The Legislative Branch
The Two House System

- **Bicameral**
- **Senate**
  - 100 members
  - Six years
  - More prestigious
- **House**
  - 435
  - 2 years
  - Reapportioned after each census
The US Senate

• Qualifications
  – 30 Years Old
  – American citizen for 9 years
  – Resident of state elected
  – Method of Selection – Election by the people

• Term of office – 6 years

• Members per state – 2

• Powers reserved for Senate only
  – Confirm Presidential appointments
  – Approve/reject treaties
  – Jury for impeachment trial
The House of Representatives

• Qualifications
  – 25 years old
  – U.S. Citizen for 7 years
  – Resident of state elected

• Method of Selection – Election by the people

• Term of Office – 2 years

• Members per State – Based on population – 435 total

• Powers reserved for the House only
  – Originates money bills (taxes)
  – Begins impeachment process
  – Elects President if Electoral College fails to do so
Functions and Powers

• Function: Make the Laws

• Congressional Joint Powers
  – Levy and collect taxes
  – Raise and maintain military
  – Grant statehood
  – Control national lands
  – Regulate interstate trade
  – Naturalize citizens
  – Declare war
  – Control making of currency
Officers of the Legislative Branch

• **Speaker of the House**
  - Currently: Paul Ryan (R. Wisc)
  - Presiding officer of the House
  - Job: acknowledges speakers, signs bills, appoints committees, calls a vote.
Officers of the Legislative Branch

• President of the Senate-
  – V.P.
  – Presiding officer but may not speak or debate

• President pro tempore
  – Resides in V.P.’s absence
  – Elected by the Senate
  – Majority Party
  – Currently: Orrin Hatch (R. Utah)
Committees in Congress

• **Standing committee**: permanent groups which all similar bills could be sent. (Ex. Budget committee)

• **Select committee**: a special group set up for a specific purpose for a limited time. (ex. Senate Watergate Committee)

• **Joint Committees**: members from both houses.
How does a Bill become a law?

• **Bills** - proposed laws, or drafts of laws presented to the House or Senate for enactment.

• Two types:
  – **Public** - measure applying to the nation as a whole - (tax bills)
  – **Private** - only apply to certain persons or places rather than to the nation generally.