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## Congress and the Title IV Lawmaking Process



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## Objectives

- know when a bill becomes law by gaining a better understanding of:
  - the structure of Congress
  - the legislative process
  - how a bill becomes a law
- obtain contact information for the key Title IV policy makers in Congress



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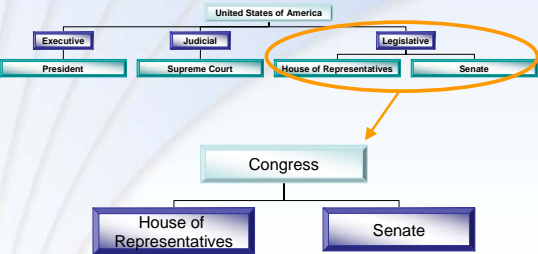

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## Structure

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## Senate

- composed of 100 members
  - 2 from each state
- 6-year term



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## House of Representatives

- composed of 435 members
- apportioned to their total population
- 2-year term



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## Bills

- form used for most legislation
  - whether permanent or temporary, general or special, public or private
  - affect the public generally



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## Bills

- may be originated in House or Senate
- exception - general appropriation bills start in House
- House bills = "HR"
- Senate bills = "S"



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## Questions



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## Legislative process

### Step 1: Introduction and Committee Referral

- a bill may be:
  - written by anyone
  - introduced only by a member of Congress



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## Legislative process

- House
  - member introduces a bill by placing it in “hopper” (wooden box)
  - primary sponsor is the member introducing a bill
  - unlimited number of members may co-sponsor



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## Legislative process

- Senate
  - introduces a bill by presenting it to the clerk at presiding officer’s desk
  - formal process – introduces a bill from the floor
- all bills are referred to one or more of the House/Senate committees, according to the specific rules



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## Legislative process

### Step 2: Committee Action

- committee considers a bill
  - example: House Committee on Education and Labor considers reauthorization bill’s impact:
    - How will bill help improve access to post-secondary education?
    - How much will it cost?



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## Legislative process

- if the committee approves a bill, it moves on for floor action
- if a bill fails to get the committee approval, it dies in the committee



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## Legislative process

### Step 3: Subcommittee Review

- some bills are sent to subcommittee for further study and public hearings
- subcommittee may make changes and amendments to a bill before reporting back to full committee – “mark up”
- if subcommittee does not report to full committee, the bill dies here



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## Legislative process

### Step 4: Committee Action

- full committee reviews recommendations from subcommittee
- committee may hold more public hearings
- full committee prepares and votes on final recommendations to House/Senate



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## Legislative process

### Step 5: Floor Action

- bill placed on legislative calendar
- debate for and against a bill proceeds
- once debate ends and amendments are approved, full membership votes for or against a bill
  - voice vote or roll-call vote



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## Legislative process

### Step 6: Bill Referred to Other Chamber

- bill approved by one chamber sent to other chamber
- same process
  - committee action
  - floor action



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## Legislative process

### Step 7: Conference Committee

- conference committee made up of members from both chambers
  - work to reconcile differences between House and Senate versions of a bill
  - prepares report on reconcile version of a bill
- both House and Senate must approve report



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## Legislative process

### Step 8: Presidential Action

- once a bill is agreed to in identical form it becomes “enrolled” and sent to the President



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## Legislative process

- President’s options:
  - make bill into law
    - sign bill
    - hold bill for 10 days while Congress is in session
  - veto bill
    - send Congress veto message
    - hold bill for 10 days after Congress adjourns



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## Legislative process

### Step 9: Overriding the Veto

- Congress can override veto and force bill into law
- 2/3 vote in each chamber is required



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## Legislative process

The flowchart details the legislative process, starting with a bill's introduction in either the House or Senate. It tracks the bill's progress through committee assignments, hearings, floor debates, and potential amendments. It also shows the path for bills that are passed by one chamber but not the other, leading to conference committees or reconciliation. The process concludes with the bill's final passage, signing by the President, or a veto.

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National Student Loan Program

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## Questions

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National Student Loan Program

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## Something to think about

- If con is the opposite of pro, is Congress the opposite of Progress?
- in each Congress:
  - about 9,000 pieces of legislation will be introduced
  - only 350 will become law

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National Student Loan Program

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## Online Resources

- <http://thomas.loc.gov>
- [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)
- [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)
- [www.cspan.org](http://www.cspan.org)



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## Senate committee resources

Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Chairman:  
Edward Kennedy (D-MA)  
SD-428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6300  
phone 202-224-5375  
fax 202-228-5044  
<http://help.senate.gov>



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## House committee resources

Committee on Education and Labor

Chairman:  
George Miller (D-CA)  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6100  
phone 202-225-3725  
<http://edworkforce.house.gov>



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## Review

- when a bill becomes law by gaining better understanding of:
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- contact information for key Title IV policy makers in Congress



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## Resources

- “How Our Laws Are Made”
  - <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>
- “A Primer on the Federal Budget Process”, NASFAA Monograph Number 18, April 2006
  - available to NASFAA members through NASFAA website



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## Questions



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### More information

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