



CONGRESS & ITS MEMBERS

NINTH EDITION

ROGER H. DAVIDSON and WALTER J. OLESZEK

Congress and Its Members

Ninth Edition

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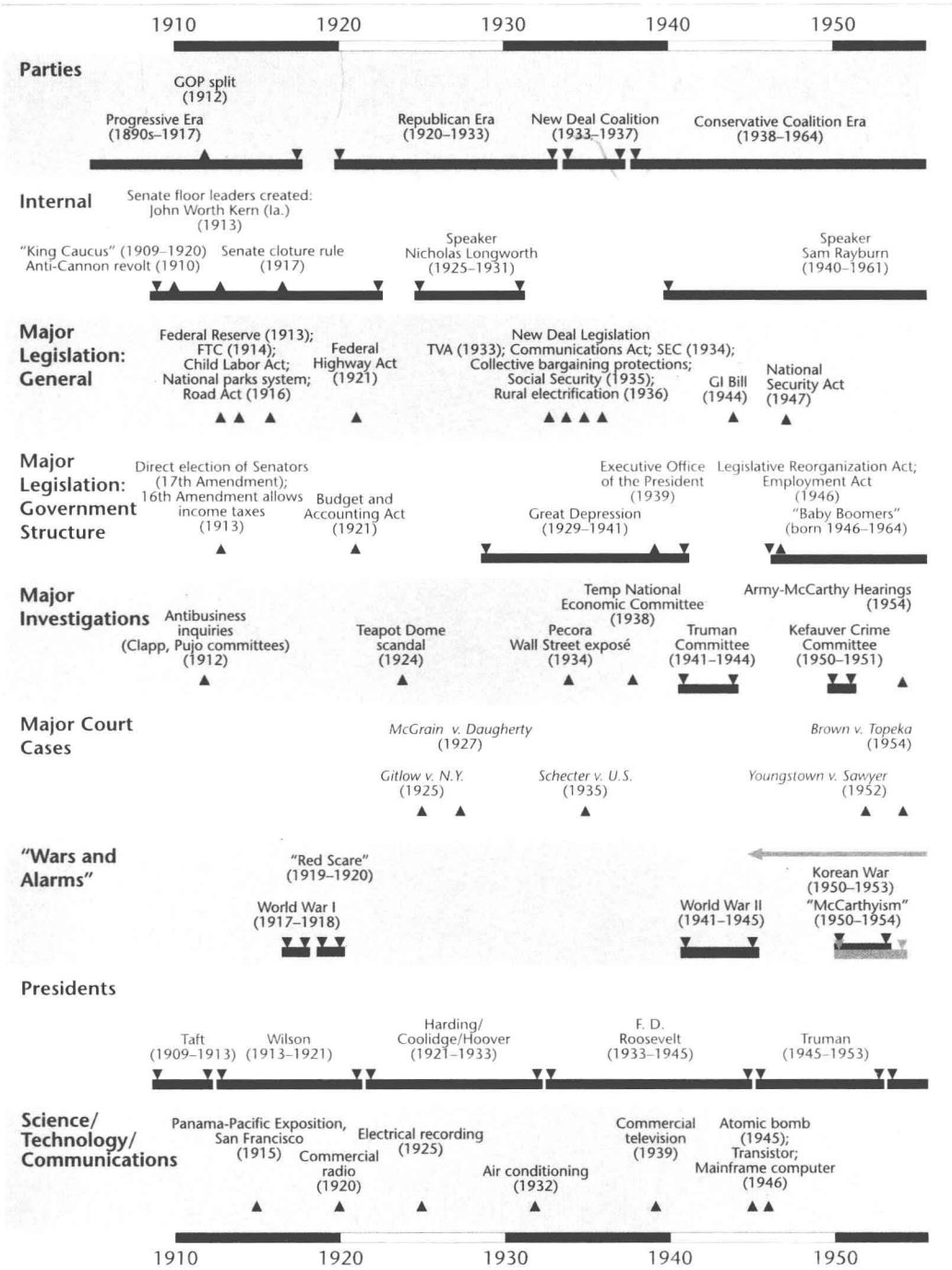
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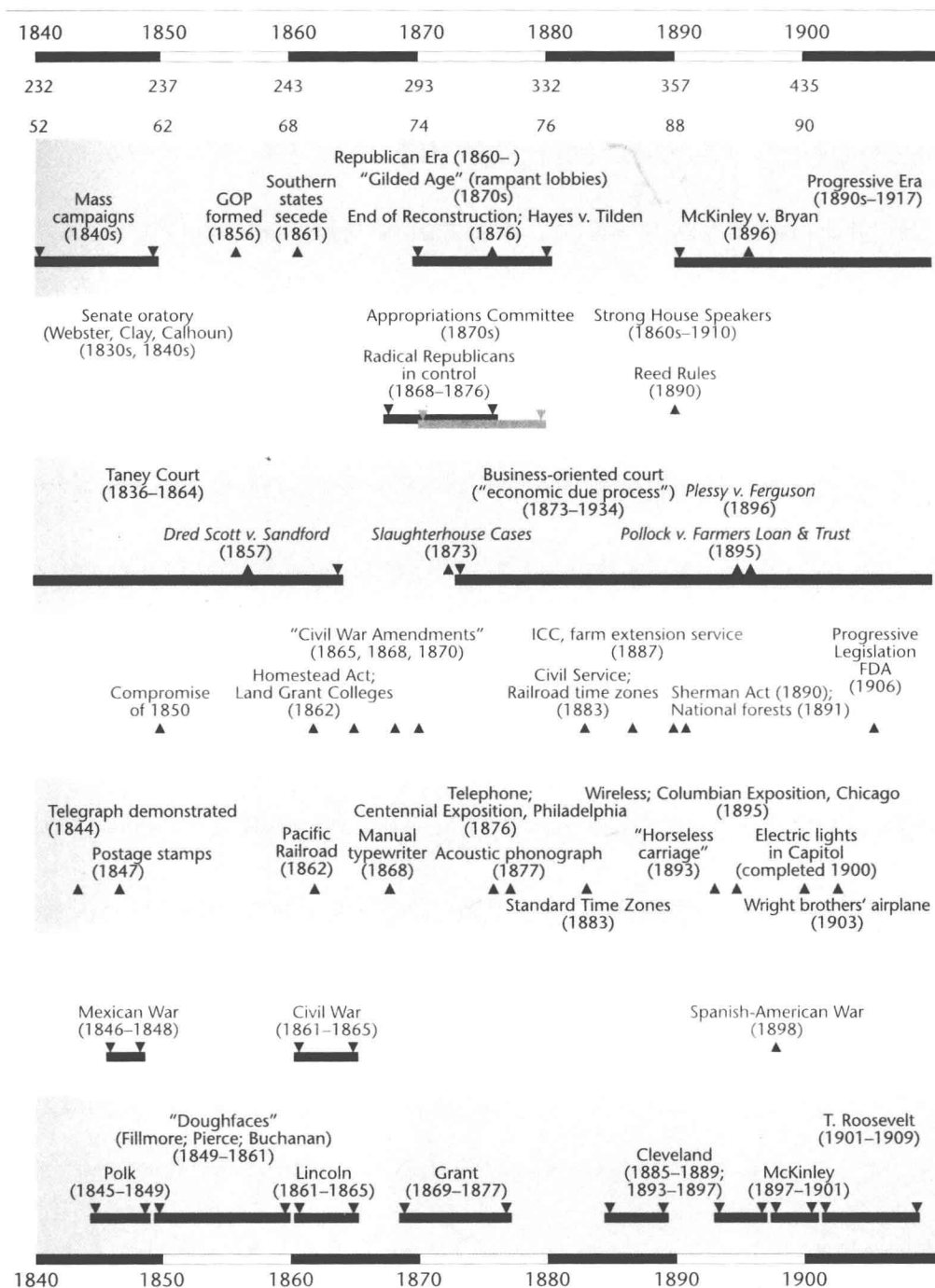
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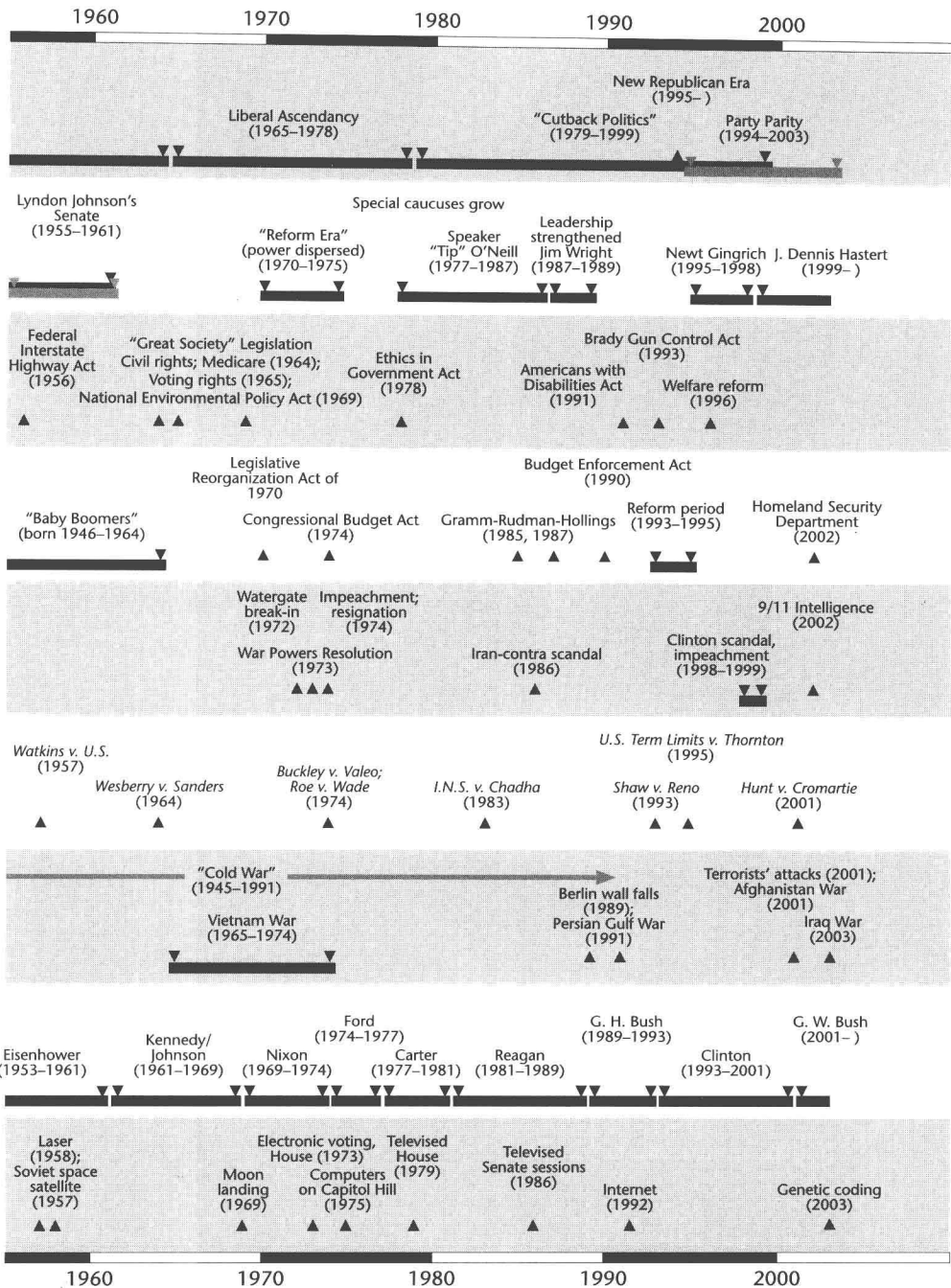
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Congressional Time Line: Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries









Classic moments in congressional politics. Lyndon B. Johnson, Senate majority leader (1955–1961), vice president (1961–1963), and president (1963–1969), master of one-on-one communication and what was termed “The Treatment,” interacts at close range with (top to bottom) Sen. Theodore Francis Green, D-R.I., Supreme Court justice Abe Fortas, and Sen. Richard B. Russell, D-Ga.



*For Nancy; Douglas, Victoria, Elizabeth, Thomas, James,
Alexander; Chris, Teddy, Emily, and Olivia
R. H. D.*

*For Janet, Mark, and Eric
W. J. O.*

Preface

As authors of the ninth edition of a book that first appeared in 1981, we are performe believers in the maxim that in politics six months is a long time and four years practically a lifetime. Events of recent years surely bear out this wisdom.

The presidency of Bill Clinton took Congress and the American people on a wild roller-coaster ride of success and disappointment. George W. Bush, Clinton's successor, emerged from the 2000 presidential contest that ended in the political equivalent of a tied score resolved by a judicial coin toss. Thus Bush faced the daunting task of governing in the absence of a clear electoral mandate. But his moderately successful presidency was dramatically transformed by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which enabled him to reinvent himself into a wartime leader.

Political forces on Capitol Hill reflected a recent partisan realignment. The new century found the two parties in a state of virtual parity. The Republicans began the 108th Congress (2003–2005) with 229 House seats, a sufficient but not overwhelming majority. In the Senate the GOP edge was a 51–48 (with one Independent who tended to side with the minority Democrats)—by no means a comfortable majority in a chamber that values independence and often requires supermajorities to conduct business.

The fluctuating fortunes of Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush and the Republican congressional majorities remind us of the pervasive pluralism of our political system, with its diversity of viewpoints and interests. What presidents and congressional majorities see as their mandates soon bump against the Founders' intricate "auxiliary precautions" for preventing majorities from winning quick or total victories. Not the least of the system's qualities is what we call the "two Congresses" dilemma: Congress is a conduit for localized interests and concerns as well as a maker of national policy.

In this edition we discuss new developments and fresh research findings regarding nearly every aspect of Congress. The impact of the September 11, 2001, attacks cannot be minimized. A wartime environment—thus far embracing two fighting wars in the Middle East and an ongoing war on terrorism—places extreme pressures on Congress. Deliberative legislative processes may seem out of place when people demand immediate, concerted actions. But hasty actions invariably are regretted, and sober reflections may demand legislative oversight and reconsideration.

The strength of partisanship and party leadership—perhaps the biggest Capitol Hill "story"—has at last gained serious attention from analysts. Party

competition—the so-called permanent campaign—pervades nearly every aspect of legislative life. We record changes in the committee system, floor procedures, and the Capitol Hill “establishment.” Congress’s shifting relationships with presidents illustrate the centrality of the White House–Capitol Hill connection and raise once again fundamental questions about the results of unified versus divided party control.

Amid all these global and political changes, there are underlying constants in Congress’s character and behavior. Most important is the dual nature of Congress as a collection of career-minded politicians and at the same time a forum for shaping and refining national policy. We employ the “two Congresses” theme to explain the details of congressional life as well as the scholarly findings about legislators’ behavior. Colorful personalities and practical examples illustrate the enduring topics essential for understanding Capitol Hill. We strive to describe recent events and trends precisely and perceptively; more than that, we try to place these developments in the broader historical and conceptual frameworks necessary for understanding how Congress and its members function.

For congressional experts, these are the best of times and the worst of times. On the one hand, we have witnessed an era of astonishing change on Capitol Hill—dramatic shifts in congressional membership, partisan control, structural and procedural arrangements, and policy agenda. Congress ought to validate its position as an initiator of national policy making. Yet, at the same time, executive decision makers, federal judges, and elite opinion makers profess widespread distrust of Congress. In our judgment, and that of most careful observers, this skepticism far outruns the institution’s actual defects and shortcomings—a paradox that is manifested in our new edition of *Congress and Its Members*.

This edition, like its predecessors, is addressed to general readers seeking an introduction to the modern Congress as well as to college or university students taking courses on the legislative process or national policy making. We have tried to provide our readers with the most accurate, timely, and readable information possible, along with the most important and thoughtful insights from scholars and practitioners alike. Although wrapped around our core theme and a number of subthemes, the book’s chapters are long on analysis. For this we do not apologize. Lawmaking is a complicated business that demands special skills; those who would understand it must encounter its details and nuances. At the same time, we trust we have conveyed something of the energy and excitement of the place. After all, our journalist friends are right: Capitol Hill is the best “beat” in town.

Anyone who has prepared nine editions of a book has incurred more debts to friends and fellow scholars than could ever be recounted. Authors are primarily indebted to their readers, in this case the students and teachers at the hundreds of colleges and universities here and abroad where our book has

been adopted. We have benefited from a large number of scholars and, for this edition, several outstanding young scholars.

We acknowledge our colleagues at the Congressional Research Service and elsewhere: Mildred Amer, Stanley Bach, Richard Beth, Sarah A. Binder, Colton Campbell, Joe Cantor, Kevin Coleman, Royce Crocker, Paul E. Dwyer, C. Lawrence Evans, Louis Fisher, Gary Galemore, Kevin Gates, William Heniff, Henry Hogue, David Huckabee, Frederick Kaiser, Robert Keith, Johnny H. Killian, Mike Kolakowski, Forrest Maltzman, Ronald Moe, John S. Pontius, Harold Relyea, Sula P. Richardson, Paul Rundquist, Steve Rutkus, Elizabeth Rybicki, Richard Sachs, Judy Schneider, Eric R. A. N. Smith, Sean M. Theriault, and Donald Wolfensberger.

Our friends at CQ Press deserve special appreciation. Brenda Carter, director of the college division, patiently encouraged us at every step. Charisse Kiino, our editor, proved once again the exceptional quality of CQ's editorial work. Colleen McGuiness provided skilled and probing editorial assistance. Christopher Karlsten coordinated the entire effort and tried to hold us to our deadlines. Belinda Josey kept the trains running on time. Talia Greenberg gave invaluable advice on photo research. Deborah Ismond fashioned fresh graphics throughout the book and implemented our concept of congressional time lines.

Our deep appreciation for our families, for their love and support, cannot be fully expressed in words. As a measure of our affection, this book is dedicated to them.

Roger H. Davidson, Santa Barbara, California
Walter J. Oleszek, Fairfax, Virginia
June 2003

Contents

Preface xi

Part 1 In Search of the Two Congresses

- 1 The Two Congresses 3
 - The Dual Nature of Congress 4
 - Divergent Views of Congress 9
- 2 Evolution of the Modern Congress 13
 - Antecedents of Congress 13
 - Congress in the Constitution 17
 - Institutional Evolution 26
 - Evolution of the Legislator's Job 31
 - Conclusion 36

Part 2 A Congress of Ambassadors

- 3 Going for It: Recruitment and Candidacy 39
 - Formal Rules of the Game 40
 - Districting in the House 44
 - Becoming a Candidate 56
 - Nominating Politics 65
 - The Money Factor 68
 - Conclusion 79
- 4 Making It: The Electoral Game 81
 - Campaign Strategies 82
 - Campaign Resources 85
 - Campaign Techniques 90
 - The Parallel Campaigns 96
 - Who Votes? 97
 - How Voters Decide 100
 - Election Outcomes 111
 - After the Election Is Over 116

5 Being There: Hill Styles and Home Styles 119

Hill Styles 120

Looking Homeward 132

Office of the Member Inc. 140

Members and the Media 145

Conclusion 149

Part 3 A Deliberative Assembly of One Nation

6 Leaders and Parties in Congress 151

Leaders of the House 153

Leaders of the Senate 168

Selection of Leaders 177

Leadership Activities 178

Party Caucuses, Committees, and Informal Groups 182

Party Continuity and Change 185

Conclusion 191

7 Committees: Workshops of Congress 193

The Purposes of Committees 194

Evolution of the Committee System 195

Types of Committees 197

The Assignment Process 203

Committee Leadership 211

Policy Making in Committee 211

Committee Staff 219

Committee Reform and Change 221

Conclusion 226

8 Congressional Rules and Procedures 229

Introduction of Bills 231

Referral of Bills 234

Scheduling in the House 237

House Floor Procedures 246

Scheduling in the Senate 249

Senate Floor Procedures 252

Resolving House-Senate Differences 256

Conclusion 259

9 Decision Making in Congress 261

The Power to Choose 262

Types of Decisions 263

Determinants of Voting 271

Legislative Bargaining	282
Conclusion	288

Part 4 Policy Making and Change in the Two Congresses

10 Congress and the President	291
The President as Legislator	291
The Veto Power	305
Sources of Legislative-Executive Cooperation	309
Sources of Legislative-Executive Conflict	311
The Balance of Power	313
Conclusion	316
11 Congress and the Bureaucracy	319
Congress Organizes the Executive Branch	320
Congressional Control of the Bureaucracy	336
Conclusion	343
12 Congress and the Courts	345
Constitutional Review	346
The Court as Referee and Umpire	347
Advice and Consent for Judicial Nominees	356
Conclusion	364
13 Congress and Organized Interests	367
A Nation of Joiners	367
Pressure Group Methods	370
Groups and the Electoral Connection	376
Groups and Legislative Politics	381
Informal Groups of Members	383
Regulation of Lobbying	384
Conclusion	388
14 Congress, Budgets, and Domestic Policy Making	391
Definitions of Policy	391
Stages of Policy Making	393
Types of Domestic Policies	396
Characteristics of Congressional Policy Making	398
Congressional Budgeting	401
The 1974 Budget Act	407
Surpluses Arrive Unexpectedly	413
The Return of Deficits	414
Conclusion	417

15	Congress and National Security Policies	419
	Constitutional Powers	420
	Who Speaks for Congress?	421
	Types of Foreign and National Security Policies	424
	Structural Policies	424
	Strategic Policies	429
	Crisis Policies: The War Powers	437
	Conclusion	442

Part 5 Conclusion

16	The Two Congresses and the American People	447
	Congress-as-Politicians	448
	Congress-as-Institution	452
	Twenty-first Century Challenges	457
	“The Fundamental Things Apply”	461

Reference Materials 465

Appendix A.	Party Control: Presidency, Senate, House, 1901–2003	466
Appendix B.	Internships: Getting Experience on Capitol Hill	468
Notes		470
Suggested Readings		516
Index		523



Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., and the "two Congresses" after disaster strikes the World Trade Center in his Eighth District. Above, Nadler (left, in mask) and Democratic leader Dick Gephardt, Mo., are shown areas of devastation as lawmakers tour Ground Zero. Nadler (left) and fellow New York Democrats Joseph Crowley and Carolyn B. Maloney attend an Appropriations Committee markup to lobby for New York City aid. Below, Nadler talks with New York mayor Michael Bloomberg.

