

Part Two: The Congress and its work!

PS103

I. Congress: the leading branch of the U.S. Government.

a. Article 1

- i. Congress is the first institution defined in the Constitution.
- ii. It does not simply give Congress the lawmaking powers of government, but it grants Congress, and Congress alone, power.

II. Daily Operations of Congress

a. Article 1 of the Constitution

- i. Although Article 1 grants Congress the power to make laws, it does not give specifics on how Congress will operate.
 1. So, how does Congress operate?
 2. Each chamber has its own laws that it makes.

III. Organization of Congress

- a. The two factors that affect the organization and operation of Congress the most are not constitutionally based.
 - i. Political Parties
 - ii. Committees

IV. Leadership Organization of Congress

a. Two types of leadership in Congress:

i. Constitutional

1. Those positions that are mandated by or listed in the Constitution.
2. Speaker of the HOR
3. President of the Senate (V.P. of the U.S.)
4. President *Pro Tempore* of the Senate

ii. Political

1. These positions are selected by, and based on party affiliation.
 - a. Majority and Minority Leaders
 - b. Whips

V. Speaker of the HOR

- a. Constitution says the membership of the HOR will elect a Speaker that will act as the leader of the HOR.
- b. This makes the Speaker of the House the “Constitutional Leader” of the HOR.
 - i. BUT, politics plays a part.....How?
 1. The party in the HOR with the most members (Majority Party) will always win. (SPEAKER HAS ALWAYS COMES FROM THE MAJORITY PARTY.)
 2. THIS GIVES THE MAJORITY PARTY A GREAT DEAL OF POWER IN THE HOR!!

VI. President of the Senate

- a. V.P. Of the United States is the President of the Senate.
- b. Only votes in the case of a tie.
- c. Does not preside over the senate on a regular basis; is usually only there during “Official Functions”.
 - i. State of the Union Speech
 - ii. Swearing in of the Members of the Senate
- d. *President Pro Tempore* - serves as presiding officer of the Senate most of the time. No real power or authority in this position, mostly honorific (usually senior member of the majority party).

VII. Party Leadership

- a. Majority Leaders:
 - i. House Majority Leader
 1. 2nd in command in the House of Representatives
 2. Conduct day to day operations of the “floor” in the House. Does the political negotiating

on behalf of the Speaker (it would be inappropriate for it to appear that the Speaker was being outwardly partisan).

ii. Senate Majority Leader

1. Conduct day to day operations of the “floor” in the Senate.
2. Leader of the Senate

iii. Minority Leaders

1. Performs the same functions as the majority leaders*****

iv. Whips

1. Each party has one in each chamber.
2. They act as the communication link between the party leadership and the party membership in each chamber.

VIII. Party Caucus & Conferences

- a. Members in each chamber take part in their party’s **caucus (Democrats)** or **party conference (Republicans)**.
 - i. These groups:
 1. Elect Party Leaders
 2. Ratify Committee Leaders
 3. Debate and Formulate Party Positions on Issues.

IX. Other influential Groups in Congress

- a. Members of Congress sometimes cross party lines to create groups known as caucuses. These caucuses are formed by members to pursue common interests.
 - i. Examples: Coastal Caucus, Rural Caucus, etc.

X. Major Operational Differences Between the House and the Senate

- a. The major difference between the two chambers is due PRIMARILY to the sizes of the two chambers.
 - i. Major differences: