisions.

Investigative hearings – Based on Congress's legislative authority but more free-wheeling, these hearings are called to examine a subject that the committee thinks "Congress should take a look at." Often, they precede legislation. Such hearings are also held when there is some evidence of criminal activity or wrongdoing by specific individuals.

Oversight hearings – Because Congress must both authorize and appropriate money for Executive Branch agency programs, it wants to ensure that the agencies conduct those programs in the manner Congress intended. This is done by having agency officials testify about agency operations.

Confirmation hearings – For presidential appointments requiring Senate confi mation, the Senate committee with jurisdiction over the area in which the nominee will serve holds hearings to investigate the nominee's qualifications. The committee issues a recommendation to the full Senate, which then votes to confi m or reject the nomination.

Floor Action

To observe floor action, you will first need to obtain Gallery Passes, one for the House and one for the Senate. They do not cost anything, and you should be able to get both from your representative and one of your senators. They are valid for the entire term of Congress.

Once you have your Gallery Passes, head for the galleries (balconies), located on the third floor of the Capitol building. Access is via the Capitol Visitor Center (see pages 63-66). Briefcases, bags, and any electronic devices (e.g. cameras, cell phones, keyless remotes) must be left with the checkroom in the CVC. Once in the galleries, you are not allowed to read, take notes, talk, applaud, boo, take pictures, eat, drink, or smoke. These and other rules of the galleries were established both for security purposes and as a mark of respect toward the legislators.

Upon entering either chamber's galleries, you will see the rostrum where the presiding officer sits. As you face the rostrum, the Republicans will be on your right, the Democrats on your left.

In the House, the Speaker is the presiding officer, but they usually delegate this duty to another member of the majority. There are no assigned seats on the House floor. Members who want to speak must do so at one of six places — at one of the two microphones located in front of the rostrum, at either the Majority Leader's or Minority Leader's table, or, on occasion, at one of the tables beside each leader's table. Speaking opportunities in the House are tightly regulated: Members normally get five minutes or less to make their remarks, and frequently there are restrictions on what subjects they may address. One common exception to this is "special orders," a period set aside at the end of the day after normal legislative business is finished. During special orders, Members may schedule up to 60 minutes of speaking time, and are allowed to talk on any topic they wish.

Recorded votes in the House are usually conducted by electronic device. Members vote by inserting a card into one of the voting machines fastened to the back of the chairs along the aisles. These cards are not transferable, that is, only Members themselves may cast their votes, and they must do so in person on the House floor. When a vote is called, a screen with

the names of all the Members listed alphabetically lights up on the wall behind the rostrum. A green light is illuminated for each "aye," a red light for each "no," and a yellow light for each "present." All legislative votes in the chamber are public.

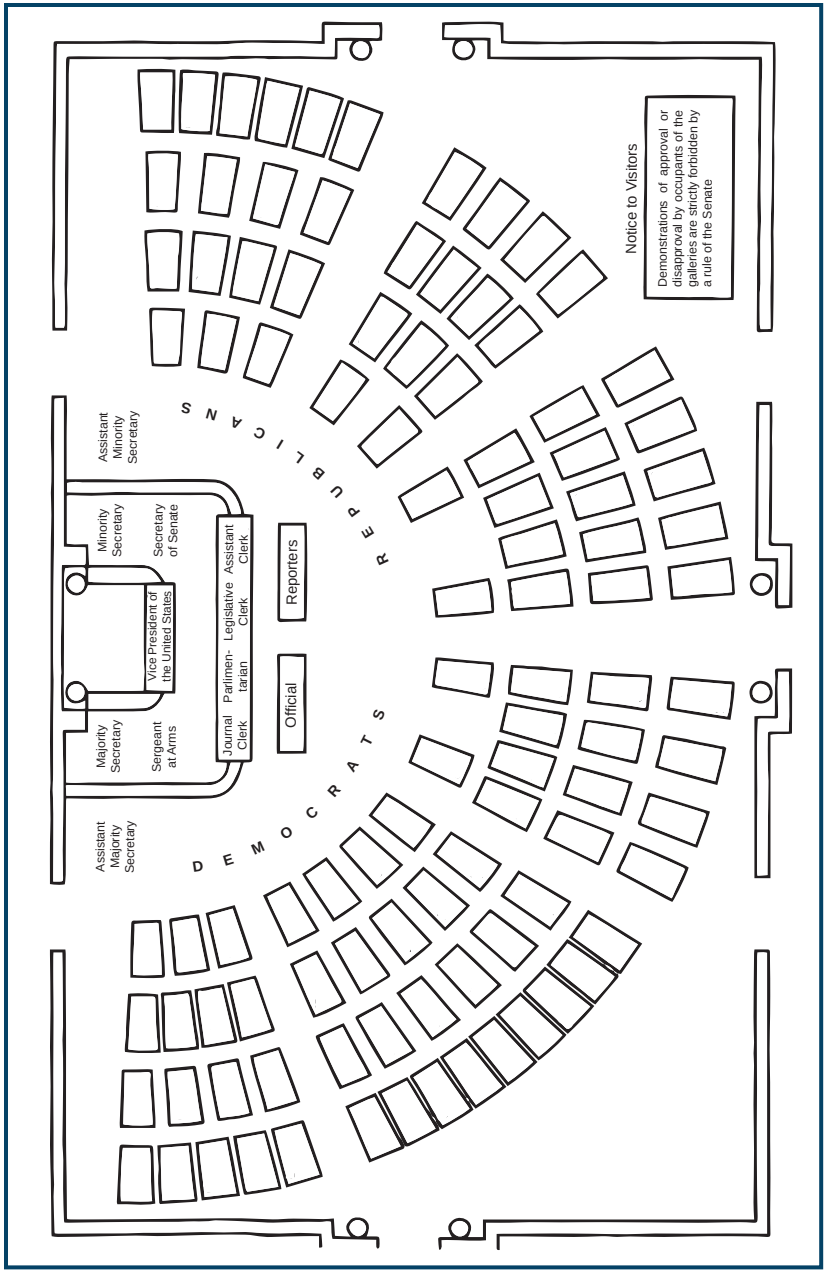
In the Senate, the official presiding officer is the Vice President of the United States, who rarely attends Senate debate except at ceremonial occasions or when needed to cast a tie-breaking vote. In the Vice President's absence, the presiding officer is the President Pro Tem (traditionally the senator of the majority party with the longest continuous service), but the President Pro Tem usually delegates the duty in half-hour stints to the senators with the least seniority in the majority party.

Each senator has their own individually assigned desk. Senators who wish to speak do so from their desks. Unless the Senate specifically agrees to restrict debate time on a particular issue, senators are allowed to speak for as long as they want on any topic they want, but they must remain standing for as long as they are speaking.

The Senate has no electronic voting system, so recorded votes are taken by having a clerk call the roll of senators alphabetically. The Senate frequently conducts quorum calls. Some of these are termed "live" calls, and are intended to determine if there are enough senators present to officially conduct business. More often, however, the quorum call is used as a device to keep the Senate officially occupied while the next speaker gets to the floor, a compromise is struck in the cloakroom, or other "off-stage" activities are taking place. In both the House and the Senate, the presence of a quorum is assumed unless or until a Member raises a point of order.

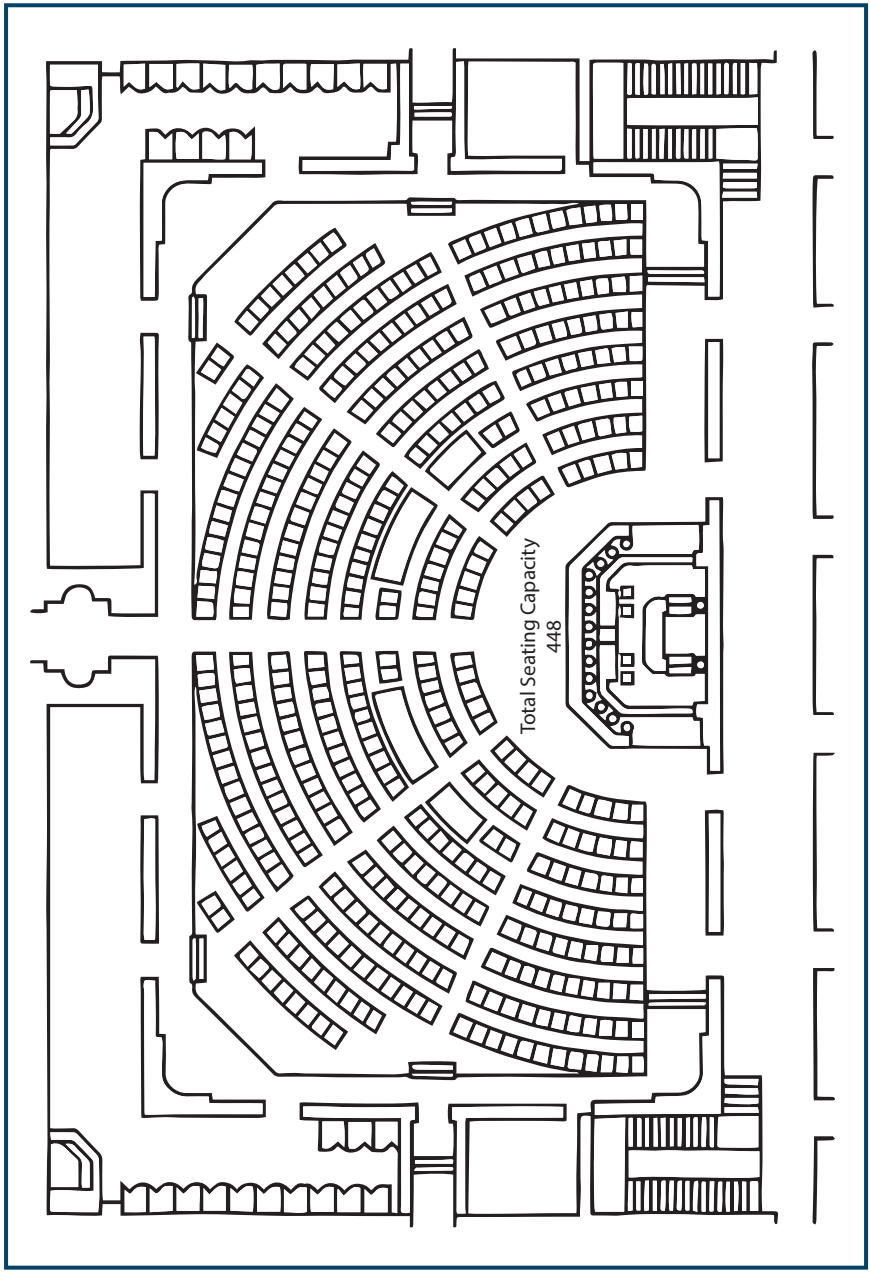
Observing Floor Action in the Senate

Diagram of Senate Chamber



Observing Floor Action in the House

Diagram of House Chamber



Authorizations, Appropriations, and the Budget

The President's Budget

The president kicks off the budget year by submitting a budget request to Congress on the first Monday in February. They usually preview the budget during the State of the Union address in late January.

The legislation that requires the president to submit a budget, the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, created the Bureau of the Budget (renamed the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 1970) to undertake this task. OMB is the budgetary and legislative clearinghouse for the executive branch.

The budget process for executive branch agencies begins at least a year before the president's request goes to Capitol Hill and about 20 months before the beginning of a given fiscal year. OMB assigns budget ceilings to each executive branch department and agency. The departments and agencies then prepare their budget requests and send them to OMB for clearance. OMB compiles all the approved requests into a unified budget document for submission to Congress. The president's budget is not voted on by Congress, which likes to remind that "the president proposes, but Congress disposes."

The Congressional Budget Resolution

After the president submits a budget, Congress begins its budget process. The first order of business is to develop a blueprint to guide decisions on spending and taxes. This blueprint is called the Congressional Budget Resolution, which is supposed to pass Congress by April 15. It is not a law and does not go to the president for signature. It is meant only to provide guidelines for Congress as it considers legislation during the year. It always includes two main components and sometimes a third.

- The Resolution sets forth total figures for all federal spending and revenues with a projected deficit or surplus.
- It gives the Appropriations Committees in the House and Senate a total figure, referred to as the 302(a) allocation, for all discretionary spending. Discretionary spending refers to programs and agencies

subject to annual appropriations; it comprises less than a third of the federal budget. Each Appropriations Committee chair subdivides the 302(a) allocation into 302(b) allocations, one for each of their subcommittees.

- In some years, reconciliation instructions are a part of the Budget Resolution. These require certain authorizing committees to report out bills that make changes in tax policy and mandatory programs. Mandatory programs refer to those programs, for example, Social Security and Medicare, that are written into law by authorizing committees and receive funding without an annual appropriation. The difference between mandatory and discretionary spending is that mandatory programs continue on "auto-pilot" if Congress makes no legislative changes in a given year, while discretionary programs cease to exist without an annual appropriation. The use of reconciliation makes implementing controversial changes in popular mandatory programs or in the tax code easier by bypassing the Senate's filibuster rule.

The Act of Congress passed in 1974 that required the Budget Resolution and created Budget Committees in the House and Senate to write the Resolution also established the Congressional Budget Office. CBO is Congress's in-house information arm on budget issues. In many ways it is Congress's counterpart to OMB.

The Appropriations Process

Getting funding for an agency or a program in the discretionary part of the federal budget is a two-step process:

- Authorization bills, which call for the establishment or renewal of programs and agencies, must pass Congress and be signed into law by the president. These bills also set funding ceilings.
- Appropriations bills must pass Congress and be signed into law by the president to provide funding, which may be at the authorization ceiling or below the ceiling. An authorized program may not necessarily receive any funds in the appropriations process.

According to both Rule 16 in the Senate and Rule 21 in the House,

Congress is not allowed to allocate money to a program or agency until the program or agency has been approved in an authorization bill. Also, legislative authorizing language is not allowed in an appropriations bill, and all policy decisions must be set forth in the authorizing bill.

In fact, Congress frequently appropriates money for programs that have not had their authorizations renewed. Points of order challenging this action are regularly waived in both the House and Senate. In addition, policy language is frequently inserted in appropriations bills, again, by finding a way to circumvent the rules.

The Appropriations Committees

The Appropriations Committees work on their regular appropriations bills that must be signed into law by October 1 to fund the operations of the federal government. All discretionary programs in the federal government require an appropriation every year. The Committees write supplemental appropriations bills when additional money is needed after the fiscal year has begun.

The Committees produce Continuing Resolutions (usually called CRs), which really are "continuing appropriations," when appropriations bills are not passed by the start of a fiscal year. The CR prevents the agencies that would be unfunded in the new fiscal year from shutting down by keeping them running at about the previous year's funding level.

The Appropriations Committees and Subcommittees write reports that give details of the bill and describe its implications to help agencies determine how to implement the law and to help the courts interpret the law. When the House and Senate agree on a final bill, the legislative language is called a Conference Report and is accompanied by a Joint Explanatory Statement by the Managers of the Conference (sometimes known as a statement of Managers). Until 2011, these reports often had specific suggestions as to how money should be spent, referred to as earmarks, which are not legally binding but which are ignored at the agency's peril. Earmarks, it should be noted, may appear at any stage of the legislative process.

Spending by the Authorizing Committees

Authorization bills may do more than just authorize programs. They can obligate money by requiring mandatory spending, such as for Social Security, Medicare, farm programs, or highway projects on the government's part without ever going through the appropriations process. Mandatory spending makes up the largest portion of the budget.

Recent Developments in the Budget Process

Many aspects of the contemporary budget situation can be traced back to around 1980. Historically large tax cuts, along with the growth of entitlements and the resulting large deficits have prompted an ongoing concern over our national debt and various attempts to reduce it. The 1980s saw our first experience with sequestration: across-the-board cuts to non-exempt programs triggered when spending caps were exceeded in a process created in 1985 by Gramm-Rudman-Hollings (GRH). In 1990 GRH was replaced by the Budget Enforcement Act (BEA) that imposed statutory caps on discretionary spending and instituted pay-as-you-go (usually called PAYGO) rules that required any increases in mandatory spending or tax cuts be paid for by cuts in other mandatory spending or tax increases. This eliminated some of the various gimmicks that were being used to circumvent GRH, and addressed the mandatory side of the budget as well as the discretionary side. The early 1990s also saw two significant tax increases (1990 and 1993), and subsequent economic growth that, combined with spending cuts, resulted in a string of surpluses by the late 1990s. While 1997 saw a modest tax cut, it was dwarfed by the size of the earlier 1990s tax increases—though far larger tax cuts were to follow under the Bush 43 administration.

While the 1990s are generally characterized as a time of better fiscal management and prosperity, they also saw an increase in budgetary showdowns. The formal budget process, created by the 1974 Budget Act, has become more fraught over time. The last time the budget process was completed on time, with a budget resolution, all twelve appropriations and a final budget passing Congress and getting signed by the President, was 1994. Increasing reliance on Continuing Resolutions (CRs) that continue to appropriate funds in the absence of completing the full process, is a hallmark of our current system.

At the beginning of this century, as surpluses grew, Congress ignored the caps and PAYGO. Both officially expired in 2002. Since then, Congress has adopted PAYGO as a rule, but not a law. As a result, it has been waived repeatedly. The aughts also saw a return to the large tax cuts and large deficits that were a hallmark of the 1980s.

The August 2011 debt ceiling, unlike previous episodes, became politically tied to major deficit-reduction efforts as the price of averting default. (There is not normally a link: the debt ceiling does not spend additional funds but rather approves borrowing for funds already spent.) Congress enacted the Budget Control Act of 2011 as a direct consequence of the showdown over the debt ceiling, and the subsequent failure of the Super Committee to agree on a deficit reduction plan. One aspect of the law sets into place strict deficit reduction targets over a decade. As Congress has been unable to find cuts elsewhere, sequestration has been invoked, which obtains savings through across-the-board cuts to non-exempt discretionary and mandatory programs, evenly split between defense and non-defense programs. This s equestration provision was designed to cut $1.2 trillion from the deficit over ten years. As with our first experience with sequestration in 1985, this second attempt has invited similar problems.

In 2013 the Bipartisan Budget Act (conventionally called the Ryan-Murray budget) deferred sequestration for two years. The 2015 Bipartisan Budget Act also deferred sequestration for two years. Ongoing features of our fiscal landscape will include wrestling with sequestration, as well as with the debt ceiling. Other elements also include the now-commonplace use of continuing resolutions (CRs) in lieu of passing budgets, as well as perennial difficulties fu nding what used to be larger priorities, such as the Highway Trust Fund.

Calendar of Congressional Budget Activities

An asterisk (*) indicates a schedule provision formally written into the Budget Act. The calendar below reflects the preferred schedule of activities but slippage and overlap are the norm.

First Monday in February*	Deadline for submission of President's budget.
February 15*	Deadline for submission of Congressional Budget Office report on projected spending for the forthcoming fiscal year.
Six Weeks After Submission of President's Budget*	Deadline for committees to submit their "views and estimates" to the Budget Committee.
March	House and Senate Budget Committees develop respective budget resolutions. House Committee reports in March; full House votes on resolution roughly one week thereafter.
April 1*	Deadline for Senate Budget Committee to report its budget resolution. Full Senate acts on budget resolution roughly one week thereafter.
April 1-15	House-Senate conferees develop conference report on budget resolution, and each chamber votes on the resolution conference report.
April 15*	Congress completes action on concurrent resolution on the budget.
April 15 to May	Authorizing committees develop reconciliation legislation (if necessary) and report legislation to Budget Committees. Budget Committees package reconciliation language and report to floors of their respective chambers. After passage in each chamber, House-Senate conferees develop conference report on reconciliation and bring to floors of House and Senate.

May 15*	The House may begin to consider annual appropriations bills.
June 10*	House Appropriations Committee reports the last of its annual appropriations bills.
June 15*	Congress completes action on reconciliation legislation (if necessary).
June 30*	House completes action on House appropriations bills.
July 1 - September 30	Senate completes action on Senate appropriations bills. House-Senate conferees complete action on appropriations conference reports and bring to floors of House and Senate.
October 1*	Fiscal year begins.

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How to Find the Status of Legislation

You can find legislative status information on all bills and resolutions before Congress at **www.congress.gov**.

This easy-to-use search mechanism allows visitors to pinpoint legislative summaries, votes, bill status, and text of current and past legislation. Links provide access to a wealth of information including the Congressional Record, House and Senate committees, schedules, and reports.

In the Senate and House

Senate Documents Room: Distributes Senate bills, reports, public laws, and documents. Committee-produced bills should be obtained from the committees themselves.

B-04 Hart Senate Office Building, (202) 224-7701

Senate Executive Clerk: When Congress is in session, this Office handles all information and materials related to treaties submitted to the Senate for ratification. When Congress is not in session, check with the Senate Documents Room.

Selected Sources of Legislative Information

The Government Printing Office (GPO) produces all congressional publications available to the public. It publishes a monthly catalog. Selected U.S. Government Publications may be ordered by mail, phone, fax, or over the internet. Of particular interest are the Congressional Record and the Digest of Public General Bills and Resolutions. The former contains the proceedings and debates of the House and Senate, the latter provides a brief synopsis of public bills and resolutions, and any changes made therein during the legislative process.

Website: **www.gpo.gov/fdsys/**. This index provides a wealth of information on congressional procedure and legislation.

The Legislative Resource Center

The Legislative Resource Center (LRC) was created to assist congressional offices in retrieving legislative information and to provide easy public access to the legislative records of the House. The office is located in room 135 of the Cannon Building. Research and library materials of the LRC are kept in closed stacks. On request, materials will be retrieved by staff and available for review in the reading room. Inquiries should be directed to the main LRC desk, at which point reference staff will be called to assist patrons. To facilitate research, call ahead to insure availability of materials and to have them retrieved before your visit. It should be noted that the LRC is focused on House legislation although some Senate reports and documents are retained. The Senate library holds documents related to Senate legislation.

Information about Congress that is available through the LRC includes:

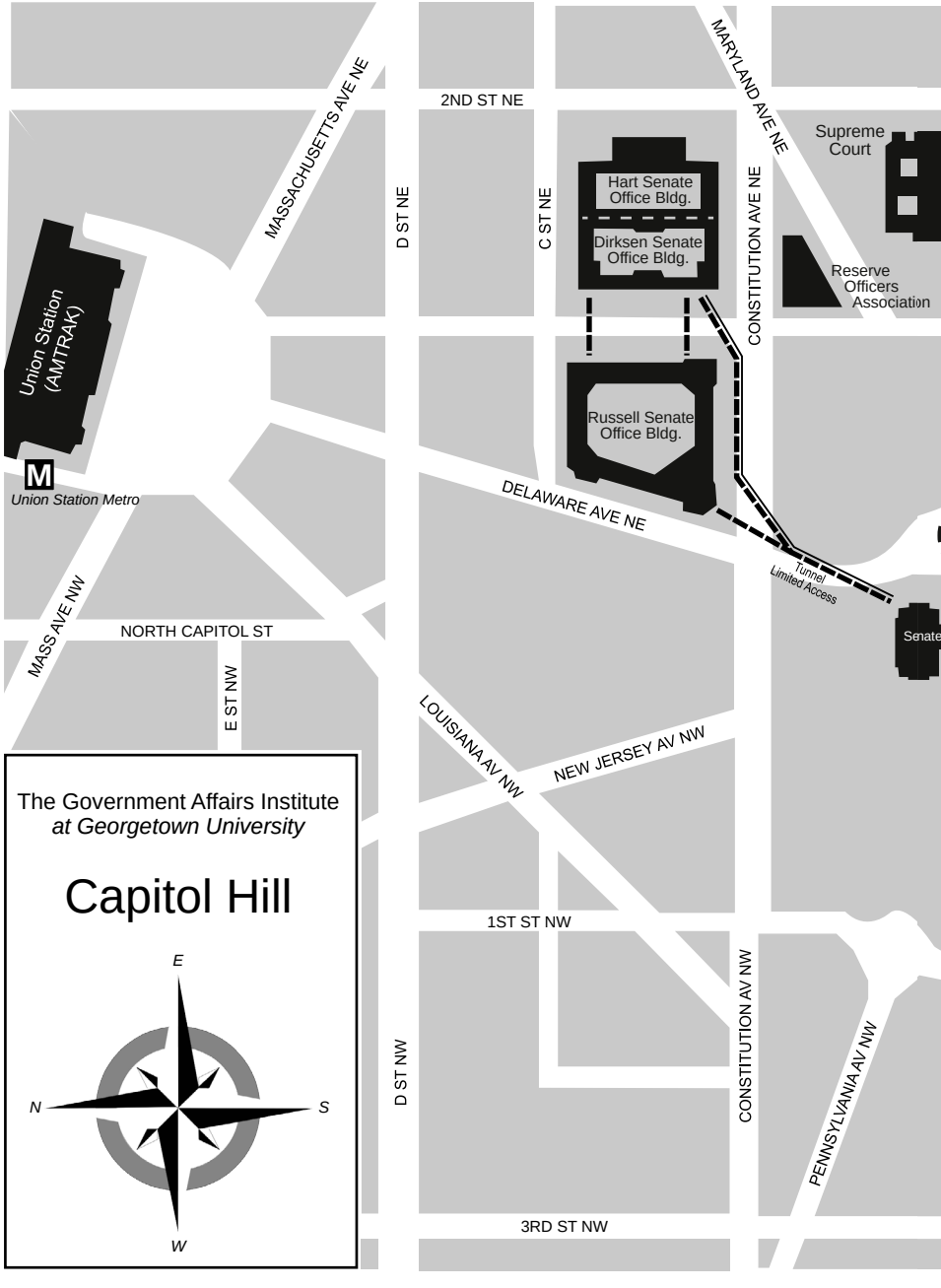
- House and Senate Journals, Bills and Resolutions
- Congressional Record
- House Reports, documents, bills and resolutions, committee hearing transcripts
- Senate Reports
- Congressional Directories

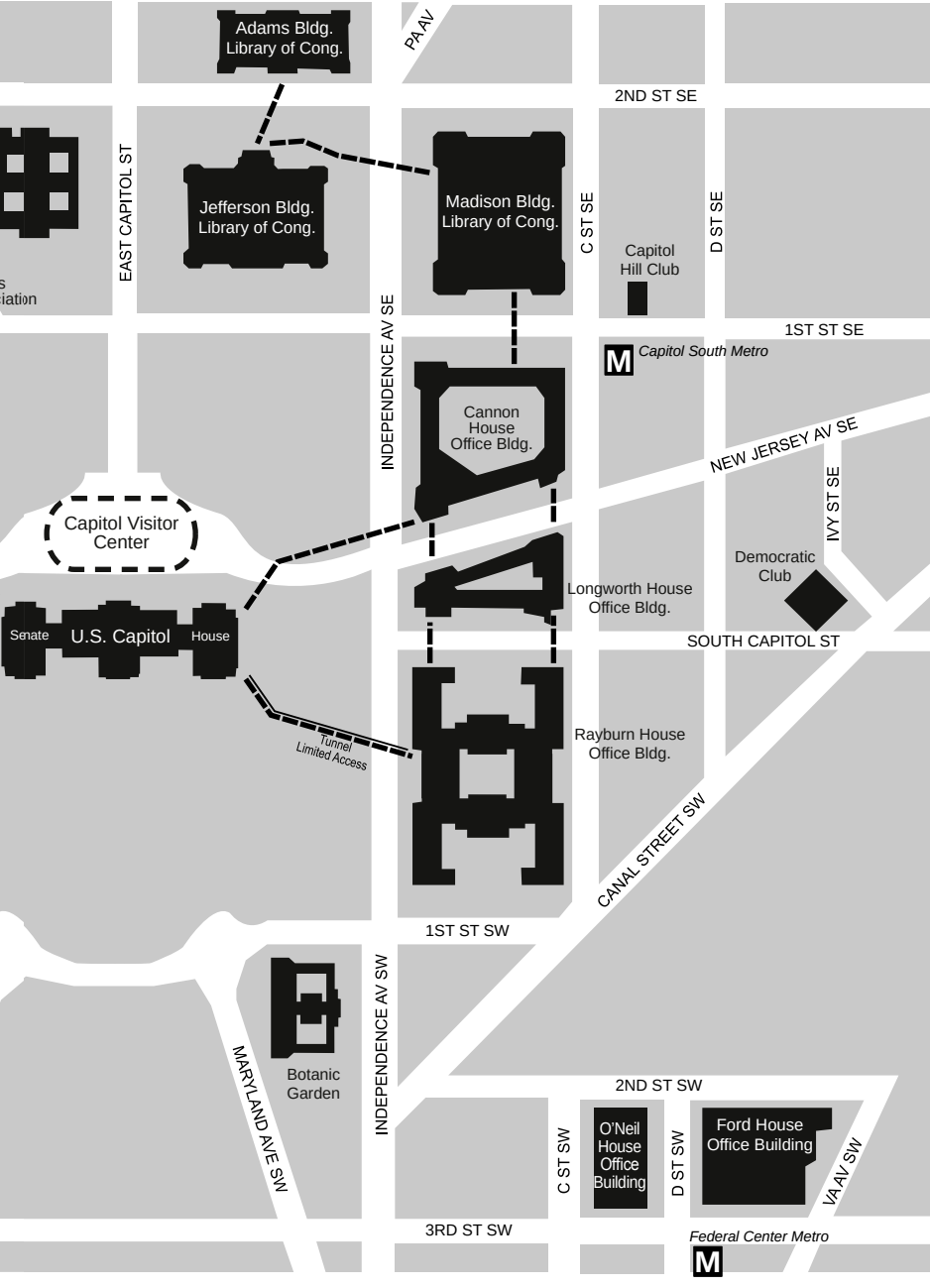
Additional information relating to legislation or the federal government includes:

- Code of Federal Regulations
- Federal Register
- Compilation of Presidential Documents
- Decisions of the Comptroller of the Treasury and the Comptroller General
- Opinions of the Attorney General
- United States Code

Website: **www.clerk.house.gov**

Map of Capitol Hill




Adams Bldg.
Library of Cong.
PA AV
2ND ST SE
Jefferson Bldg.
Library of Cong.
Madison Bldg.
Library of Cong.
EAST CAPITOL ST
C ST SE
D ST SE
Capitol
Hill Club
1ST ST SE
INDEPENDENCE AV SE
Capitol South Metro
Cannon
House
Office Bldg.
NEW JERSEY AV SE
IVY ST SE
Capitol Visitor
Center
Democratic
Club
Longworth House
Office Bldg.
Senate
U.S. Capitol
House
SOUTH CAPITOL ST
Tunnel
Limited Access
Rayburn House
Office Bldg.
CANAL STREET SW
1ST ST SW
INDEPENDENCE AV SW
MARYLAND AVE SW
Botanic
Garden
2ND ST SW
C ST SW
O'Neil
House
Office
Building
D ST SW
Ford House
Office Building
VA AV SW
3RD ST SW
Federal Center Metro

History of the Capitol Building

Home to the legislative branch of the government, the Capitol building crowns Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, and overlooks the National Mall. The cornerstone of the building was laid by George Washington in 1793, and except during the British invasion in 1814, it has housed the Senate and the House of Representatives since 1800.

Since 1793, the Capitol has been built, burned, rebuilt, extended and restored. The original building, completed in 1826, was made of brick clad in sandstone. The north and south wings and connecting corridors added in the mid 19th century and the replica of the east front constructed in the 20th century are made of brick clad in marble. In 1856, five million pounds of masonry was placed on the Rotunda walls. The aggregate weight of the iron in the fire-proof dome is 8,909,200 pounds.

Its length, from north to south, is 751 feet 4 inches; its greatest width is 350 feet. Its height above the base line on the east front to the top of the Statue of Freedom is 288 feet. This bronze 19-foot tall statue tops the dome itself. No building in the District of Columbia is supposed to be taller than the statue, so nothing may stand above "Freedom."

The building contains approximately 540 rooms and has 658 windows (108 in the dome alone) and approximately 850 doorways. The third floor allows access to the galleries from which visitors to the Capitol may watch the proceedings of the House and the Senate when Congress is in session.

In addition to its active use by Congress, the Capitol is a museum of American art and history. Each year, it is visited by an estimated four million people from around the world.

As the focal point of the government's legislative branch, the Capitol is the centerpiece of a complex, which includes the six principal congressional office buildings and three Library of Congress buildings.

One of the earliest known photographs of the Capitol, this image is of the East Front in 1846. Note that the dome is not completed; another 17 years passed before the Statue of Freedom was placed atop the finished dome.

The familiar view of the Capitol building as it looks today.

*Photos courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol and Library of Congress

A Chronology of Capitol Construction Milestones

1790	Congress passes the "Residence Act," which provides that the federal government will be located in a permanent site on the Potomac River by 1800
1791	Pierre Charles L'Enfant develops plan for capital city; he and President Washington select site for "Congress House"
1792	L'Enfant dismissed. Competition announced for design for Capitol; Dr. William Thornton submits design after deadline
1793	On recommendation of President Washington, Thornton awarded first prize in competition. Washington lays cornerstone
1800	Congress moves from Philadelphia. Only the north wing of the Capitol is complete
1801	Supreme Court first meets in Capitol
1803	President Jefferson appoints Benjamin Henry Latrobe to continue work on building
1807	South wing occupied by House
1808	Latrobe begins rebuilding north wing
1810	Senate occupies chamber in north wing; room below constructed for Supreme Court
1814	Capitol burned by British troops
1815	Latrobe rehired to restore the Capitol. He resigns over disputes about authority. Congress meets in the Old Brick Capitol where the Supreme Court Building is now
1818	Charles Bulfinch appointed by President Monroe to succeed Latrobe Center building begun
1819	Supreme Court, Senate, and House meet in reconstructed rooms in the Capitol
1829	Building completed, including west terraces and landscaping
1850	Competition held for design to extend Capitol; five architects split prize
1851	President Fillmore appoints Thomas U. Walter as "Architect of the Capitol Extensions;" cornerstone laid. Library of Congress (then located in the Capitol) destroyed by fire
1855	Congress votes to replace Bulfinch's wooden/copper dome with cast-iron dome designed by Walter; Constantino Brumidi paints first fresco in the Capitol

(continued)

1857	House holds first session in new hall
1895	Senate holds first session in new chamber
1860	Old Senate Chamber converted into Supreme Court Room
1861	Work on extensions suspended for 11-1/2 months because of Civil War; Capitol used during that time as Union hospital, barracks, and bakery. Work on dome continues
1863	The all-bronze Statue of Freedom, nineteen and a half feet high, raised into place atop dome
1864	Old Hall of Representatives designated National Statuary Hall.
1870	Exteriors of extensions completed
1874	Congress places Frederick Law Olmsted in charge of planning Capitol Grounds
1884-1892	Olmsted terrace constructed
1890-1990	Electric lighting installed throughout building and grounds
1894	Completion of modern plumbing throughout building
1897	Library of Congress moves to its first building (later named the Thomas Jefferson Building)
1930	Installation of air conditioning in Capitol Complex
1935	Supreme Court moves into its own building
1949-1951	House and Senate chambers redesigned and remodeled
1958-1962	New marble east front constructed 32-1/2 feet east of old sandstone front. Conference Room EF-100 added
1975-1976	Old Senate Chamber and Old Supreme Court Chamber restored; partial restoration of National Statuary Hall
1983-1987	Restoration of west front
1991-1993	West terrace restoration/infill project
1993	Restoration of the Statue of Freedom
2008	Opening of the Capitol Visitor Center, east front
2014-2016	Restoration of the Capitol Dome

Exceptional Places in the Capitol

The Rotunda is a large, domed, circular room located in the center of the Capitol on the second floor. It has been used for ceremonial functions, such as the unveiling of statues, for inaugurations, and for the lying in state of distinguished citizens. Its lower walls hold historic paintings, and a frescoed band, or "frieze," depicting significant events in American history rings its upper walls. The Rotunda canopy, a 4,664-square-foot fresco painting entitled "The Apotheosis of Washington," depicts the first President of the United States rising into the clouds in glory.

On the Capitol's first floor is the **Crypt**, which supports the Rotunda and dome directly above. Despite its name, the Crypt has never been used for funerary purposes; it serves today for the display of sculpture and interpretive exhibits. The cases around the floor and on the walls contain photographs, models, historic objects, and text that trace the history of the Capitol's design, construction, enlargement, decoration, and restoration. A marble compass rose in the center is directly below the dome. A person standing on this spot can be in all four quadrants of the nation's capital at the same time!

Architect of the Capitol

Until 1935, the Capitol housed the Supreme Court of the United States. From 1810 to 1860, the Court met in what is now known as the **Old Supreme Court Chamber.** This semicircular, umbrella-vaulted room is located north of the Crypt. During that time numerous landmark decisions were handed down from the bench, including *Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward, Gibbons v. Ogden, and Dred Scott v. Sandford.* In 1976, the chamber was restored to its mid-19th- century appearance.

The vaulted, ornately decorated **Brumidi Corridors** on the first floor of the Senate wing are named for the artist Constantino Brumidi, whose elaborate decorative scheme combines classical styles and symbols with subjects from American history and technology. Brumidi himself painted

the frescoed lunettes above the hallway doors to the committee rooms, reflecting the functions of the committees that met there at the time; for example, over the room occupied by the Military Affairs Committee is Bellona, the Roman Goddess of War. Although obscured for many years by later retouching and repainting, the frescoes have been restored to their original appearance. The ornately patterned and colored Minton tile floors were installed between 1856 and 1861.

Th **Old Senate Chamber**, a semicircular, half-domed chamber, located north of the Rotunda, was occupied by the Senate between 1810 and 1859. It was the scene of many of the great national debates of the 19th century, including the Missouri Compromise of 1820, the Hayne-Webster debates of 1830, and the Webster-Clay-Calhoun debates of 1850. After the Senate moved to its present chamber, this room was used by the Supreme Court from 1860 until 1935. In 1976, it was restored to its mid- 19th-century appearance.

The House of Representatives first occupied **National Statuary Hall** (The Old Hall of the House), located south of the Rotunda, in 1809 and used it as their meeting room for almost 50 years. Many important events took place in this semicircular hall. In 1824, the Marquis de Lafayette spoke here, becoming the fi st foreign citizen to address Congress. Presidents James Madison, James Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, and Millard Fillmore were inaugurated here. In 1857, the House moved to its present chamber, and in 1864, Congress invited each state to contribute two statues of prominent citizens for permanent display in the room, which was renamed National Statuary Hall. The room was partially restored in 1976 for the nation's bicentennial celebration. A popular feature to this room is the "whispering spot," where the acoustics enable a whispered comment to be amplified and heard on the other side of the chamber.

History of the House and Senate Office Buildings

The Joseph G. Cannon House Office Building

Architect of the Capitol

Completed in 1908, it is the oldest congressional office building, constructed to relieve overcrowding in the Capitol. Previously, members who wanted office space had to rent quarters or borrow space in committee rooms.

The building is divided into a rusticated base and a colonnade with an entablature and balustrade. The colonnades with thirty-four Doric columns that face the Capitol are echoed by pilasters on the sides of the buildings. Modern for its time, it included such facilities as forced-air ventilation systems, steam heat, individual lavatories with hot and cold running water and ice water, telephones, and electricity.

Of special architectural interest is the rotunda. Eighteen Corinthian columns support an entablature and a coffered dome, whose glazed oculus floods the rotunda with natural light. Twin marble staircases lead from the rotunda to an imposing Caucus Room, which features Corinthian pilasters, a full entablature, and a richly detailed ceiling. In 1962, the building was named for former Speaker Joseph Gurney Cannon.

The Nicholas Longworth House Office Building

Architect of the Capitol

Plans for a second office building were begun in 1925 and it was fi ished in 1933. Longworth is the smallest office building, with a floor area of just under 600,000 square feet.

Because of its position on a sloping site, the rusticated base of

the Longworth Building varies in height from two to four stories. Above this granite base stand the three principal floors, which are faced with white marble. Ionic columns supporting a well-proportioned entablature are used for the building's five porticoes. Two additional stories are partially hidden by a marble balustrade. The Longworth Building is one of Washington's best examples of the Neo- Classical Revival. While the House of Representatives was being remodeled (1940-1950), members met in the large assembly room now used by the Ways and Means Committee. The building was named in 1962 in honor of Nicholas Longworth of Ohio, who served as Speaker of the House of Representatives (1925-1931) when the building was authorized.

The Sam Rayburn House Office Building

Architect of the Capitol

The Rayburn House Office Building, completed in early 1965, was proposed in March 1955 by Speaker Sam Rayburn.

The design of the building is a modified H plan with four stories above ground, two basements, and three levels of underground garage space. A white marble facade above a pink granite base covers a concrete and steel frame. On either side of the main entrance to the building stand two ten-foot marble statues by C. Paul Jennewein, Spirit of Justice and Majesty of Law. On the east and west walls are eight marble rhytons, drinking horns formed of mythical fi ures known as chimeras. Speaker Sam Rayburn, for whom the building was named in 1962, is represented in the building in an oil portrait by Tom Lea, a marble relief by Paul Manship, and a six-foot bronze statue by Felix de Weldon.

The Richard B. Russell Senate Office Building

Architect of the Capitol

Faced with marble and limestone, the Russell Building is the oldest Senate office building. Architecturally, it is nearly identical to the Cannon House Office Building, which was built at the same time (1903-1908) and like the Cannon Building, it has an impressive rotunda.

The Russell Caucus Room still retains its original 1910 benches and settees with carved eagles. The growth of staff and committees in the twenty years following its completion resulted in the addition of a fourth side, the First Street Wing, which was completed in 1933, to the originally U-shaped building. This space has been used for many hearings on subjects of national significance, from the sinking of the Titanic (1912) to Watergate (1974) and the nomination of Justice Clarence Thomas (1991). In 1972 the building was named for former Senator Richard Brevard Russell.

The Everett M. Dirksen Senate Office Building

Architect of the Capitol

The growth of staff and committees in the 1930s and 1940s prompted efforts to provide the Senate with additional space in 1958.

The principal (First Street) elevation was designed with a pilastered central bay with an entablature and pediment. In the center is the American Eagle and symbols representing Equality and Liberty. Five figures on the spandrels of the windows represent shipping, farming, manufacturing, mining, and lumbering. The building was named in 1972 for former Minority Leader Everett McKinley Dirksen.

The Philip A. Hart Senate Office Building

Architect of the Capitol

By 1967 the Senate, experiencing a strain on its existing office facilities, initiated the process that led to the creation of the Hart Building. The building includes suites for fifty senators, with over one million square feet of interior space, including three floors of garage and service facilities, eight floors of offices, and a mechanical equipment floor at the top. A central atrium provides offices and corridors with light in an energy-efficient manner.

Alexander Calder's sculpture, Mountains and Clouds, was installed in 1986 in the building's atrium, and the matte black aluminum clouds, the largest of which weighs 1 ton, are suspended from the roof, revolving above the 39-ton steel mountains. In August 1976, the building was named in honor of former Senator Philip A. Hart.

Congressional Office Building Addresses

Senate Office Buildings

SHOB Hart Senate Office Building
Corner of Constitution Ave. and Second St., NE

SDOB Dirksen Senate Office Building
Constitution Ave. and First St., NE

SROB Russell Senate Office Building
Constitution Ave. and First St., NE

House Office Buildings

CHOB Cannon House Office Building
Independence Ave. and First St., SE

LHOB Longworth House Office Building
Independence and New Jersey Ave., SE
(Room numbers have four digits; second digit is floor number)

RHOB Rayburn House Office Building
Independence Ave. between First St., SW and South Capitol St., SW
(Room numbers have four digits; second digit is floor number)

FHOB Ford House Office Building
Second St. between D St., SW and Virginia Ave., SW
(Room numbers have four digits; second digit is floor number)

Gift Shops

House Gift Shop – Room B-218 Longworth House Office Building
Monday–Friday, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Senate Gift Shop – Room SDB01 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

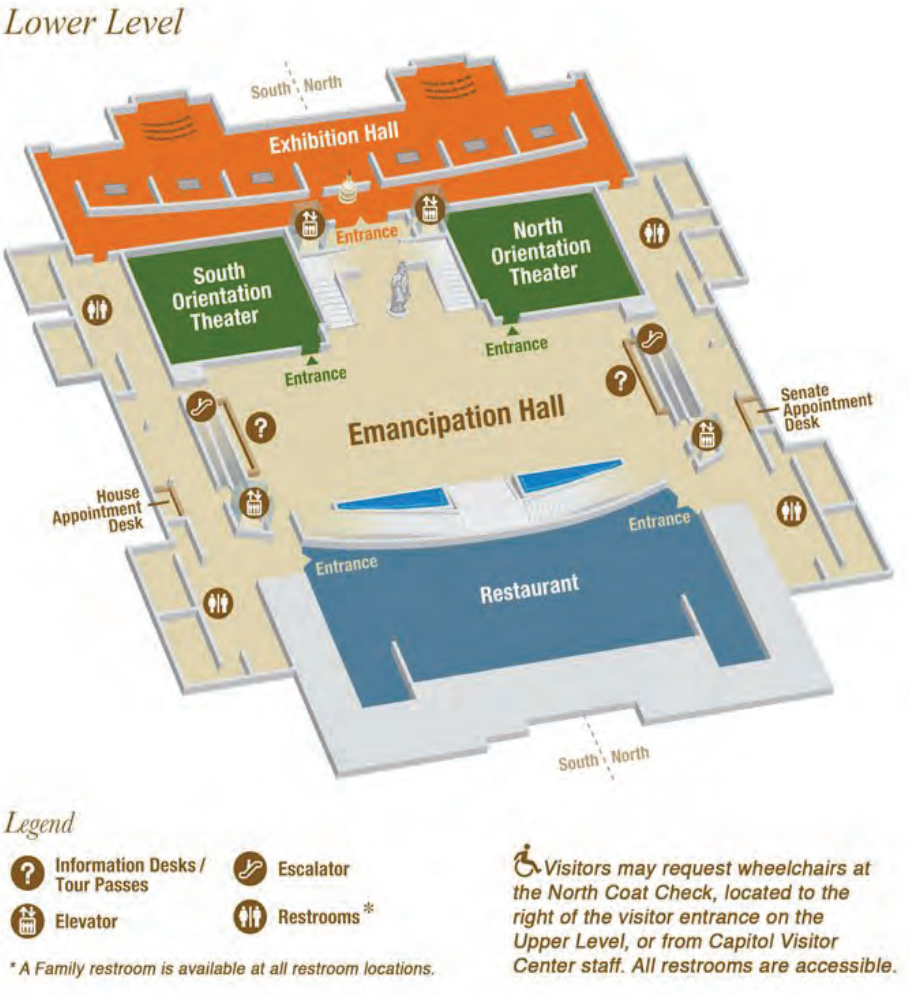
The Capitol Visitor Center

The official opening of the long-awaited Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) took place on December 2, 2008, exactly 145 years after the Statue of Freedom was placed atop the Capitol Dome.

Enter the building via the long, gradually descending walkways on First Street, NE, near East Capitol Street. The CVC is designed for security as well as education, so you will pass through a metal-detector at the entrance. There is a large coatcheck room just beyond the entrance. Note that backpacks are not permitted in the building. The coatcheck room also provides wheelchairs.

Once inside, the scale of the complex is grand. At 580,000 square feet, the Center is about three-quarters the size of the Capitol building itself. It is the first major addition to the Capitol since 1962, when the East Front was extended. Indeed, the CVC lends itself to description by number: It took 9,000 workers, 400,000 pieces of stone, and 65,000 truckloads of dirt to construct a facility that can accommodate 4,000 people with 26 bathrooms, two theatres, two gift shops, and a cafeteria that seats 530 customers.

The central space inside the CVC is Emancipation Hall, named in honor of the slaves who built the original Capitol building. Photographers will want to capture the stunning view of the Capitol dome through the two 30-by-70 foot skylights overhead. The open, airy room is surrounded by statues of two dozen notable fi ures in American history. At one end of the hall stands the imposing plaster model that was used to cast the bronze Statue of Freedom during the Civil War.



The information desk in Emancipation Hall is the starting point for Capitol tours. Tours may be arranged through Members' offices or online at **www.visitthecapitol.gov**. A limited number of same-day tour tickets may be available. The first stop on the tour is in one of two accessible theatres, where a 13-minute orientation film depicting the role of Congress in our constitutional design is shown. The film makes the important point that Congress is often a cacophony of voices, but that is what representation of legitimate interests sounds like in a healthy democracy. Note that the tour

Architect of the Capitol

points out highlights (such as the Rotunda and Statuary Hall) but does not include the House or Senate galleries.

Immediately beyond Emancipation Hall is the Exhibition Hall, which features congressional treasures old and new. Artifacts include the trowel George Washington used to lay the Capitol cornerstone in 1793, the desk Abraham Lincoln used for his Second Inaugural Address and the catafalque on which he lay in state, and various items rotated in for display from the Smithsonian Institution's American History Museum. Among the many letters on display are George Washington's letter to Congress about victory at Yorktown, Thomas Jefferson's request for congressional funding for the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and John F. Kennedy's speech promising to put a man on the moon.

For more contemporary history, there are large screens displaying live video feeds from the House and Senate chambers when Congress is in session. A series of interactive terminals allow visitors to take quizzes on their knowledge of Congress and get instant feedback. There is also a touchable 11-foot cross-section of the Capitol dome that replicates the interior (including bas-reliefs and paintings) in exquisite detail.

The CVC is the primary point of access to the Capitol building. Visitors to the House and Senate galleries must first obtain gallery passes from their respective Members' and Senators' offices; the CVC does not distribute them. For visitors with gallery passes, there are staging areas with designated elevators to carry them directly to the chamber galleries on the third floor of the Capitol. Watch the overhead signs for directions.

The Office of Visitor Services

www.visitthecapitol.gov; (202) 226-8000.

Open Monday – Saturday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day, and Inauguration Day.

Other Points of Interest on Capitol Hill

U.S. Botanic Garden

Architect of the Capitol

The United States Botanic Garden is a living plant museum. It is open daily, free of charge, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Exhibits interpret the role of plants in supporting earth's diverse and fragile ecosystems and in enriching human life. Public displays are located in the Conservatory, on the surrounding terrace gardens, and in adjacent Bartholdi Park. Established by Congress in 1820, the U.S. Botanic Garden is one of the oldest botanic gardens in North America. The garden's first greenhouse was constructed in 1842. Since 1849 the Garden has been located at the eastern end of the Mall. The Garden has been administered through the Office of the Architect of the Capitol since 1934. For more information go to www.usbg.gov/ or call (202) 225-8333.

The Summer House

Architect of the Capitol

This brick structure, set into the sloping hillside of the West Front lawn among the paths that lead from Pennsylvania Avenue to the Senate side of the Capitol, has offered rest and shelter to travelers for over a century. Constructed to provide comfort for those who explore the area on foot, it is also a pleasant location from which to appreciate the Capitol's classical architecture and the landscaping that surrounds it.

The Summer House is constructed in the form of an open hexagon. The red brick used for its walls is laid in geometric and artistic patterns, forming volutes and other shapes. The brick takes on a "basket-weave" texture on

the exterior walls on either side of each doorway. Arched doorways, each fitted with wrought-iron gates and flanked by small windows, occupy three of the building's six walls.

Inside, stone benches with armrests alternate with the doorways and provide seating for 22 people; the benches are shaded and sheltered by projecting roofs of red Spanish mission tile. Above each bench is a large oval window flanked by decorative niches, each niche with a different design of intertwined scrollwork. Two of the three windows are filled by

thick stone panels with octagonal perforations; the third, ornamented with a wrought-iron grille, affords a view into a small grotto, where a stream of water falls and splashes over the rocks. The water supply for the grotto was originally provided by a runoff stream from a drinking fountain at the Capitol's west entrance. Later, a city-water stream was made to flow over the rocks.

The Summer House was begun in 1879 and completed in late 1880 or early 1881 by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. Olmsted had been appointed by Congress in 1874 to develop and improve the Capitol grounds, which had been enlarged in response to the addition of the north and south wings of the Capitol. Olmsted originally planned two Summer Houses for the Capitol Grounds (references in his letters identify a northern and a southern Summer House); however, congressional objections to the northern Summer House before its completion prevented the construction of the southern one.

The Peace Monument

The white marble Peace Monument was erected in 1877-1878 to commemorate the naval deaths at sea during the Civil War. The 44-foot- high monument stands in the circle to the west of the Capitol at Pennsylvania Avenue and First Street, N.W.

At the top of the monument, facing west, stand two classically robed female figures. Grief holds her covered face against the shoulder of History and weeps in mourning.

Architect of the Capitol

History holds a stylus and a tablet that was inscribed "They died that their country might live." Below Grief and History, another life-size classical female figure represents Victory, holding high a laurel wreath and carrying an oak branch, signifying strength. Below her are the infant Mars, the god of war, and the infant Neptune, god of the sea.

Facing the Capitol is Peace, a classical figure draped from the waist down and holding an olive sprig. Below her are symbols of peace and industry. A dove, now missing and not documented in any known photographs, once nested upon a sheaf of wheat in a grouping of a cornucopia, turned earth, and a sickle resting across a sword. Opposite, the symbols of science, literature, and art (including an angle, a gear, a book, and a pair of dividers) signify the progress of civilization that peace makes possible.

Inscribed "In memory of the officers, seamen and marines of the United States Navy who fell in defense of the Union and liberty of their country, 1861-1865," this sculptural group has also been called the Naval Monument.

The idea for the monument was conceived by Admiral David D. Porter, who had commanded fleets of gunboats and troop transports during the war, and the sculptor was Franklin Simmons (1839-1913), who created four statues and three busts for the United States Capitol. He carved the Carrara marble in Rome and worked directly with Admiral Porter on many changes in the designs, including the addition of other fi ures.

In the almost 100 years since its completion, the condition of the monument had deteriorated to such an extent that restoration became necessary. Carrara marble cannot withstand the outdoor environment, particularly modern acid rain, which dissolves the porous stone and leaves a sugary, crystalline surface. The marble was also disfigured by grime, dark lichen growths, and black crusts caused by pollution. Several limbs and objects were broken off through weathering or by protestors climbing the monument.

The laborious conservation treatment markedly brightened the marble and brought out obscured details. Although it was not possible to restore the monument to its original appearance, further deterioration was arrested and the life of the monument has been prolonged.

The Garfield Monument

Architect of the Capitol

The sculptural monument to President James A. Garfield by John Quincy Adams Ward (1830-1910), cast by The Henry-Bonnard Co. of New York, with a pedestal designed by Richard Morris Hunt, is an outstanding example of American sculpture. The monument stands in the circle at First St., S.W., and Maryland Ave., where it was unveiled on May 12, 1887.

President Garfield was elected in 1880 and was assassinated in 1881 by a disgruntled office-seeker after serving only four months of his term. The memorial was commissioned in 1884 by the Society of the Army of the Cumberland, of which Garfield had been a member. Funds for the project came from the society's Garfield Monument Fair, which was held in the Rotunda and Statuary Hall in 1882, congressional appropriations of $7,500 in funds from the sale of condemned cannons, and other sources.

The tapered, cylindrical granite pedestal holds four over-life-size bronze figures, with the portrait statue of Garfield at the top and three allegorical figures representing different phases of his career below. The top-coated figure, depicted as if giving a speech, gazes intently outward, a sheaf of papers in his left hand, his right resting on a book on a draped column. The toe of one shoe projects over the edge of the base, giving the work a sense of vigor and incipient movement. Below him, the young student, draped in a sheep skin, suggests Garfield's early work as a teacher. The bearded, middle-aged warrior, wearing a wolf skin, represents his Saxon ancestry and his military career during the Civil War.The older statesman, dressed in a toga and holding a tablet inscribed"Law/Justice/Prosperity,"symbolizes Garfield's achievements as congressman, senator, and president.

Ward was known for his portraits and for working directly from nature rather than from classical art, and his portrait of Garfield is particularly life-like since the two men were friends. The reclining figures were

influenced by Michelangelo's Medici Tomb, while the overall composition shows awareness of the French Beaux-Arts style.

The Senate Garage Fountain

Architect of the Capitol

The display fountain in the park between the Capitol and Union Station is located over the Senate underground garage. Authorization for its construction, for that of the terraces, and for landscaping was given on March 4, 1929. The fountain was designed by architects Bennett, Parsons, and Frost and built under the direction of Architect of the Capitol David Lynn. It operated for the first time on July 16, 1932.

The fountain, a hexagonal granite monolith with high jets of water spouting from its center, is surrounded by six smaller jets on a lower level. Lion-head spouts on the faces of the hexagon project streams of water into a large circular basin with a scalloped stone rim, over which the water spills into a larger oval basin. The hexagon is 25 feet across and the basin measures 85 feet by 100 feet.

From the oval basin the water is piped underground to three sculpted stone bubbler fountains in the north wall of the terrace. From there the water is again piped underground to the lower level of the 180-foot-by-80-foot reflecting pool.

The present lighting display is comprised of 114 underwater light fixtures with red, green, blue, and clear lenses controlled by a computer running a program that repeats every 20 minutes. Recirculating pumps ensure water conservation, and fresh water is added occasionally to replace any losses. Of the three circulating pumps, two have a capacity of 3,000 gallons per minute; the other can pump 1,650 gallons per minute. It is possible for all pumps to discharge against a 40-foot head.

The main fountain is fabricated of Minnesota Pink granite, with a basin of Minnesota Green granite. The piers and other granite elements facing the

Russell Senate Office Building terrace are made of Mount Airy granite, which blends visually with its surroundings.

The Robert A. Taft Memorial and Carillon

Architect of the Capitol

The Robert A. Taft Memorial and Carillon is located north of the Capitol, on Constitution Avenue between New Jersey Avenue and First Street, N.W. Designed by architect Douglas W. Orr, the memorial consists of a Tennessee marble tower and a 10-foot bronze statue of Senator Taft sculpted by Wheeler Williams. The shaft of the tower measures 100 feet high, 11 feet deep and 32 feet wide. Above the statue is inscribed, "This Memorial to Robert A. Taft, presented by the people to the Congress of the United States, stands as a tribute to the honesty, indomitable courage, and high principles of free government symbolized by his life."

The twenty-seven bells in the upper part of the tower are among the finest in the world and were cast in the Paccard Bell Foundry in Annecy, France. The largest, or bourdon bell, weighs 7 tons. The bells are well matched and produce rich, resonant tones. At the dedication ceremony on April 14, 1959, former President Herbert Hoover stated, "When these great bells ring out, it will be a summons to integrity and courage." The bells are automatically operated to strike the hour and sound on the quarter hour; they can also be played manually.

Construction of the memorial was authorized by Congress in July 1955. It was funded by popular subscription from every state in the nation. More than a million dollars was collected.

Robert A. Taft was born on September 8, 1889, in Cincinnati, Ohio; his father, William Howard Taft, was the only person to serve as both President of the United States and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Robert Taft was elected to the Senate in 1938 and served until his death in New York on July 31, 1953. He was affectionately dubbed "Mr. Republican."

Bartholdi Fountain and Park

Architect of the Capitol

The Bartholdi Fountain, designed by the sculptor of the Statue of Liberty, graces the flower-filled Bartholdi Park at 245 First St., near the U.S. Botanic Garden and provides a welcome oasis for visitors from dawn to dusk. The fountain is based on Classical and Renaissance forms and is an elegant expression of the Gilded Age in which it was created.

The fountain was designed symmetrically in three identical sections. The triangular base with turtles and large shells rises to the pedestal, from which three identical nereids (sea nymphs) rise on thirds. Between their feet are fish and scattered sea shells and coral. The nymphs, with arched backs, are caryatids, following a tradition of sculpture founded in classical Greece. They seem to hold up the large basin, which is actually supported by the central column. The nymphs wear headdresses of leaves. Their clinging drapery, clasped by shells at the waist, reveals their supple figures. Despite its monumental size (it weighs approximately 40 tons and is 30 feet high, and the sculptured female figures are 11 feet tall), each element of the fountain is beautifully detailed.

The curved arms of the nereids lead the viewer's eye to the large basin above, which supports twelve lights. The fountain continues with three youthful tritons playfully holding out seaweed and is topped by a mural crown resembling a crenellated city wall.

Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi (1834-1904) created the fountain for the 1876 International Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. At the close of the Exhibition, the fountain was purchased for $6,000 (half of its estimated value) by the United States government at the suggestion of Frederick Law Olmsted.

The design was based on a model he had created in 1867, during the time that Bartholdi was also working on his design for the Statue of Liberty. The fountain, cast in Paris by A. Durenne, was painted to look like bronze.

When it was created, the fountain fused modern gas-lighting and cast-iron technologies with water and was intended to allegorically represent Light and Water. Bartholdi saw this work as symbolically appropriate for the modern city and its gas lamps made the fountain a popular attraction since it was one of the first monuments in the city of Washington to be brightly illuminated at night. The lights surrounding the basin were added in 1886, and the round glass globes replaced the original gas fixtures when the fountain was fitted for electric lighting in 1915.

In 1932, the fountain was erected in the park where it still stands, which was renamed in honor of Bartholdi in 1985. The fountain was restored in 1986.

Congressional Services for Disabled Visitors

The Office of Congressional Accessibility Service (OCAS) provides a variety of services for visitors with disabilities. The office is located on the first floor of the Capitol, off the Crypt area, directly below the Rotunda. It is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call (202) 224-4048 (voice) or (202) 224-4049 (TDD-TTY) to make a request or obtain more information. www.aoc.gov/accessibility-services

Library of Congress Tour Information

Scheduled Public Tours

Docent-led scheduled public tours are offered Mondays through Saturdays in the Great Hall of the Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. Tours are free and reservations are not required. For more information on guided tours, ask at either of the information desks in the Visitors' Center of the Jefferson Building (corner of First St. and Independence Ave.) or contact the Visitor Services Office at (202) 707-8000.

Public Tour Schedule:

Monday – Friday: 10:30 and 11:30 a.m., 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m.
Saturdays: 10:30 and 11:30 a.m., 1:30 and 2:30 p.m.
Website: **www.loc.gov/visit**

Group Tours

Special tours can be prearranged through the Visitor Services Office for groups of 10 to 60 participants. These tours are available only by reservation, Monday through Friday, and can begin as early as 9:00 a.m. or as late as 1:00 p.m. Reserved group tours are about one hour in length (this allows time for the personal security check at the entrance and the collections security check at the exit). Each tour is led by a docent who explains the history of the Library and the Jefferson Building and services the Library provides to Congress and the nation. Because this is a lecture tour, it is not suitable for school groups younger than 5th grade. Call (202) 707-0919.

Library of Congress Building Access

John Adams Building (LA)
Second St. & Independence Ave., SE.
Enter on Second St. side of building.
Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday: 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Friday, & Saturday: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thomas Jefferson Building (LJ)
10 First St., SE.
Enter on First St. side of building.
Monday-Saturday: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

James Madison Building (LM)
101 Independence Ave., SE.
Enter on Independence Ave.
Monday – Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 p.m.,
Saturday: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Most Reading Rooms are open from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Check **www.loc.gov/visit/hours**

For Visitors With Disabilities

The Library of Congress American Sign Language Interpreting Services Program (ASL/ISP) will provide interpreting services (American Sign Language, Contact Signing, Oral and/or Tactile) if requested five business days in advance of the event, and makes every effort to accommodate needs for interpreting services. Call (202) 707-6362 (TTY/voice) to make a specific request.

Library of Congress Buildings

The Library of Congress occupies three buildings on Capitol Hill. The three buildings are remarkable public spaces and works of art. Each is named after a President of the United States who had a strong connection with the creation of Congress's library.

Thomas Jefferson Building

Architect of the Capitol

When the Library of Congress was first established, it was housed in the U.S. Capitol. The first Library of Congress building, opened in 1897, is named for President Thomas Jefferson, who offered his personal collection of books as a replacement after the British burned the Capitol in 1814 and destroyed the Library's collections. Congress agreed in 1815 to purchase Jefferson's eclectic and comprehensive collection, thus greatly expanding the scope of the Library.

John Adams Building

Architect of the Capitol

President John Adams signed into law on April 24, 1800, an act moving the seat of government to Washington; it contained a provision appropriating $5,000 "for the purchase of such books as may be necessary for the use of Congress...and for fitting up a suitable apartment for containing them." The 1939 John Adams Building honors the second U.S. President.

The simple structure of the building was intended as a functional and efficient bookstack encircled with work spaces. Today, the building's decorative style, which contains elements of Art Deco inspired by the Exposition des Arts Dècoratifs held in Paris in 1925, is widely admired.

James Madison Memorial Building

Architect of the Capitol

The Library's newest building is a memorial to President James Madison, whose influence on the establishment of the Library of Congress predates the U.S. Constitution. In 1783, as a member of the Continental Congress, Madison became the first sponsor of the idea of a library for Congress by proposing a list of books on the subjects of law, history, politics, and geography that he considered "indispensable" for legislators. The James Madison Memorial Building was dedicated on April 24, 1980.

Communicating with Members and Staff

There are no laws or regulations that limit the rights of private citizens to communicate with Members of Congress or congressional staff. On the contrary, citizens are encouraged to communicate with their representatives, and should feel free to visit with their own representative or senators both in Washington and in their district or state offices. Always keep in mind that Members and staff have extremely busy schedules when Congress is in session, and some ways of communicating can be more effective than others.

If you are a federal employee, you do not give up your right as a citizen to communicate with Members or staff, but there are legal restrictions and professional guidelines that govern your contact with the Hill.

Title 18, Sec. 1913 of the U.S. Code, titled "Lobbying with Appropriated Moneys," prohibits federal employees from engaging in direct lobbying, grassroots lobbying, or use of the media intended to influence Members of Congress regarding any legislation or appropriation, before or after its introduction. That same section, however, states that this shall not prevent federal officials from providing, through official channels, information requested by any Members of Congress.

In general, federal officials should communicate with members or

staff through official channels only on any issues related to their own departments or agencies. In any case, consultation with the department's congressional relations staff regarding any interaction or communication with the Hill is always advisable.

The following information is intended to assist individual citizens in contacting their own member or senators.

Via E-mail

The U.S. Congress allows you to search for information about a Member by name, state, committee, or zip code. Most Members have an e-mail address that can be found by going to their website. To fi d your senator's website, go to **www.senate.gov**; for your representative's website go to **www.house.gov**. The volume of e-mail has increased exponentially since its introduction in 1994. The number of messages processed has exceeded 30 million per month.

By Mail

Since the anthrax incident in 2002, Congress has taken many steps to heighten security procedures on U.S. mail sent to its buildings. In order to protect members, mail sent to Capitol Hill is now shipped to a safe location and put through an irradiation process before being delivered to Members' offices. First-class mail sent from anywhere in the U.S. takes approximately two weeks to reach a Member's office.

Another effective means of communicating with your Member is to send correspondence to one of his or her district or state offices. U.S. mail is likely to reach those offices more quickly and if the staff is not able to deal with your specific concern, they may forward it to Capitol Hill on your behalf.

If you decide to write a letter, this list of helpful suggestions will improve its effectiveness:

1. Address only one issue in each letter, and, if possible, keep the letter to one page.
2. Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph of the letter. Support your position with the rest of the letter.

3. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., House bill: H. R._____, Senate bill: S._____.
4. Be courteous, to the point, and factual. If possible, include examples of how the legislation is likely to affect you and others in order to support your position.
5. If you believe legislation is wrong and should be opposed, say so, indicate the likely adverse effects, and suggest a better approach.
6. Ask for a legislator's views but do not demand support. Even if your position is not supported on one issue or bill, it may be on another.
7. If writing longhand, take care to write legibly, especially with your name and return address.
8. The suggested address style is:

To Your Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
(Rm. #) (name of) Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:_____

To Your Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
(Rm. #) (name of) House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:_____

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Note: When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address them as "Dear Mr. Chairman," "Dear Madam Chairwoman," or "Dear Mr. Speaker," "Dear Madam Speaker."

By Telephone

To find your representative's phone number, you may call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your senator's and/or representative's office. After identifying yourself, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (S.___/H.R.8___)." You will also want to state reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your senator's or representative's position on the bill. You may be directed to voicemail or told they will follow up with you in writing or by e-mail.

In Person

A personal visit with a Member of Congress or staffer is an effective way to emphasize your interest in an issue or bill. However, you should not expect a meeting to last longer than 15 minutes, and be prepared for the meeting to be interrupted or cut short. Some tips for meeting a member or staffer to urge support or opposition to legislation:

1. Make an appointment, state the subject to be discussed, the time needed, and identify persons who will attend.
2. Select a spokesperson if others are going with you, and agree on your presentation.
3. Know the facts, both legislative and related to your position. If a bill exists already, know the number and title. If the matter has been voted on before, know the member's position.
4. Present the facts in an orderly, concise, positive manner.
5. Relate the positive impact of legislation you support and problems it corrects. Or, relate the negative impact of legislation you oppose and suggest, where appropriate, a different approach.
6. Leave a concise fact sheet. If possible, no more than one page.
7. Encourage questions and discussion and offer to be a resource for additional information.
8. Ask for favorable consideration, thank the legislator for his or her time and courtesy, and leave promptly.

Useful Phone Numbers

US Capitol Switchboard . . . . . (202) 224-3121
Architect of the Capitol . . . . . (202) 228-1793
Congressional Budget Office . . . . . (202) 226-2600
Congressional Research Service . . . . . (202) 707-5700
Federal Register . . . . . (202) 741-6000
Library of Congress . . . . . (202)707-5000
Office of Special Services . . . . . (202) 224-4048
Senate and House Bill Status . . . . . (202) 225-1772

Senate Offices (Room/Phone Numbers):

Cloak Rooms
- Democratic . . . . . .(202) 224-4691
- Republican . . . . . .(202) 224-6191

Floor Information
- Democratic . . . . . .(202) 224-8541
- Republican . . . . . .(202) 224-8601

Press Gallery, S-316 . . . . . .(202) 224-0241

Document Room, SH-BO4 . . . . . .(202) 224-7860

House Offices (Room/Phone Numbers):

Cloak Rooms
- Democratic . . . . . .(202) 225-7330
- Republican . . . . . .(202) 225-7350

Floor Information
- Democratic . . . . . .(202) 225-7400
- Republican . . . . . .(202) 225-2020

Press Gallery, H-315 . . . . . .(202) 225-3945

Document Room, CHOB-B106, ...(202) 226-5200

Political Party Information:

Democratic National Committee . . . . . .(202) 863-8000
Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee . . . .(202) 863-1500
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee . . . . . .(202) 224-2447
Democratic Governors Association . . . . . .(202) 772-5600
Republican National Committee . . . . . .(202) 863-8500
National Republican Congressional Committee . . . . . .(202) 479-7000
National Republican Senatorial Committee . . . . . .(202) 675-6000
Republican Governors Association . . . . . .(202) 662-4140

Useful Websites

Architect of the Capitol Home Page

www.aoc.gov

This site provides useful information for visitors about the Capitol complex.

Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress

bioguide.congress.gov

Searching by last name, first name, position, or state brings up an informative biography of past and present members of Congress.

Capitol Hearings

www.capitolhearings.org

Live video of selected Senate hearings with links to House committee streaming video.

Capitol Visitor Center

www.visitthecapitol.gov

Congressional Budget Office

www.cbo.gov

This site offers the budget and economic information that the CBO provides to Congress including monthly budget reviews, historical data, current budget projections, various policy briefs and a glossary.

Congress.gov

www.congress.gov

The official source for federal legislative information. It includes all data sets previously available on Thomas which include legislative sumaries, vote, bill status, and text of current and past legislation.

C-SPAN Online

www.c-span.org

Watch actual C-SPAN television coverage of House and Senate proceedings. General programming information is also provided.

Congressional Record (via GPO Access)
www.gpoaccess.gov/crecord/index.html
The Congressional Record is the official daily publication of congressional proceedings and debates. This site contains the Record from 1995 to the present.

Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC)
www.pueblo.gsa.gov
This site offers information regarding government services and consumer problems. Search for "order a flag" to find out how to purchase a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol or click on any of the topic buttons for consumer tips.

First Federal Congress Project
www.gwu.edu/~ffcp
This website, created by the FFCP (which is affiliated with The George Washington University) features a comprehensive online exhibit and list of publications on the history of the First Federal Congress. The exhibit includes a wealth of speeches and letters from the first congressmen, artwork from their era, and clear explanations of the issues that the first Congress dealt with.

The Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University
gai.georgetown.edu
This site offers a free online newsletter, blog, and other information about current congressional matters as well as listing numerous courses taught on Capitol Hill.

The Hill
www.thehill.com
This site provides information from a newspaper for and about Members and their staffs. Print copies are usually available on the Hill.

The Library of Congress Website
www.loc.gov
This site allows visitors to search the online catalogues and to view images from special collections.

National Journal

www.nationaljournal.com

This weekly magazine site offers nonpartisan articles on policy and politics as well as mark-up reports, the online Almanac of American Politics, and current campaign and poll data. Although the magazine requires a subscription, the site provides a free selection of stories and columns online.

Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

clerkweb.house.gov

This site provides access to schedules, rosters, statistics, House documents, historical information and election data.

POLITICO

www.politico.com

Another widely read newspaper, the website is free and offers somewhat "punchier" fare about politics.

Roll Call

www.rollcall.com

For subscribers, this site features articles from its leading Hill newspaper. The print edition is usually available on the Hill and includes daily hearing schedules.

USA.gov

www.usa.gov

A comprehensive interagency site initiated by the U.S. General Services Administration, it serves as a valuable, user-friendly connection between the public and all levels of the U.S. government.

U.S. Capitol Historical Society

www.uschs.org

Organized by this nonprofit, nonpartisan group, the site features a congressional timeline of events from 1774 – present, educational resources for students from elementary school to high school, historical exhibits and articles on Congress.

U.S. House of Representatives Home Page

www.house.gov

The House home page hosts a library of links to Member and committee offices. Additional interesting features include instructions on how to contact your representative, a mechanism for searching the U.S. Code, and committee schedules for hearings.

U.S. Senate Home Page

www.senate.gov

The Senate home page provides valuable information on committees, hearing schedules and individual Members similar to that available from its House counterpart.

WiFi: Available in the Rayburn & Longworth cafeterias by using the wireless network HousePublic, network key: HousePublic

Legislative Call System: The System of Lights and Bells

Because of the large number and diversity of daily tasks that Members have to perform, it is not practical for them to be present in the House (or Senate) chamber at every minute that the body is actually sitting. Many of the routine matters do not require the personal attendance of all the Members. A legislative call system (consisting of electric lights and bells or buzzers located in various parts of the Capitol Building and the House and Senate Office Buildings, often on clocks) alerts Members to certain occurrences in the House and Senate Chambers.

Senate

1 long ring announces the opening of each day's session – **1 red light** remains lit at all times while the Senate is in actual session.

1 ring Yeas and Nays

2 rings Quorum Call

3 rings Call of Absentees

4 rings Adjournment or Recess

5 rings Seven and a half minutes remaining on Yea and Nay vote.

6 rings Morning business concluded (lights cut off immediately); recess during daily session (lights stay on during period of recess).

Where white lights exist, they will correspond with rings.

House

1 long ring followed by a pause and then 3 rings and 3 lights on the left. Start or continuation of a notice or short quorum call in the Committee of the Whole that will be vacated if and when 100 Members appear on the floor. Bells are repeated every five minutes unless the call is vacated or the call is converted into a regular quorum call.

1 long ring and extinguishing of 3 lights on the left.
Short or notice quorum call vacated.

2 rings and 2 lights on the left.
Recorded vote, yea-and-nay vote or automatic roll call vote by electronic device. The bells are repeated five minutes after the first ring.

2 rings and 2 lights on the left followed by a pause and then 2 more rings.
Automatic roll call vote or yea-and-nay vote taken by a call of the roll in the House. The bells are repeated when the clerk reaches the R's in the first call of the roll.

2 rings followed by a pause and then 5 rings.
First vote under Suspension of the Rules or on clustered votes. 2 bells are repeated five minutes after the first ring. The first vote will take 15 minutes with successive votes at intervals of not less than five minutes. Each successive vote is signaled by five rings.

3 rings and 3 lights on the left.
Regular quorum call in either the House or in the Committee of the Whole by electronic device or by clerks. The bells are repeated five minutes after the first ring.

3 rings followed by a pause and then 3 more rings.
Regular quorum call by a call of the roll. The bells are repeated when the Clerk reaches the R's in the first call of the roll.

3 rings followed by a pause and then 5 more rings.
Quorum call in the Committee of the Whole that may be followed immediately by a five-minute recorded vote.

4 rings and 4 lights on the left.
Adjournment of the House.

5 rings and 5 lights on the left.
Any five-minute electronically recorded vote.

6 rings and 6 lights on the left.
Recess of the House.

12 rings at 2-second intervals with 6 lights on the left.
Civil Defense Warning.

The 7th light indicates that the House is in session.

Another way to find out if the House and Senate are currently in session is to look at the top of each wing of the Capitol. If a flag is flying atop either side, that chamber is in session. At night, look for a light inside the Capitol dome – if it is illuminated, at least one of the chambers is still in session.

Glossary of Legislative Terms

Act – Legislation that has passed both houses of Congress and become law.

Adjourn – To close a legislative day.

Amendment – A change in a bill or document by adding, substituting, or omitting portions of it.

Appropriations Bill – Legislation that provides funds for authorized programs.

Authorization Bill – Legislation establishing a program and setting funding limits.

Bill – Legislation introduced in either the House or the Senate.

By Request – Phrase used when a Member introduces a bill at the request of an executive agency or private organization but does not necessarily endorse the legislation.

Calendar – List and schedule of bills to be considered by a committee.

Caucus – Meeting of Republican or Democratic Members of Congress to determine policy and/or choose leaders.

Chair – Presiding Officer.

Chamber – Place where the entire House or Senate meets to conduct business; also, the House of Representatives or the Senate itself.

Clean Bill – A bill which has been revised in mark-up. Amendments are assembled with unchanged language and the bill is referred to the floor with a new number.

Cloak Rooms – Small rooms off the House and Senate floor where members can rest and hold informal conferences.

Closed Hearings – Hearings closed to all but members, staff, and witnesses testifying; also called Executive Hearings.

Closed Rule – In the House, a prohibition against amendments to a bill brought to the floor. The House must either accept or reject the bill as-is.

Cloture – Method of limiting debate or ending a filibuster in the Senate. At least 60 senators must vote in favor before cloture can be invoked.

Co-sponsor – Member who joins in sponsoring legislation but who is not the principal sponsor who introduced the legislation.

Commit – To refer a bill or matter to a committee.

Committee – A group of members assigned to give special consideration to certain bills. See Standing Committee, Joint Committee, Special Committee.

Committee of the Whole – A mechanism to expedite business in the House whereby the House itself becomes a committee, allowing for less rigid rules and a quorum of 100 instead of 218.

Companion Bills – Identical bills introduced separately in both the Senate and the House.

Concurrent Resolution – Legislative action used to express the position of the House or Senate. Does not have the force of law.

Conference Committee – Meeting between representatives and senators to resolve differences when two versions of a similar bill have been passed by the House and Senate.

Congressional Record – Official transcript of the proceedings in Congress.

Continuing Resolution – A resolution enacted to allow specific Executive Branch agencies to continue operating even though funds have not been appropriated for them for the following fiscal year.

Discharge Petition – A petition for the purpose of removing a bill from the control of a committee. A discharge petition must be signed by a majority of Members in the House or Senate.

Engrossed Bill – Final copy of a bill passed by either the House or Senate with amendments. The bill is then delivered to the other chamber.

Enrolled Bill – Final copy of a bill that has passed both the House and Senate in identical form.

Extension of Remarks – When a Member of Congress inserts material in the Congressional Record which is not directly related to the debate underway.

Filibuster – Tactic used in the Senate whereby a minority intentionally delays a vote.

Final Passage – Adoption of a bill after all amendments have been voted on.

Fiscal Year – Accounting Year. For the Federal Government, the fiscal year (FY) is October 1 to September 30 of the following calendar year.

Five-Minute Rule – Rule which allows any House member to propose an amendment and debate it for five minutes. Opponents and supporters of the amendment have five minutes to debate it.

Floor Manager – A Member who attempts to direct a bill through the debate and amendment process to a final vote.

General Consent – A unanimous silent vote. If there is no objection to the matter, it is resolved without a formal vote.

Germane – In the House, all amendments must have some relation to the bill in question.

Hearing – Committee sessions for hearing witnesses.

Holds – A courtesy afforded senators which allows them to delay legislation for a reasonable period. The Majority Leader can override a hold.

Hopper – Box on the desk of the Clerk of the House where sponsors submit their bills.

Hour rule – When the House is sitting as the full House, each Member has one hour to debate amendments. In the Committee of the Whole, the five-minute rule is in effect.

Jefferson's Manual – Basic rules of parliamentary procedure adopted by both chambers, originally drafted by Thomas Jefferson.

Joint Committee – Committee composed of Members of both the House and Senate.

Joint Resolution – Legislation similar to a bill that has the force of law if passed by both houses and signed by the President, generally used for special circumstances.

Lame Duck – Member of Congress (or the President) who has not been reelected, or has announced they are not running for reelection, but whose term has not yet expired.

Leader Time – Ten minutes given to the Majority and Minority Leaders at the beginning of each day Congress is in session.

Legislative Day – In the Senate, the period of time between convening until the Senate adjourns, not necessarily a calendar day.

Lobbying – The process of attempting to influence the passage, defeat, or content of legislation by individuals or a group other than Members of Congress.

Logrolling – Process whereby Members help each other get particular legislation passed. One Member will help another on one piece of legislation in return for similar help.

Main Motion – Motion that introduces the business or proposal to the assembly for action.

Majority Leader – Chief Spokesman and strategist for the majority party, elected by Members of the majority party.

Marking Up a Bill – Process, usually in committee, of analyzing a piece of legislation section by section and making changes.

Member – A U.S. Senator or U.S. Representative.

Minority Leader – Chief Spokesman and strategist for the minority party, elected by members of the minority party.

Motion – Proposal presented to a legislative body for consideration.

Motion to Table – Proposal to postpone consideration of a matter in the Senate.

Omnibus Bill – Bill regarding a single subject that combines many different aspects of that subject.

One-day Rule – In the Senate, a requirement that measures reported from committee be held for at least one legislative day before being brought to the floor.

Open Rule – In the House, permission to offer amendments to a particular bill during floor debate.

Override a Veto – When both the House and Senate vote by a two-thirds majority to set aside a presidential veto of legislation.

Pairing – System whereby two Members jointly agree not to vote on a particular matter.

Petition – Plea by an individual or organization for a chamber to consider particular legislation.

Pocket Veto – When the President does not sign or veto legislation submitted to him by Congress within ten days of adjournment, the bill dies.

Point of Order – An objection that language, an amendment, or bill is in violation of a rule. Also used to force a quorum call.

President of the Senate – The Vice President of the United States is designated by the Constitution as the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate casts a vote only in cases of a tie.

President Pro Tempore – Senator who presides over the Senate in the absence of the Vice President of the U.S. The President Pro Tem is usually the longest-serving Member of the majority party.

Previous Question – In the House, a request to end all debate and force a vote.

Private Bill – Bill designed to benefit a certain individual or business.

Public Law – Designation used for legislation that has been passed by both chambers and signed by the President.

Quorum – The number of senators or representatives who must be present before a legislative body can conduct official business.

Quorum Call – In the Senate, a method of determining whether there is a quorum. Often used to suspend debate without adjourning.

Ranking Members – The highest ranking Member of the minority party on a committee.

Recess – Temporary halt to proceedings, with a time set for proceedings to resume.

Record Vote – Vote in which Members of Congress indicate their vote, orally in the Senate or by electronic device in the House, for listing in the Congressional Record.

Rescission Bill – Legislation that revokes spending authority previously granted by Congress.

Resolution – A measure passed only in one house to express the sentiment of that chamber. A simple resolution does not have the force of law.

Rider – A measure added to another, often unrelated, bill with the purpose of one piece of legislation passing on the strength of another.

Roll Call Vote – In the House, an oral vote for which a record is kept.

Seniority – Length of unbroken service. Often used to determine rank on committees.

Seriatim Consideration – Consideration of a motion line by line.

Sine Die – Final adjournment at the end of a session. Bills under consideration but not enacted must be reintroduced in the next session.

Speaker – The presiding officer of the House, elected by Members of the House.

Sponsor – The representative or senator who introduces a measure.

Suspend the Rules – Procedural action in the House whereby a two- thirds majority can vote to bring a measure to a vote after forty minutes of debate.

Table a Bill – A nondebatable motion to kill a bill by cutting off future consideration.

Three-Day Rule – In the House, a requirement that measures reported from committee be held for at least three calendar days (not counting weekends and holidays) before being brought to the floor. Similar to the One-Day Rule in the Senate.

Unanimous Consent – A procedure whereby a matter is considered agreed to if no Member on the floor objects. Unanimous Consent motions save time by eliminating the need for debate or a vote.

Unlimited Debate – In the Senate, the right of any senator to talk as long as desired during floor debates on a bill.

Whip – Assistant leader for each party in each chamber who keeps other members of the party informed of the legislative agenda. Also tracks sentiment among party Members for certain legislation and tries to persuade Members to be present and vote for measures important to the leadership.

Yield – Permission granted by the Member who has the floor to another Member who wishes to make a comment or ask a question.

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Notes

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