Congress and Its Members

Fourth Edition

Roger H. Davidson
Walter J. Oleszek

Congress and Its Members

Fourth Edition

Roger H. Davidson
University of Maryland

Walter J. Oleszek
Congressional Research Service

CQ PRESS

A Division of Congressional Quarterly Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

Photo Credits: 2, Michael Jenkins, Congressional Quarterly; 12, Library of Congress; 46, Jose R. Lopez, *New York Times;* 88, Friends of Barbara Boxer; 120, AP/Wide World Photos; 166, George Tames; 202, Michael Jenkins, Congressional Quarterly; 238, AP/Wide World Photos; 268, Michael Jenkins, Congressional Quarterly; 294, Michael Jenkins, Congressional Quarterly; 320, Architect of the Capitol; 354, Warren Leffler; 382, AP/Wide World Photos; 412, Neal H. Flieger; 436, Michael Jenkins, Congressional Quarterly.

Acknowledgments: Figure 4-4 reprinted from *The Electoral Origins of Divided Government: Competition in U.S. House Elections, 1946-1988* by Gary C. Jacobson, © 1990, with permission of Westview Press, Boulder, Colo.; Table 10-2 reprinted from *Organized Interests and American Democracy* by Kay Lehman Schlozman and John T. Tierney, © 1986, with permission of HarperCollins Publishers Inc.; Table 13-1 reprinted with permission of *Los Angeles Times,* © 1993; Figure 13-1 reprinted with permission of *Wall Street Journal,* © 1993 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide.

Cover and book design: Paula Anderson

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Davidson, Roger H.
Congress and its Members / Roger H. Davidson, Walter J. Oleszek.—4th ed.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-87187-767-8 (hard)—ISBN 0-87187-726-0 (soft)
1. United States. Congress. 2. Legislators—United States.
I. Oleszek, Walter J. II. Title.
JK1061.D29 1993
320.73--dc20

93-27786
CIP

For Nancy, Douglas and Victoria, and Christopher
R.H.D.

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

Preface

The U.S. Congress is an institution that mirrors its political surroundings and adapts or adjusts to events and trends. This changeability is manifested in this new edition of *Congress and Its Members.*

As we go to press, President Bill Clinton and Congress's fractious Democratic majority are struggling to prove that they can govern. It is clear that political gridlock (a now-fashionable term) is caused not wholly, or even primarily, by divided party control. President Clinton's troubles, which brought him the briefest presidential honeymoon since Gerald Ford's, remind us of the pervasive pluralism of our political system. Not the least of its qualities is what we call the "two Congresses" problem: Congress is a conduit for localized interests and concerns as well as a maker of national policy.

Congress in the 1990s is significantly different from the institution of 1981, when the first edition of this book appeared. More than half of all House and Senate members have been elected since then. Most committee chairmen and virtually all party leaders assumed their posts after that date. And, although Congress has made relatively few formal alterations in structures or procedures, the legislative workload and techniques for handling that workload are strikingly different from the way they were just a few years ago.

In this edition we examine the effect of these changes on the institution. Formal elements of House representation—census taking, apportionment, and districting—were all fiercely contested in the early 1990s. Gerrymandering, a perennial but little analyzed phenomenon, has raised new issues that are being fought out in academic, political, and judicial forums. Our expanded treatment of these subjects responds to these ongoing developments.

The 1991-1992 congressional election cycle yielded unusually high numbers of retirements, challengers, and defeats. The 1992 electoral results, while confirming much of what we have learned about congressional elections over the past two decades, also reminded us that changing contextual factors can shift the resources available to all contestants—senators or representatives, incumbents or challengers, Democrats or Republicans. Our analysis of what happened in 1992 identifies what was unique about those events; at the same time we attempt to show how they demonstrate underlying variables and continuities in the electoral equation.

We discuss new developments, and fresh research findings, in connection with nearly every aspect of Congress. The growing strength of partisanship and party leadership, perhaps the biggest Capitol Hill "story," is only recently gaining serious attention from analysts. We record subtle changes in

the committee system as well as academic disputes over the sources of committee influence. Congress's shifting relationships with both Bush and Clinton illustrate the centrality of White House-Capitol Hill relationships and raise once again fundamental questions about the results of unified versus divided party control.

The continuing urgency of fiscal issues dictates detailed coverage of the budget and domestic policy making. We have tried, however, to avoid the arcane terminology of budget-process specialists, preferring instead to emphasize how budget practices reflect political conflicts. In examining foreign and national security policies, we stress the likely effect upon Congress of the end of the cold war—for example, an altered international agenda and a downsized military establishment. Finally, we consider the love-hate relationship between Congress and the American people that in the 1990s brought waves of public criticism and demands for reform in matters both large and trivial.

Amid all these legal, political, and institutional changes, there are underlying constants in Congress's character and behavior. Most important is the dual nature of Congress as a collection of career-maximizing politicians and an arena for shaping and refining national policy. In this edition we employ the "two Congresses" theme even more forcefully than in previous editions to explain the myriad 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 full understanding of how Congress and its members function.

This edition, like its predecessors, is addressed to general readers seeking an introduction to the modern Congress as well as college or university students taking courses on the legislative process or national policy making. To supplement this book, we have prepared a legislative simulation exercise, designed to be used in classrooms or workshops, that replicates the political divisions and procedural features of the House of Representatives. Each participant is assigned a congressional district to represent in the three phases of the exercise: committee hearings, committee markups, and floor deliberations. Robert M. Tennant, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Maryland, compiled the simulation materials, based on exercises successfully conducted by the coauthors for college students, federal managers, lobbyists, and Capitol Hill staff members.

In the course of preparing these four editions, we have incurred debts to more friends and fellow scholars than we could ever recount. We acknowledge our colleagues at the Congressional Research Service: Mildred Amer, Stanley Bach, Richard Beth, Joe Cantor, Royce Crocker, Sandy Davis, Louis Fisher, Gary Galemore, Carol Hardy-Vincent, David Huckabee, Robert Keith, Ronald Moe, Ilona Nickels, Fred Pauls, John Pontius, Sula P.

Richardson, Paul Rundquist, and Richard Sachs. Professor James Gimpel of the University of Maryland kindly assisted in the analysis of National Election Study survey data. Both of us, too, would like to thank our friends and colleagues at the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, especially Kelly Cordes, John Deeken, Larry Evans, Phil Grone, Maureen Groppe, Kim Wincup, and Nick Wise, for informing us further on the intricacies of legislative operations and reorganization. Professors Ross K. Baker of Rutgers University, Linda L. Fowler of Syracuse University, and Leroy N. Rieselbach of Indiana University were kind enough to review the third edition of our book and to offer many thoughtful recommendations. We also would like to thank our readers, including the students and teachers at more than three hundred colleges and universities here and abroad where our book has been adopted.

Our friends at CQ Press deserve special appreciation. Acquisitions Editor Brenda Carter patiently encouraged us at every step; General Manager Patrick Bernuth and Editorial Director David R. Tarr have given valuable support over the years. Senior Editor Ann Davies proves once again the exceptional quality of CQ's editorial work. And Michelle Sobel gave invaluable assistance with production and photo research. Our deep appreciation for our families, their love and support, cannot be adequately expressed in words. As a measure of our affection, this edition is dedicated to them.

Roger H. Davidson
Walter J. Oleszek
Washington, D.C.
July 1993

Contents

Tables, Figures, and Boxes

Tables

Figures

Boxes

Part 1

In Search of the Two Congresses

A good government implies two things: first, fidelity to the object of government, which is the happiness of the people, secondly, a knowledge of the means by which that object can be best attained.

The Federalist, No. 62 (1788)

Legislatures are really two objects: a collectivity and an institution. As a collectivity, individual representatives act as receptors, reflecting the needs and wants of constituents. As an institution, the Legislature has to make laws, arriving at some conclusions about what ought to be done about public problems.

Charles O. Jones
"From the Suffrage of the People: An Essay of Support and Worry for Legislatures" (1974)

These two statements—one by the authors of *The Federalist,* the other by a contemporary scholar—express our thesis. As the words suggest, the idea that representative assemblies contain an inherent tension between representation and lawmaking, between individual and institution, is neither new nor novel. This dualism is embedded in the Constitution, manifested in history, and validated by scholars' findings.

In elaborating the "two Congresses" notion, we have organized this book into four parts, each with a brief explanatory introduction. In the first part we outline the two Congresses theme and briefly trace the historical development of the institution and its members.

Chapter 1

First-term representatives from the 103d Congress gather for a traditional class photo by the Capitol. One hundred ten new representatives were elected in November 1992—one-fourth of the House membership.

The Two Congresses

Two House members, once friends, were fighting for their political lives in Illinois's 3d Congressional District, which covers south-central Chicago and the nearby suburbs. When Illinois lost two House seats after the 1990 census, Reps. Marty Russo and William O. Lipinski, both Democrats, were tossed into a combined district redrawn by Republicans.

The race was not only between two individuals but between two ways of being an elected representative. Russo, an eighteen-year veteran, was an ebullient legislative negotiator, an articulate voice on the issues concerning his suburban voters. A Capitol Hill insider, a floor whip, and an influential member of the Ways and Means Committee, he was a major player on such national issues as tax reform and health care. In his fifth term, Lipinski had little national visibility. Known as "Bungalow Bill," after the nearly identical houses of his working-class supporters, he used his seat on the Public Works and Transportation Committee to his district's advantage. When the White House owed him a favor, he asked for federal money for a local transit line.[1]

The campaigns of the two members reflected their differing "home styles." Although both were effective face-to-face campaigners, their messages diverged: Russo talked about national issues, Lipinski touted local service. Russo's impressive war chest, funded by contributions from political action committees, paid for an extensive media campaign. Lipinski, endorsed by most local ward leaders, was aided by what was left of Chicago's once-invincible Democratic party machine. Russo criss-crossed the district in a blue Ford van with a license plate that read "Member of Congress, 3d District." The plates on Lipinski's Chrysler sedan read simply "Ward 23."[2]

A thousand miles away in the nation's capital, the 102d Congress was mired in scandal and bitter election-year conflicts. Economic recession had shattered public confidence. The public's faith in Congress, shaky at best, sank even lower as a result of the acrimonious Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, revelations of senatorial favors for a failed savings and loan kingpin, and charges of mismanagement of the House "bank" (payroll office), restaurants, and post office. Little headway was made on substantive legislation. Locked in combat with President George Bush (enmeshed in his own electoral problems) and stymied by competing pressure groups, Congress left many pressing issues unresolved: economic recovery, deficit reduction, bank restructuring, national health insurance, campaign finance reform, to name a few.

"All politics is local," former House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill once declared. That dictum was borne out in 1992, when voter discontent and