

The Legislative Branch


Unit 4
Chapters 10, 11, 12

A Bicameral Congress

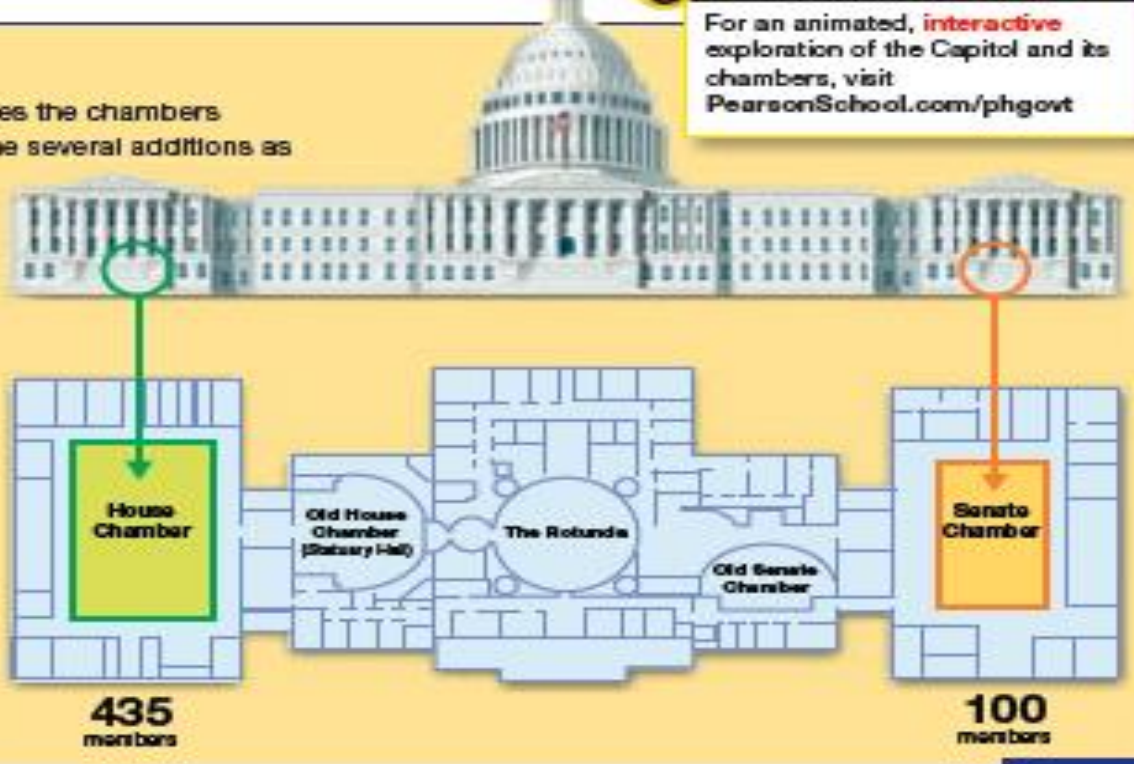
- The Constitution establishes a **bicameral** legislature – that is, a legislature made up of two houses.

The Capitol
Congress meets in the Capitol, which houses the chambers of the bicameral Congress. It has undergone several additions as both the nation and Congress have grown.
Why do the two houses meet in the same building?

▼ House Chamber



For an animated, **interactive** exploration of the Capitol and its chambers, visit PearsonSchool.com/phgovt



435 members

100 members

A Bicameral Congress

- The Founding Fathers created a bicameral legislature for three reasons: historical, practical, theoretical.

REASON	SUMMARY
Historical	Americans familiar with bicameral British Parliament
Practical	Compromise between the New Jersey and Virginia Plans
Theoretical	Each house can check power of the other; prevents Congress from becoming too powerful.

Terms and Sessions

Terms of Congress

- Each **term** of Congress lasts two years
- The start of each two-year term starts on January 3rd on every odd-numbered year.
- We are finishing up the 114th Congress now (2015-2016).
- The 115th Congress will start on January 3rd, 2017.
- How many years has Congress been at work?

Session of Congress

- A **session** of Congress is that period of time each year, during which Congress assembles
- There are two sessions in each term of Congress – one session each year.
- **Special Session** – only the President may call; emergency situations only.
- Congress **adjourns** between each session.

Legislator: The Job

Different Styles (or theories) of how legislators should work:

- **Trustees** - each issue must be decided on its own merits – legislators vote the way they think is “best”
- **Delegate** - believe they should vote the way the people back home want them to vote – represent the voters
- **Partisans** - believe they should follow party guidelines and vote on party lines
- **Politicos** - attempt to combine all three

The House of Representatives



Chapter 10 Section 2





• United States Capitol Building, House Chamber •

Qualification for Office – House of Reps

FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS

AGE

Must be at least 25 years old

CITIZEN

Must be a citizen of the US
for at least seven years

RESIDENT

Must be an inhabitant of
the State from which they
are elected

Are there “informal” qualifications?

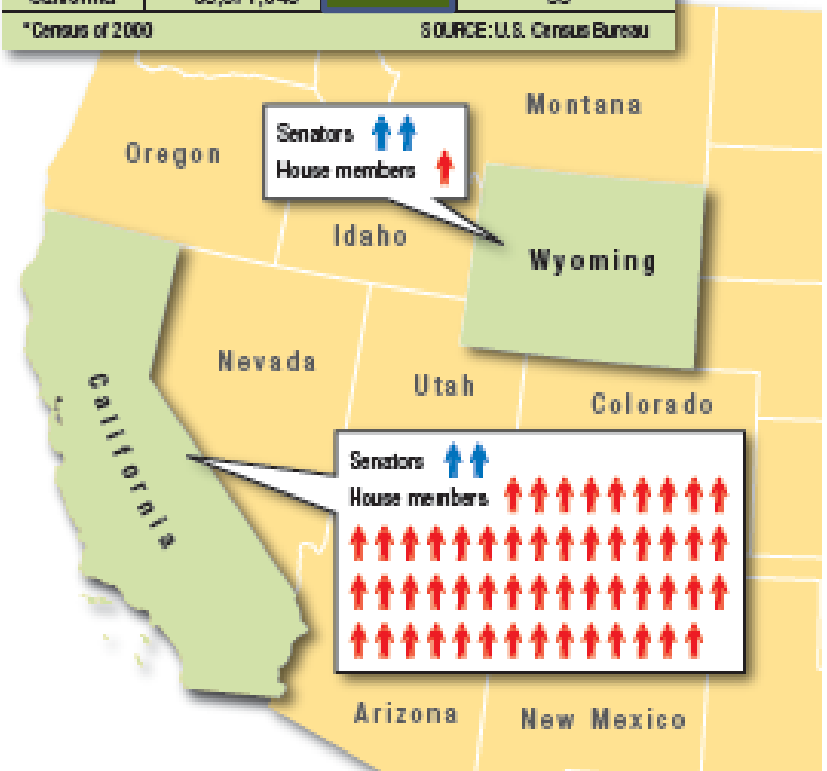
In the House...

- **Exact size = 435 members**
 - Represents a district within the state
 - 435 is set by law
- The total number of seats in the House is **apportioned** (distributed) among the States based on their population.
- Representatives serve for two-year terms
- There is **no** limit on how many terms a representative can serve.

Representation in Congress

State	Population*	Senators	House Members
Wyoming	493,782	2	1
California	33,871,848	2	53

*Census of 2000 SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau



Representative from Virginia– 10th District

Barbara Comstock



- **Name:** Barbara Comstock
- **Party:** R
- **State:** Virginia
- **District:** 10
- **In Office:** elected 2014 - Present
- **Education:** Georgetown University Law; Middlebury College (B.A. Political Science)
- **Previous Political Experience:** VA House of Delegates, 2010-2015
- **Election Status :** In office
- <https://comstock.house.gov/>

Who's in charge in the House?



Speaker of the House
(Paul Ryan, R-WI)



House Majority Leader
(Kevin McCarthy, R-CA)



*House Minority
Leader (Nancy Pelosi,
D-CA)*



House Majority
Whip (Steve
Scalise, R-LA)



*House Minority Whip,
(Steny Hoyer, D-MD)*

House Leadership

Speaker of the House

- Most powerful role in Congress
- Presides over the House
- Appoints members to Committees
- Assigns bills to committees
- CONTROLS THE SCHEDULE – what bills get considered & when
-

Majority/Minority Leader

- Elected by their parties
- Manage legislation on the House floor
- Majority Leader is 2nd in command (to Speaker)
- Minority Leader is the leader/chief strategist of minority party

Majority/Minority Whips

- Manage votes on the floor for their party
-

Reapportionment

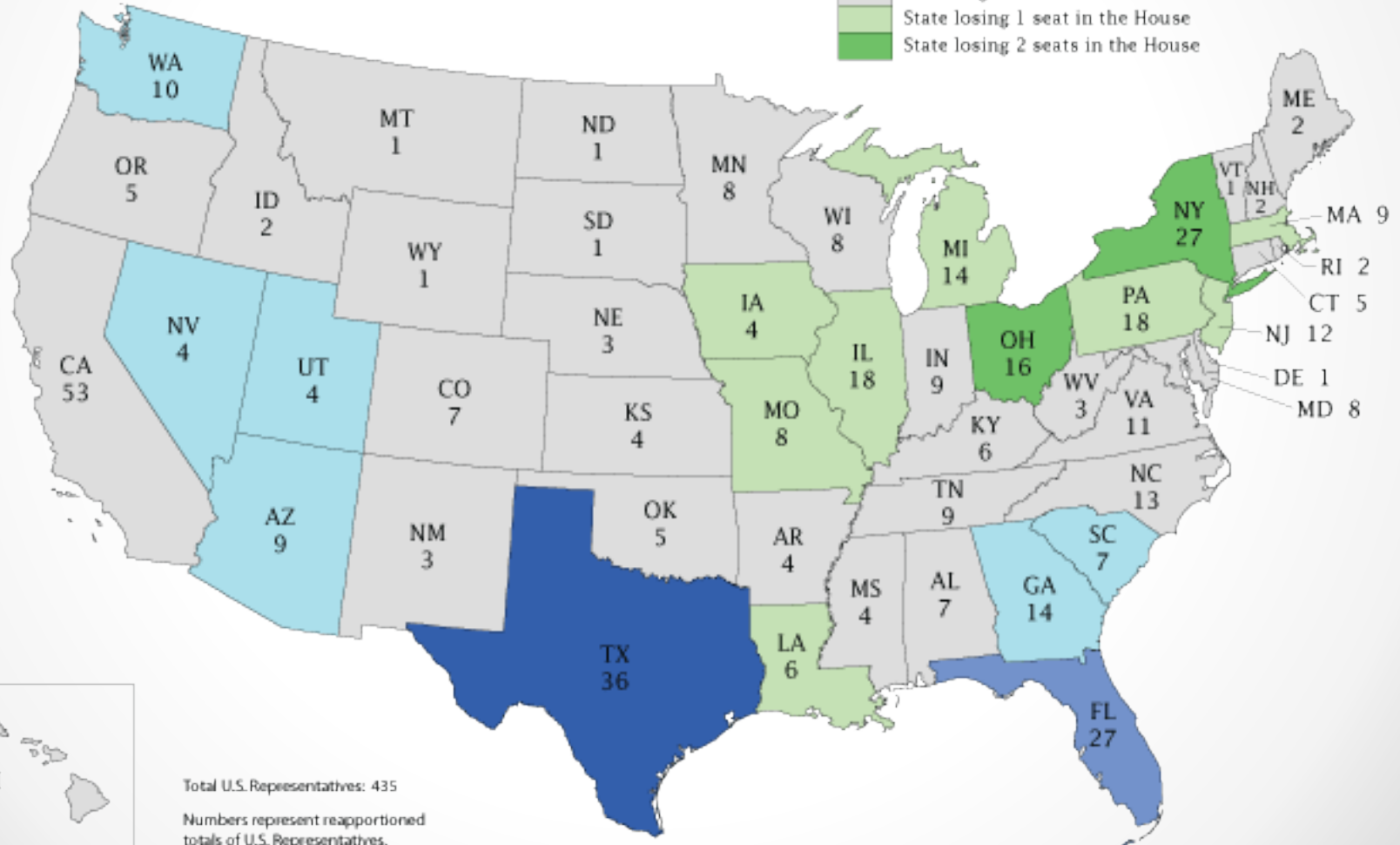
- Article I of the Constitution directs Congress to **reapportion** (distribute) the seats in the House every ten years, after each census.
- **Reapportionment Act of 1929**
 1. Permanent size of House = 435
 2. Census Bureau determines number of seats in each State
 3. The Bureau sends plan to President
 4. Becomes effective 60 days after both Houses receive plan and don't reject it
 5. States can gain...or lose...seats in the House with every census.
 6. Districts average ~700,000, but range from 524,000 to 990,000.

Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives Based on the 2010 Census



Change from 2000 to 2010

- State gaining 4 seats in the House
- State gaining 2 seats in the House
- State gaining 1 seat in the House
- No change
- State losing 1 seat in the House
- State losing 2 seats in the House



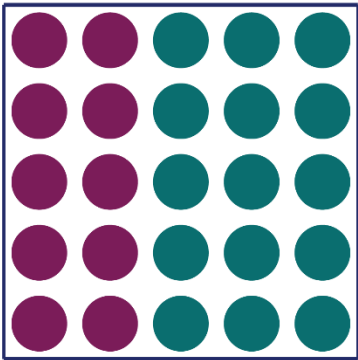
Total U.S. Representatives: 435
Numbers represent reapportioned totals of U.S. Representatives.

Congressional Elections

Date	Congressional elections are held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year
Off – Year Elections	Congressional elections that occur in years between presidential elections (aka “mid-term elections”) Example: 2014, 2018
Districts	The 435 members of the House are chosen by 435 separate congressional districts across the country.
Redistricting	Redrawing district boundaries to reflect population shifts within a state, or changes due to reapportionment.
Gerrymandering	The process of re-drawing district lines to give an advantage to one political party (the one that controls the State legislature).

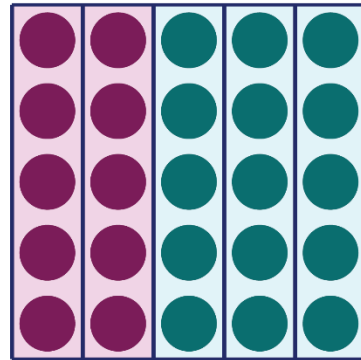
GERRYMANDERING SIMPLIFIED

No Districts



40% purple
60% green

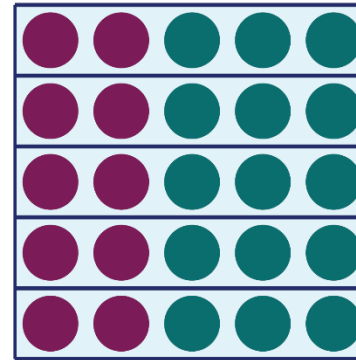
Districts are
Compact & Fair



2 purple districts (40%)
3 green districts (60%)

GREEN RULES!

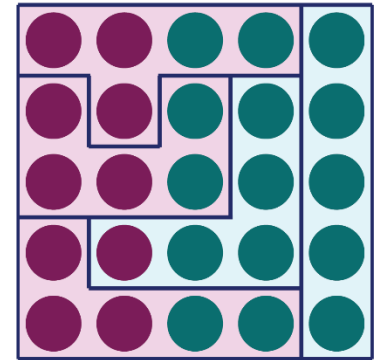
Districts are
Compact & Unfair



0 purple districts (0%)
5 green districts (100%)

GREEN RULES!

Districts aren't
Compact or Fair

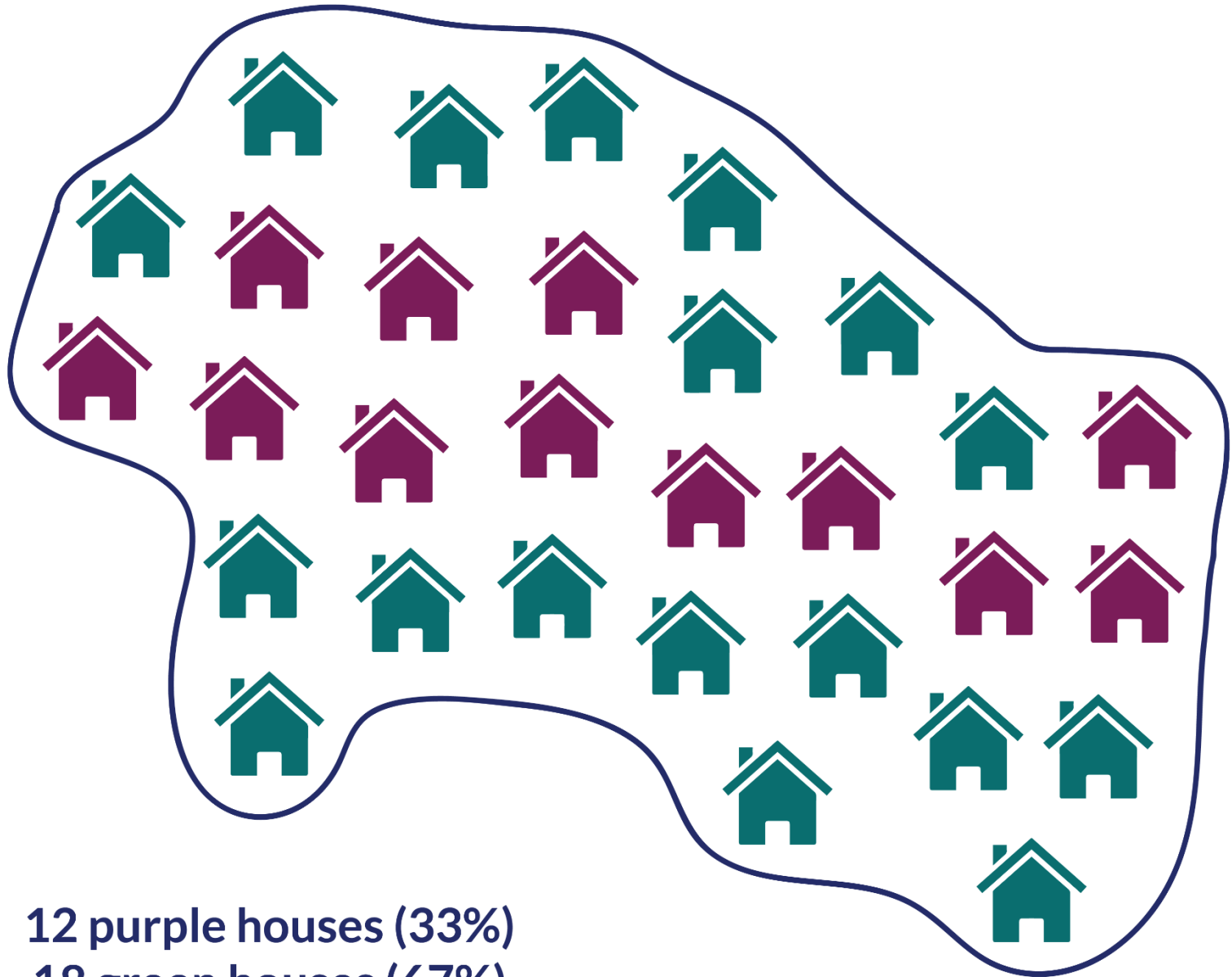


3 purple districts (60%)
2 green districts (40%)

PURPLE RULES!

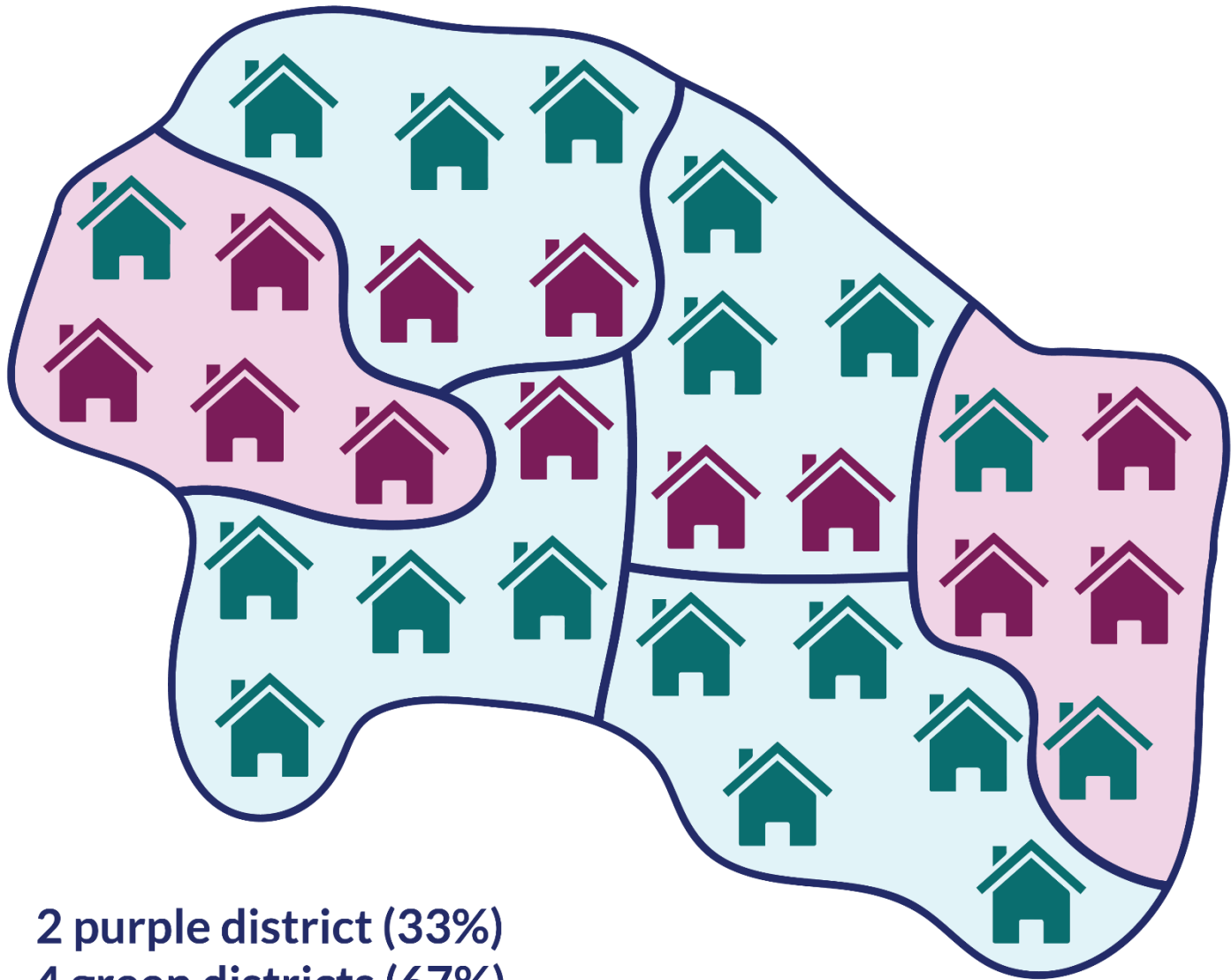
Source: Inspired by <http://bit.ly/1Fi2bam>

vpap.org



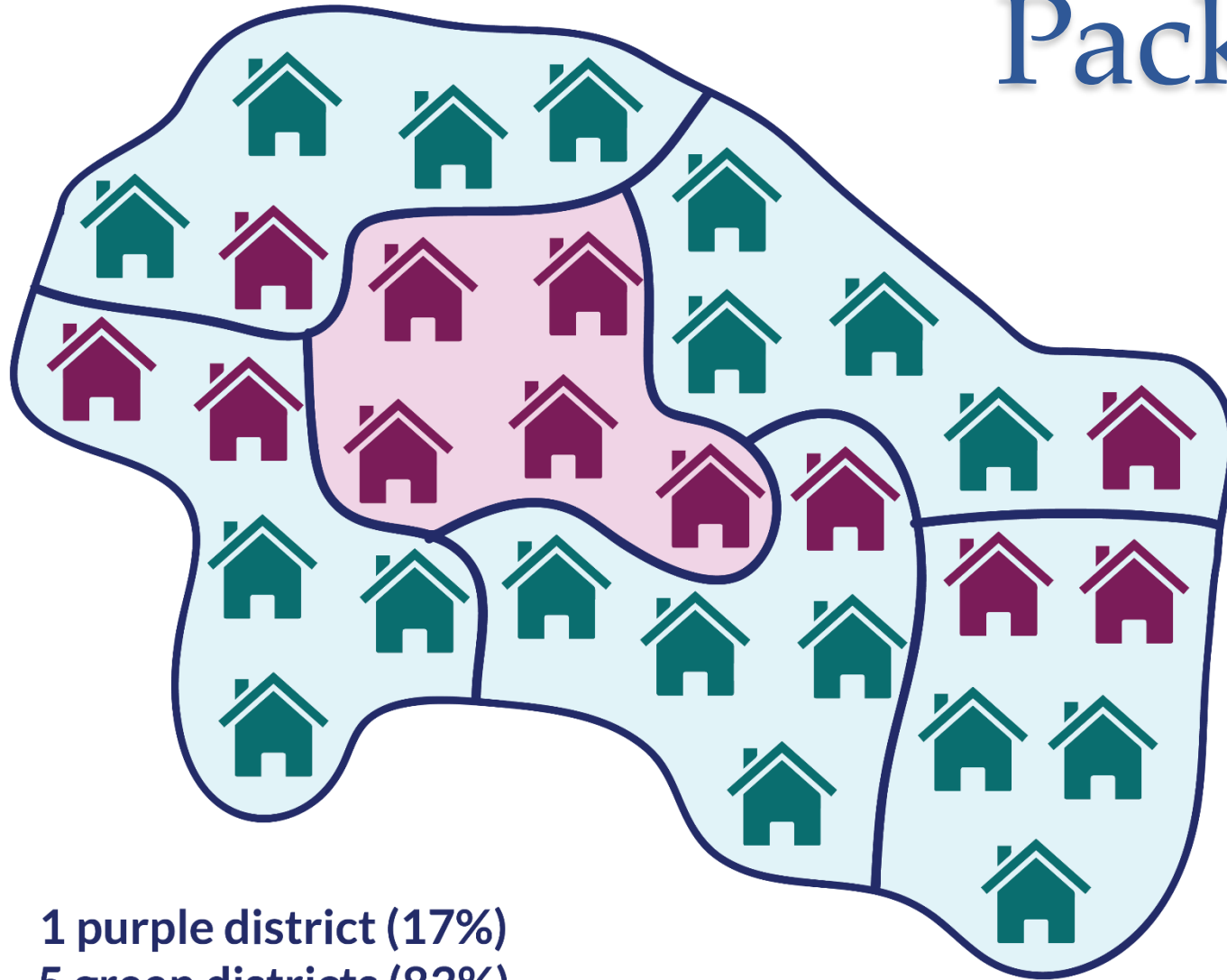
12 purple houses (33%)
18 green houses (67%)

Representative



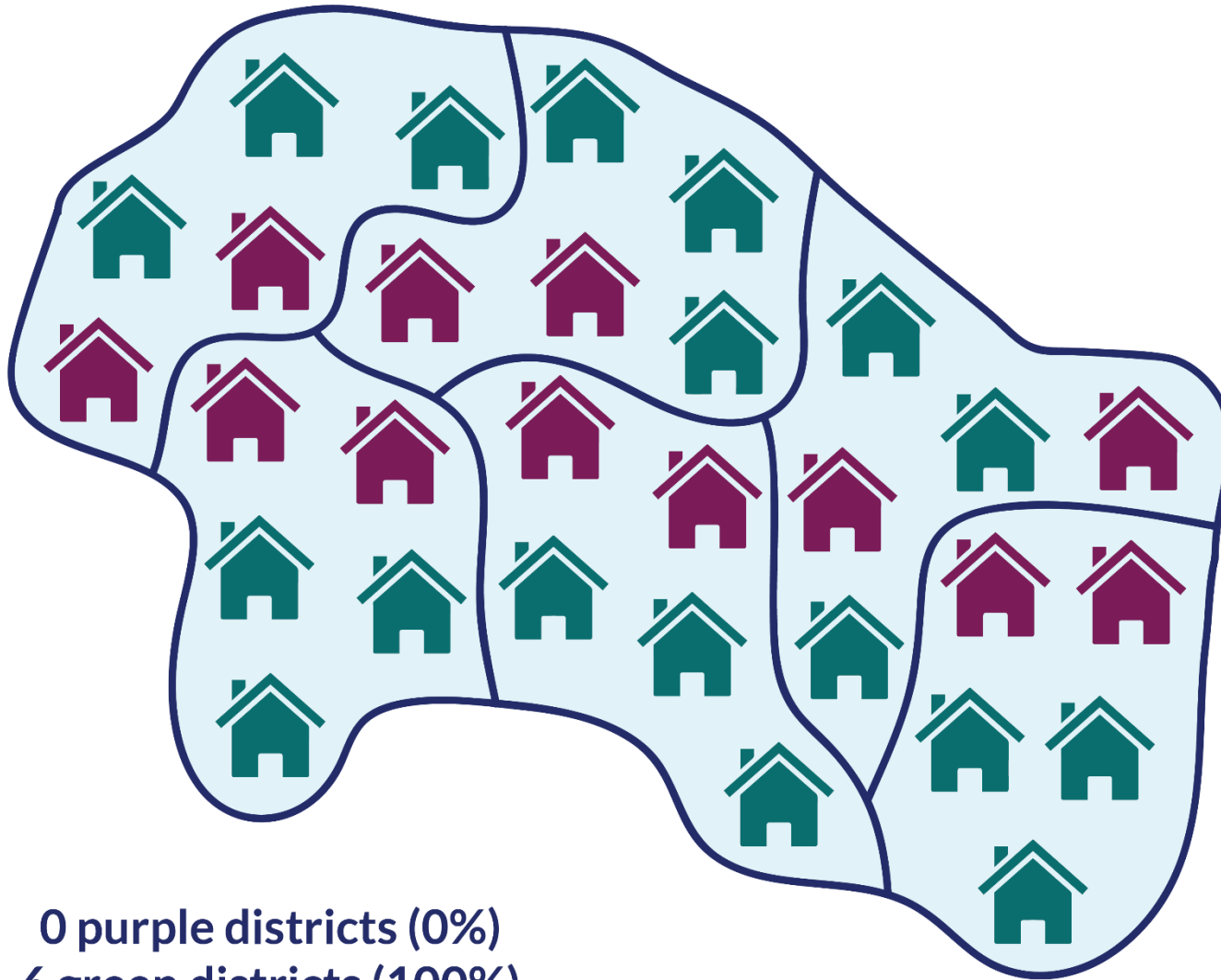
2 purple district (33%)
4 green districts (67%)

Packing



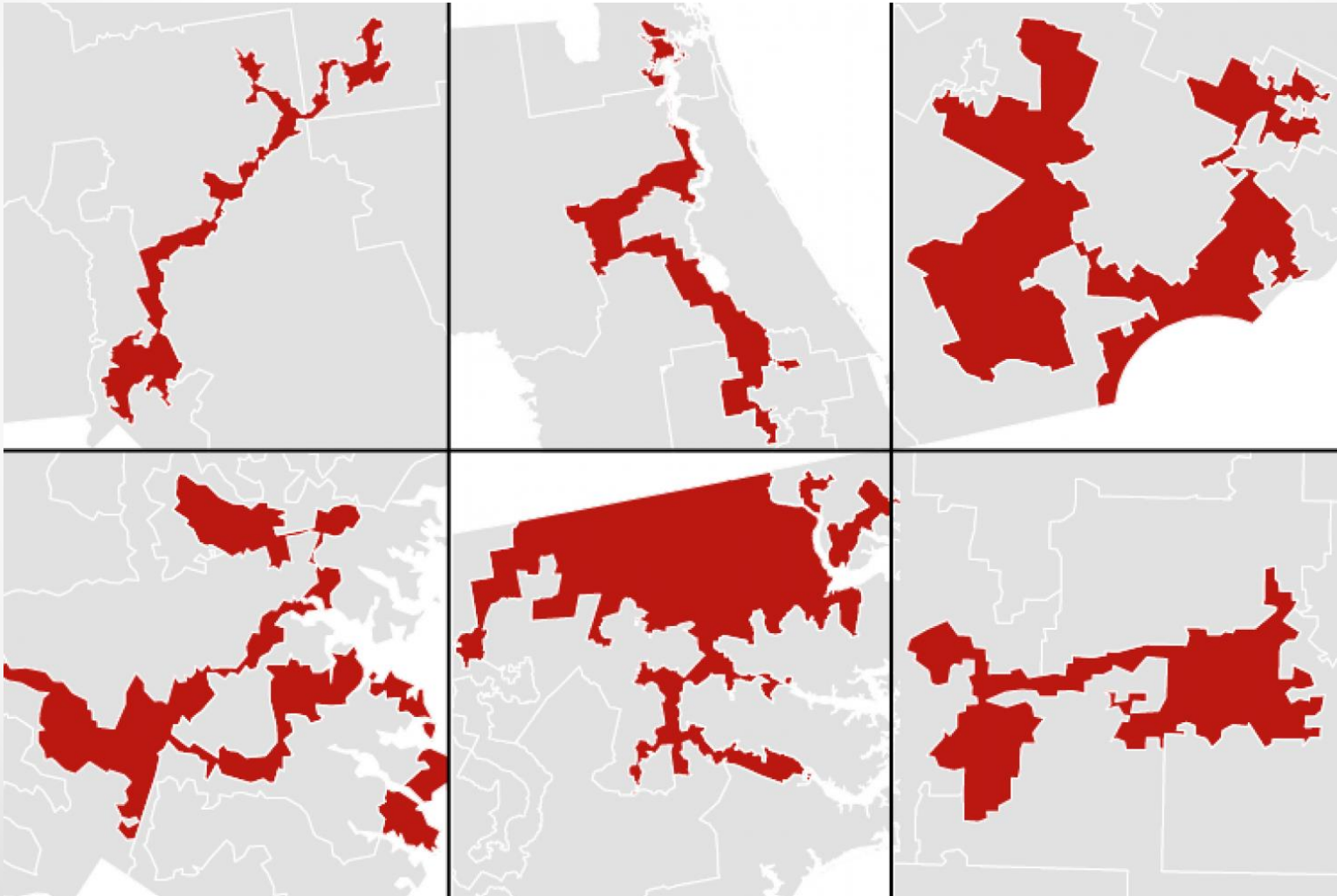
1 purple district (17%)
5 green districts (83%)

Cracking



More on Gerrymandering

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnhFm5QVVTo>
- Washington Post [article](#)



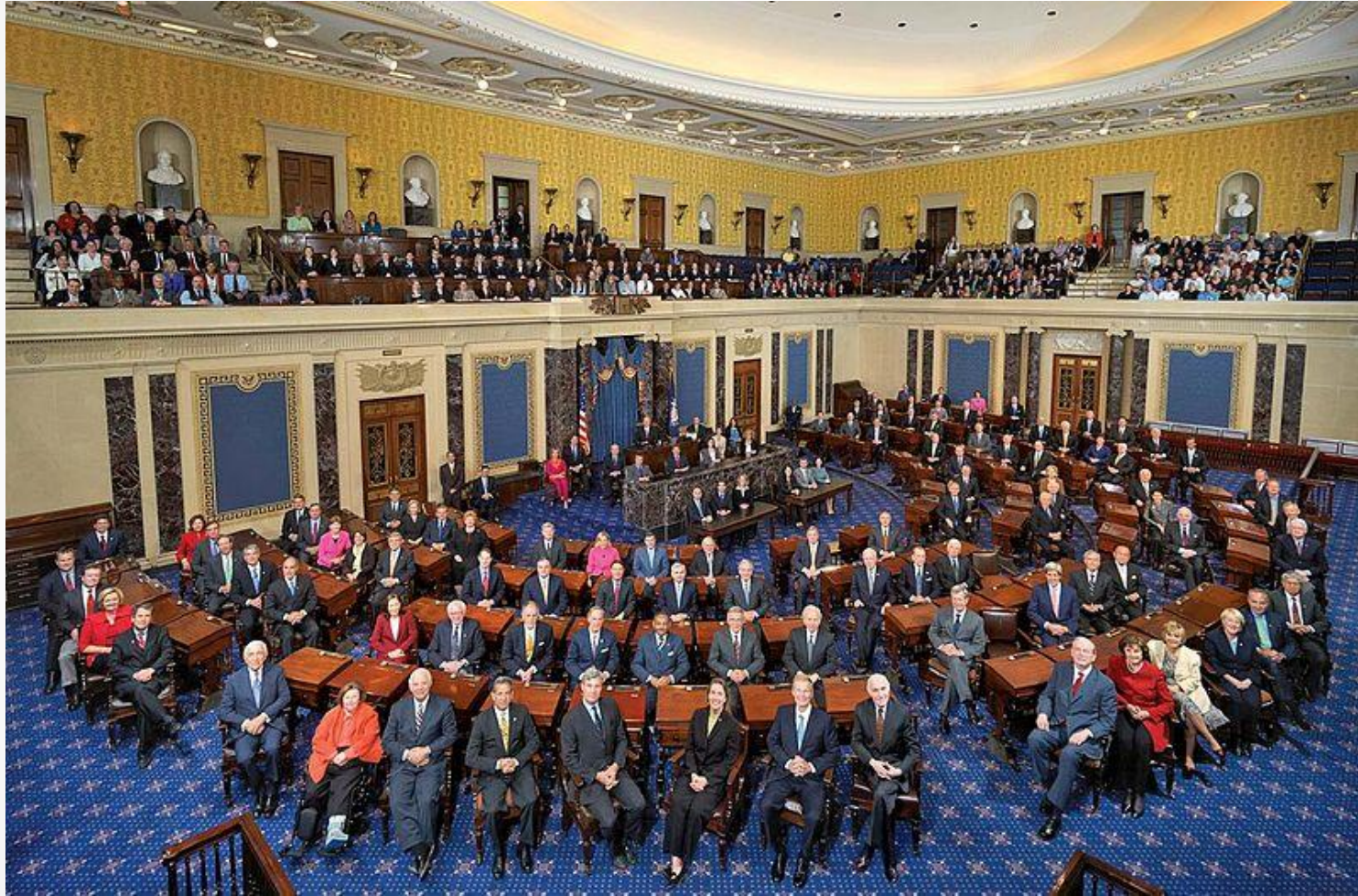
The Senate



Chapter 10 Section 3

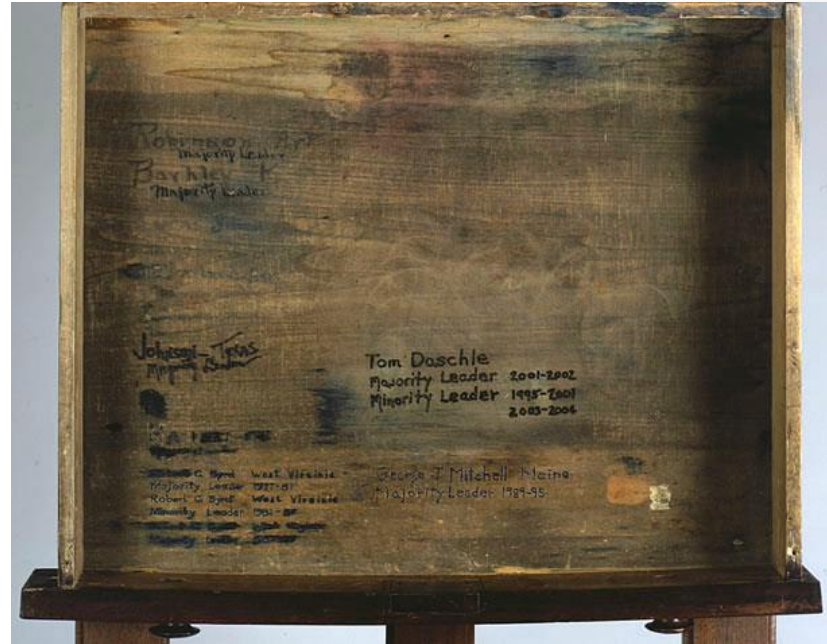


Meeting Place



Official Photo, US Senate, 112th Congress
Senate Chamber, United States Capitol Building

US Senator's Desk Senate Chamber



Underside of Desk Drawer
traditionally used by Democratic
Leadership in US Senate

How does the Senate
differ from the House?

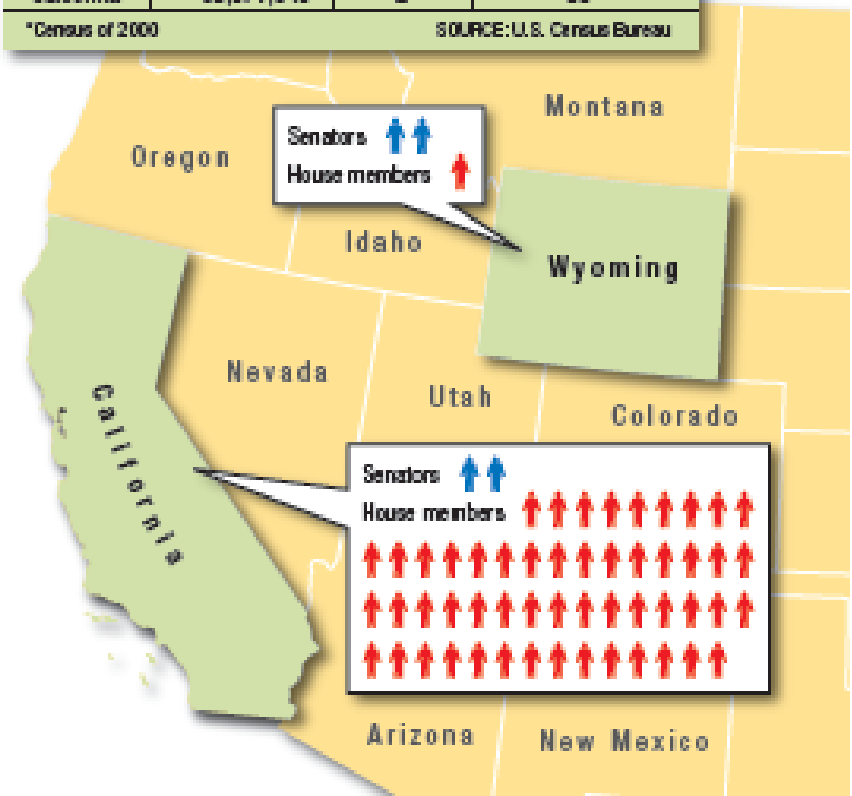
Size, Election, and Terms

- **100 Senators**
 - 2 from each state
 - Based upon equal representation
 - Represents an entire state
- **Elected by the people (17th Amendment)**
- **Senators serve for six-year terms**
 - Terms are staggered
 - Only 1/3 of the Senators are up for re-election every two years, allowing for a continuous body in the Senate

Representation in Congress

State	Population*	Senators	House Members
Wyoming	493,762	2	1
California	33,871,848	2	53

*Census of 2000 SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau



Qualification for Office - Senate

FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS

AGE

Must be at least 30 years of age

CITIZEN

Must be a citizen of the US for at least nine years

RESIDENT

Must be an inhabitant of the State from which they are elected

Informal Requirements?

Senators from Virginia

Mark Warner - Democrat



Assumed office

January 3, 2009 (re-elected 2014)

Former Governor of VA

Tim Kaine - Democrat



Assumed office

January 3, 2013 (elected 2012)

Former Governor of VA

Who Presides in the Senate?

Technically.....

President of the Senate (VP of the US)



But since the VP's rarely around (he only votes in a tie)....

the President Pro Tempore (senior majority party Senator)



But since this is a ceremonial role (for an old guy).....

...the majority party members just take turns.

Other Senate Leaders

Senate Majority Leader

- Spokesperson for the majority party
- Works to move legislation to a vote
- Coordinates w/minority leader on scheduling
- Mitch McConnell, R-KY



Senate Minority Leader

- Spokesperson for minority party
- Tries to stop majority party from passing bills the minority opposes
- Coordinates w/majority leader on scheduling
- Harry Reid, D-NV



Majority/Minority Whips

- Help the majority leaders

How are the House and Senate Different?

- Think of the features of the House and Senate
 - Number of members
 - Who they represent (size, population, geography)
 - How long they serve
 - Rules (we'll talk more about this later...the House has much stricter rules)
- What differences might this lead to?