

*Chapter One*

# Being a Member of Congress

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SAMPLE

## § 1.00 Introduction

The purpose of this book is to provide government affairs professionals, government officials, journalists, students of Congress, librarians, and other interested people, including members of Congress and congressional staff, particularly those new to Congress or seeking or taking on more senior roles, with a practical guide to Congress. The book offers an orientation to Congress, assisting the reader in understanding how Congress works and why it works the way it does.

The authors each have over thirty-five years' experience in American government. First as congressional staff, and then as analysts, writers, and educators, we have worked to understand and explain Congress to members and to congressional staff and to people whose profession requires a solid understanding of Congress. Based on our experiences, we designed this book to answer the variety of questions about Congress that arise daily in the work of individuals with a professional interest in Congress.

### § 1.10 Who . . . Gets . . . What!

Walter Kravitz, our late colleague at the Congressional Research Service (CRS), began his lectures and speeches by asserting the immediately and comfortably obvious: "Congress is a political institution." Then he would pause a long time, and silently watch discomfort gradually but relentlessly take hold of his listeners. Their faces showed they were becoming very uncertain about the meaning of the word *political*.

Kravitz would finally ask, "What do I mean by that?" Answering his own question, he would practically shout, "WHO . . . GETS . . . WHAT!" He would pause again briefly and then begin a litany: "Who gets what in terms of benefits, preferences, advantages? Who gets what in terms of North versus South? City versus rural areas? Rich versus poor? Business versus labor? Republican versus Democrat? Who gets dams or highways or research? That's what I mean by political—who gets what!" And on he would continue with more examples until it was painfully obvious to all listening that *political* means *who gets what*.

### § 1.20 Congress, the Political Institution

A member of Congress takes to Washington all the aspirations, desires, and conflicted sentiments of his or her constituency, and serves as one of 435 representatives, four delegates, one resident commissioner, and one hundred senators, all of whom have their own constituencies, each with its own aspirations, desires, and conflicted sentiments. It is worth noting the number of Democratic freshmen elected in 2006 who had experience as servicemen in Iraq—a war still underway—who ran in opposition to the war. Yet other Democratic and Republican freshmen ran and won on positions in support of the war or in support of a change in mission without necessarily endorsing an immediate withdrawal. Somehow, these 540 men and

women make national policy. (See *Chapter Three, Pressures on Congress: Constituents, Media, President, and Courts.*)

The policymaking process in Congress—the means for determining who gets what—is not easy. It can be partisan, fractious, slow, cumbersome, and frustrating. It can even seem craven as each member seeks advantages for his or her constituency. If we find it difficult to settle differences in our daily lives, how much more difficult must it be for members of Congress to make policy as they represent all 300-plus million of us?

The framers of the Constitution well understood competition between groups of people and regions, and created Congress to provide an outlet for debating and deciding the common good, balancing one interest against others in the process.

The rules of procedure and organization that each chamber has developed exist equally for the use of proponents and opponents of any proposition. At each step of the legislative process, proponents must build a new majority to get to the next step. Or, opponents may try to build a new majority to stop a proposition that they have not yet been able to stop. Outside groups—constituents, lobbyists, the president and his administration, and the media—are never far from the fray, and they pressure, pressure, pressure to influence the outcome. (See *Chapter Three, Pressures on Congress: Constituents, Media, President, and Courts.*) Finally, it is important always to recognize that not just one proposition at a time is moving in Congress, but many propositions, offering individual members and groups of members numerous opportunities to trade for support or opposition on more than one of these. These multiple propositions also restrain members—the colleague one alienates on one vote may be the colleague one needs on another vote.

At each step of the legislative process, proponents and opponents must build their majorities within larger groups. A committee is larger than a subcommittee, a chamber is larger than a committee, and the two houses voting on a conference report are larger still.

Winning a majority in Congress is not usually based on denying members—and thereby their constituents—a stake in the outcome of a piece of legislation. Winning a majority is more likely based on giving as many members as needed for a majority a stake in the outcome—by compromising, old-fashioned logrolling, papering over differences, trading for legislative support elsewhere, or exchanging favors within or outside Congress. To become a law, a measure must pass the House and Senate in identical form.

A piece of legislation must also pass the test of having sufficient political support to gain the president's signature to become law. The president, however, might *veto* a measure for any number of reasons, including a different sense of what the nation wants or needs. For Congress then to override a presidential veto requires a two-thirds supermajority in each chamber. On those infrequent occasions when a veto is overridden, political consensus in Congress must be very high.

It is in the power of the presidential veto that one can clearly see what the phrase “co-equal branches of government” means. Unless there are two-thirds of the members of each

chamber willing to vote to override a veto, almost the equivalent of Congress speaking with one voice, the power of the sole executive—the president—is equal to the votes of more than 280 representatives and more than 60 senators, assuming all members are present and vote overwhelmingly for a measure. But, few controversial measures pass Congress by majorities within striking distance of the two-thirds required for a veto override. The president's exercise of the veto should be seen as a constitutional action first and a political action second.

Two examples illustrate the power of the president in lawmaking. The Republican-controlled Congress was frustrated by President Bill Clinton's vetoes of appropriations bills in late 1995 as Congress tried to dictate the terms of achieving a balanced budget. Two shutdowns of the federal government ensued, for a total of twenty-seven days, and the public by wide margins blamed Congress. Congress ultimately responded with appropriations measures that the president was willing to sign. In 2007, Democrats in Congress and their supporters believed voters put Democrats back in the majority in Congress to stop funding for the war in Iraq, and Congress in May sent President George W. Bush an appropriations bill with a troop withdrawal or redeployment time frame. The president vetoed the measure, and a majority of the House, but only 222 of 425 representatives present, cast their votes for an override. Congress responded with an appropriations measure that nearly all Republicans voted for and a large majority of Democratic representatives voted against.

At every stage of the legislative process, and in every alliance made during the legislative process, Congress is a political institution, deciding who, including the president, gets what.

### **§ 1.30 A Member of Congress as Politician, Policymaker, and Parliamentarian**

To be a successful member of Congress, a person must be a politician, policymaker, and parliamentarian. In the role of politician, a member must have the self-confidence to represent a large, diverse constituency. A constituency, in turn, expects its member of Congress, in the role of policymaker, to advance its interests and vote on the major issues of the day. Less visible to a constituency is the member of Congress in the role of parliamentarian, acting within the rules, precedents, and practices of the House or Senate to represent the constituency's interests and sentiments, and make policy for the entire nation. All three roles are constantly in play, thereby shaping the work of a member of Congress.

#### **Politician**

As a politician, a prospective or elected member of Congress can look in the mirror and see a person with a gift that most of us do not have—the capacity to campaign for and win a congressional election. He or she knows how to raise money; how to manage a campaign operation; how to rally a crowd; how to debate; how to listen; how to learn what issues matter to an

individual, a constituency group, or a constituency generally; and how to advocate for himself or herself and for key issues. (See *Chapter Two: Pressures on Congress: Campaigns and Elections.*)

Once elected, the member of Congress can put the same skills to work in committee and on the House or Senate floor representing a congressional district or a state. The goal is to make policy—who gets what. The member’s interests might be parochial or national or both; they might be simple or complex; they might be quite focused or fairly broad. The member has to be the same self-confident advocate with congressional colleagues as with constituents, able to speak persuasively one-on-one to a committee chair or ranking minority member and equally able to speak persuasively to the House or Senate in session.

Each member of Congress looks out for his or her own political interests in party and leadership meetings. A member wants to follow party leaders, unless they lead in a direction that would create political problems back home. The member must balance personal political needs against any stance taken by party leaders. A member might even want to have a role in the leadership, perhaps within the party’s whip structure, but still maintain some flexibility in the relationship so he or she can speak for a different point of view or vote against the party leadership when necessary politically.

A principal challenge for any member is to be successful in a group. A *group* in Congress is not a *team*, as we might think of a sports team with everyone working together in various support roles to accomplish the clear goals of offense, defense, and winning. A group in Congress also lacks the formal system of direction or command that exists in business, the military, or even executive agencies, where a superior can give an order to subordinates with some degree of assurance that it will be carried out.

A member of Congress, in contrast, constantly functions within groups of different sizes, composition, like-mindedness, partisanship, purpose, role, structure, and so on. While some members of a group might have positions of power or discretion, such as the chair of a committee or a leader of a chamber, members are largely equal in many circumstances. No one is, or will be allowed to be, fully in charge since each state or district and set of supporters and other conditions are different for each member. A member must be skillful and adaptive in a variety of group structures to be a successful politician and policymaker.

### **Policymaker**

As a policymaker, a member must be in command of facts, arguments, perspectives on a problem, and the advantages of particular policy or legislative solutions and the disadvantages of others. A member of Congress must also be able to manage his or her relationships with party and committee leaders. A member will need his or her leaders’ assistance and even indulgence on matters critical to the member’s constituency or political well-being.

Members of Congress might say that their views are rarely swayed by a colleague’s speech. That may be true. However, it is equally true that their views are never positively swayed by a colleague who is unprepared or uninformed. More experienced members might be tolerant of

a junior member learning a new policy issue. They are not accepting of another member who is not in command of facts and arguments for a point of view, who speaks loudly in ignorance, or who makes implausible arguments.

As policymakers, members introduce bills, ask questions in hearings, offer amendments in committee markup and in the chamber, debate and vote in committee and in the chamber, and maneuver inside and outside of conferences to protect or kill provisions in measures submitted to conference. All their actions are intended to advance to the degree possible their constituents' interests and their own policy and legislative positions.

In leading a chamber of policymakers, party leaders have the tough job of putting together majorities (or even supermajorities in the instance of veto override attempts or, in the Senate, motions to invoke cloture). They need to put together these majorities without compromising core party positions. Leaders must also stop opposing viewpoints from gathering momentum. To build a majority on some matter within a chamber, leaders first seek a majority within their parties. Leaders try to enforce party discipline through favors, threats, or even a member's isolation. (See *Chapter Seven, Organizing Congress: Members, Leaders, and Committees.*)

### Parliamentarian

As a parliamentarian, a member of Congress must understand chamber structure and the procedures through which members try to advance or impede policy in the form of legislation. Does the member introduce a bill or offer an amendment? If an amendment, should it be offered in a committee or on the floor? When? Is one committee more receptive to a policy solution than another? What opportunities or limitations will exist in committee because of the markup vehicle chosen? How does a member get time to speak on the floor? What can he or she do during that time? What is the optimal time? All these questions, options, and choices come into play as a member works within a chamber's procedures to realize a policy goal through the legislative process.

Congress has a formal structure. Each house of Congress follows laws, rules, precedents, and practices that apply in its chamber. Each chamber is very different. The strategies that work in the House, a majoritarian institution, are different from those that work in the Senate, an institution where the individual senator reigns supreme. Representatives who are elected to the Senate often find the first year or so to be a frustrating experience. It seems so difficult to get anything done in the Senate, compared with the practices of the House. (See *Chapter Eight, Legislating in Congress: Legislative Process; Chapter Nine, Legislating in Congress: Federal Budget Process; and Chapter Ten, Legislating in Congress: Special Procedures and Considerations.*)

To be effective and realize policy goals, a member of Congress must use all his or her skills and abilities as a politician, policymaker, and parliamentarian—both inside and outside committees and chambers, and at all stages of the legislative process.

## **Congress and Its 540 Members**

In contrast to the roles of politician, policymaker, and parliamentarian, what images do Americans carry of members of Congress? Most citizens have images of a teacher in a classroom, a businessman or woman in an office, a programmer at a computer, a carpenter building a house, a therapist helping a patient, or an entertainer on stage. They have strong, largely accurate images of people at work. They generally think well of people in various professions, even if they have had a bad experience with an individual in any profession.

With members of Congress, Americans might very well have somewhat or largely positive images of their own representatives and senators, yet dismiss Congress as a whole because it is made up of “politicians.” Even worse, they might dismiss it because it represents America too well—a lack of consensus in Congress often reflects a lack of consensus in the country.

To avoid the cynical view of Congress held by many Americans, how might someone interacting regularly with Congress try to imagine it as a whole, as a working institution? One possible way is to imagine Congress as a living organism, with a skeleton, nervous system, and muscular system. The skeleton is legislative procedure and the organization of Congress for processing legislation, which gives each chamber an enduring structure. The nervous system is complex, and involves all the avenues for information to reach members, committees, and leaders, such as the stimuli of elections, constituents, the president, lobbyists, the media, perceptions of problems, dissatisfaction with the status quo, events at home, events abroad, and the individual interests of members. The muscular system of Congress, which gives it the capacity to act, results in policymaking. Competing legislation is drafted, hearings are held, information is gathered, arguments are devised, and advocacy takes place inside and outside Congress. This image offers a way one might view Congress as a whole, in its capacity to act and to change.

The framers did not create Congress to achieve specific legislative results. They created it to process (or stop) legislation and to make law, whatever the outcome might be. A Congress that was largely controlled by Democrats for forty years until the 1994 elections worked just as well as a policymaking institution for Republicans who controlled it for twelve years until the 2006 elections. The policy results for Congress under Democratic control may be different from the policy results under Republican control. The framers, in fact, could not have anticipated modern political parties, but created a legislature where a majority, however composed, could win—in passing or stopping legislation. The stimulus of issues, the making of policy, and the procedural structure are just as important and evident today as they were in 1994, 1894, or 1794.

A member of Congress works as a politician, policymaker, and parliamentarian within a complex structure. He or she is one of 540 members motivated by different constituencies and personal and professional interests. To be successful, a member must combine roles skillfully within this complex structure.

## § 1.40 Obligations and Perquisites

With election come obligations to constituents, one's chamber, and the public and interests affected by one's role, and to the next election campaign.

If a member intends to seek reelection, he or she must be attentive to a constituency—through case work, visits home, prompt response to mail, and so on. Sometimes, proposed legislation could have a direct, adverse impact on a district or state. Constituents expect their members of Congress to defeat the legislation—not just do everything possible to defeat it, but defeat it. Think of how hard and how long the Nevada delegation, no matter what party or chamber, has fought the storage of civilian nuclear reactor waste in its state.

The obligations to a representative's constituency nowadays also require the member's presence in the home district every weekend. The demand of this kind of obligation is felt more keenly by representatives than senators, but no member who will seek reelection can afford to spend many weekends in Washington.

A member might also serve on as many as three or four committees and many more subcommittees. However, meetings often conflict so that a member might spend a morning running from one important markup to another as well as fitting in other commitments. Floor votes occur regularly on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons and often well into those nights. Floor votes may occur on other days as well. Meetings on specific legislation with chamber leaders, other party members, or allied members might take place at any time to try to work out problems, get commitments, or strategize. Formal party meetings are regularly scheduled, but informal party meetings can occur at any time. To participate in the politics of Congress, a member must be present and working.

The members' appearances and participation in events contribute significantly to their workloads. A member must choose which events to attend (and for how long), which to respond to with more than regrets (and how to respond), and which to decline. Home state and Washington lobbyists, interest group representatives, important constituents such as business or labor leaders, and constituent delegations or deputations want meetings. A member's staff needs to schedule time to discuss legislative initiatives. A member's family would like to be remembered somewhere in the schedule.

Another important consideration in daily, weekly, and monthly schedules is the need to focus on reelection. A reelection campaign starts as soon as an election is won, and neither party now waits for an election year or the selection of an opposition candidate to begin targeting members whom they perceive to be vulnerable or whom they wish to test for vulnerability. Negative attacks on freshmen members might start with their swearing-in. Representatives and delegates must face the electorate again in just two years. (The Puerto Rican resident commissioner has a four-year term.) Senators have six years between elections, but they cannot rest on their laurels for long. Each member must raise money for each campaign. Nearly every representative must set aside some time each week just to keep in touch with principals in his or her campaign organization, campaign contributors, and politicians back

home. Members might go as often as once or twice a week to the Democratic or Republican headquarters in Washington to telephone their political advisors back home and their campaign contributors.

Senators' reelection campaigning is much less visible than that of representatives during the first three or four years of their terms. Yet, senators also must keep in touch with principals in their campaign organizations, raise money, and speak with home-state politicians. Senators seek to build large campaign funds by the fourth year of their terms, to ward off challengers or to ensure that a challenger knows a race will be hard-fought.

Many activities are important, and all must be accommodated somehow. Private time or "think time" is rare once a day starts. A plane or train ride home to the state or district becomes catch-up time for reading—so long as another member, an administration official, a lobbyist, or an important constituent is not also on the plane and desiring a conversation.

It is all too common for a member's workday in Washington to begin before 8:00 a.m. and continue well into the night. A day in the district or state might be just as long or even longer. A member of Congress almost always has one eye on a watch, frequently rechecks his or her daily schedule, cannot be separated from a cell phone or BlackBerry®, and is often accompanied by a staffer who seems to be urging the member to leave wherever they are only moments after their arrival. On foot or by car, staffers are always picking up or dropping off a member and assisting with some aspect of the member's personal life as well as attending to the official one. (See *Chapter Five, Supporting Congress: Allowances and Staff*.)

One must imagine holding the job of a member of Congress to appreciate the attributes required. To be effective—to ensure that one's constituency is well served—requires exceptional skills and endurance.

### **The Honorable. . .**

Election and congressional service also bring recognition and perhaps even adulation. Congratulatory letters and phone calls flow in after an election. Past and potential contributors want to associate with a successful candidate. People want to work in a congressional office; hundreds of résumés arrive in the temporary congressional mailboxes of members-elect. Party leaders are eager to get relations off to a good start. In less than two months after the election, the member's swearing-in ceremony is carried on C-SPAN, and dozens of well-wishers join the member in swearing-in festivities in Washington.

Subsequent speeches in floor and committee proceedings are carried on C-SPAN, and excerpts might be broadcast elsewhere. National newspapers and news services seek comments from senators on everything, and state and local newspapers want the views of representatives as well. Congressional leaders, administration officials, and the president seek the support of members of Congress on important votes. Lobbyists also want members' support, and all sorts of home-state and national organizations want members to give speeches, meet their boards of directors, and shake hands with their employees. Invitations to events, includ-

ing perhaps a state dinner at the White House, arrive by the bagful. Constituents visiting Washington cannot leave town without taking the opportunity to say hello. These activities, largely flattering, are part and parcel of the politics of Congress.

For members, there are a number of smaller perquisites that accompany election and further indicate a change in status. Members of Congress and their spouses receive pins when the members are sworn in. The pins have the practical effect of facilitating the members' and their spouses' movement throughout the Capitol complex. (See *Chapter Six, Supporting Congress: The Capitol Complex.*) But, they are also the mark of an elite fraternity. There are also VIP parking lots for members of Congress and other dignitaries set aside at the Washington, DC, airports, Reagan Washington National and Dulles International. Again, it is a practical and cost-effective arrangement to deal with VIPs' cars, but, out of the millions of passengers who pass through those two airports each year, members are some of the few who are treated specially.

There are many flattering aspects and emotional rewards to being a member of Congress. Whether in Washington or traveling, a member of Congress is generally extended every courtesy. Most simply stated, being a member of Congress makes others pay attention.

### § 1.50 Ever-Changing and Unpredictable Schedules

Daily and weekly schedules in Washington, as well as district or state schedules, are major preoccupations of every congressional office. Scheduling a member's time is a job that often involves a scheduling assistant, a chief of staff, and a district or state director, in addition to the member. The watchword is *contingency*.

The first item to consider is whether the chamber in which the member serves is in session, when it is in session, and when there will be votes. The next item involves when the committees, subcommittees, and groups on which the member serves will meet and what their business will be. The legislative assistants and committee staff provide the scheduling team with information to assist them in setting priorities and ensuring the member's legislative interests are accommodated. The member's personal staff might want to reserve time, and there might be personal events or family needs and plans to be protected in a schedule.

Most of the staff know the flight and train options for going to the district or state and returning. Possible events in the home district or state over a weekend are factored in. There are town hall meetings, breakfasts, lunches, receptions, dinners, events, and requests for meetings for which RSVPs are waiting, and quasi-official activities such as party conference or caucus meetings, briefings by legislative branch or administration staff, various meetings of like-minded members, and legislative strategy meetings that compete for a specific place on the schedule. No matter how senior or junior they may be, all members are very, very busy. (See § 1.51, *Example of a Senior House Member's Daily Schedule*; and § 1.52, *Example of a Freshman House Member's Daily Schedule*.)

§ 1.51

**Example of a Senior House Member's Daily Schedule**

**November 9 (Tuesday)**

- 8:00a–9:30a Democratic Women Candidates Networking Breakfast to promote Democratic agenda regarding education and children  
Location: Capital Hilton, Congressional Meeting Room, 1001 16th St., NW
- 9:00a Democratic Caucus to discuss the budget and appropriations  
Notes: special guest—White House Chief of Staff John Podesta  
Location: B-339 Rayburn
- 9:00a Morning Hour
- 10:00a Ways and Means Committee (W&M)—full committee hearing on President Clinton's new Social Security plan  
Location: 1100 Longworth
- 10:00a House convenes—measures under suspension
- 11:00a Prescription drug press conference with Hillary Clinton, Leader Gephardt, Whip Bonior, others  
Notes: staff—Helen  
Location: Rayburn Gold Room (2168)
- 11:30a Democratic Women Candidates' Networking Lunch  
Notes: keynote speaker—Hillary Clinton  
Location: Capital Hilton, Congressional Meeting Room, 1001 16th St., NW
- 12:30p Joint Health/Medicare task force meeting on Medicare prescription drug benefits  
Notes: staff—Jeff; pizza and drinks to be served  
Location: HC-9, Capitol
- 1:30p–2:00p W&M Democrats to discuss minimum-wage bill  
Location: 1129 Longworth
- 2:00p Sue Esserman to brief W&M Democrats and Democratic advisory group on World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial  
Notes: staff—Nora  
Location: H-137, Capitol
- 2:30p Bob Quaine of the Kidnapped & Hostage program in Spring Hill to discuss silent survival signals  
Notes: staff—Bob
- 2:30p White House ceremony giving the Congressional Gold Medal to the Little Rock Nine, the nine black students to integrate Little Rock's Central High School  
Notes: Members asked to arrive at 2:30; ceremony in the East Room from 2:45–3:45; reception in State Dining Room from 3:45–4:45

*Continued on page 13*

## § 1.51 (continued)

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- 3:00p W&M markup on minimum-wage bill  
Notes: staff—Bob  
Location: 1100 Longworth
- 3:30p W&M Democrats and WTO labor advisory group Democrats' briefing on WTO Ministerial  
Notes: staff—Nora  
Location: H-137, Capitol
- 4:00p Major Walker and various representatives from the Marine Corps Liaison to follow up on last week's meeting, answer Member's previous questions  
Notes: staff—Nora
- 4:30p New Democratic Coalition "top of the week" meeting  
Notes: featuring John Podesta  
Location: HC-8, Capitol
- 5:00p Members only briefing on WTO Ministerial  
Location: H-137, Capitol
- 6:30p–8:30p Congressional Black Caucus reception to honor the Little Rock Nine  
Location: Great Hall, Jefferson Building, Library of Congress

A scheduling assistant's work does not end when he or she puts a schedule for the next day in a member's hands. The schedule rarely works as planned, and much of the day might be spent rearranging meetings and other commitments to accommodate changes.

Changes can result from additions to or deletions from agendas in committees or on the floor. Party leaders might also require a member's presence on short notice—a member does not say "I'm unavailable" to the Speaker or to party leaders. An event inside Congress or outside anywhere in the world—such as party leaders announcing an agreement with the White House on an important matter, a foreign crisis that leaves American citizens in harm's way, the sudden death of a member of Congress, or similar events—can have an immediate effect on every member's activities and schedule. A chamber might adjourn or recess early for the week or stay in session longer than announced. Many occurrences can scramble plans. (See § 1.53, *Excerpt from House's Daily Schedule (GOP Source)*; and § 1.54, *Excerpt from House's Daily Schedule (Democratic Source)*.)

Planning weekend and weeklong visits to the home district or state can also be fraught with anxiety when chamber leaders are unable to give commitments on an adjournment or recess or when members are required to return earlier than anticipated. (See § 1.55, *Floor Discussion of Schedule Changes*.) Weather can also upset travel plans for leaving or returning to Washington, and for maintaining a schedule at home. Compared with Washington schedules, however, members at home are better able to make and stick to schedules. Principal schedul-

§ 1.52

**Example of a Freshman House Member's Daily Schedule**


**Thursday, March 18**

7:59a–9:14a	Breakfast for another Member—National Democratic Club
8:00a–9:00a	Breakfast reception for another Member—National Democratic Club
9:00a–9:45a	Copanelist with another Member opening the 1999 Consumer Assembly; two staffers to accompany—Washington Plaza Hotel, 10 Thomas Circle, NW
9:00a–9:45a	WHIP Meeting—HC-9
9:01a–10:01a	GOVERNMENT REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING (preventing and treating drug abuse, government witnesses)—2247 Rayburn
9:30a–10:00a	SPEAKER'S CLOSED MEETING OF THE HOUSE to discuss highly classified material relating to emerging ballistic missile threats, followed later today by House action on HR 4—House Chamber
10:00a–10:30a	SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE MARKUP: HR 536 (SBA district offices)—2360 Rayburn
11:00a–11:30a	Meet with representative of American Immigration Lawyers' Association from Member's district to discuss immigration matters; staffer present—Member's office
12:00 noon	HOUSE convenes: HR 4 scheduled (missile defense policy), votes expected
12:00p–1:15p	Luncheon with National Newspaper Association editors and publishers; staffer to accompany—Montpelier Room, 6th floor, Madison Building, Library of Congress
2:00p–2:15p	Meet with parent of a campaign volunteer; staffer present—Member's office
2:30p–3:00p	Meet with a representative of State Podiatric Medical Association—Member's office
3:00p–3:45p	Meet with representative of Indo-American Democratic Organization; two staffers present—Member's office
4:00p–4:15p	Meet with representative of State Press Association—Member's office
4:30p–5:00p	Staff meeting on upcoming recess activities—Member's office
5:00p–9:00p	Reception at 5:00 followed by dinner and awards presentation 6:00p–9:00p for Center for Women Policy Studies; Member to speak and make presentation (business attire)—Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Ave., NW

## § 1.53

## Excerpt from House's Daily Schedule (GOP Source)

One of the principal jobs of the party whips in both parties in both chambers is to keep party members apprised of the floor schedule. The parties' whips' web sites in both chambers are listed in § 11.10, Finding and Obtaining Congressional Documents. On any day, a reader will find different and useful supporting information available through the two parties' whip notices.



# THE WHIPPING POST

◆ FROM THE OFFICE OF REPUBLICAN WHIP ROY BLUNT ◆

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\*\*REVISED\*\*

**Anticipated Floor Schedule**  
On Monday, the House will meet at 2:00 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m.

**One Minutes**

**Suspensions (6 bills):**

- 1) H.R. 988 - To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5767 Tilton Avenue in Riverside, California, as the "Lieutenant Todd Jason Bryant Post Office" (Sponsored by Rep. Calvert / Oversight and Government Reform Committee)
- 2) H.Res.273 - Supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month, and for other purposes (Sponsored by Rep. Hinojosa / Oversight and Government Reform Committee)
- 3) H.Con.Res.71 - Commemorating the 85th Anniversary of the founding of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), a leading association for the Nation's 1.3 million American citizens of Greek ancestry, and Philhellenes (Sponsored by Rep. Maloney / Oversight and Government Reform Committee)
- 4) H.Res.179 - Expressing support for a National Foster Parents Day (Sponsored by Rep. Boyda / Oversight and Government Reform Committee)
- 5) H.Con.Res.89 - Honoring the life of Ernest Galo (Sponsored by Rep. Cardoza / Oversight and Government Reform Committee)
- 6) H.Con.Res.76 - Honoring the 50th Anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) and its past contributions to space research, and looking forward to future accomplishments (Sponsored by Rep. Udall (CO) / Science and Technology Committee)

**Special Orders**

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**Tuesday's Forecast**  
On Tuesday, the House will meet at 10:30 a.m. for morning hour and 12:00 p.m. for legislative business.

**Suspensions (15 bills):**


- 1) H.R. 886 - Wild Sky Wilderness Act of 2007 (Sponsored by Rep. Larsen / Natural Resources Committee)
- 2) H.Res.217 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the 50th anniversary of Cello Falls (Sponsored by Rep. Wu / Natural Resources Committee)
- 3) H.R. 809 - To amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Central Texas Water Recycling and Reuse Project, and for other purposes (Sponsored by Rep. Edwards / Natural Resources Committee)
- 4) H.R. 786 - To amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the Los Angeles County Water Supply Augmentation Demonstration Project, and for other purposes (Sponsored by Rep. Linda Sanchez / Natural Resources Committee)
- 5) H.R. 309 - To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a demonstration program to facilitate landscape restoration programs within certain units of the National Park System established by law to preserve and interpret resources associated with American history, and for other purposes (Sponsored by Rep. Pearce / Natural Resources Committee)
- 6) H.R. 815 - To provide for the conveyance of certain land in Clark County, Nevada, for use by the Nevada National Guard (Sponsored by Rep. Porter / Natural Resources Committee)
- 7) H.R. 865 - To grant rights-of-way for electric transmission lines over certain Native allotments in the State of Alaska (Sponsored by Rep. Don Young / Natural Resources Committee)
- 8) H.R. 1191 - To authorize the National Park Service to pay for services rendered by subcontractors under a General Services Administration Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity Contract issued for work to be completed at the Grand Canyon National Park (Sponsored by Rep. Renzi / Natural Resources Committee)
- 9) H.R. 1677 - Tax Payer Protection Act (Sponsored by Rep. Rangel / Ways and Means Committee)
- 10) H.Res.125 - Expressing deep concern over the use of civilians as "human shields" in violation of international humanitarian law and the law of war during armed conflict, including Hezbollah's tactic of embedding its forces among civilians to use them as human shields during the summer of 2006 conflict between Hezbollah and the State of Israel (Sponsored by Rep. Ros-Lehtinen / Foreign Affairs Committee)
- 11) H.Res.196 - Supporting the goals and ideals of World Water Day (Sponsored by Rep. Blumenauer / Foreign Affairs Committee)
- 12) H.Con.Res.100 - Condemning the recent violent actions of the Government of Zimbabwe against peaceful opposition party activists and members of civil society (Sponsored by Rep. Lantos / Foreign Affairs Committee)
- 13) H.R. 1681 - To amend the Congressional Charter of The American National Red Cross to modernize its governance structure, to enhance the ability of the board of governors of The American National Red Cross to support the critical mission of The American National Red Cross in the 21st century, and for other purposes (Sponsored by Rep. Lantos / Foreign Affairs Committee)
- 14) H.Res.293 - Supporting the goals and ideals highlighted through National Volunteer Week (Sponsored by Rep. Shea-Porter / Education and Labor Committee)
- 15) H.R. 1515 - To amend the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 to treat certain communities as metropolitan cities for purposes of the community development block grant program (Sponsored by Rep. Costello / Financial Services Committee)

§ 1.54

**Excerpt from House’s Daily Schedule  
(Democratic Source)**

Party entities in the House and Senate provide various forms of information on their respective chamber’s daily, weekly, and long-term schedules. The parties’ scheduling web sites in both chambers appear in § 11.10, Finding and Obtaining Congressional Documents. The starting point with party-provided information on floor action begins with whip information, shown here.

OFFICE OF HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER STENY H. HOYER



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**FRIDAY, APRIL 13, 2007**

First Vote of The Week...	Last Vote Predicted...
Monday 6:30 p.m.	Friday p.m.

Legislative Program - 51600 | Floor Information - 57400 | Whip Information - 63210

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**MONDAY, APRIL 16, 2007**  
The House will meet at 2:00 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m.

**Suspensions (8 bills):**

- 1) **H.R. 988** - To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5757 Tilton Avenue in Riverside, California, as the "Lieutenant Todd Jason Bryant Post Office" (*Rep. Calvert - Oversight and Government Reform*)
- 2) **H.R. 1425** - To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4551 East 52nd Street in Odessa, Texas, as the "Staff Sergeant Marvin "Rex" Young Post Office Building" (*Rep. Conaway - Oversight and Government Reform*)
- 3) **H.Res. 273** - Supporting the goals and ideals of Financial Literacy Month, and for other purposes (*Rep. Hinojosa - Oversight and Government Reform*)
- 4) **H.Con.Res. 71** - Commemorating the 85th Anniversary of the founding of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA), a leading association for the Nation's 1.3 million American citizens of Greek ancestry, and Philhellenes (*Rep. Maloney - Oversight and Government Reform*)
- 5) **H.Res. 179** - Expressing support for a National Foster Parents Day (*Rep. Boyda - Oversight and Government Reform*)
- 6) **H.Con.Res. 88** - Honoring the life of Ernest Gallo (*Rep. Cardoza - Oversight and Government Reform*)
- 7) **H.Res. 252** - Recognizing the 45th anniversary of John Hershel Glenn, Jr.'s historic achievement in becoming the first United States astronaut to orbit the Earth (*Rep. Space - Science and Technology*)
- 8) **H.Con.Res. 76** - Honoring the 50th Anniversary of the International Geophysical Year (IGY) and its past contributions to space research, and looking forward to future accomplishments (*Rep. Udall (CO) - Science and Technology*)

**TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2007**  
The House will meet at 10:30 a.m. for Morning Hour and at 12:00 p.m. for legislative business.

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**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2007 AND THE BALANCE OF THE WEEK**

On Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday the House is scheduled to meet at 10:00 a.m. for legislative business.

**Suspensions (1 bill):**

- 1) **H.Res. \_\_\_\_\_** - Honoring the 53,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, and civilians that comprise the Nation's special operations forces community (*Rep. Smith (WA) - Armed Services*)

**H.R. 1361** - RECOVER Act (*Rep. Velazquez - Small Business*) (Subject to a Rule)

**H.R. 1257** - Shareholder Vote on Executive Compensation Act (*Rep. Frank - Financial Services*) (Subject to a Rule)

**H.R. 1495** - Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (*Rep. Oberstar - Transportation and Infrastructure*) (Subject to a Rule)

**H.R. 363** - Sowing the Seeds Through Science and Engineering Research Act (*Rep. Gordon - Science and Technology*) (Subject to a Rule)

\* Conference Reports may be brought up at any time.  
\* Motions to go to Conference should they become available.  
\* Possible Motions to Instruct Conferees.

## § 1.55

1

**Floor Discussion of Schedule Changes**

The negotiation of schedules is a time-consuming but important activity on Capitol Hill. Everyone desires predictability, but it is difficult for congressional leaders to deliver it.

The excerpt below is representative of congressional concerns over unpredictability in scheduling. The excerpt was taken from a House floor colloquy between House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-TX, and House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member David Obey, D-WI, on Thursday, June 15, 2000. The House was considering amendments to the fiscal year 2001 Interior appropriations bill. The Republican leadership expressed its hope on Wednesday, June 14, to complete all floor votes by 6:00 p.m. Thursday. As Thursday afternoon wore on, representatives became anxious about making evening airline flights to their home districts. Finally, Obey raised the scheduling question with Armey in formal debate, and ultimately offered a preferential motion for the *Committee of the Whole to rise*. (See § 8.120, *Committee of the Whole: Amendment Process*.)

The motion was defeated on a recorded vote, 183 to 218. The Obey-Army colloquy began about 5:20 p.m. The colloquy and vote on the motion consumed about thirty minutes. The House worked late and finally adjourned for the week on Friday morning, June 16 at 1:25 a.m.

Mr. Obey: . . . I would simply like to ask if the leadership intends to keep the commitment which was announced to the House (to take no votes after 6:00 p.m. today) or whether the rumors are true that we hear that they now intend to be in until 9:00.

Mr. Armey: . . . We worked out an agreement last night that we thought would give us good progress. We had high hopes of continuing this work and completing it by 6:00 today. But as we can see, we are approaching that hour; and we are not near completion.

Mr. Obey: . . . Let me simply say that the problem, as has been brought to my attention by a number of members, is that the schedule published by the leadership indicates legislative business, no votes after 6:00 p.m. . . . But I regret that the leadership has seen fit to upset the ability of each individual member to get back to their district. . . .

Mr. Armey: . . . [O]ur agreement that we made last night was in full understanding of the need and the commitment to complete this, where the floor manager said, and I think in good faith and with all good intention, that they would do everything they could to finish by 6:00. Unfortunately, given their best efforts, they have not been able to achieve that. . . .

Mr. Obey: . . . We were told that the intention of the leadership was that we were leaving at 6, that the committee should do its best to be done by 6, but there was a clear understanding that the members would be allowed to leave as scheduled at 6:00.

ing problems at home tend to result from overcommitment, insufficient travel time between event locations, and weather conditions affecting travel.

Mindful of the problems of alienation and exhaustion caused by congressional schedules, leaders and members have discussed a variety of scheduling options since the 1990s, but none of the alternatives has taken hold. Both chambers looked at options such as three weeks in

session and one week not in session each month. The House looked at the possibility of eliminating evening votes, and went so far as to build a “family room” for members’ children near the House floor, just off Statuary Hall.

Nothing has happened to make congressional committee and floor schedules more predictable. Members have also not changed their behavior in traveling routinely to their districts or states, and constituents have not changed their expectations for members to be physically present in their districts or states as often as possible.

Within this demanding and shifting framework, a member’s time and attention are resources that must be strategically and tactically deployed. Effectiveness in Congress is often-times based on a member taking the right step at the right time and being in the right place at the right time. Committee markups, floor debate and votes, constituent visits, calls to campaign contributors, purposeful chats with party leaders, and other important activities must be accommodated in the swirl of ever-changing and unpredictable schedules.

### **§ 1.60 Family Life**

In addition to public and institutional pressures and demands, a member faces the challenge of balancing public and private lives. The demands of congressional service take a toll on a member’s family and family life.

Just a little over a generation ago, most members’ families lived in the Washington area. Today, a significant number of members’ families live in the home district or state. It is a key difference in congressional life. Washington is a very expensive city compared with many of the places that members call home. To relocate a family and provide comparable housing, schools, and lifestyle is beyond many members’ means. In Washington, spouses and children are cut off from the network of family and friends in their hometowns. Members, therefore, end up maintaining two residences, even if one is a tiny or shared apartment on Capitol Hill. Some members with families back home even stay in their Washington office rather than rent another place to live, although the House and Senate discourage that.

Whether a member’s family lives in Washington or elsewhere, the toll on family and personal life is high. A spouse can become a stranger when one is a member of Congress. The time it takes to be a member of Congress can be a factor in a marriage’s breakup. Even when a family is in Washington and a member goes to his or her district or state a bit less frequently or for a shorter period of time, the schedule of the House or Senate in session seems to preclude a regular home life. As mentioned in § 1.50, there has been discussion of “family friendly scheduling” in the last several Congresses, but no identifiable changes have endured.

Moreover, congressional families reflect changes in American life. Many spouses work. Delayed childbearing has affected members, too, with many of them, including an increasing number of women members, having young children at the same time they are building their congressional careers. For these and other reasons, Congress in session has become the tem-

porary location for many members. A family and the constituents back home make the district or state the member's principal residence and workplace. Members are in Washington three or four days a week and not at all when there is a week-long recess.

A generation ago, members of Congress got to know each other fairly well. Members, spouses, and families socialized together. Members themselves would also socialize at activities such as weekly poker games. That is much less common among junior members today. Some representatives, in reaction, have attempted to create some common ground. Two bipartisan family "retreats" were organized at Hershey Park, PA, just after the convening of the 105th and 106th Congresses, to enable House members and their families to socialize together. The 107th and 108th Congresses' retreats were held at the Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, WV, but no subsequent bipartisan or family retreats have been held since then. Congressional spouse organizations also attempt to provide a common ground. (See § 5.191, *Congressional Spouse Organizations*.)

Senators' lives seem to have been affected somewhat less dramatically than those of representatives. A senator is somewhat more likely to have older grown children rather than be a parent of young children during his or her Senate service, and the relentless travel to the home state is principally a feature of the last two years of a term. It is also somewhat less common for a senator's spouse and family to reside in the home state rather than in the Washington area.

Like the trade-offs between obligations and perquisites, the honor and rewards of serving in Congress come at a price. A member's family might be unprepared for its new status and regular separation from one parent. A member might be unprepared for the loneliness of having family far away.

## § 1.70 Staying in Congress

Another change in congressional service involves members' departures from Congress after a few terms.

The median number of terms or years that a member might be expected to serve in Congress declined for some time. A generation ago, a newly elected member could reasonably expect to be reelected. Members frequently served twenty years or more before retirement. Reelection rates for the House—members choosing to run for reelection—are historically over 90 percent. At the beginning of the 110th Congress, the median number of terms served by representatives was five (ten years). Reelection rates for the Senate are historically below those for the House, but are still high. At the beginning of the 110th Congress, the median number of years served in the Senate was ten.

However, members whose seats are safe, who have no problem raising campaign funds, who hold positions of influence within Congress, and who contribute substantially to legislation regularly decide not to run for reelection. Why is this commitment to a career in Congress eroding?

Members of Congress cite many dissatisfactions with the congressional way of life as it has evolved over a generation. Some of these are as follows:

- high toll on personal and family life
- living with guilt over trying and being unable to be all things to all people, especially loved ones
- life in a fishbowl
- backbreaking schedule
- loss of time to think and be expert
- partisanship of Congress
- anonymity among colleagues that goes with a three-and-one-half-day-a-week presence in Washington
- endless fund-raising and the cost of campaigns
- undue influence of special interests
- negative campaigning, which has become year-round and includes groups affiliated with one's own party as well as the opposition party
- perceived irrelevance and intransigence of Congress in solutions to national problems
- vacuous, symbolic, and partisan legislation and votes on the congressional agenda
- perception of parties' lack of interest in governing
- low salary for the work and high cost of being a member of Congress
- need for a higher salary to provide family needs, such as college costs
- decline of interest in public service
- term limits as a political issue and as a reality in committee and subcommittee chairmanships
- stronger interest in other careers

The hardship of congressional life is undeniable. Even the most self-confident and politically gifted member might choose to make a change after a few terms.

However, turnover might also reflect generational changes in how Americans view their jobs. Many workers today hold several jobs in the course of a lifetime, in contrast to the norm in their parents' generation, when a successful career might have meant working for just one or two employers. In part, the shorter tenure of members of Congress could simply reflect larger national trends.

Whatever the reason for a member departing after a few terms, the departure means a loss of expertise and of political experience in Congress. National problems are complex and not easily mastered in a short time. Even with knowledge or expertise, members need political experience to identify and engineer legislative solutions. For the professional interacting with Congress, the shorter tenure presents both opportunities and challenges in developing working relationships, understanding congressional dynamics, and advocating and facilitating legislative solutions. (*See Chapter Four, Pressures on Congress: Lobbying and Congressional Ethics.*)