**Unit 3: Legislative Branch Study Guide**

**Congressional Structure**

What is the name of the US legislative branch and what are the names of its two houses?

**CONGRESS - HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES & SENATE**

What term describes a legislative body that is divided into two houses?

**BICAMERAL**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristic** | **House of Representatives** | **Senate** |
| Minimum age | 25 | 30 |
| Years as a U.S. citizen | 7 | 9 |
| Length of term | 2 years | 6 years |
| Total # members | 435 | 100 |
| # from each state | Based on state population | 2 |
| Area represented | **District** (where they live) | **State** (where they live) |
| Presiding officer | Speaker of the House | Vice President |

What is a Congressperson’s main responsibility?

**TO REPRESENT THE NEEDS OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS.**

Define *constituents*:

**PEOPLE IN A CONGRESS MEMBER’S HOME STATE OR DISTRICT**

Every ten years Representatives are reapportioned based each state’s population determined by what?

**CENSUS**

When the Vice President is not in the Senate, who is the presiding officer?

**PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE**

**Congressional Powers**

What three terms describe the powers specifically given to Congress in Article I of the U.S. Constitution?

1. **ENUMERATED** 2. **DELEGATED** 3. **EXPRESSED**

Give three examples:

1. **COINING MONEY** 2. **DECLARING WAR** 3. **RATIFYING TREATIES**

Write House or Senate next to the correct powers:

Appropriate money - **HOUSE** Approve appointments - **SENATE**

Approve treaties - **SENATE** Hold impeachment trial - **SENATE**

Begin impeachment charges - **HOUSE**

What is another name for the elastic clause?

**NECESSARY AND PROPER CLAUSE**

What does the elastic clause allow Congress to do?

**IT ALLOWS CONGRESS TO STRETCH ITS POWERS TO NEW SITUATIONS**

What are implied powers?

**POWERS THAT ARE NOT WRITTEN DOWN BUT NECESSARY FOR CONGRESS TO ACHIEVE ITS GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Who does Congress have the power to impeach?

**MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE (like the President) AND JUDICIAL BRANCHES (like federal judges)**

What is an appropriation bill?

**A BILL DIRECTING THE SPENDING OF MONEY $$$**

Which house has the power to introduce appropriation bills?

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Legislative Influence**

Define lobbyist.

**A PERSON HIRED BY INTEREST GROUPS TO TRY TO INFLUENCE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND HOW THEY VOTE ON CERTAIN BILLS**

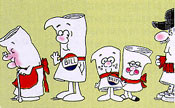
What is the main purpose of interest groups and lobbyists?

**TO INFLUENCE THE WRITING & PASSAGE OF LEGISLATION (bills)**

How do interest groups and lobbyists influence legislation?

* **SECURING CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS $$$$**
* **DELIVERING VOTES OF CONSTITUENTS WHO SUPPORT THE ISSUE**

What factors influence a legislator’s vote?

* **VOTES FROM HIS/HER CONSTITUENTS**
* **MONEY FROM SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS AND CONSTITUENTS**

**Law-making Process**

List the six steps of the law-making process in order.

1. **BILL IS INTRODUCED INTO HOUSE/SENATE**
2. **BILL IS ASSIGNED TO A COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION**
3. **BILL IS INITIALLY VOTED ON BY HOUSE/SENATE**
4. **BILL IS REFERRED TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE FOR AGREEMENT WITH OTHER HOUSE**
5. **BILL UNDERGOES FINAL VOTE BY HOUSE/SENATE**
6. **BILL IS SIGNED BY PRESIDENT**

What actions can a committee take when considering a bill?

* + **BILL IS PASSED AND SENT TO FLOOR FOR VOTE**
  + **BILL IS “PIGEON-HOLED” AND DENIED DEBATE & FLOOR VOTE**
  + **BILL IS REJECTED BY COMMITTEE**

What must finally happen for a bill to be enacted into law?

**THE PRESIDENT MUST SIGN IT (or allow it to stand for ten days)**

How can Congress override a presidential veto?

**BY A 2/3s VOTE OF BOTH HOUSES**

When Congress overrides a presidential veto it is checking which other branch?

**LEGISLATIVE CHECKING EXECUTIVE**