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BY LAWRENCE G. DODD AND BRUCE I. OPPENHELM

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Preface



The 2000 elections have been truly historic. For the first time since the 1920s, the Republicans have won control of the House in four consecutive elections. For the first time since the beginning of an elective Senate, the Democrats and Republicans are tied in the number of seats they control. And for the first time since the Hayes-Tilden election of 1876, the presidential outcome was seriously in doubt following the election, and the result was contested in the courts.

Although the outcome of the presidential election is still uncertain as we go to press, we have again worked to provide the readers of *Congress Reconsidered* with a thoughtful and accurate analysis of the congressional elections, a discussion of their implications for governing in the 107th Congress, and a glance ahead to the 2002 midterm elections. As with past editions, we are proud to produce not only the first analysis of the elections but also interpretations that students of Congress will value.

In the weeks following the November 7 elections, the deadlines for determining the outcome of Florida's presidential contest, for counting the electoral college vote, and for inaugurating a new president were not the only deadlines on our minds. We were concerned with the deadlines for the seventh edition of *Congress Reconsidered* as well. If the book was to be ready in time for spring 2000 courses, as promised, we and our editors at CQ Press had deadlines to meet, even if it meant going to press without knowing who had won the White House or what the precise makeup of the 107th Congress would be. But unlike the Gore campaign, which challenged the deadlines set by Florida's secretary of state, we had no court to which we could appeal the discretion of the printer's schedule or complain about the uncertainties of the tumultuous 2000 elections.

What we can say is that we have done the best we could under the circumstances. We hope our readers will make allowances for the necessary ambiguities and assumptions in our postelection chapter. We are satisfied that the major points we wanted to make will be clear and provide the proper focus for understanding the impact of the 2000 elections for the new Congress, even if every observation is not at the level of specificity that we would prefer. Readers are entitled to make whatever recounts and adjustments to the totals that they deem appropriate either by machine or by hand.

On a more positive note, we have again been privileged to work with a superb group of contributors who have made our job as editors a pleasure. As

with contributors to past editions, the authors of this collection represent the best of current congressional scholarship. Together, their efforts present up-to-date analysis for understanding how Congress operates as an institution and how it continues to develop. Some of the writers add to our reconsideration of Congress by examining the contemporary Congress and the way it is functioning in the aftermath of six consecutive years of Republican control. Others want to ensure that we have a broader historical perspective on Congress and ask us to look back a century or more in its evolution. They also offer and at times test a variety of competing theoretical approaches for explaining and predicting the workings of the House, the Senate, and their members. As with the previous editions of *Congress Reconsidered*, the seventh avoids a "one size fits all" view of scholarship. The pluralist nature of the congressional research community has always been one of the book's great strengths, and it is one we hope this volume continues to foster.

True to the book's tradition, the overwhelming majority of the chapters are completely new, and the few that are not have undergone substantial revisions. The contributors prepared their chapters for this volume; they are not reprints from other sources.

What has not changed is the overall organization: again we divide the book into six parts that we think fit the way one might logically organize the teaching of Congress and that represent substantive divisions in research. The first part, "Patterns and Dynamics of Congressional Change," includes two overview pieces, one on the contemporary Senate and the other on the contemporary House, as well as a chapter that examines public expectations about Congress. Part II deals with issues of congressional elections and representation. It contains essays on the linkages between voters' opinions and candidates' issue positions in congressional elections, the changing nature of congressional campaign financing, and the gender gap between the parties in the House. It concludes with an essay by Morris Fiorina in which he revisits his argument from *Congress—Keystone of the Washington Establishment*, first published in 1977, and assesses new developments in American politics likely to shape congressional elections in the twenty-first century.

The third and fourth sections of the book focus on the internal workings of Congress. Part III deals with committees and the committee system: the three chapters address the historical development of committees, competing theories about the rationale for them, and contemporary message politics. Part IV features two related pieces. One compares the differences in the development and exercise of party leadership in the House and the Senate, and the other makes the case that the model of conditional party government is consistent with theories based on the electoral motivations of members.

The relationships between Congress and the executive branch are examined in Part V. One chapter addresses issues related to gridlock (its causes and consequences) and the thwarted efforts of the president and the two houses of Congress to resolve major public policy issues during the past half-century. The other raises questions about whether the level of cooperation between Congress and

the president over foreign policy has undergone significant change since the mid-1990s.

In addition to our postelection chapter, the final section of the book includes two broad overviews. The first offers perspectives on the Congress of the twentieth century as a vehicle for raising important questions about the future of the institution. The final chapter examines the Republican Revolution of the past six years and its significance for how we think about Congress and explain congressional change.

As with previous editions, the quality of *Congress Reconsidered* is attributable to a goodly number of people. We have already mentioned our debt to those who wrote such fine chapters. In addition, the people with whom we have worked at CQ Press are a stellar group. For the third consecutive edition, we have had the good luck to work with Brenda Carter. Her concern, patience, and good humor have been constants upon which we have come to count. Gwenda Larsen made valuable suggestions at every step of the process, from proposing content changes to ensuring that things were completed in a timely fashion. Joanne Ainsworth, Ann Davies, and Tom Roche were incredibly professional and cooperative in the editing and production aspects of the book. We appreciate that it is no easy task to create a consistent whole when faced with manuscripts by so many contributors. Julie Rovesti and Amy Briggs did a marvelous job of ensuring a successful promotion of the book to its potential audience.

We are fortunate to enjoy backing for our research from our respective home institutions, the University of Florida and Vanderbilt University. We are also grateful to our departmental colleagues, who are regular sources of stimulation and ideas. Because we have day-to-day interactions with them, we tend to take their contributions for granted and fail to thank them as often as we should.

Naturally, the support and tolerance of our respective families is the magic ingredient in our ability to produce this book. Leslie still pulls Larry away from CNN to go out “two-steppin’” on Friday nights. And Susan and Anne ensure that Bruce has much to smile about. After working together for more than twenty-five years and through seven editions of this book, we still maintain the proper balance of professional respect and personal friendship that allows space for our individuality in both arenas. Dodd may prefer to view the world from atop a horse, while Oppenheimer opts for vehicles with four wheels rather than four hooves. Thankfully, however, doing this book every four years gives us a chance to “sit a spell” and talk.

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Part I

Patterns and Dynamics of Congressional Change

1. The New World of U.S. Senators

Barbara Sinclair

- A courtly older gentleman—probably a conservative southern Democrat, perhaps even white haired and clad in a white linen suit—working in committee behind closed doors
- A policy entrepreneur—Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative—pursuing his cause singly or with a few allies on the Senate floor, aggressively using nongermane amendments and extended debate as his weapons
- A partisan warrior, acting as a member of a party team, dueling with his opposing party counterparts in the public arena and on the floor, using all the procedural and PR tools available

These three images capture the differences among the Senates of the 1950s, the 1970s, and the 1990s. To be sure, they are simplifications, and some elements of the 1950s Senate and many of the 1970s Senate still persist. Yet the Senate at the beginning of the twenty-first century is very different from the 1950s Senate, which fictional and some journalistic accounts still often depict as current, and appreciably different from the 1970s Senate.

The U.S. Senate has the most permissive rules of any legislature in the world.¹ Extended debate allows senators to hold the floor as long as they wish unless cloture is invoked, which requires a supermajority of sixty votes. The Senate's amending rules enable senators to offer any and as many amendments as they please to almost any bill, and those amendments need not even be germane. The extent to which senators make full use of their prerogatives under the rules has varied over time. The Senate as it enters the twenty-first century is characterized by fairly cohesive party contingents that aggressively exploit Senate rules to pursue partisan advantage, but also by the persistence of the Senate individualism that developed in the 1960s and 1970s.

In this chapter, I briefly examine how and why the Senate changed from the 1950s to the present. I then analyze the impact of individualism and intensified partisanship on how the contemporary Senate functions and on legislative outcomes.