Government Study Guide Chapter 12

- Why women are underrepresented in congress
  - Fewer women than men become major party nominees for office
  - Report that women are less ambitious to run for office than their male counterparts mainly because they have childcare responsibilities, interestingly there is no gender difference in ambition with no children
  - Women’s decisions to run are more sensitive than men’s to their perception of their odds of winning they are less likely to run than men when they perceive their chances of winning are poor but are more likely than men to run if they detect a potential opportunity
  - Incumbents are more likely to win and since women are already underrepresented that makes it harder for more women to enter into congress because there are less spots available for them to fill

- Underrepresented groups in congress
  - Women
  - African Americans
  - Hispanics
  - Asians
  - Native Americans
  - Jewish people and other religions

- Descriptive and substantive representation
  - Descriptive representation: representing constituents by mirroring their personal, politically relevant characteristics
  - Sustentative representation: representing the interests of groups

- Advantages to incumbency
  - Voters know how elected representatives will vote on policy
  - Advertising
    - Visibility
    - Free mailing of letters as long as it doesn’t say vote for blank
      - Franking
    - Trips home
    - Get better known to constituencies
    - Use technology to their advantage
    - Calling people to find out their interests
    - Incumbents may have lists of thousands of votes email people for personal information and recommend why they should be reelected something that challengers could really use but do not have access to
  - Credit claiming
    - Enhancing their standing with constituents through service to the individuals and their district
Serving constituency can be done through casework or a pork barrel

- **Casework**: activities of members of congress that help constituents as individuals cutting through the bureaucratic red tape to get people what they think they have the right to get representatives and senators can take credit for this favor
- **Pork barrel**: list of federal projects grants and contracts available to cities businesses colleges and institutions available in a congressional district
- Recently there has been more “earmarking” funds that must be spent for particular projects and districts incumbents become better known with helping

- **Position taking**
  - Members must take a stand on which may affect the outcome of an election
  - Especially in the senate

- **Weak opponents**
  - Many people don’t want to run against incumbents and those who do are not well qualified lack experience organization and funds
  - Also they need money to be able to make themselves better known because incumbents have “free” recognition and credit claiming

- **Campaign spending**
  - Challengers have to get/raise a lot of money to win
  - Buys name recognition
  - PACs give to incumbents…and are more likely to give funding after the elections

- **Hurting incumbents chance of reelection**
  - Incumbent is tarnished with scandal or corruption
  - Loose supporters if the borders of their district change
    - After a census that happens every 10 years congress is reapportions membership
      - One incumbent may get moved to another’s district and the who have to battle it out
      - Incumbent minority party might find his or her district split up to make it more competitive
  - Major political tidal wave occasional happens leaving defeated incumbents

- **Personal committee staffs**
  - Casework, providing services to constituents, answer mail, communicate members views to voters and help constituents solve problems
  - Most work in members office not in Washington because it is easier to contact the staff (people to contact staff)
  - Legislative functions: draft legislation meet lobbyists and administrators negotiating agreements write questions to ask witnesses at committee meetings summarize bills and briefing legislators

- **Committee staffs**
  - Organize hearings research legislative options draft committee reports on bills write legislation and keep tabs on the activities of the executive branch
- Lobbyists spend a lot of time cultivating these staffers to obtain information on legislative actions ab to plant legislation ideas

- **Who proposes bills**
  - House members and senators only

- **Presidential; influences on congressional decision making**
  - Help create congressional agenda
    - Have their own agenda based on their party platform and electoral coalition so they want to persuade congress that their agenda is the congressional agenda
  - Veto power to stop legislation
  - Facilitator: works at margins of coalition building to recognize and exploit opportunities presented by favorable configuration of political forces

- **How a bill becomes a law**
  - I’M JUST A BILL YES IM ONLY A BILL AND I’M SITTING HERE ON CAPITAL HILL
  - Although this is totally and completely accurate, see the chart 😊

- **When are congress people more or less likely to pay attention to their constituents**
  - Less likely: when this issue is salient
  - More likely: when their issue is controversial

- **Representatives and senators**
  - The job
    - Salary of $174,000 as of 2014 with retirement benefits
    - Office space in DC and at home with staff
    - Travel allowances and franking privileges
    - Requires long hours, a lot of time away from family, pressures from others to support their policies

- **Requirements**
  - Senate (100 members)
    - 30 years old
    - American citizen for 9 years
    - Resident of the state that they represent
  - House (435 members)
    - 25 years old
    - American citizen for 7 years
    - Residents of states that they represent

- **Problem**
  - Lack of descriptive representation
    - Does not reflect the population of the united states

- **Congressional elections**
  - Who wins the election s
    - Incumbents those who are already holding office
Vocabulary

- **Incumbents**: Those already holding office. In congressional elections, incumbents usually win.
- **Casework**: Activities of members of Congress that help constituents as individuals; cutting through bureaucratic red tape to get people what they think they have a right to get.
- **Pork Barrel**: The mighty list of federal projects, grants, and contracts available to cities, businesses, colleges, and institutions available in a congressional district.
- **Bicameral Legislature**: A legislature divided into two houses. The U.S. Congress and every American state legislature except Nebraska's are bicameral.
- **House Rules Committee**: An institution unique to the House of Representatives that reviews all bills (except revenue, budget, and appropriations bills) coming from a House committee before they go to the full House.
- **Filibuster**: A strategy unique to the Senate whereby opponents of a piece of legislation try to talk it to death, based on the tradition of unlimited debate. Today, 60 members present and voting can halt a filibuster.
- **Speaker of the House**: An office mandated by the Constitution. The Speaker is chosen in practice by the majority party, has both formal and informal powers, and is second in line to succeed to the presidency should that office become vacant.
- **Majority Leader**: The principle partisan ally of the Speaker of the House or the party's manager in the Senate. The majority leader is responsible for scheduling bills, influencing committee assignments and rounding up votes on behalf of the party's legislative positions.
- **Whips**: Party leaders who work with the majority leader or the minority leader to count votes beforehand and lean on waverers whose votes are crucial to a bill favored by the party.
- **Minority Leader**: The principle leader of the minority party in the House of Representatives or in the Senate.
- **Standing Committees**: Separate subject-matter committees in each house of Congress that handle bills in different policy areas.
- **Joint Committees**: Congressional committees on a few subject-matter areas with membership in drawn from both houses.
- **Conference Committees**: Congressional committees formed when the Senate and the House pass a particular bill in different forms, Party leadership appoints members from each house to iron out the differences and bring back a single bill.
- **Select Committees**: Congressional Committees appointed for a specific purpose, such as the Watergate investigation.
- **Legislative Oversight**: Congress's monitoring of the bureaucracy and its administration of policy, performed mainly through hearings.
Committee Chairs: The most important influencers of the congressional agenda. They play dominant roles in scheduling hearings, hiring staff, appointing subcommittees, and managing committee bills when they are brought before the full house.

Seniority System: A simple rule for picking committee chairs, in effect until the 1970s. The member who had served on the committee the longest and whose party controlled Congress became chair, regardless of party loyalty, mental state, or competence.

Caucus (Congressional): A group of members of Congress sharing some interest or characteristic. Most are composed of members from both parties and from both houses.

Bill: A proposed law, drafted in precise legal language. Anyone can draft a bill, but only a member of Congress can formally submit a bill for consideration.

Congressional elections

Advantages of incumbents

- Advertising
  - The goal is to be visible to your constituents
  - Frequent trips home use of the newsletter and technology
- Credit claiming
  - Service to the constituents through…
    - Casework: specifically helping constituents get what they think they have the right to
    - Pork barrel: federal projects grants etc. made available in a congressional district or state
- Position taking
  - Portray themselves as hardworking dedicated individuals
  - Occasionally take a position on an issue
- Weak opponents
  - In experienced in politics unorganized and underfunded
- Campaign spending
  - Challengers need to raise large sums of money to beat incumbents
  - PACs give money to “buy” votes in congress?
    - No face time and a chance

Role of party identification

- Most members represent the majority party of their district and most who identify with a party reliably vote for its candidates

Defeating incumbents

- One tarnished by scandal or corruption becomes vulnerable to a challenger
  - Todd Akin (R) Missouri (that guy who said “legitimately raped”)
- Redistricting may weaken his incumbency advantage
- Major political tidal wave may defeat incumbents
  - 2010 congressional races

Open seats
- Greater likelihood of competition
- Most turnover occurs in open seats
  - Massachusetts Senator race

➤ Stability and change
- Incumbents provide stability in congress
- Change in congress occurs less frequently through elections
- Are term limits an answer?
  - No happening
    ♦ It’s like seeing the Loch Ness monster (which I mean it’s not that hard, I visited him last weekend)

❖ Redistricting
- Process of redrawing the district lines for congress
- Happens after every 10 years in a census

❖ Method redistricting
- Advisory commissions
- Politician commissions
- Independent commissions
- State legislatures

❖ Federal rules when redistricting
- Equal population
- Equal representation for minorities but not based on race (voting rights act passed in 1965)
- Lines must be contiguous
- Baker vs. Carr
- Reynolds Vs. Sims

❖ Gerrymandering
- Process of redrawing a district to give a group an unfair advantage

❖ The congress is organized to make policy
- American bicameralism
  - House (pathos)
    • 453 members with 2 year terms in office
    • Initiates all revenue bills, more influential on budget
    • House rules committee
    • Limited debates
    • Initiates impeachment
    • Constituencies usually smaller
    • Centralization of power more centralized, stronger leadership
    • Less political prestige
    • More influential in budget, more specialized (in policy making)
    • Turnover small
    • Role seniority most important in determining power
- Procedures: limited debate limits on floor and amendments allowed
  - Senate (logos)
  - 100 members with 6 year terms of office
  - Gives advice and consent and is more influential on foreign affairs
  - Unlimited debates (filibuster)
  - Tries impeachment
  - Constituencies usually larger
  - Centralization of power less centralized, weaker leadership
  - More political prestige
  - In policy making more influential in foreign affairs, less specialized
  - Turnover moderate
  - Role of seniority is less important in determining power
  - Procedures: unlimited debate

- Filibuster
  - Only in the senate
  - Strategy whereby opponents of a piece of legislation try to talk a bill to death
    - Why is this possible: senate has a tradition that allows unlimited debate on bills
  - Today 60 members present and voting can stop a filibuster
    - Super majority
    - Cloture
      - The process to stop a filibuster or prevent a filibuster from happening

- House of representatives
  - Fast
  - More institutionalized
    - More centralized more hierarchical (1st term members rarely do anything) less anarchic
  - More party loyalty
    - Role of speaker whip, etc.
  - Reviews bill before going to the full house for a vote
    - Sets the date for debate
    - Rules for amending the bill
    - Allots time for the debate
      - Restricts the role of the minority party

- House leadership
  - Speaker of the house
    - Elected by the house members
      - Majority party always wins
    - Resides over the house
    - Major role in the committee assignments and legislation
    - 2nd in line for the presidency
- Majority leader and the whip
  - Both parties have one
  - Majority leader
    - Ally of the speaker
    - Schedules bills influences committee assignments
  - Whip
    - Tires to get assured votes in any way that is necessary

- Senate leadership
  - Senate
    - Formally run by the president
    - Really lead by the majority leader – chosen by party members
    - Assisted by the whips
    - Must work with the minority leader
  - President Pro Tempore of the senate
    - Highest ranking senator
    - Elected by the senate
    - Typically the longest serving member of the majority party
    - 3rd in line for the presidency
    - Honorary position

- How congress is organized to make policy
  - Committees and subcommittees
    - Standing committees: subject matter committees that handle bills in different policy arenas (permanent)
    - Joint committees: a few subject matter areas – members drawn from the house and the senate
    - Conference committees: resolve differences in house and senate bills
    - Select committees: created for a specific purpose such as the Watergate investigation
  - Committees at work: legislation and oversight
    - Legislation
      - Committees work on the 10,000 bills every session
      - Some had hearings and “mark-up” meetings
    - Legislative oversight
      - Monitoring of the bureaucracy and its administration of policy through committee hearings
      - As publicity values of receiving credit for controlling spending has increased so has oversight grown
      - Oversight usually takes place after a catastrophe

- How congress is organized to make policy
  - Getting ahead on the committee
    - Committee chair: the most important influencer of a congressional election
Dominant role in scheduling hearings bring staff appointing subcommittees and managing committee bills when they are brought before the full house

Most chairs are selected according to seniority system

Members who have served longer and whose party controlled congress becomes chair

Caucuses: the informal organization of congress

- Caucus: a group of members of congress sharing the same interest or characteristic
- About 300 caucuses
- Caucuses pressure for committee meetings and hearing and for votes on bills
- Caucuses (insiders) can be more effective than lobbyists (outsiders)

Congressional staff

- Personal staff: they work for the member mainly providing constituent service but help with legislation too
- Committee staff: organize hearings research and write legislation and are the target of lobbyists
- Staff agencies: CRS GAO CBO provide specific information to congress

Congressional process

- Legislation
  - Bill: a proposed law
  - Anyone can draft a bill but only members of the house or the senate can introduce them (members of congress)
  - More rules in the house than in the senate
  - Party leaders play a vital role in steering bills through both houses but less in the senate
  - Countless influences on the legislative process

- Presidents and congress partners and protagonists
  - Presidents attempt to persuade congress that what they want is what congress wants
  - President may have many resources to influence congress
  - Ultimately presidential leadership of congress is at the margins

- Party constituency and ideology
  - Party influence
    - Party leaders cannot force a party member to vote a particular way but many do vote along party lines
  - Constituency vs. ideology
    - Prime determent of members vote on most issue is ideology
    - On most issues that are more salient legislature may ignore constituent opinion
    - One issues that are more controversial members are wise to heed the constituents opinion
- Remember constituents are the people/public that they were elected by/ the people that are in your area that you are representing
  
  **Models of representation**
  - Delegate model/agency model
    - People chose a representative to carry out their wishes in congress
  - Trusteeship model
    - Representative votes for what he/she thinks is right regardless of the opinions of the constituents
  - Sociological representatives
    - People chose a representative whose ethnic racial religious social and educational background resembles their own

  ❖ **Lobbyists and interest groups**
    - There are 35,000 registered lobbyists trying to influence congress, the bigger the issue the more lobbyists will be working on it
    - Lobbyists try to influence legislators votes
    - Lobbyists can be ignored shunned or even regulated by congress
    - Ultimately it is a combination of lobbyists and others that try to influence legislatures votes

  ❖ **Understanding congress**
    - Congress and democracy
      - Leadership and committee assignments are not representative
      - Congress does not try to respond to what they people want but some argue it could do a better job
      - Members of congress are responsible to the people if the people made clear what they want
    - Congress in the scope of the government
      - More policies congress works on more ways it can serve their constituencies
      - The more programs that are created, then the bigger the government gets
      - Contradiction public opinion everybody wants governmental programs cut, just not theirs

  **Congressional process**
  - Introduce the bill
  - Leadership assign committees
    - Easier in the senate
    - Commits → subcommittee → hearing → mark-up bill → vote
  - Scheduling
  - Floor/debate
  - In subcommittees
    - Scheduling → hearings → mark-up → vote → committee → then back again to hearings

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