

The image features a blurred American flag as a background. The stars and stripes are visible but out of focus. In the center of the image, the word "CONGRESS" is written in a bold, black, serif font.

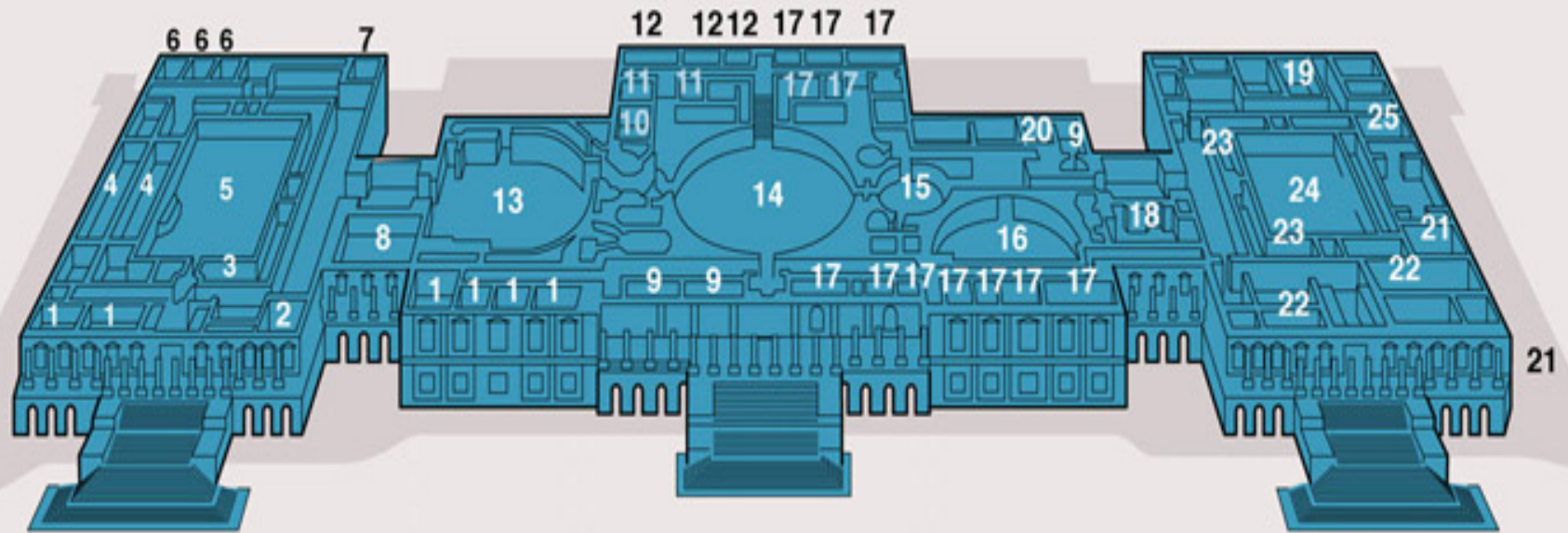
CONGRESS

CONGRESS

In this chapter we will cover...

- **Roots of the Legislative Branch**
- **The Constitution and the Legislative Branch**
- **Apportionment and Redistricting**
- **Powers of Congress**
- **Members of Congress**
- **Organization of Congress**
- **Lawmaking**
- **How Members Make Decisions**
- **Congress and the President**

Figure 7.4 Floor Plan of The Capitol Building



House of Representatives

- 1 Speaker's Office Suite
- 2 Committee on Ways and Means
- 3 Cloakrooms
- 4 Members' Retiring Room and Lobby
- 5 House Chamber
- 6 Committee on Appropriations
- 7 Minority Whip
- 8 House Reception Room
- 9 House Conference Room
- 10 Committee Meeting Room
- 11 Representatives' Offices
- 12 Minority Leader

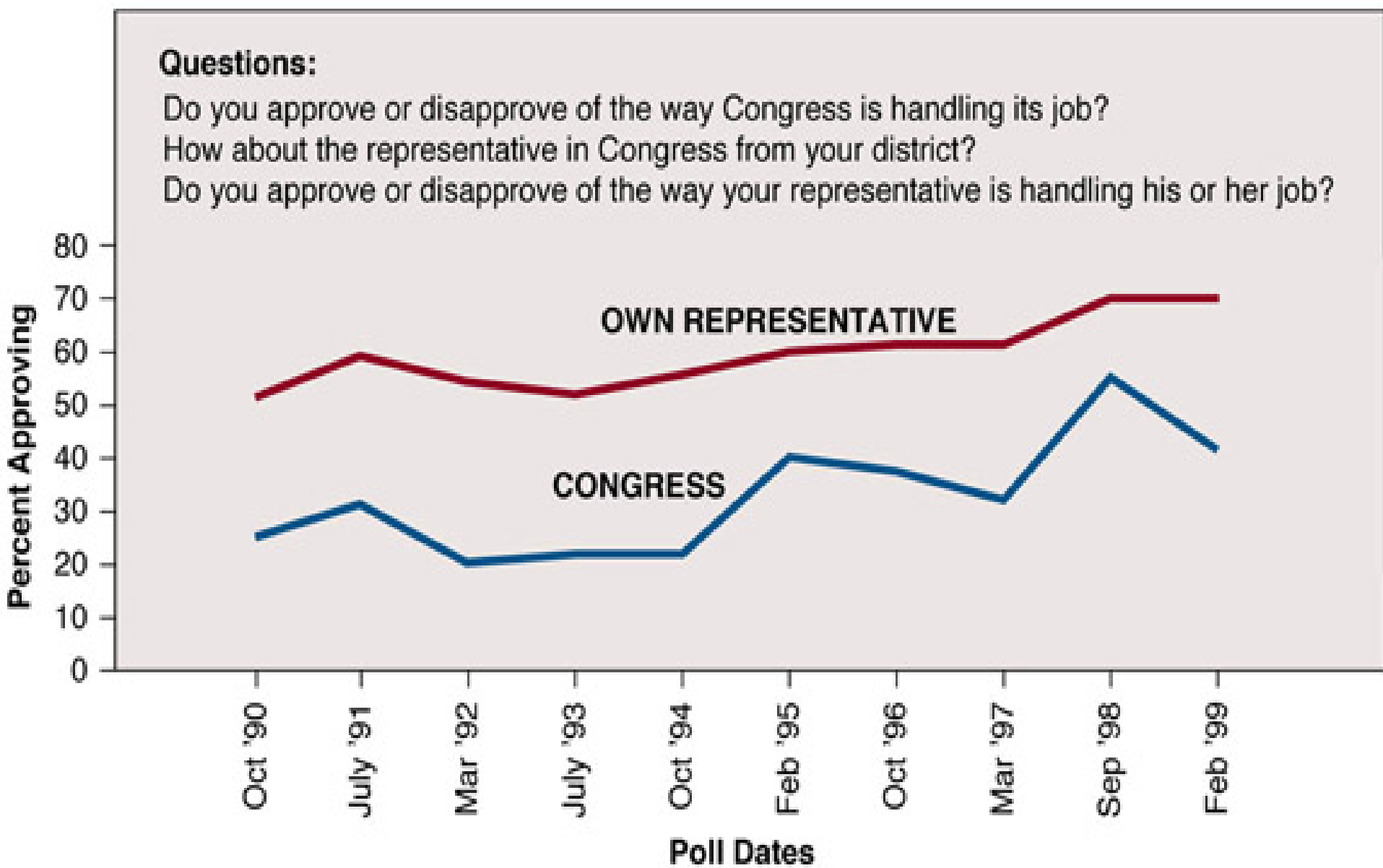
Central Area

- 13 Statuary Hall
- 14 Rotunda
- 15 Senate Rotunda
- 16 Old Senate Chamber

Senate

- 17 Senators' Offices
- 18 Senate Conference Room
- 19 Minority Leader
- 20 Majority Leader
- 21 Office of the Vice President
- 22 Senators' Reception Room
- 23 Cloakrooms

Figure 7.1 Approval of Congress and District Representatives



SOURCE: Data derived from R-Poll, LEXIS/NEXIS.

Roots of the Legislative Branch

- The U.S. Congress was greatly influenced by the American colonial experience and by the Articles of Confederation.
- Under the British, colonial assemblies were chosen as advisory bodies to the royal governors.
- These assemblies gradually assumed more power and authority in each colony, eventually gaining responsibility over taxation and spending.
- The weaknesses of the Articles led to the Philadelphia Convention in 1787.

The Constitution and the Legislative Branch

- Article I creates a bicameral legislative branch of government.
- The upper house is called the Senate in which each state receives two representatives.
- The lower house is called the House of Representatives which is apportioned by population.
- The Senate has a 6 year term with 1/3 of the seats up for reelection every two years.
- House members serve 2 year terms.

Apportionment and Redistricting

- The Constitution requires that all Americans be counted every 10 years by a census.
- The census determines the representation in the House of Representatives.
- Redistricting (the redrawing of congressional districts to reflect changes in seats allocated to the states from population shifts) is done by state legislatures and, of course, always has political overtones.
- When the process is outrageously political, it is called gerrymandering and is often struck down by the courts.



"necessary and proper" to carrying out the enumerated powers

Powers of Congress

- The most important constitutional power of Congress is the power to make laws.
- This power is shared by the House and the Senate.
- In order to become a law, a bill must be passed by **both** the House and the Senate.

Key Differences

House

- Initiate revenue bills
- 2-year term
- 435
- Formal
- Specialist
- Tax policy

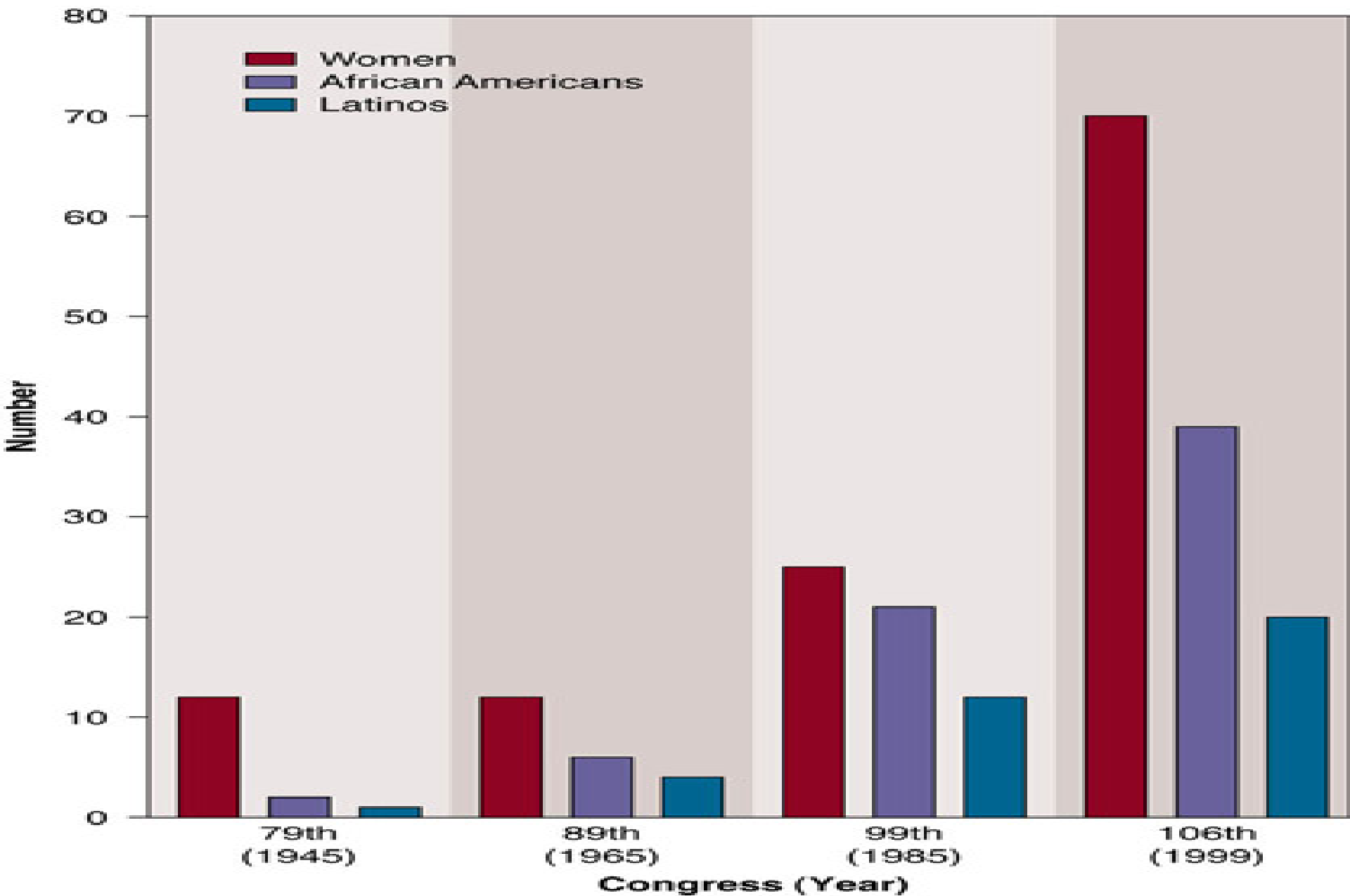
Senate

- advise and consent
- 6-year term
- 100
- Relaxed
- Generalist
- Foreign policy

Members of Congress

- Congress is older, better educated, whiter, and richer than most of us.
- However, great strides have been made. Currently, both California senators are women.
- Can a man represent a woman?
- Can a white person adequately represent the views of a black person?

Figure 7.2 Numbers of Women and Minorities in Congress



SOURCE: Harold W. Stanley and Richard G. Niemi, eds., *Vital Statistics on American Politics, 1997-1998* (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 1998), 197. Data updated by authors.

WOMEN MEMBERS OF THE 107TH CONGRESS

SENATE

WOMEN SENATORS: 13

Barbara Boxer (D-CA)

Mary Landrieu (D-LA)

Susan Collins (R-ME)

Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD)

Dianne Feinstein (D-CA)

Patty Murray (D-WA)

Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX)

Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME)

Blanche Lambert Lincoln (D-AK)

Maria Cantwell (D-WA)

Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY)

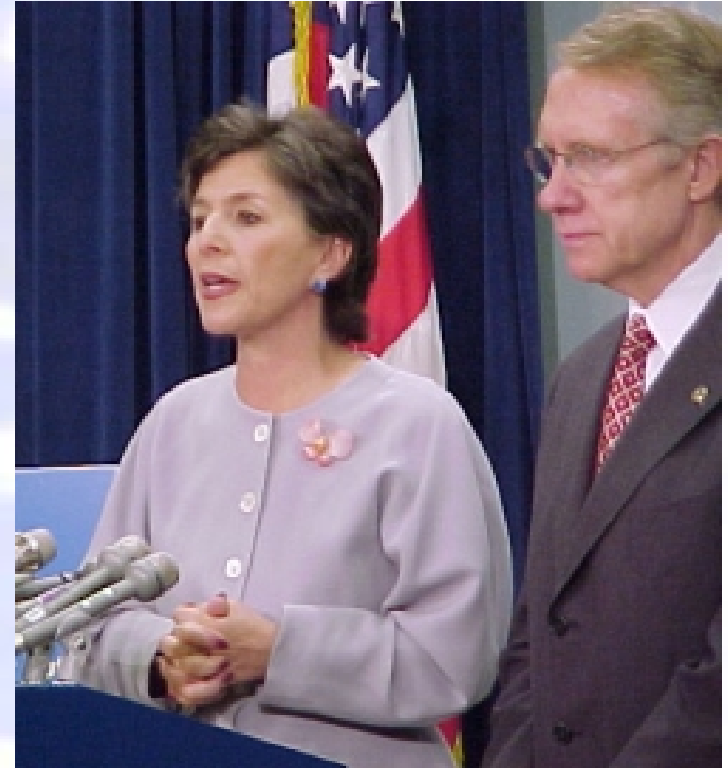
Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)

Jean Carnahan (D-MO)

Total Democratic Senators: 10

Total Republican Senators: 3

ARE WOMEN
DIFFERENT?



HOUSE WOMEN

REPRESENTATIVES: 56

Total Democratic Congresswomen: 41

Total Republican Congresswomen: 17

The Representational Role of Members of Congress

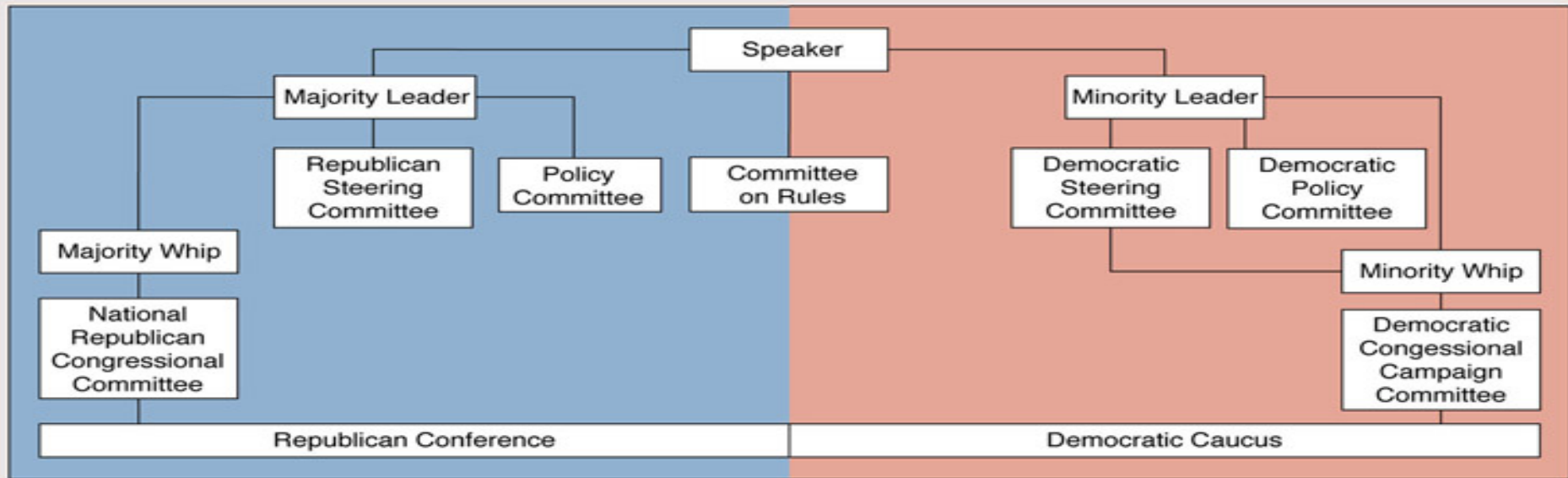
- How *should* an elected official represent his/her constituents?
- Trustee--representatives use their own best judgment
- Delegate--representatives vote the way their constituents want them to
- Politico--representatives act as trustee or delegate depending on the issue

Organization of Congress

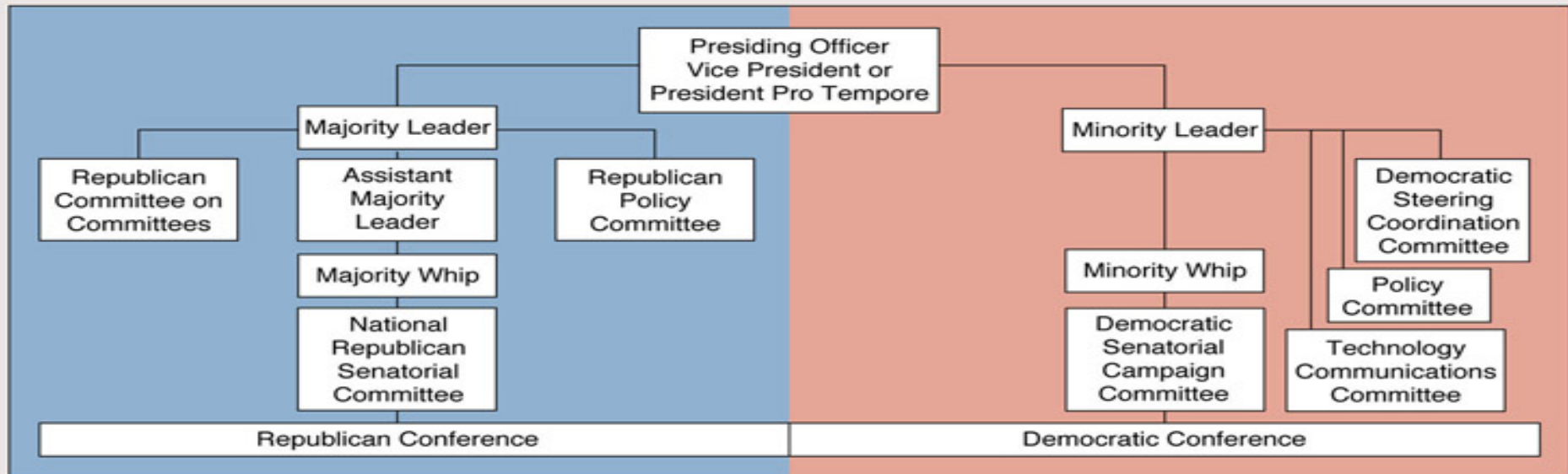
- Every two years, a new Congress is seated.
- The first order of business is the election of leaders and adoption of new rules.
- Both houses of Congress are organized on the basis of party for both leadership and committee purposes.

Figure 7.3 Organizational Structure of the House of Representatives and the Senate during the 106th Congress (1999-2000)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



SENATE



Lawmaking

- Only a member of the House or Senate may introduce a bill but anyone can write a bill.
- Over 9,000 bills are proposed and fewer than 5 to 10% are enacted.
- Most bills originate in the executive branch.
- A bill must survive three stages to become a law: committees, the floor, and the conference committee. A bill can die at any stage.

7.7 How a Bill Becomes a Law

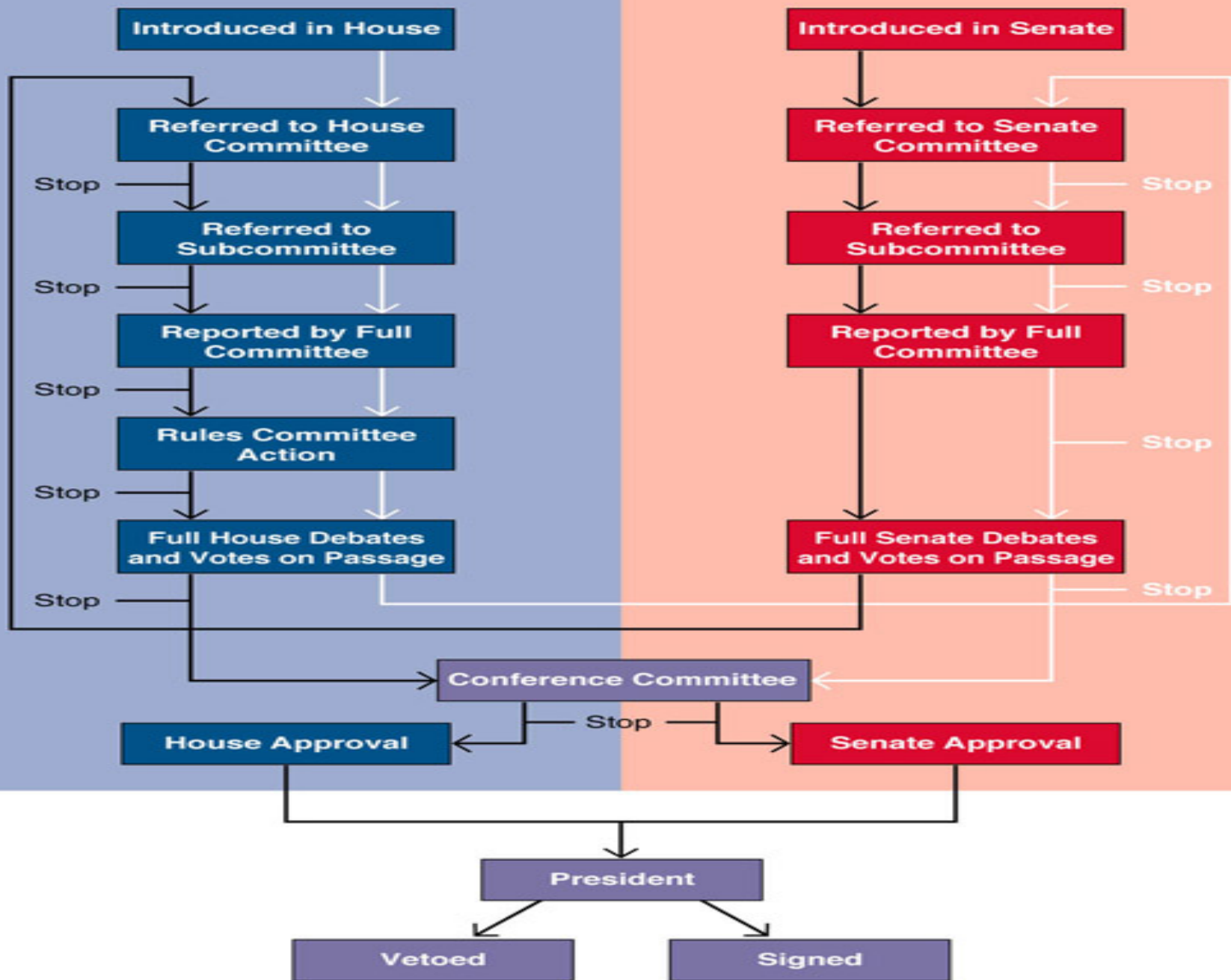
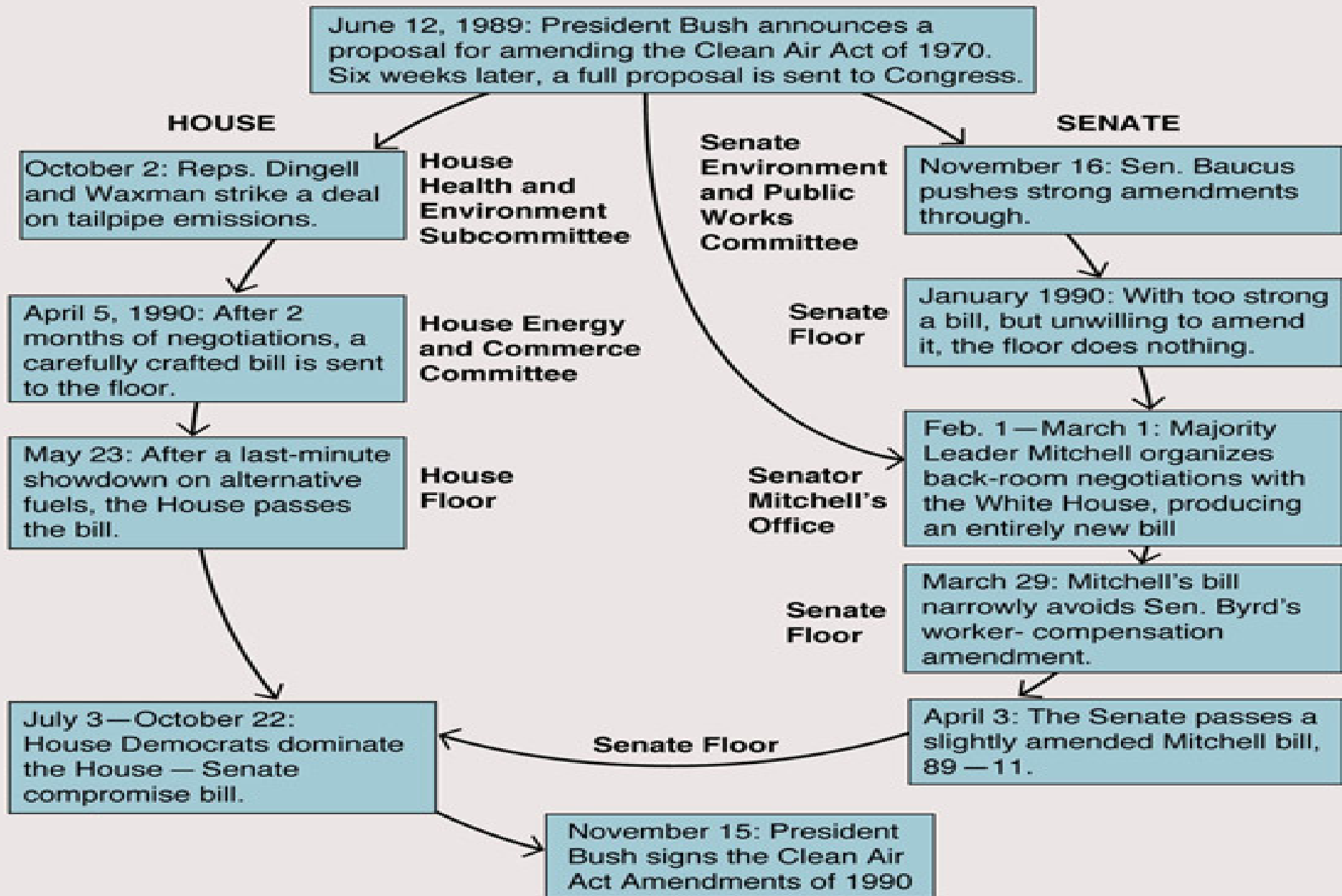


Figure 7.8 How a Bill Really Becomes a Law: The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990



How Members Make Decisions

- It is rare for a legislator to disregard strong wishes of constituents, particularly on hot button issues or those contentious issues that get a lot of media attention.
- Deciding how the voters feel is not possible.
- The perceptions of the representative are important since he/she cannot really know how all the constituents feel about an issue.
- If constituents have little knowledge or interest in an issue, the legislator often makes an autonomous decision.

How Members Make Decisions

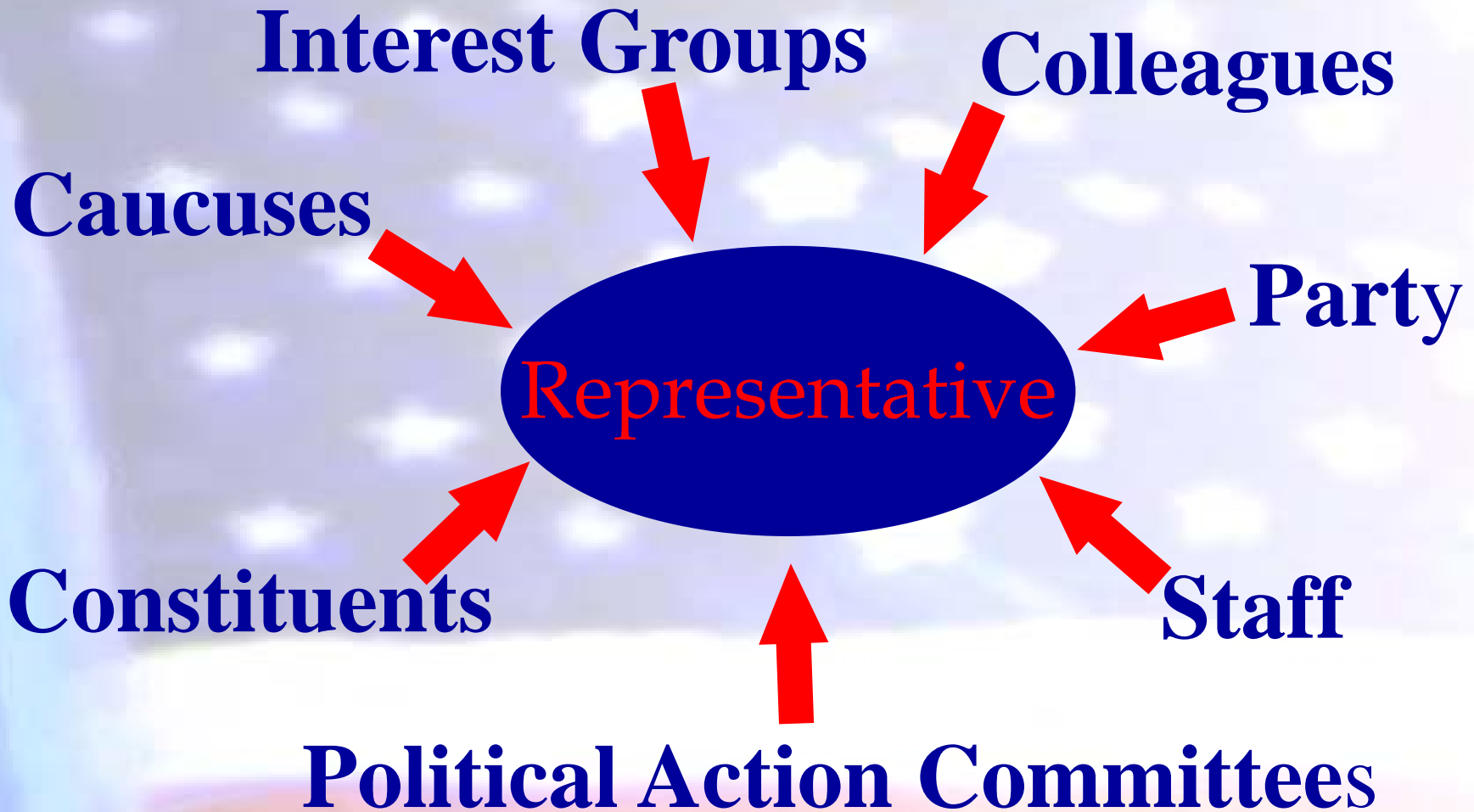
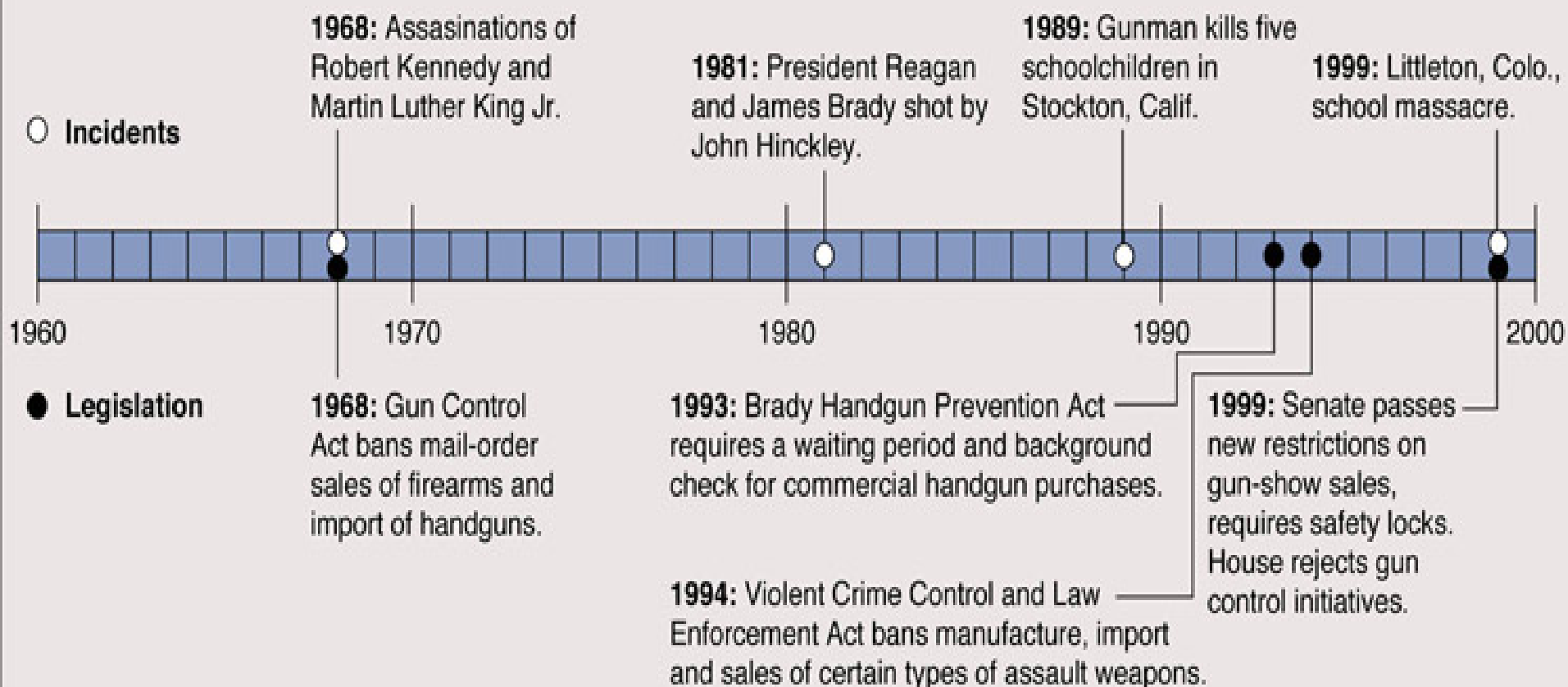


Figure 7.6 Gun Control Legislation Following Publicized Shootings Since 1968

Gun control legislation following publicized shootings since '68

Machine-gun violence during Prohibition and the attempted assassination of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 was followed by the National Firearms Act of 1934, which required registration of automatic weapons. Other gun control legislation that also followed highly publicized shootings.



Congress and the President

- Especially since the 1930s, the president has seemed to be more powerful than Congress.
- However, Congress retains several key powers vis-a-vis the president:
 - funding powers
 - oversight
 - impeachment/removal.



Congressional Oversight of the Executive Branch

- **Congress has the power to review the actions of the executive branch**
- **Congressional oversight is used to ensure that the bureaucracy is enforcing and interpreting laws the way Congress intended.**

Continuity and Change

- The framers of the U.S Constitution placed Congress at the center if the government.
- In the early years of the republic, Congress held the bulk of power.
- The face of Congress is changing as women and minorities have achieved seats.
- Today, the presidency has become quite powerful particularly since FDR.
- Congress now generally responds to executive branch legislative proposals.