

## Daily Lecture Notes

Lesson

7-1

### Did you know?

One important bill was passed in a single day. In March 1933, on his first day in office, President Franklin D. Roosevelt drafted a bill closing the nation's banks to prevent their collapse. The Senate and House both debated and passed the bill, and President Roosevelt signed it into law that evening.

### Outline

#### I. Types of Bills and Resolutions (pages 181–183)

- A. Public bills involve national issues; private bills deal with individual people or places.
- B. Resolutions may be passed by either house or by both houses jointly.
- C. Both houses pass concurrent resolutions, which do not have the force of law.
- D. A rider is a provision attached to a bill on an unrelated subject.
- E. Only a few bills become laws because:
  - 1. the process is long and complex;
  - 2. measures must have broad support;
  - 3. supporters must be willing to compromise;
  - 4. many bills are introduced that have no chance of passing.

#### Discussion Question

Why might a major public bill require months to move through Congress? (Many major public bills deal with controversial issues and may be debated for months.)

#### II. Introducing a Bill (pages 183–186)

- A. Introducing a new bill in Congress is the first step in the lawmaking process.
- B. New bills are sent to committees and sometimes subcommittees.
- C. Both houses usually agree with the committees' decision on a bill.

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## Daily Lecture Notes

(continued)

Lesson

7-1

### II. Introducing a Bill (pages 183–186, continued)

- D.** If a committee decides to act on a bill, it holds hearings on it.
- E.** When a committee hearing is complete, committee members review the bill line by line and make changes in it by a majority vote.
- F.** The committee kills or reports the bill to the House or Senate, sending with the bill a written report that describes the bill, explains the committee's actions, lists the committee's changes, and recommends passage or defeat.

#### Discussion Question

**Why do congressional committees play such a key role in bills after they are introduced?** (Committee members have authority because they are considered experts on the bills they receive.)

### III. Floor Action (pages 186–187)

- A.** During debate any lawmaker may offer amendments.
- B.** The bill, including proposed changes, must receive a majority vote in both the House and Senate to pass.
- C.** Congress may use standing, roll-call, record, or voice votes.

#### Discussion Question

**How may bills be changed during floor debates in each house?** (Amendments may be added.)

### IV. Final Steps in Passing Bills (pages 187–188)

- A.** To become a law, a bill must pass in identical form in both houses; conference committees work out differences when necessary, and send a compromise bill to each house of Congress for final action.
- B.** The president may then let the bill become law by signing it or keeping it 10 days without signing it, or kill it using a veto or pocket veto.

turn

# Daily Lecture Notes

Lesson

7-1

(continued)

## IV. Final Steps in Passing Bills (pages 187–188, continued)

- C. Congress can override a presidential veto by a two-thirds vote in each house.
- D. The line-item veto was challenged in the Supreme Court and declared unconstitutional.
- E. After a bill becomes a law, it is registered with the National Archives and Records Service.
- F. Citizens can track legislation using an online information resource called THOMAS.

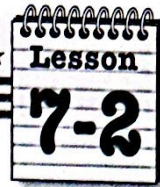
### Discussion Question

**Do you believe the president's line-item veto is constitutional? Explain.** (Answers will vary. Students should demonstrate understanding of legislative powers.)

end



# Daily Lecture Notes



## Did you know?

Members of Congress often promote spending bills that benefit their district or state. For example, in 1997 Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama added a measure to the House appropriations bill to spend \$3 million for fertilizer research in Alabama. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas added a bill to build a new commuter lane on a bridge in El Paso. Both senators were important members of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and their efforts were successful.

## Outline

### I. Making Decisions About Taxes (pages 189–190)

- A.** The House of Representatives has exclusive power to start all revenue bills, and all important work on tax laws occurs in the House Ways and Means Committee.
- B.** Until the 1970s the closed rule forbade members of Congress from amending tax bills from the floor of the House; members felt tax bills were too complicated and in too much danger of being amended under pressure from special-interest groups to allow such changes.
- C.** In 1973 the House revolted against the powerful Ways and Means Committee and its chairperson to do away with the closed rule; critics charge that doing away with this rule has allowed tax bills to become a collection of amendments favoring special interests.
- D.** The Senate may propose changes in tax bills, and the Senate Committee on Finance has primary responsibility for tax matters.

### Discussion Question

**Compare the role of the House Ways and Means Committee in tax legislation before the 1970s with the role it plays today.** (See discussion of changes in closed-rule procedure on text page 190.)

### II. Appropriating Money (pages 191–192)

- A.** Congress has the power of appropriation, or approval of government spending.





## Daily Lecture Notes

Lesson

7-2

(continued)

### II. Appropriating Money (pages 191–192, continued)

#### B. Congress uses a two-step procedure in appropriating money:

1. an authorization bill, setting up a federal program and specifying how much money may be spent on it;
2. an appropriations bill, providing the money needed to carry out the program or law.

#### C. In each house of Congress, an appropriations committee and its subcommittees handle appropriations bills.

#### D. Appropriations subcommittees may develop close relationships with certain agencies and projects for which they appropriate funds.

#### E. Powerful interest groups try to influence appropriations subcommittees to give the agencies all the money they request.

#### F. Most of the money the federal government spends each year is for uncontrollable expenditures.

### Discussion Question

**Why are certain expenditures such as social security given long-term spending authority?** (Government entitlement programs must be honored from year to year.)

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## Daily Lecture Notes

Lesson

7-3

### Did you know?

Lobbyists representing interest groups may have gotten their name from favor-seekers operating in the New York state legislature. As early as the 1820s, those favor-seekers sought out New York lawmakers in the “lobby”—the corridor or other parts of the state capital building at Albany—seeking to influence legislators’ votes. Since that time, lobbyists have become one of the most powerful influences on governments.

### Outline

#### I. Influences on Lawmakers (page 194)

- A. Lawmakers’ views on decisions are seldom based on individual conscience.
- B. Voters back home, lawmakers’ staff members, lawmakers’ own political parties, the president, and special-interest groups all influence lawmakers’ views.

#### Discussion Question

**Why do members of Congress consider other factors and not just cast their votes according to their own views on proposed bills?** (Lawmakers want to serve their constituents, be reelected, and support their party or president.)

#### II. The Influence of Voters (pages 195–196)

- A. Lawmakers are heavily influenced by the needs and opinions of their constituents.
- B. Lawmakers stay informed of voters’ attitudes and needs by making frequent trips back home, by reading messages from home, by questionnaires, and by reports from their staff in their home district.

#### Discussion Question

**What influence do voters back home have on lawmakers’ decisions on legislation?** (On issues that affect their constituents’ daily lives, lawmakers generally listen to voters’ preferences.)

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## Daily Lecture Notes

Lesson

7-3

(continued)

### III. The Influence of Parties (pages 196–197)

- A. Nearly all members of Congress belong to one of the two major political parties and generally support their own party's stands on legislation.
- B. House members support their parties more strongly than do Senate members, but the issues themselves also determine whether members follow their party leaders' agenda.
- C. Members of Congress usually support their party because party members usually share the same general political beliefs.

#### Discussion Question

**What might happen when lawmakers do not vote with their own political party on an important bill?** (Answers will vary. Students should consider the value of party membership to a lawmaker.)

### IV. Other Influences on Congress (pages 197–198)

- A. Presidents work hard to persuade lawmakers to support laws they want passed and give or withhold political favors to secure lawmakers' support.
- B. Interest groups and their lobbyists represent various interests, including labor and business groups, education and environmental organizations, and minority groups.
- C. Political action committees (PACs) are political fund-raising organizations that give their funds to support lawmakers who favor the PAC's position.

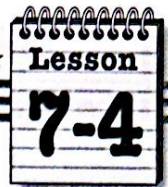
#### Discussion Question

**Do you think lobbyists are beneficial or detrimental to the lawmaking process in Congress? Explain.** (Answers will vary. See lobbyists' influence on text page 198.)

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## Did you know?

Critics say that the “pork” in “pork-barrel legislation” is used to “grease” the wheels of government. By that, they mean that when Congress appropriates millions of dollars for local projects, such as hydroelectric dams, environmental cleanup programs, and mass transit projects, it does so for two reasons: to help districts and states provide services and, just as important, to improve their own chances of being reelected.

## Outline

### I. Handling Problems (pages 200–201)

- A.** Lawmakers in both houses must deal with their constituents’ problems and needs involving government.
- B.** Caseworkers on lawmakers’ staffs help them deal with voters’ requests for help.
- C.** Lawmakers spend a great deal of time on casework because responding to voters helps them get reelected, casework brings problems with federal programs to lawmakers’ attention, and caseworkers help citizens cope with the huge national government.

### Discussion Question

**How much of their time should members of Congress spend handling the problems of their constituents? Explain.** (Answers will vary. See discussion of casework on text page 201.)

### II. Helping the District or State (pages 201–203)

- A.** Lawmakers bring federal projects and money to their districts and states through pork-barrel legislation, federal grants and contracts, and keeping federal projects.
- B.** Congress appropriates billions of dollars for local projects that can bring funds and jobs to districts and states; these appropriations for local projects are sometimes called “pork-barrel legislation.”

**turn**



## Daily Lecture Notes



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### II. Helping the District or State (pages 201–203, continued)

- C.** Lawmakers also try hard to obtain federal grants and contracts for their districts and states, working closely with executive department agencies that award those grants and contracts.
- D.** Although lawmakers do not have direct control over funds for grants and contracts, they may try to influence how these are awarded. They may pressure agency officials to grant their state favorable hearings, urge constituents to contact agency officials, and assign staff members to help constituents apply for grants and solve any special problems.

#### Discussion Question

**Do you think members of Congress should spend much time obtaining federal projects and federal grants and contracts for their districts and states? Explain.**

(Answers will vary, but should demonstrate an understanding of the pressure to win projects, grants, and contracts for their home districts.)

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