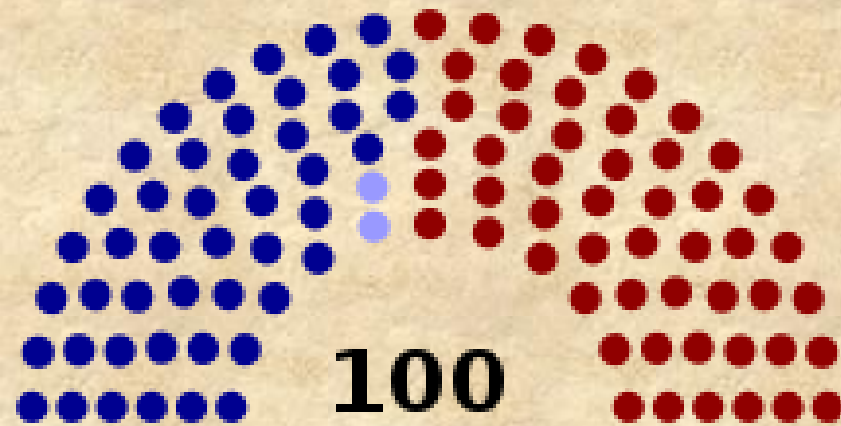


115th Congress (2017-2019)



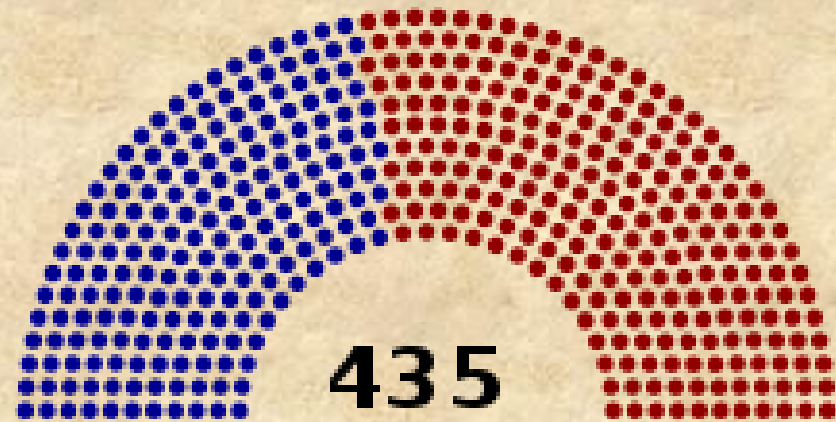
100

Senate membership

52 Republicans

46 Democrats

2 Independents, both caucusing
with Democrats



435

House membership

240 Republicans

193 Democrats

2 Vacant

Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

Two Houses of Congress

The Constitution creates a bicameral legislature for three reasons:

- **Historical:**
 - The British Parliament
 - many colonial assemblies
- **Practical:** Great (Connecticut) compromise (Virginia and New Jersey plans)
- **Theoretical:** mutual check on power



Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

Chapter 10, Section 1

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Sessions of Congress

A **session** is the regular period of time during which Congress conducts business.

- Congress **adjourns**, or suspends until the next session, each regular session as it sees fit.
- Only the President may call Congress into a **special session**—a meeting to deal with some emergency situation.



Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

Chapter 10, Section 1

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Comparative Government: Legislative Bodies

Legislative Bodies					
Country	Legislative Body	Houses if Bicameral	Number of Members	How Elected	Term of Office
 United States	Congress	House of Representatives	435	Direct popular vote	2 years
		Senate	100	Direct popular vote	6 years
 Costa Rica	Legislative Assembly		57	Direct popular vote	4 years
 France	Parlement	National Assembly	577	Direct popular vote	5 years
		Senate	321	Local electoral colleges	9 years
 Israel	Knesset		120	Direct popular vote	4 years
 Japan	Diet	House of Councillors	252	Direct popular vote	6 years
		House of Representatives	500	Direct popular vote	4 years
 Saudi Arabia	Consultative Council		90	Appointed by the king	4 years



Go To Section:

1

2

3

4

Chapter 10, Section 1

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How Representative Is Congress?

COLLEGE DEGREES

27%
of Americans

93%
of 110th Congress

In the First Congress, elected in 1789, only 48.4% of the members had college degrees. Today, 44% of senators and representatives have law degrees.

WOMEN

51%
of Americans

17%
of 110th Congress

The first woman in Congress was Jeanette Rankin (R., Montana), a suffragist and peace activist elected in 1916.

AGE 60 AND OLDER

17%
of Americans

40%
of 110th Congress

The 110th Congress was, on average, the oldest that has ever served. The oldest member was 83, the youngest was 31.

FOREIGN-BORN

13%
of Americans

2%
of 110th Congress

Foreign-born members of Congress have come from Canada, Cuba, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Taiwan, and elsewhere.

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau; Congressional Research Service; Biographical Directory of the United States Congress; *Politics in the First Congress, 1789–1791*

► **Analyzing Charts** Over time, the membership of Congress has become more educated, older, and more diverse. **To what extent should the composition of Congress reflect the general population? Why?**

Go To
Section:

1

2

3

4

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How should Members of Congress Vote?

The Senate must vote on an appropriate (spending) bill passed by the House. It includes earmarks (funds designated for specific projects) for hospitals and state college system in Senator Miller's home State, as well as projects for other States. Senator Miller may decide to act as a delegate, a trustee, a partisan, or a politico. *How should he vote?*

What are the options?

DELEGATE

Although Senator Miller personally thinks that it is bad policy to run a deficit, polls show that his constituents support this bill. As a delegate, he would vote **for the bill**.

TRUSTEE

Senator Miller's personal goal is a balanced budget. His constituents trust him. As a trustee, he would vote **against this bill** because it would cause another year of deficits.

PARTISAN

Senator Miller believes that it is important for his party to show that they can get things done. As a partisan, he would **follow the party leadership** and vote to pass the bill.

POLITICO

As a politico, Senator Miller attempts to **balance the views** of his constituents, his own views, those of his party, and other considerations.

Think about...

- What interests should a representative represent?
- What should a legislator do if the constituents' views clash with the representative's?
- Should legislators do what is best for their constituents or what is best for the nation?
- How would this question be decided on a partisan basis? On a politico basis?