



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.