

# THE AMERICAN CONGRESS

## Third Edition

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### CHAPTER EIGHT

#### THE FLOOR AND VOTING

The House and Senate had sessions of about average length in the 107th Congress (2001-2002). The House was in session for 1,694 hours in that Congress, and the Senate met for 2,279 hours. The House number marked a sharp drop from the 106th Congress, and was the first Congress since the Republican Party gained majority status in 1995 that the House had not exceeded 2,000 hours in session. The sessions averaged about seven hours per day in the House and eight hours per day in the Senate. In both chambers, the level of floor activity reflected a return to historical averages following marathon session lengths in the three previous Congresses, in which the new Republican majorities sought to capitalize on regaining majority status by enacting a broad legislative agenda.

The House and Senate have developed elaborate committee and party systems that have taken much of the policy-making process off the chamber floors. During most of Congress's history, responsibility for the details of public policy rested with the standing committees. At times, power over the details of important bills resided in the hands of central party leaders. Most scholars have used this continuum—from decentralized, committee-oriented decision making to centralized, party-oriented decision making—to characterize the decision-making processes and distribution of power within the two houses. And yet, everything that goes on within the House and Senate is, in principle, subject to the approval of the parent chambers in floor sessions. In principle, therefore, all policy making could be made on the chamber floors.

These alternatives are depicted in Table 8.1. If important decisions were made on the chamber floor, all members, in that one place, would have the opportunity to participate effectively in all-important measures. In general, as we saw in Chapter 7, the modern House is more dependent on committees than is the Senate. But there have been times when central party leaders dominated the House. Thus, the House is often characterized as varying along the centralized-decentralized continuum. The Senate is more collegial—more likely to make detailed policy choices on the floor. Both committees and party leaders are important in the Senate, but relative to the House, the Senate has long been far more floor oriented. Neither committees nor party leaders have found the Senate floor predictable or controllable.

Table 8.1 Possible Patterns of Congressional Decision Making		
<i>Number of Effective Participants</i>		
<i>Number of Units</i>	<b>Few</b>	<b>Many</b>
Few	Centralized (party leadership)	Decentralized (committees)
Many		Collegial (floor)

These differences are obvious every day in the Capitol. This chapter reports on a typical day on the House and Senate floors and notes how differences in floor procedure shape the distribution of power in the two houses.

The chapter explains House and Senate voting procedures in some detail and notes that reforms of House rules on floor voting have proven important. In addition, the chapter reviews how members' records of floor voting are most commonly analyzed by political scientists, journalists, and interest groups, providing a "consumer's guide" to studies of floor voting. The chapter concludes with a review of the factors that influence the relationship between the parties, committees, and the floor.

### **A Typical Day on the House and Senate Floors**

On a September day of 2002, a fairly typical day while Congress is in session, dozens of committees, and subcommittees held morning meetings and hearings in the congressional office buildings while clerks and pages prepared for the opening of the House and Senate floor sessions. In the Senate, this meant distributing various documents to individual senators' desks, which are arranged by party (when facing the front, Democrats are on the left and Republicans are on the right) and seniority (junior members are in the back). In the House, members do not have desks or assigned seats, although, by tradition, the Democrats sit on the left and the Republicans on the right. As the clerks and pages went about their work, tourists went in and out of the galleries, some disappointed that they did not have a chance to see a debate before they hurried off to other sites in Washington.

As usual, the Senate session opened before the House session—the Senate at 9:30 a.m. and the House at 10 a.m. Both houses were starting a little earlier than stipulated in their regular rules because leaders in both houses wanted to make progress on controversial bills—a bill regulating interest rates on rent to own contracts in the House and a bill on establishing the Homeland Security Department in the Senate.

## The Day in the House

The House session began when Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Illinois) assumed the chair. The Speaker does not always preside over House proceedings. He frequently appoints other members (Speakers *pro tempore*) to take his place presiding over the House so that he can conduct business in his office or elsewhere. Typically, several members will preside during the course of the day.

The session opened with a prayer from the chaplain. The Speaker then announced that he had examined the *Journal* of the House, and announced his approval of it. Rep. Mark Foley (R-Florida) asked for and received a vote on approving the *Journal*. After a voice vote Speaker Hastert announced that the *Journal* had been approved. Rep. Foley then objected that a quorum had not been present, so consideration of the *Journal* was suspended. Approval of the *Journal* used to require a vote of the House, but dilatory requests for votes led House Democrats to push through a rule allowing the Speaker to approve the *Journal* without a vote. As Rep. Foley's behavior demonstrates, the Speaker's decision on the *Journal* is not final. Next came the Pledge of Allegiance, which has been recited since 1989. The practice was started the year the Supreme Court ruled that burning the American flag was constitutionally protected speech and Congress responded with legislation to ban flag burning. To demonstrate their patriotism, House Republicans proposed—and the Democrats did not dare block—a House rule that required that the Pledge be recited after the prayer. Ever since, a different member each day has led the House in reciting the Pledge. The House then received a message from the Senate, reporting that three bills had been passed and delivered to the House for consideration. The floor session was televised (see the box on next page).

Speaker Hastert announced that members of each party would be recognized to give one-minute speeches. One-minute speeches may address any subject, so members have a brief period to address the House and the nation on any matter they choose. Frequently, members use one-minute speeches to respond to the news of the day, and they often use the opportunity to compliment or criticize the president. Occasionally, a group of members will organize themselves to emphasize a particular theme—and being outrageous or flamboyant increases the chance of getting on the evening news. On this day, there was a mix of speeches, with about half calling for or opposing a war with Iraq, while others concerned less controversial topics such as welcoming visiting dignitaries.

After about a half hour of one-minute speeches, Representative John Boehner (R-Ohio), moved that the House suspend the rules and consider H. Res. 523 that would recognize the contributions of “historically Black colleges and universities.” Non-controversial measures such as this one are often considered under suspension of the rules, a streamlined method of considering bills that requires a two-thirds majority for passage, but forbids amendments and restricts debate to a total of forty minutes. After adopting H. Res. 523, the House considered a resolution honoring the achievements of members of the Negro Baseball league under suspension of the rules.

Representative John Linder (R-Georgia), a member of the Rules Committee, was recognized to offer a resolution, called a “special rule” in House jargon, that provided “that at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may . . . declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R.1701) to amend the Consumer Credit Protection Act to assure meaningful disclosures of the terms of rental-purchase agreements. . . .” The bill provided a new federal law limiting the interest rates that companies selling furniture to consumers on a “rent to own” basis could charge, and spelled out several new disclosure requirements. Supporters of the bill pointed out that the states had enacted a variety of laws and that federal legislation would be better for both consumers and the rent to own industry by applying a consistent standard throughout the country, while opponents charged that the bill was a “special interest” bill on behalf of the industry in an effort to circumvent strong consumer protection provisions in many states.

### **Televising the House and Senate**

The House began televising its floor sessions in 1979. After becoming somewhat jealous of the attention given to the House, the Senate began to televise its sessions in 1986. Congressional employees operate both television systems, and the signal is made available to television networks and individual stations via satellite.

Floor proceedings are carried live on C-SPAN, the Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network. Most cable television systems carry C-SPAN I, on which House sessions are shown. Many cable systems also carry C-SPAN II, where Senate sessions are broadcast. Many committee hearings, press conferences, and other public affairs programs are shown on C-SPAN when the House and Senate are not in session.

In both houses, the most obvious consequence of television coverage has been an increase in floor speeches. In the House, one-minute and special-order speeches have become more numerous. One-minute speeches are made at the beginning of the day for about half an hour. Special-order speeches are made after the House finishes its regular business for the day. In 1994, House Democratic and Republican leaders agreed that special-order speeches should be limited to four hours on most days. They also began to experiment with structured, Oxford-style debates. In 1995, “reaction shots” of members on the floor were limited after members complained about being caught in unflattering shots by the floor cameras.

The Senate created a new class of speeches, special-order speeches, which are limited to five minutes. In addition, representatives and senators have made increasing use of large poster charts and graphs to illustrate their points for the television audience. And many senators now address their chamber from the back row, some distance from their personal desks, so that the camera angle will be less steep and, in the case of male senators, will not expose their bald spots to home viewers.

A resolution from the House Rules Committee—a special rule—is required to bring the bill to the floor off of a House calendar and to make special arrangements for the way the bill will be debated and considered for amendment. The term “special rule” reflects the fact that its provisions substitute for the standing rules of the House that otherwise would be followed. Nearly all important bills are considered under special rules in the House. A majority of the Rules Committee and a majority of the House must approve these resolutions.

### **The Special Rule (H. Res. 528) on the Consumer Rental Purchase Bill**

Resolved, That at any time after the adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1701) to amend the Consumer Credit Protection Act ... The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour, with 50 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services and 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services, as amended by the amendment recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary, now printed in the bill. The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. No amendment to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendment are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

In this case, the special rule allocated control over general debate on the bill by giving twenty-five minutes each to the chair and ranking minority member of the committee originating the bill (the Committee on Financial Services) and ten minutes each to the chair and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee. The special rule also gave priority consideration to a substitute amendment prepared by the Financial Services Committee.

The substitute represented a rewriting of the bill by the committee. Only two amendments listed in the report accompanying the resolution would be allowed. The rule also set time limits on debate for those amendments, and for each amendment divided control of that time between the leading sponsor and opponent of the amendment. Only amendments listed in the Rules Committee report were in order. In the jargon of the House, the resolution was a “modified closed rule” because it barred all but a limited set of amendments. The resolution was adopted 238-178, largely along party lines.

Pursuant to the special rule, Speaker *pro tempore* Dan Miller declared that the House would move into the Committee of the Whole to consider the bill on rental purchase agreements. Miller left the Speaker’s chair and passed the gavel to Representative Johnny Isakson (R-Georgia). Isakson now was chairman of the Committee of the Whole. By tradition, the Speaker or Speaker *pro tempore* does not chair the Committee of the Whole. As the House resolves into the Committee of the Whole, the mace of the House is removed to signify the change.

The bill managers, as well as the other members allocated time, spoke from the tables placed on the Democratic and Republican sides of the chamber. Also sitting at or behind the managers’ tables were committee aides who are permitted on the floor only while their mentor is managing a bill or amendment. The managers addressed the House and also yielded time to colleagues, who shared their views of the bill.

The debate on the bill and amendments lasted for approximately three hours. Members cast roll-call votes on the two amendments, both of which were defeated. Action on the amendments was complete by about 2:30 p.m. As stipulated in the special rule, the Committee of the Whole rose, and the House again came into session. The mace was returned, to signify the change, and Rep. Ray LaHood (R-Illinois) guided House action through the final stages of action on the bill.

Prior to final passage, House rules allow opponents of the bill to offer a motion to recommit the bill to committee. This motion can either permanently send the bill back to the committee from which it came, or as in this case require the committee to report an amendment to the bill “forthwith”, which is very similar to a substantive amendment to the bill. Rep. Maxine Waters (D-California) chose to offer a motion to recommit that would amend the bill by removing certain sections from the bill affecting enforcement. Following debate on the motion to recommit the House rejected the motion offered by Waters by a vote on 190-227.

All that remained was to take a vote on final passage. The outcome was 215-201 in favor of the bill. Republicans divided 169 to 43 in favor. Democrats divided 46-157 against passage.

Some routine business, such as the laying before the House messages from the president, consideration of private bills, memorials, and enrolling of signed bills, was then conducted. A motion allowing members to revise and extend their remarks on the Consumer Rental Purchase Bill within five days was offered and adopted without

objection. Such changes would be reflected in the permanent version of the *Congressional Record* (see box below). The House then approved the *Journal* for the previous day and received communications for the President. The House session ended with more than a dozen special-order speeches. These speeches, which are given at the end of the day, are arranged with the Speaker in advance, and take up an agreed-upon period of time.

### **The Congressional Record**

The proceedings of the House and Senate are published daily in the *Congressional Record*. The *Record* is printed overnight and distributed to Capitol Hill and to many other places, including most large libraries. Hardcover, permanent editions are published and distributed periodically.

The *Record* is much more than a report of the words spoken on the chamber floors. Introduced bills, committee meetings, and many other items are listed in the *Record* each day. The text of bills and conference reports considered on the floor is included, as are the many newspaper articles, scholarly studies, executive agency reports, and other items that members place in the *Record* by gaining unanimous consent of their house. As a general rule, the charts or graphs that members use on the floor cannot be printed in the *Record*, although tabular material may be inserted if the member receives unanimous consent.

The members' ability to alter prose reported in the *Record* after they have spoken has long been a controversial issue. Members are allowed to make non-substantive grammatical changes in their prose. As a result, some members appear far more articulate in the *Record* than they do on the floor. Statements and other insertions in the *Record* are supposed to be distinguished by a bullet (•). In the Senate, members frequently seek, and then always receive, unanimous consent to have their statements placed in the *Record* "as though read." This makes distinguishing what was said from what was inserted nearly impossible. Frequently, senators request that their statements be included "at the appropriate place." This is usually done so that the statement does not interrupt the discussion on a pending matter in the *Record*.

The *Congressional Record* tends to be a more faithful record of House proceedings than of Senate proceedings. Representatives frequently seek permission to "revise and extend" their remarks, so many statements reported in the *Record* were not actually read on the floor. But the House has more restrictive rules about including extraneous matter and speeches in the *Record* and requires that newspaper articles and other insertions be printed in a separate section, "Extensions of Remarks." The House also has long required that revisions or extensions that are not "a substantially verbatim" account be distinguished by a different typeface. The House adopted an even tighter rule in 1995, one that limits changes to corrections of grammar and typographical errors.

## The Day in the Senate

The Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. when Senator Jack Reed (D-Rhode Island) called the Senate to order. The vice president is the president of the Senate but tends to preside only at ceremonial occasions (for example, when the oath of office is administered to newly elected senators at the start of a Congress) and when a tie-breaking vote might be needed. The Constitution provides for a president *pro tempore* to preside in the absence of the vice president. But the president *pro tempore*, who by tradition is the most senior member of the majority party, is not able to preside on a full-time basis because of other duties. Consequently, the president *pro tempore*'s staff arranges for other majority party senators, usually the most junior ones, to take turns presiding over the Senate. On this day, following the pledge of allegiance, Senator Reed read a letter from the president *pro tempore*, Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia), appointing Reed as acting president *pro tempore*. After the prayer, Assistant Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nevada), serving as acting majority leader in the absence of Majority Leader Tom Daschle, was recognized and indicated that the Senate would conduct one hour of morning business. Following morning business, he announced that the Senate would resume consideration of the appropriation bill for the Interior Department for one hour, then resume consideration of the bill to create the Department of Homeland Security.

Debate on the Interior Department appropriations bill was quite contentious, centering on an amendment offered by Senators Larry Craig (R-Idaho) and Pete Domenici (R-New Mexico) that would provide funding for the Interior department to clear underbrush in national forests as a means of preventing large scale forest fires. The Craig-Domenici amendment was offered as a second-degree amendment to an amendment providing emergency funding to fight forest fires. The emergency appropriation was non-controversial--almost all senators saw the need to pay for firefighting operations--but the Craig-Domenici amendment raised the ire of many senators. Supporters of the amendment argued that a new forest policy was necessary to prevent large, devastating fires that feed on underbrush on the forest floor, while opponents argued that the new policy would simply increase the amount of commercial logging permissible on federal lands.

The procedural context of Senate consideration of the Craig-Domenici amendment was also controversial. Supporters of the amendment offered it as an amendment to the popular Byrd amendment to pay for fire fighting operations. A majority of senators wished to defeat the Craig-Domenici amendment, but supporters of the Craig-Domenici amendment sought to keep it, along with the Byrd amendment, from coming to a vote until they could gain enough votes for the amendment to pass. Senate rules require a super-majority vote of senators (60 percent) to cut off debate on most issues. On the previous day, opponents of the Craig-Domenici amendment tried to cut off debate, or invoke cloture, on the Byrd amendment, but supporters of the Craig-Domenici amendment voted against cloture. Thus, as is quite common in the modern Senate, the debate stretched on long after senators had said everything they had to say on the



underlying issues. Senator Reid noted at the outset of the Senate session this day, “There is not a great deal that can be done because of the procedural quagmire in which we find ourselves because cloture was not invoked.”<sup>1</sup>

After spending an hour on the Craig-Domenici amendment and failing to take action, the Senate moved to consideration of legislation that would create the Department of Homeland Security. The Homeland Security bill was controversial; the Senate debated the measure for several months in late 2002. On this day the Senate was continuing to debate the labor rules under which employees of the Department of Homeland Security would work. President Bush and most Senate Republicans argued that the sensitive and critical duties of the Department of Homeland Security made it necessary for these employees to be exempt from many federal labor laws, including the right of workers to organize in unions, participate in collective bargaining, and the right to strike. Democrats argued that President Bush and the Republican Party were simply trying to undermine the power of labor unions, a traditional Democratic constituency, by invoking “national security” concerns. After an afternoon of senators explaining their positions on the labor rules, the Senate suspended debate on legislation that would create the Department of Homeland Security at approximately 5 p.m. and then proceeded to “morning business.” Morning business is a period of time where senators are allowed to speak on any topic for a limited amount of time, usually five to ten minutes. The Senate moves into morning business, with unanimous consent, whenever it is convenient. Following several such speeches, the Senate adjourned for the day at 6:51 p.m.

### **Congressionally Speaking . . .**

On the Senate floor, *quorum calls* are used to get a temporary break in the action—a time out. A senator might, “Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum,” and the presiding officer will respond, “The clerk will call the roll.” Technically, if a quorum is not discovered, the Senate will have to adjourn. Indeed, filibustering senators sometimes note the absence of a quorum to force senators to appear on the floor. Most of the time, however, a quorum call is used as a time out that gives absent senators time to come to the floor to offer an amendment or speak. At other times, a quorum call is used to give leaders time to work out agreements on issues or procedure.

### **House-Senate Differences**

The events of this day illustrate many of the differences between the two houses of Congress. Most of the differences are the by-product of one fact: Floor debate and amendments are governed by strict rules in the House but are generally limited only by unanimous consent agreements or super-majority votes in the Senate. Representatives must worry that their floor amendments might not be put in order by a special rule from the Rules Committee. And once a bill is on the House floor, representatives are compelled to conform to the schedule laid out by the Speaker and the special rules. In sharp contrast, senators can introduce amendments freely, even on subjects unrelated to

the bill at hand, and protect their ability to do so by objecting to requests for unanimous consent to limit amendments. But getting the Senate to move from amendment to amendment and from bill to bill is a constant struggle for the majority leader and bill managers. The House has a schedule that is followed in the main; scheduling in the Senate is often much like fortune telling.

### **Voting Procedure**

By the end of that September day in 2002, the House had held five recorded votes, all using its computerized voting system. The Senate had held only no recorded votes but had approved many non-controversial motions through voice vote or unanimous consent. The process of recording a vote in the Senate is time consuming. It is an old-fashioned roll call, whereby a clerk calls out the individual names of the senators (“Mr. Akaka . . . Mr. Allard . . . Mr. Baucus,” and so on) and waits for senators to arrive on the floor and respond.

The Constitution provides that “the Yeas and Nays of the Members of either House on any question shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered upon the Journal.” This means that twenty senators or eighty-seven representatives (if all members are present) may demand a vote in which each member’s vote is recorded. In practice, usually only eleven senators or forty-three representatives are required—one-fifth of a quorum, which is half of the membership of the house. Because the quorum requirement is not enforced unless a member makes a point of order that a quorum is not present, the presiding officer will assume that a quorum is present and order the yeas and nays based on the lower threshold. If the House is in the Committee of the Whole, then twenty-five members may demand a recorded vote. The Constitution does not specify how the houses should vote in the absence of a demand for the Yeas and Nays.

### **House Voting Procedure**

In today’s Congress, the House votes by three means: voice vote, division vote, and recorded vote. On most motions, the presiding officer (the chair of the Committee of the Whole or the Speaker) first asks for a voice vote. He or she might say, “The question is on the amendment by the gentlewoman from Illinois. All in favor say ‘aye,’ all opposed say ‘no.’ The noes have it, and the amendment is rejected.” In many cases, this is spoken so rapidly that it is obvious that the number voting each way had little to do with the announcement of the winning side. Sometimes the issue is not controversial and the presiding officer is merely reporting the obvious result. In other cases, the presiding officer knows that his or her announcement will make no difference because a member will demand a recorded vote on the issue.

The division, or standing, vote is used little and is virtually never decisive. Any member may demand such a vote, which is conducted by having members voting aye stand and be counted and then having members voting no stand and be counted. Only the vote tally—the number of ayes and noes—is recorded. Because few members are on the floor for debate on most matters, the result usually shows that less than a quorum of

members is present (a quorum is one hundred or more in the Committee of the Whole), and this leads automatically to a recorded vote.

Recorded votes are conducted with the assistance of an electronic voting system and nearly always occur upon the demand of the necessary number of members after a voice vote. In the Committee of the Whole, twenty-five members must demand a recorded vote. (The Constitution's requirement that one-fifth of those present demand a recorded vote applies only to requests for recorded votes in the House, not in the Committee of the Whole.)

### **Congressional Speaking . . .**

Pairing is the practice of matching two members who did not vote—one who would have voted yea and one who would have voted no. One or both members may be absent from the floor when the roll-call vote is cast. The intended votes are then recorded in the *Congressional Record* so that a public record is established. Staff assistants to the parties help members arrange pairs. Members sometimes withhold their vote to do a colleague a favor by pairing with her. By pairing when absent, a member can claim to have taken a stand on the issue. And she can show that her actual vote would not have impacted the outcome because she was paired with a member who would have voted the opposite way.

Each member is issued a voting card about the size of a credit card. To vote, a member uses his or her card in any one of the nearly forty voting boxes scattered around the House chamber (most are attached to the back of the chamber's bench-like seats). With the card inserted, the member presses one of three buttons—yea, nay, or present—and his or her vote is recorded by the computer system. As the votes are cast, they are displayed on panels above the gallery at the front of the chamber, and the running totals can be viewed on computer terminals. Under the House rules, recorded votes take fifteen minutes, although the presiding officer often holds the vote open a little longer to allow members to make it to the floor and cast their votes. On a few occasions, the Speaker has held open the vote for several minutes to find the last vote or two his side needed to win. And the rules permit the Speaker to postpone votes—to “stack” votes is the jargon used—in some circumstances, such as votes on motions to suspend the rules and pass a measure. Stacked votes are cast in rapid succession in periods of five minutes each. By the way, the record for the number of recorded votes cast without missing one belongs to Representative William Natcher (D-Kentucky), who cast 18,401 consecutive votes over twenty-two years before he became ill and died in 1994.

### **Senate Voting Procedure**

The Senate, too, has voice, division, and recorded votes, but virtually no division votes are cast in the Senate because of its smaller size. On voice and recorded votes, Senate practice is quite different from House practice. On many, perhaps most, “votes,” the Senate does not really vote at all. The presiding officer often brings a matter to a vote when debate appears to have ended by saying, “Hearing no further debate, and without

objection, the amendment is agreed to.” In this way, even the pretense of a voice vote is not observed in the Senate. Recorded roll-call votes often are ordered in advance, upon the successful demand of a senator, so no preliminary voice vote is held, as in the House.

Recorded votes in the Senate are properly called roll-call votes. The names of the senators are called out, one by one, by a clerk, and senators’ responses are recorded by hand. Roll-call votes are supposed to take only fifteen minutes, as stipulated by a unanimous consent agreement that the majority leader arranges at the beginning of each Congress. Many, if not most, Senate roll-call votes last longer than fifteen minutes, however, to accommodate senators who need more time to make it to the floor. At times these delays have become so burdensome that majority leaders have promised to insist that the fifteen-minute limit be observed. But the desire to accommodate colleagues seems overwhelming so votes extending to twenty minutes or more remain common.

### **Voting and Floor Decision Making**

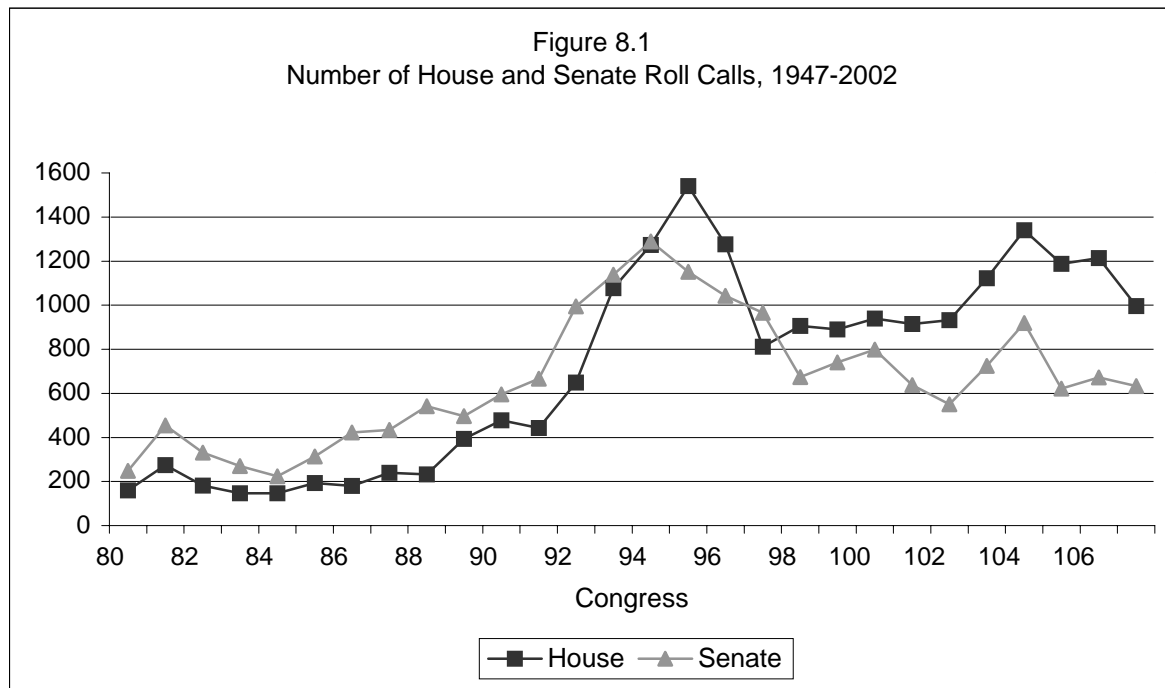
On the surface, it might seem that the differences in voting procedures between the two houses matter little. The record suggests otherwise. House voting procedures changed in the early 1970s—and with important consequences. As earlier chapters have discussed, the early 1970s was a period of remarkable change in House politics. Power devolved from full committee chairs to subcommittee chairs, many of whom were inexperienced as bill managers. Personal and subcommittee staffs were growing, which enabled more members to design and promote their own legislation. And a new breed of member—more media-oriented and more insistent on having a meaningful role—seemed to be flooding into Congress. In this context, the House changed the voting rules in such a way that encouraged members to more frequently and more actively pursue floor amendments.

The House voting reforms had two components. First, a new rule extended recorded voting to the Committee of the Whole. Before 1971, no recorded votes ever took place in the House’s Committee of the Whole, where action on floor amendments takes place. That meant that members’ positions on most floor amendments were not recorded. As is still the case, a roll-call vote could be demanded on amendments approved in the Committee of the Whole just before the vote on final passage of the bill, but rejected amendments could not be considered again.

Second, the electronic voting system was used for the first time in 1973. Voting “by electronic device,” as they call it in the House, nearly completely replaced the old system of teller voting in the Committee of the Whole and the traditional call of the roll in the House. Teller voting was done by having members pass by tellers (other members appointed to do the counting), with the yes voters to one side and the no voters to the other. The 1971 reform allowed recorded teller voting, in which members signed green (yes) or red (no) cards, deposited them in a box, and then waited for tellers to count them and turn them over to clerks, who would record each member’s individual vote. This cumbersome process discouraged recorded voting in the Committee of the Whole.

Automated vote counting by the electronic system allowed the Committee of the Whole and the House to complete a vote and have the results in fifteen minutes.

Electronic recorded voting produced a surge in amending activity. Being able to put one's position on a particular issue on the record (and forcing one's opponents to do the same) created new incentives to offer amendments, particularly for the minority party.<sup>2</sup> And electronic voting reduced the burden imposed on colleagues by demands for recorded votes. The result, as Figure 8.1 illustrates, was an increase in the number of floor votes, most on amendments, beginning in the first Congress (the 93d, 1973-1974) that used both electronic and recorded voting in the Committee of the Whole. By the late 1970s, the House floor began to look much more like the Senate floor than it had for a century. Longer daily floor sessions, repetitive amendments, and scheduling uncertainty had become the norm.<sup>3</sup> Worse yet for the Democratic leaders, more free-wheeling amending activity made it more difficult for them to enforce deals made in committee and to hold a majority coalition together on the floor.<sup>4</sup>



House Democrats sought relief in new rules and practices. In 1979, after several aborted attempts, they finally increased from twenty to twenty-five the number of members required to support a request for a recorded vote in the Committee of the Whole. This seemed to have little effect on amending activity, however. A more important reaction to the increase in amendments was an expansion of the number of days each month in which motions to suspend the rules were in order. A motion to suspend the rules simultaneously brings a measure to the floor and passes it. No amendments are allowed, and debate is limited to forty minutes, which makes suspending the rules an attractive procedure for bill managers. Although a successful motion to

suspend the rules requires a two-thirds majority, Democrats managed to greatly increase the use of suspension motions during the 1970s.

The most important response by the Democrats was to have the Rules Committee design more special rules to restrict floor amendments. The change in the content of special rules in the 1980s was quite dramatic.<sup>5</sup> Most special rules continue to put in order at least some amendments—and often many amendments—but Republicans correctly complained that many special rules had been designed to reduce the chance that any important amendment would be adopted with committee-passed bills. After taking majority control of the House, the Republicans imposed somewhat fewer restrictions on amending activity, although differences in the two parties' approaches make comparisons difficult. By the Republicans' own estimates, they designed open or nearly open rules for 57 percent of measures subject to special rules during the 104th Congress (1995-1996), in comparison to 44 percent in the Democratic-controlled 103d Congress (1993-1994).<sup>6</sup> In recent years Democrats have begun to complain that House Republicans are manipulating the proportion of bills receiving an open rule by granting open rules to bills that would typically be dealt with under suspension of the rules.

The net result of the more than two decades of adjustments to the voting reforms of the early 1970s has been a more bifurcated process for managing legislation on the House floor. Legislation that is of little importance tends to be considered under suspension of the rules, or if it is sufficiently non-controversial, it is brought up by unanimous consent and passed without a recorded vote. Legislation that is likely to attract even just a few amendments is likely to be considered under a special rule that requires that amendments be identified in advance, at least, and that orders their consideration in some way.

These changes have renewed the distinctiveness of House floor decision-making. While the number of House floor votes has been similar to that of the Senate in recent Congresses, House floor action is more predictable and more carefully controlled to advantage committees' legislation.

### **Analyzing Votes**

Nearly all members participate in recorded floor votes, so floor votes offer a natural basis for comparing members' policy positions. The voting record is available in the Congressional Record and a variety of commercial publications. It can even be examined on home computers through the use of THOMAS, a service of the Library of Congress (<http://thomas.loc.gov>). Political scientists, journalists, interest groups, challengers to incumbents, and many others have long analyzed the roll-call record for scientific, educational, and political purposes. Most conspicuously, claims are made on the basis of the voting record in nearly every congressional campaign. And the use—and misuse—of the congressional voting record seems to intensify every two years.

## The Problems of Interpreting the Roll-Call Vote

A member's roll-call vote can be thought of as an act based on (1) a policy preference and (2) a decision about how to act on that preference. The policy preference may be influenced by an array of political forces—home constituents, the president, interest groups, party and committee leaders, the member's own views, and so on. Thus, the personal view of a legislator is not easily inferred from a roll-call vote. Moreover, whatever the basis for his or her policy preference, the legislator may hold that preference intensely or only weakly.

A member's decision about how to vote can be sincere or strategic. For example, a member may strategically vote against a bill even if she prefers the bill to no bill at all, if she believes that killing the bill will lead to action on an alternative that she will like even more. Such "strategic voting" on the first bill might lead an observer to incorrectly conclude that the member prefers the status quo to the first bill. A member also might cast a deceptive vote. An extreme example is a member who holds a strong policy preference and works hard behind the scenes to push his point of view, and yet votes the other way on the floor to make the folks back home happy.

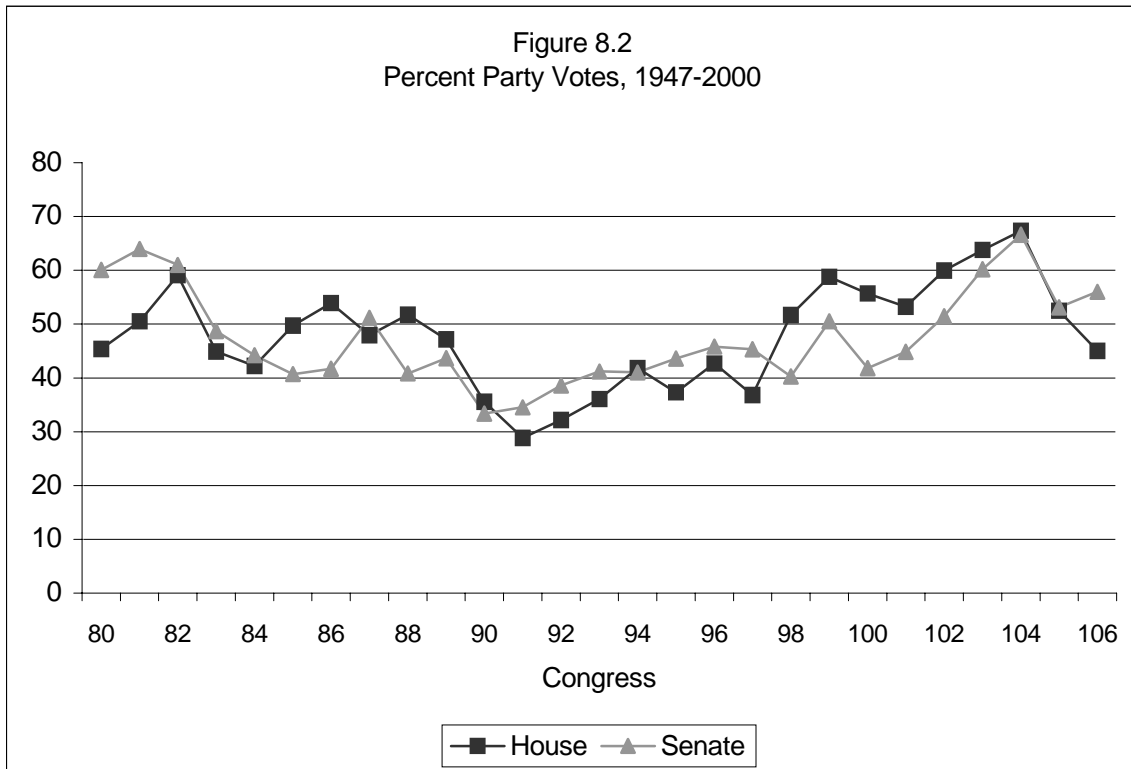
Plainly, the political and strategic character of members' policy preferences and voting choices is an obstacle to the use of roll-call votes as the basis for making claims about members' policy positions. But the situation is not as hopeless as it might seem. Most votes are not strategic or deceptive. They reflect the political preference of the member fairly well. This makes political sense. Members know that their votes on important issues may be used against them, so they have an incentive to cast votes that are easily explained. Besides, the number of situations that present an opportunity for strategic or deceptive voting is not nearly as large as it could be. Nevertheless, caution is required when making inferences from a particular vote.

The possibility of strategic or deceptive voting is less troublesome in analyzing summary statistics on members' voting records than it is when considering votes individually. Many voting indices summarize members' records over a large number of votes, by counting the number of times that they vote in a certain way—for example, in favor of the president's position. Instances of strategic or deceptive voting are not likely to greatly affect the scores assigned to the legislators.

## Common Voting Measures

Political scientists and journalists have relied on several indices to characterize members' voting records. The most widely reported measures are those calculated by the research department of the Congressional Quarterly (CQ), which publishes *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, a news magazine that provides in-depth coverage of Congress. CQ calculates objective indicators of members' support for and opposition to the president, support for and opposition to their party's positions, and support for and opposition to the conservative coalition.

Measures of the role that party plays in members' voting decisions are the most frequently used roll-call statistics. Many of these measures are based on the party vote, which CQ defines as a vote on which a majority of Democrats oppose a majority of Republicans. The percentage of all votes that are party votes is a common measure of the degree of partisanship in the House and Senate. The historical record for party votes—sometimes called party unity votes—is demonstrated in Figure 8.2. An individual member's overall level of support for his or her party is usually determined by the percentage of times he or she has supported the party's position on party votes. CQ calls these party unity scores.



CQ's label is a little misleading. Because a party vote occurs any time a majority of one party votes differently than a majority of the other party, a party vote might occur when the parties actually differ very little. For example, a vote on which 51 percent of Democrats and 49 percent of Republicans voted yea would be a party unity vote. This would hardly be an indication of unified parties, and party influences or differences might not have played much of a role in the outcome. Of course, any objective measure requires that some standard be used—if not a simple majority, then perhaps a two-thirds or a 90 percent majority. But in a legislature such as the U.S. Congress in which parties are relatively weak, a high standard would indicate few party votes and increase the difficulty of assessing the amount of partisanship that does occur. Thus, whereas some caution is



required in using CQ's measure, it remains one of the best available for examining partisanship in Congress over time.<sup>7</sup>

CQ also reports measures based on the voting record of the conservative coalition. During much of the twentieth century, a coalition of Republicans and conservative, largely southern Democrats has been a conspicuous feature of congressional politics. To determine its relative importance, CQ has identified the votes on which a majority of northern Democrats have opposed both a majority of Republicans and a majority of southern Democrats. A conservative coalition support score is then calculated as a percentage of these votes in which a member voted in favor of the conservative coalition's position.

The conservative coalition emerged as an important force in congressional politics in the late 1930s, when opposition to the Roosevelt administration increased among Democratic conservatives. In the following decades, the issues of race and civil rights divided Democrats and allowed bonds between conservative Democrats and conservative Republicans to strengthen. From the 1940s through the 1970s, between 10 and 25 percent of all roll-call votes yielded a result in which a majority of southern Democrats joined with a majority of Republicans against a majority of northern Democrats. The impact of the conservative coalition dropped in recent Congresses. In fact, by 1997 less than 5 percent of all congressional roll-call votes showed a conservative coalition alignment.<sup>8</sup>

CQ also analyzes congressional votes on bills for which the president has taken a position, by examining the public statements of the president and administration officials. CQ calculates a success rate for the president, consisting of the percentage of such votes on which the president's position prevails. Analysts using CQ's scores must rely on the CQ staff's ability to accurately identify the votes and the president's position. And they must hope that CQ is consistent in applying its selection criteria over time. Perhaps because CQ says nothing beyond a single sentence about the president's public statements, no one has effectively challenged CQ's work on this score.

The most obvious weakness of the CQ scores is that they do not take into account the varying importance of the issues behind the votes. One way to handle this problem is to use only votes that are contested—those that show a close division. The argument is that lopsided votes—for example, 90 to 10—are less likely to have been seen as decisive, controversial, or critical to the choices made on issues important to members. Besides, one-sided outcomes do not allow analysts to distinguish among members. Thus, analysts frequently limit their choice of votes to those with less than 75 percent, or perhaps even 60 percent, of the members voting in the majority.

CQ offers a corrective of its own by identifying fifteen key votes every year for each house. CQ first identifies the year's major issues subjectively—identifying those that were highly controversial, a matter of presidential or political power, or had a great impact on the country—and then, for each issue identified, chooses the vote that was the most important in determining an outcome. CQ does not calculate scores based on these

key votes, although political scientists have frequently used key votes for the construction of their own voting measures.

### **The Ratings Game**

Dozens of interest groups regularly report ratings for members of Congress. The wide range of groups that do this includes ideological groups, farmers' organizations, environmental and consumer groups, and large labor and business associations. Not surprisingly, the ratings are used for political purposes. Most interest groups send press releases to the news media in members' home states and districts, praising their supporters in Congress and condemning their opponents. They also use their own ratings as a factor in decisions about campaign contributions. Nearly all groups use their scores to enlighten their memberships about their friends and enemies in Congress. Even incumbents and challengers use the ratings to substantiate their claims about the policy stances of the incumbents.

Interest groups' ratings of legislators are based on a select number of votes chosen by group officials. The processes by which groups select votes on which to base their ratings vary widely. Some groups do not complete their analyses until their board of directors or some other authoritative group approves the list of votes, whereas others allow low-level staff to identify the pertinent votes. Typically, groups have compiled and published their annual lists at the end of a congressional session. However, more recently some groups have begun choosing votes prior to their occurrence, and at the behest of individual members or party leaders. In publicizing that a particular vote will be "scored" interest groups seek to influence wavering members to support the group's position. Upon pre-selecting a vote for scoring, groups will fax notices to members offices and/or have members give out cards prior to the vote that are imprinted with the group's logo and position on the vote. Some accounts suggest that the failure in the House of a comprehensive bankruptcy reform bill at the end of the 107th Congress was due in part to conservative interest groups announcing that they would be "scoring" the vote on the special rule, which contained a provision restricting the ability of anti-abortion activists to avoid fines by filing for bankruptcy.<sup>9</sup>

Groups also vary widely in how narrowly or broadly they define their interests. The AFL-CIO, for example, includes in its scales that "affect working people who are not necessarily union members."<sup>10</sup> The National Farmers Union has included votes on such issues as the MX missile, social security financing, and constitutional amendments requiring a balanced budget in its scales.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, the number of votes included in interest group scales varies widely as well. Sometimes as few as nine or ten votes are included in an interest group's scale, which means that just one or two votes can produce great swings in the scores assigned to members. Groups sometimes include several votes on the same issue to give that issue greater weight in their calculations, whereas others carefully avoid doing so. And groups have been known to deliberately alter their selection of votes to get a certain scale that will benefit friends or make enemies look bad.

Further complicating the interpretation of interest groups' ratings of lawmakers is the type of vote these groups tend to select to analyze. Quite naturally, interest groups want to separate supporters and opponents so they tend to select important votes that show close divisions. Because members tend to be consistent in their policy positions, the tendency to choose votes with close divisions has the effect of repeatedly counting the same set of members as supporters and another set of members as opponents. As some critics of interest group ratings have noted, this produces a polarized distribution of scores even when the real distribution among members is more like a normal curve (a bell-shaped curve).<sup>12</sup>

### **An Interest Group Recount**

In 1980, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce received a letter from Senator J. Bennett Johnston (D-Louisiana) that read, in part:

Your index was widely published among my friends in the Chamber of Commerce to the embarrassment of me and many of my colleagues. We have worked hard and I think effectively in championing so many of your causes. I am therefore deeply offended by this misrepresentation of my and my colleagues' positions.

The Chamber decided to revise its list of votes, dropping some of the original eleven votes and constructing a new list of sixteen votes. The eighty-six senators rated by the Chamber showed an average increase of fifteen points from the old to the new scale. The largest increase was for Russell Long (D-Louisiana), the powerful chair of the Senate Finance Committee, whose score jumped from 13 to 54 percent support for the positions of the Chamber.

*Source:* Based on information from David Tarrant, "Under Pressure from Some Senators . . . Chamber of Commerce Does a Recount," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, April 26, 1981, pp. 1112-1113.

The lesson is that we should be quite skeptical of claims that a member's interest group ratings are reliable indicators of her support for particular causes. Anyone seriously concerned about a member's support for a cause should seek additional clues. Using the ratings of two or more groups with similar agendas is a good place to start. Sometimes, a better guide than a member's specific percentage rating is how that figure compares with other members' ratings. The member might have a rating of 85 percent support for a group's positions on a few votes but place in only the 50th percentile among all members overall. The latter often is a better indicator of where the member is positioned on the full spectrum of views on a given issue. Moreover, whenever a member's degree of

commitment to a cause is at issue, we should look for corroborating evidence—bills sponsored, amendments offered, speeches made, and behind-the-scenes effort—that may be reported in the press or identified by knowledgeable observers.

Yet, interest group ratings retain their special appeal for analysts because as a group they provide a summary of members' policy views across a broad array of issue areas. Scholars often argue that the selection of the votes used in the ratings by knowledgeable interest group officials gives the ratings validity as measures of support for various causes. But convenience, rather than a careful judgment about the ratings' validity, seems to underlie many scholars' use of interest group ratings.<sup>13</sup>

### **Dimensions, Alignments, and Coalitions**

Given the limitations of interest group ratings, asking whether members' policy positions can be characterized in more objective ways is natural. They can. Political scientists have developed ways to determine the basic attitudes or dimensions that underlie voting patterns and the nature of the voting alignments in Congress (who votes with whom). Three basic concepts—dimensions, alignments, and coalitions—are important to understand.

Political scientists' techniques involve a search for consistency in the voting patterns across a set of roll-call votes. The idea is simple: If the members' voting behavior exhibits certain patterns for a set of votes, then we might assume that a particular mix of political forces were at work on members for that set of votes. A dimension of political conflict is said to be present when a certain alignment of members is visible throughout a set of votes.

For example, liberal and conservative members are often identified at opposite ends of an ideological dimension. A usual assumption is that each member holds a fairly stable ideological perspective and is guided by that perspective when deciding how to vote. Of course, members' voting behavior also may reflect the political outlook of their home state or district, the influence of party or faction leaders, and other political forces that produce an alignment of members that appears to have a liberal-to-conservative character. This is one reason why politicians often resist being labeled liberals or conservatives. Some members may not even have personal views about the policies at issue on most votes and still demonstrate voting patterns that appear to fit neatly on a liberal-conservative continuum.

In principle, many dimensions of conflict may organize voting patterns, each for a different set of votes. Indeed, many scholars argue that we should expect many dimensions in congressional voting because Congress operates in a pluralistic political system, one in which a different set of interest groups and constituents wages the legislative battle on each issue. The issues may divide urban and rural Americans, producers and consumers, employers and employees, coastal- and middle-Americans, retired and not-yet-retired people, and, of course, Democrats and Republicans. The number of possible bases for conflict is unlimited. The analyst's task is to find the

important dimensions of conflict without arbitrarily limiting the search to a few of the possible alignments, such as party-based alignments.

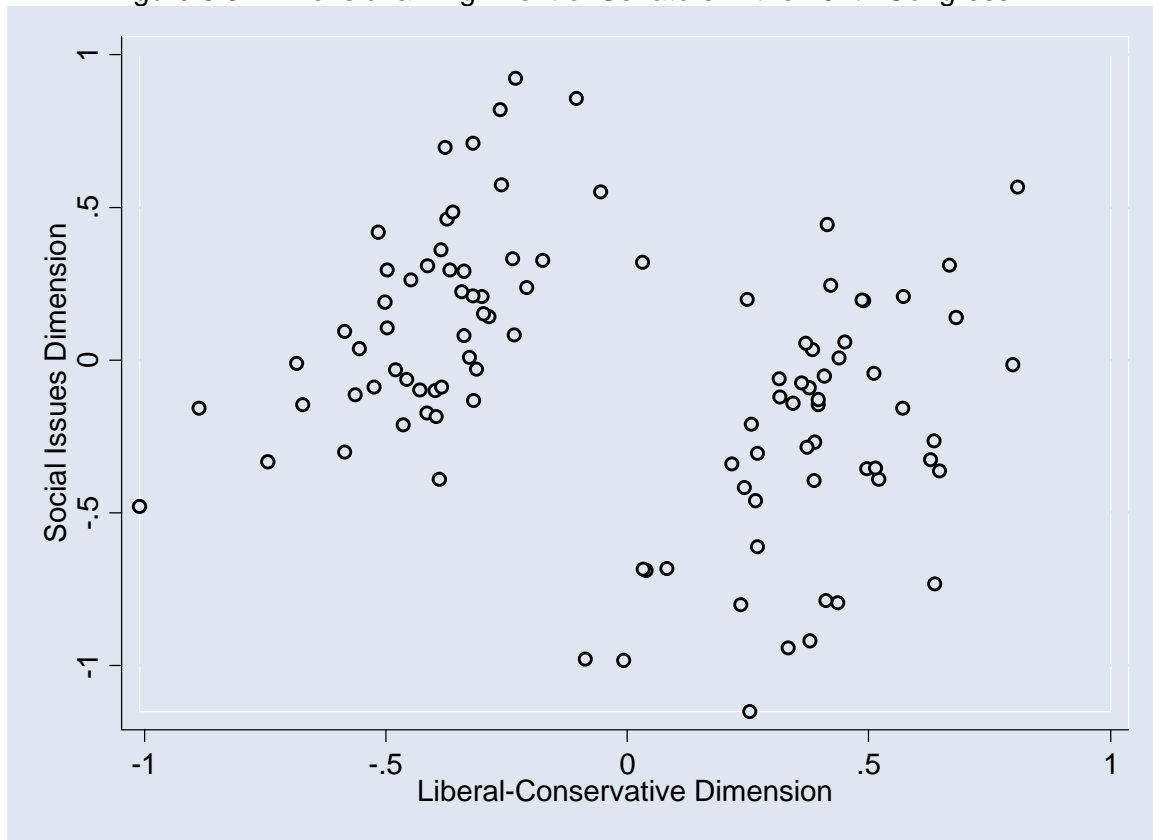
Two schools of thought about the dimensions and alignments of congressional voting have emerged. The older school adopts the pluralistic view and emphasizes the multidimensionality of congressional voting. A newer school emphasizes the consistent presence and explanatory power of a liberal-conservative dimension. Some of the difference between the schools is due to differences in the statistical techniques they use. Part of the difference is due to differences in judgment or taste—just how much must a voting alignment vary from what is thought to be a liberal-conservative division before we count it as something else?

The difficulty of making a satisfactory interpretation is visible in an analysis of Senate votes during the 107th Congress. Senators' scores on two dimensions, calculated by political scientist Keith Poole, are arrayed in Figure 8.3. The horizontal dimension is related to general liberal-conservative position on economic, tax, and spending issues; the vertical dimension separates senators according to their behavior on social or cultural issues such as free trade and abortion. High scores on the liberal-conservative dimension have a strong tendency to be associated with low scores on social policy issues. Senators with nearly identical scores on one of the dimensions often have a wide range of scores on the other dimension. Such variation is the stuff of politics. Party leaders, presidents, and lobbyists do not dare ignore such differences. They see important differences among members who operate in a multifaceted world filled with contradictory pressures that push and pull on members.

The alignment of legislators in Figure 8.3 is clearly partisan. Democratic senators are grouped to upper left in Figure 8.3, and Republicans are grouped in lower right quadrant. We might be tempted to say that the two parties were strong coalitions on the issues confronting Congress. And yet, both parties show substantial internal variation, with some Democrats and Republicans falling closer to each other than they do to fellow partisans. Although the parties have quite different central tendencies, they simply are not tightly knit groups that keep their members from deviating from the position preferred by most party members. To be sure, party leaders and other factors tend to keep party members together, but many other forces lead party members to go their own way from time to time.<sup>14</sup>

The distinction between alignments and coalitions is critical for understanding legislative politics. An alignment merely shows the distribution of policy positions among members, based on their voting behavior. But a group of members may vote the same way for different reasons, or they may vote alike only because they have similar home constituencies. They can be called a coalition only if they consciously coordinate their voting. Thus, we simply cannot determine the presence of active coalitions from voting behavior alone.

Figure 8.3 Dimensional Alignment of Senators in the 107th Congress



Nominate scores courtesy of Keith Poole. <http://voteview.uh.edu>

Over the years there has been some dispute about how much coordination actually took place between Republican leaders and southern Democratic leaders during the middle decades of the twentieth century. That is, just how much of a coalition was the so-called conservative coalition? The answer seems to be that at times genuine coordination took place that affected members' voting behavior, but at most times the alignment of Republicans and southern Democrats against northern Democrats appeared without coordination as members made largely independent judgments about how to vote.<sup>15</sup>

### The Floor, Committees, and Parties

This chapter completes the examination of the three major features of congressional organization—the parties, the committees, and the floors. These three components combine to create the policy-making process in Congress. As we have seen, just how the components are combined varies between the two houses and, within each house, over time. This is a good place to summarize the forces that lie behind those variations—the character of Congress's policy agenda, the distribution of policy preferences among members, and the institutional context.

## **Issue Agenda**

The character of the legislative process is greatly affected by the nature of the issues that Congress confronts. As a general rule, Congress relies more heavily on committees to make policy choices when it must deal with a large number of issues and when the issues it considers are readily separable, recur frequently, or are less salient. Why? A large workload requires a division of labor, so that many issues can be addressed simultaneously. A system of standing committees provides such a division of labor. If the issues are separable into distinct categories, then committees with distinct jurisdictions work well. Furthermore, if the same issues arise time and again, then fixing committee jurisdictions can be done without concern that some committees will become superfluous over time. Moreover, if most issues concern only a few members, committees are a natural place for those members to gather and make the detailed policy choices that do not interest other members.

## **Alignment of Policy Preferences**

Because the process by which decisions are made may influence which choices are made, the contending parties and factions in Congress often seek to shape the decision-making process to their liking. Sometimes party divisions predominate; at other times, cross-party coalitions arise to make the important policy choices. When issues are salient to most members and the majority party is cohesive, the majority party may centralize policy making in the hands of its leaders. When most members care about the issues but the majority party is not cohesive, however, neither committees nor majority party leaders may be trusted. Members then turn to the floor as the place where they can shape policy details.

## **Institutional Context**

Differences in the institutional arrangements in the House and Senate are likely to cause different responses to similar changes in issue agendas and policy alignments. The Senate's rules and practices protect the rights of individual senators. Consequently, the Senate usually retains a more collegial, floor-oriented decision-making process. In contrast, the rules and practices of the House advantage the Speaker and standing committees. If the majority party is cohesive; the Speaker tends to direct policy making with vigor; if not, the committees are more independent. As a result, House decision-making is generally less collegial and less floor-oriented. And change in the House tends to come as movement along the centralized-decentralized continuum described previously.

Indeed, the constraints on floor amendments under House special rules are the product of cooperation between the traditional centers of power in the House—committees and majority party leaders. Rules Committee decisions about special rules often represent the terms of an agreement between committee and party leaders. Cohesiveness in the majority party enables agreements between committee and party leaders to gain the majority required to adopt restrictive special rules on the floor. In the Senate, the care- fully preserved rights of individual members to freely debate and offer amendments to legislation stand in the way of committee and party leaders who might

otherwise seek to structure floor action in a way that would disadvantage the minority party or individual members.

### **Conclusion**

The floor is not only a place where the full House and Senate conduct business, it also is where the most vital stage in the policy-making process, when members exercise their equal voting rights, occurs. We have seen variations between the House and Senate in the degree to which the details of legislation are devised on the floor, but the possible reaction of the floor to the handiwork of committees and parties has always been a central consideration in legislative strategies. Despite similarities in the nature of floor activity in the two chambers, we see obvious inter-chamber differences—the details of legislation are far more likely to be determined on the Senate floor than on the House floor.



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Congressional Record*, September 18, 2002, p. S8701.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the impact of voting reforms see Jason M. Roberts and Steven S. Smith “Procedural Contexts, Party Strategy, and Conditional Party Voting in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1971-2000.” *American Journal of Political Science*, April 2003, pp. 305-17.

<sup>3</sup> Norman J. Ornstein, “The House and the Senate in a New Congress,” in Thomas E. Mann and Norman J. Ornstein (Eds.), *The New Congress* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1981), pp. 363-383.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Sinclair, “Coping with Uncertainty: Building Coalitions in the House and Senate,” in Mann and Ornstein (Eds.), *The New Congress*, pp. 178-220.

<sup>5</sup> See Stanley Bach and Steven S. Smith, *Managing Uncertainty in the House of Representatives: Adaptation and Innovation in Special Rules* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1988).

<sup>6</sup> *Congressional Record*, January 7, 1997, p. H151.

<sup>7</sup> See Keith Krehbiel, “Party Discipline and Measures of Partisanship,” *American Journal of Political Science*, April 2000, pp.212-27, for a critique of measures of party influence in voting.

<sup>8</sup> *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, January 3, 1998, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> John Cochran, “Interest Groups Make Sure Lawmakers Know the ‘Score’,” *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, April 19, 2003, pp. 924-29.

<sup>10</sup> Linda Fowler, “How Interest Groups Select Issues for Rating Voting Records of Members of the U.S. Congress,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, August 1992, pp. 401-413.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Hall and Bernard Grofman, “The Committee Assignment Process and the Conditional Nature of Committee Bias,” *American Political Science Review*, December 1990, pp. 1154-1155.

<sup>12</sup> James M. Snyder, Jr., “Artificial Extremism in Interest Group Ratings,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, August 1992, pp. 319-345.

<sup>13</sup> For a critique of the use of interest group ratings to measure members’ ideologies, see John E. Jackson and John W. Kingdon, “Ideology, Interest Group Scores, and Legislative Votes,” *American Journal of Political Science*, August 1992, pp. 805-823.

<sup>14</sup> On the distinction between alignments and coalitions, see Aage Clausen and Rodney Anderson, “Coalitions, Dimensions, and Partisanship in Congressional Voting: A Methodological and Substantive Inquiry,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, April 8-10, 1992.

<sup>15</sup> Mack C. Shelley 11, *The Permanent Majority: The Conservative Coalition in the United States Congress* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1983).