



The Legislative Branch

What is the basic structure of the House / Senate?

What benefits do you get if you are a member of Congress?

What are the requirements / leadership roles in the Congress?

What is the US Congress?

- The US Congress is the main, law-making body of the US government
 - House of Representatives
 - Senate

- Specifics:
 - Leadership
 - Powers
 - Responsibilities



Why did the Founding Fathers want a “Legislative” Branch?



- Prior to the Revolution, all the colonies had legislative government
 - Legislatures
 - Assemblies

 - The Founding Fathers believed that this was the best method of government
 - No king or dictator
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What is the House of Representatives?



- ❑ The House is the **lower** house of our bicameral legislature
 - ❑ Remember the Connecticut Compromise?
 - *One House based on population (House)*
 - *One House based on a single vote (Senate)*
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What are the qualifications to be in the House of Representatives?

- ❑ Term: 2 years

- ❑ Qualifications
 - 25 years old
 - 7 years as a U.S. citizen
 - Resident of the represented district

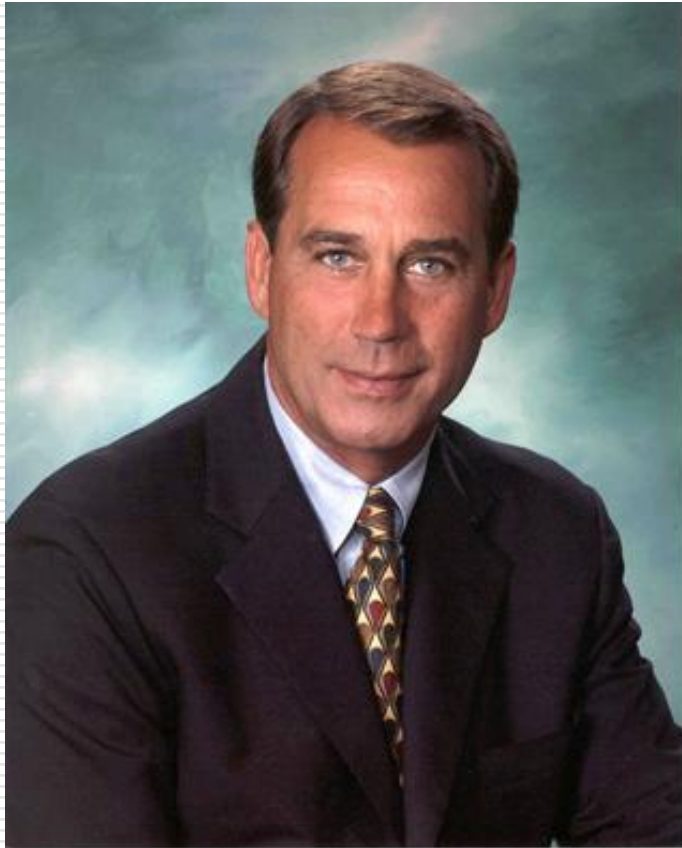


How many delegates are in the House of Representatives?

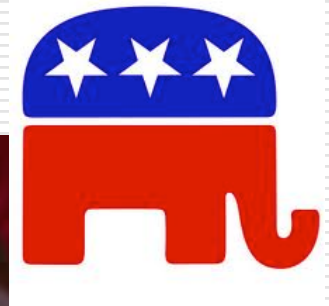
- ❑ Number of representatives: 435
- ❑ Leadership:
 - Speaker of the House
- ❑ Power
 - Decides the committees each member will serve on
 - Decides the order in which bills will be heard



Speaker of the House



The Current Speaker of the House is Congressman John Boehner (R - Ohio)



Get the Joke?



What is the US Senate?

- The US Senate is the **upper** house of the bicameral legislature

- “the older / wiser” group
 - All states have one vote / are equal



What are the qualifications of being in the Senate?

- ❑ Term of office: 6 years

- ❑ Qualifications:
 - 30 years old
 - 9 years a citizen of the U.S.
 - Resident of the represented state



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How many delegates are in the US Senate?

- ❑ Number of Senators: 100

- ❑ Leadership:
 - Head of the Senate: President of the Senate (U.S. Vice President)
 - Day to day head of Senate: President Pro Tempore

- ❑ Power:
 - Decides committee members
 - Order bill are debated.



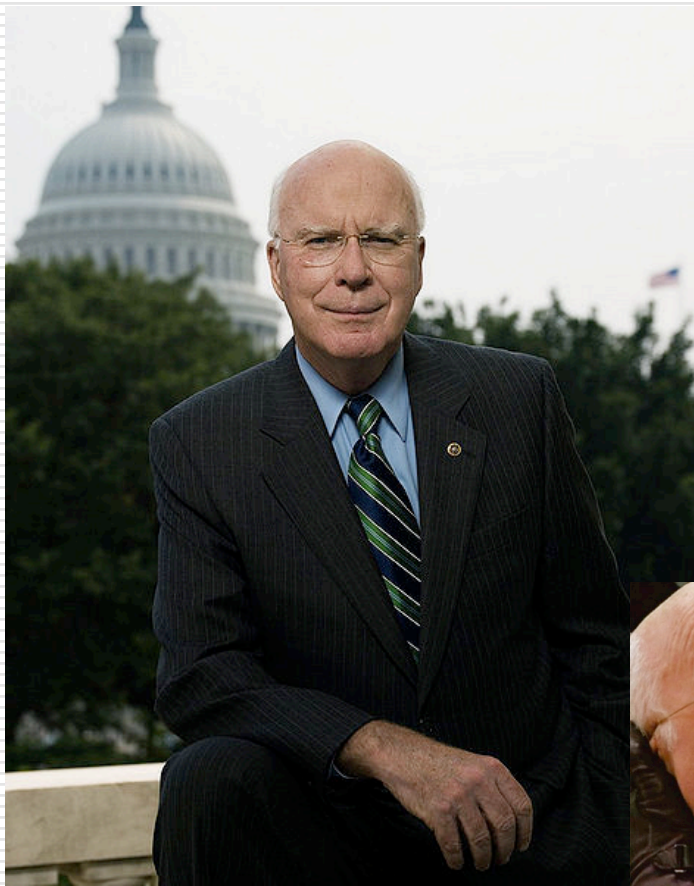
President of the Senate



The Current President of the Senate is Vice-President Joe Biden (D - Delaware)



President of the Senate



The Current President Pro-Tempore of the Senate is Senator Patrick Leahy (D - Vermont)



What are the major requirements for both houses of Congress?

- ❑ Both houses must:
 - Must keep a Journal (The Congressional Record)
 - Must hold sessions at the same time (begin January 3rd each year)
 - Must have a quorum to do business (51% of members present on the floor)



What privileges and compensations does a member of Congress get?



- Members of Congress get the following “perks:
 - Salary (\$147,000 per year)
 - Medical and dental benefits
 - Free office, parking, and trips to home state
 - Staff budget
 - Tax breaks
 - Privilege- free postage

What other Privileges or Compensations do members of Congress get?

- ❑ Members of Congress also get the following legal “perks”:
 - Immunity or legal protection (while in office)
 - Cannot be sued (say or write while carrying out their duties)
 - Cannot be arrested for minor offenses (while Congress is in session)
 - May not hold any other political office at the same time

