

[illegible]

535 total members

- 435 House
  - (age 25+ & 7 years residency in US)
- 100 Senate
  - (age 30+ & 9 years residency in US)
- Most congresspersons are professional politicians, lawyers, or businesspersons—most are white & men.



A bill or proposed law may originate from individuals, interest groups, members of Congress, the executive branch, or other source.

## Steps

1. Bills are introduced and assigned to a committee.
2. Committees usually send bills to subcommittees.
3. Subcommittees study the bills & sometimes have hearings about them.
4. Subcommittees approve them (or not) & send them to committee (or not).
5. Committees may change, amend or rewrite a bill & then decide whether to send a bill to the floor. Bills may never leave the committee step. They often die in committee.
6. Committees may report a bill for placement on the calendar.
7. The rules committee may send a bill to the full House for debate.
8. Steps are similar in the Senate, but not exactly the same. The Senate may delay a bill with a filibuster.
9. A bill is debated, amendments may be put forth, & votes are taken.
10. If a bill passes in both houses but the versions do not match, it is sent to a conference committee. When the bills match, they go back to both houses for another vote.
11. If a bill passes both houses, it is sent to the president for his approval.
12. If the president signs the bill, it becomes law.
13. If the president vetoes a bill it is either dead or Congress may attempt to override the veto with a 2/3 vote in both chambers.

## Class Notes...

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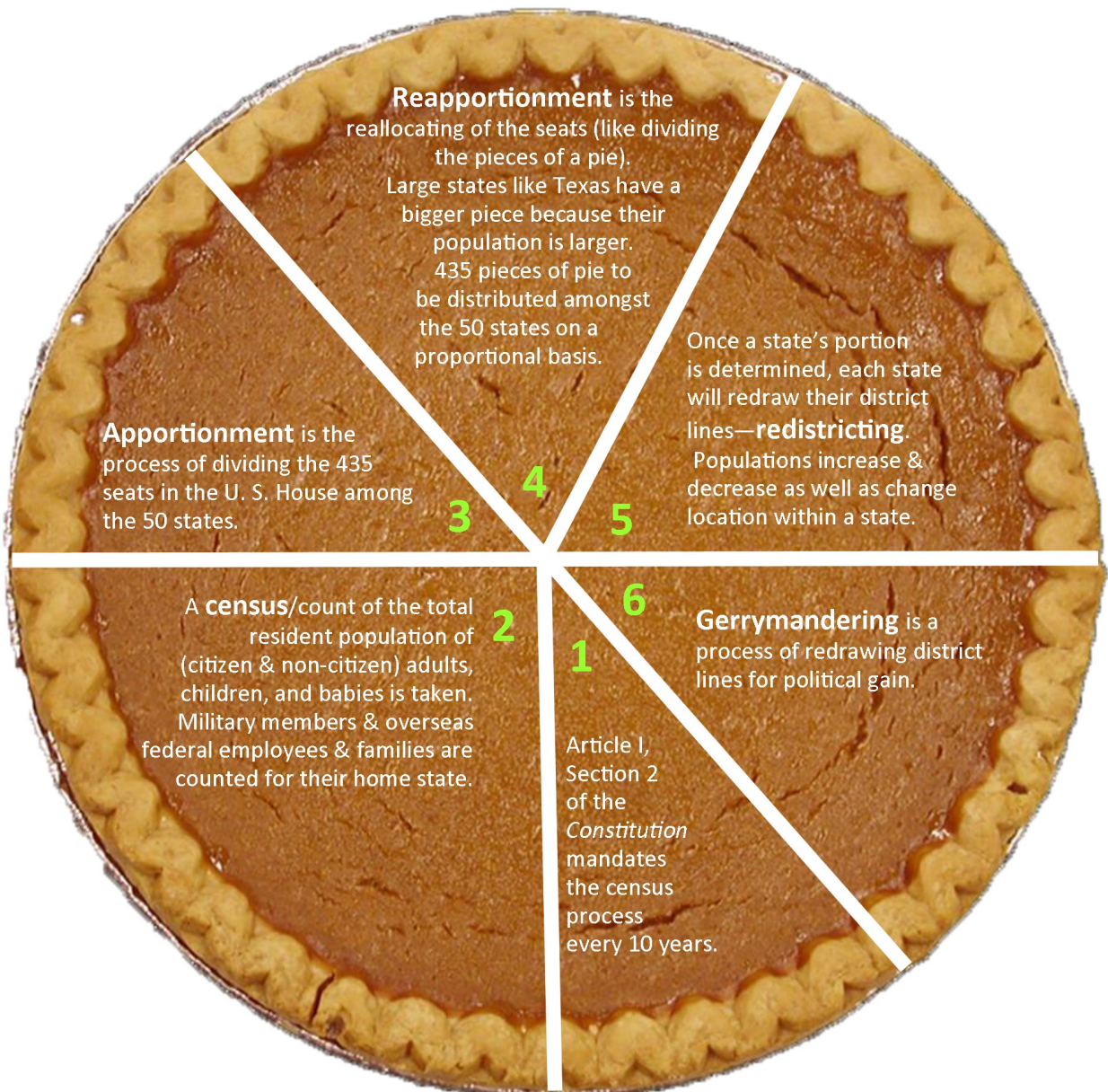
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## Terms to Remember...

- census—counting the total population every 10 years
- reapportionment—re-assigning the representatives
- redistricting—redrawing congressional districts within states
- gerrymandering—redrawing districts for political gain
- pairing—placing incumbents in a position against each other in the election following redistricting
- incumbent—individual currently holding the elected office
- pork—projects, contracts or \$\$ attached to a bill (usually for the 'home' state)
- earmark—directing funds be spent on a specific project or for specific tax exemptions
- mark up—to amend or change a bill
- omnibus legislation—bill with multiple issues/programs rolled into a single piece of proposed legislation rather than compartmentalized



### ***Features of the House...***

- ### ***Features of the Senate...***

- ### ***Features of Both Houses...***

- **Standing committees** work on particular bills related to their type of committee... examples include agriculture, appropriations, armed services, budget, etc.
- **Joint committees** on the economy and taxes work together with members of both houses
- **Conference committees** work after a bill has been passed in the 2 houses that do not match up
- **Select committees** work for a particular purpose like an investigation of some sort
- Committee chairs are in control of agenda, schedule, staff, subcommittees, managing bills
- **Seniority system** is how the majority of committee chairs are picked
- **Caucuses** are the informal networks in Congress; groups usually form around a common interest

## Class Notes...

## Terms to Remember...

- ⇒ bicameralism—dividing legislature into 2 chambers
- ⇒ New Jersey Plan—unicameral legislature and equal representation by state
- ⇒ Virginia Plan—bicameral legislature and proportional representation in states based on population count
- ⇒ Great Compromise—combination of plans
- ⇒ constituency—body of voters electing a representative
- ⇒ enumerated power—written down
- ⇒ implied power—not specifically written but inferred from language
- ⇒ inherent power—assumed to exist as a result of the country's existence
- ⇒ oversight power—watch actions of other branches
- ⇒ incumbency effect—easy to win reelection; name recognition, organization

## Legislation &amp; Regulation...

- ◆ FEC Federal Election Commission—candidates for the legislature must disclose where their money is coming from and where it is spent; limits on money if receiving federal campaign funding
- ◆ McCain—Feingold Act—limiting use of soft money raised for purposes like ads and get-out-the-vote
- ◆ *Citizens United v. FEC*—removal of spending limits on corporations

*Elonis v. US* (2015)

**threats on social media**  
18 U.S.C. § 875 (c) proof of subjective intent to threaten

It is a federal crime to transmit a threat “to injure” another person involving “interstate or foreign commerce” via communication.

([uscourts.gov/public-domain](http://uscourts.gov/public-domain))

A check of congressional power by the judicial branch often involves **judicial review** of a law in comparison to the *US Constitution*.

*Marbury v. Madison* (1803)

**court reviews federal law**  
Judiciary Act of 1789 reviewed; power of court reduced; section 13 found unconstitutional; section of federal law overturned

**Term to remember...**

**Legislative Oversight**—power to review federal policy implementation, federal agencies in the bureaucracy, programs and activities of other branches of government.

**\$\$—show us the money!!!**

- ◆ **lobbyists**—seek to influence bills/members of Congress; campaign donations; etc.
- ◆ **PACs** and Super PACs—political action committees; funded by interest groups; may raise unlimited amounts of \$\$ to support or denounce political candidates.
- ◆ **budget deficits** mean the government is over spending the income we provide by hundreds of billions of \$\$