

# (4.5) - Congress at Work - Organization and Committees

*U.S. Government and Politics*

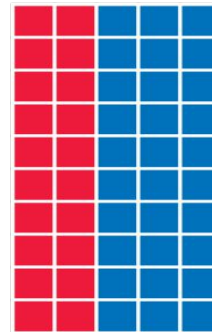
# Essential question - Legislative

- *How should government meet the needs of its people?*

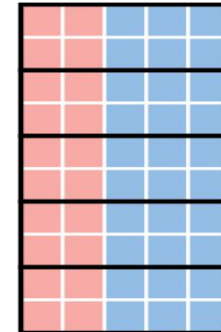
# Review two houses of Congress

- The Two houses
  - House and Senate
    - size, terms, qualifications
- Congressional districts
  - reapportionment
  - gerrymandering

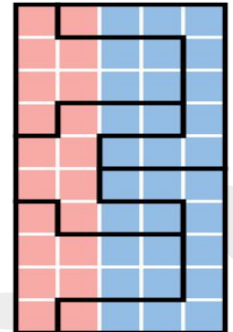
## HOW TO STEAL AN ELECTION



50 PRECINCTS  
60% BLUE  
40% RED



5 DISTRICTS  
5 BLUE  
0 RED  
BLUE WINS



5 DISTRICTS  
3 RED  
2 BLUE  
RED WINS

# Review Powers of Congress

- **Federal powers**
  - Expressed, implied, inherent
- **Expressed powers** of note
  - Commerce power - regulate interstate and foreign trade
  - Power to tax
  - Naturalization process
  - War powers

# Review Powers of Congress

- **Federal powers**

- Expressed, *implied*, inherent

- **Implied powers** of note

- Necessary and proper clause
  - Various interpretations and applications have led to a variety of more powers for Congress
- Power to investigate
  - Impeachment, Oversight function
- Approving appointments and treaties by the President

# When does Congress meet

- **Congressional terms**
  - Congress begins a new term every two years (currently 115th)
  - of every odd-numbered year
  - ex. election 2016, term started Jan 2017
- **State of the Union Message**
  - late Jan or early Feb
  - a joint session of Congress
  - President reports on the state of the nation in both domestic & foreign policy terms

# Presiding officers in Congress

- Constitution provides for presiding officers of each house.
- **House of Representatives**
  - Speaker of the House = presiding officer of the house and acknowledged leader of the majority party
  - preside in a fair manner and keep order
  - interprets, applies rules, refers bills to committees, rules on points of order, motions to vote, and decides outcomes



Paul Ryan  
(R)  
Wisconsin

# Presiding officers in Congress

- **Senate**

- President of the Senate =  
Senates presiding officer

- Vice President

- not elected and not a  
member of the body

- President pro tempore = if  
the VP is not able to attend.  
Leading member of  
majority party



Mike Pence  
(R)  
Indiana



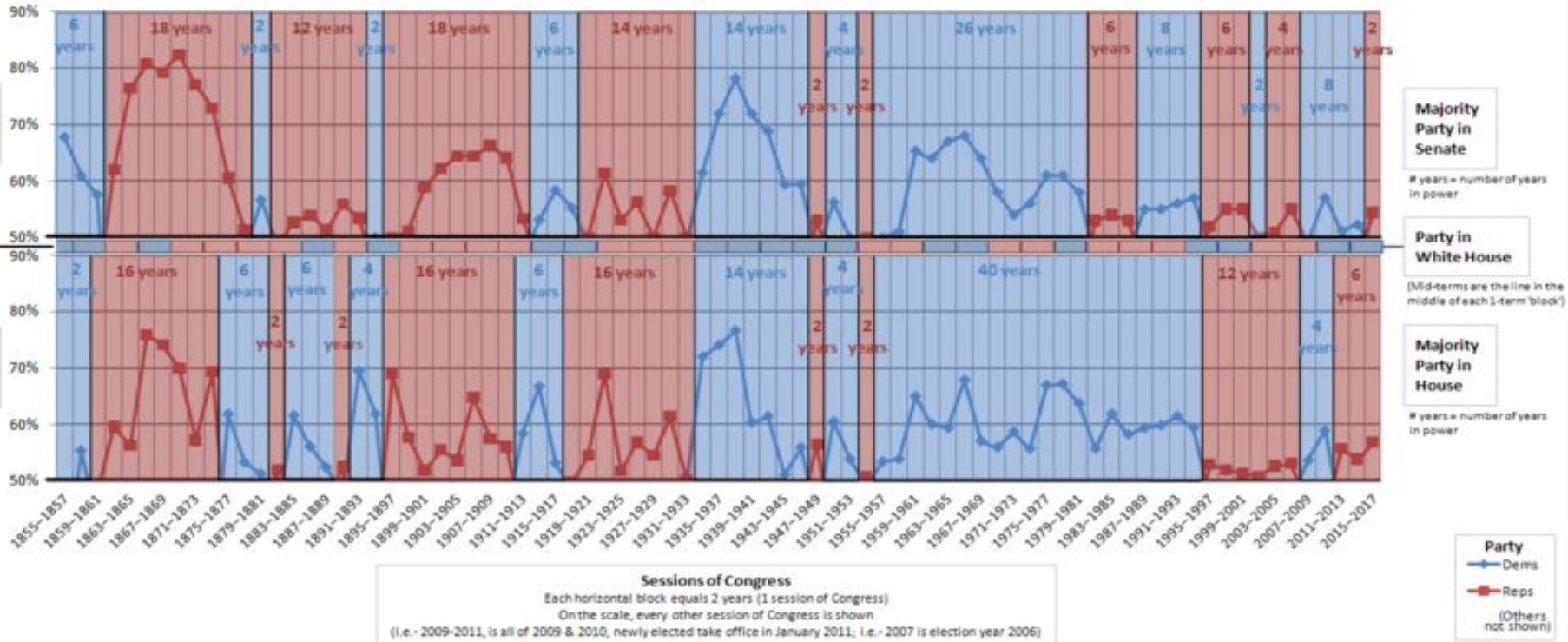
Orrin Hatch  
(R)  
Utah



# Party Officers in Congress

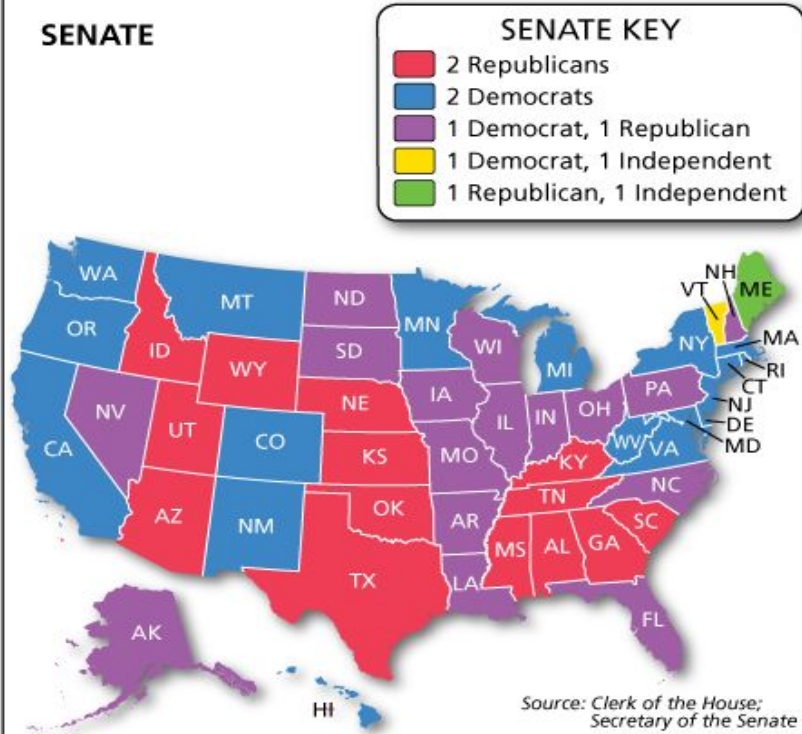
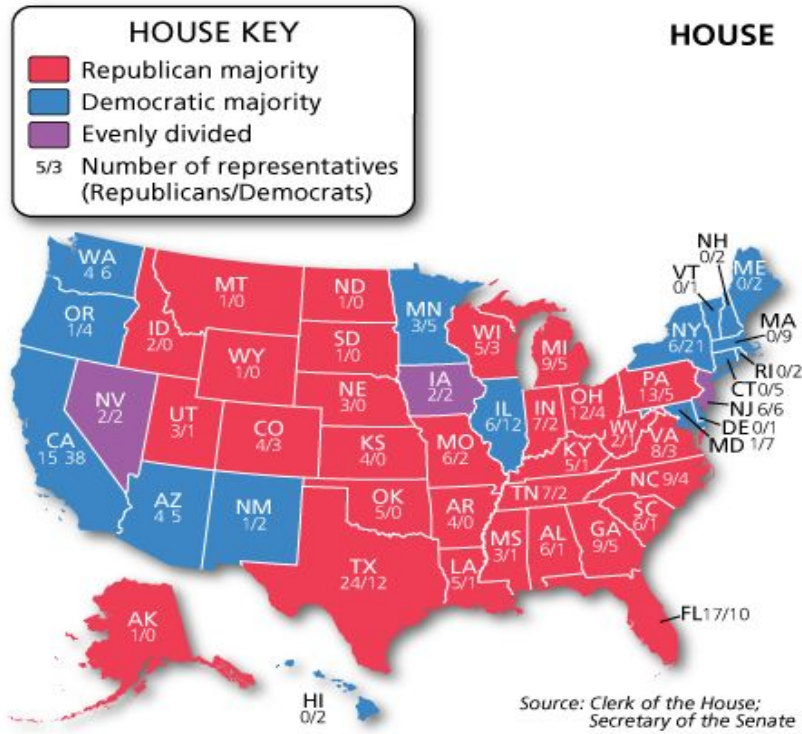
- **Caucus meetings**
  - closed meeting of the members of each party in each house
- **Floor leaders**
  - majority leader
  - minority leader
  - whips

## Control of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives: 1855-2017



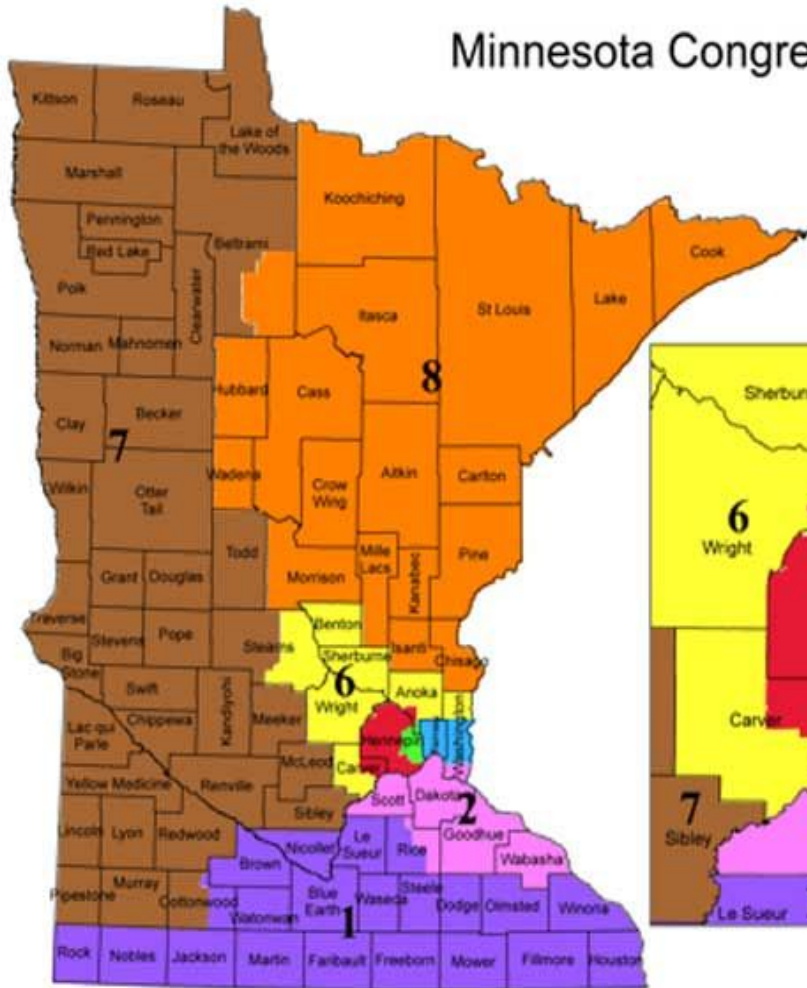
This chart shows party strength in Congress since 1855. What is the largest majority each party has held in each house over the past 30 years?

# Representation by State, 113th Congress



The colors on these maps indicate the party composition of each State's delegation in the House and Senate. Which States are the same color on both maps?

# Minnesota Congressional Districts



## Metro Area



**Your District 4  
Representative**

**Betty McCollum (D)**

**Elected: 2000**

**Re-Elected: '02, '04, '06,  
'08, '10, '12, '14**







**Amy Klobuchar (D)**

**Elected: 2006,  
re-elected 2012,  
2018**

**Tina Smith (D)**

**Appointed: 2017,  
elected 2018**

# Committees Chairs

- Committee Chairs = those members who head the standing committees in each chamber
  - Very strategic post
  - Control which bills a committee will consider, in what order and at what length
  - Control if there is a public hearing
  - Help manage the debate and tries to help the passage

# Types of Committees

- Congressional representatives assigned to committee work
  - a “**division of labor**”
- **Standing**
  - a permanent panel to which all similar bills can be sent
  - The fate of most bills is usually decided in these committees
- **Examples**
  - agriculture, nutrition and forestry
  - armed services
  - energy and natural resources
  - finance
  - foreign relations
  - homeland security and governmental affairs

# Other Congressional Committees

- **Subcommittees**
  - do most of the committee's work
- **Select/Special**
  - panels set up for some specific purpose
  - limited time
- **Joint and Conference**
  - one composed of members of both houses
  - some serve temporary purposes



# Conclusions / Takeaways

- Quick write and report out:
  - Summarize the significance of committees in Congress - make sure to use specifics!