



Organization of Congress

- ◆ The framers of the Constitution wanted Congress to be the central fulcrum of the Federal government.
- ◆ U.S. Congress is a bicameral legislature.
 1. Senate
 2. House of Representatives
 - The bicameral legislature was influenced by the British Parliament: House of Lords & House of Commons.

Congressional Sessions

- Each term of Congress starts on January 3 of odd numbered years & lasts for two years.
- Each term of Congress is divided into two sessions, or meetings.
- Most Congressional sessions last from January- November.
- Congress remains in session until its members vote to adjourn.
- The President may call Congress into session for special reasons & emergencies.

◆ Membership of the House

- ◆ 435 members of the House
- ◆ Constitution does not fix the number of representatives, it only states that the number of House Seats must be apportioned among the states based on population.
- ◆ Each state must have at least 1 rep.

Qualifications

- Must be 25
- Be a citizen for at least 7 years
- Live in the district they represent.

Term of Office

- 2 year terms, elections on even years
- If a rep. dies or resigns, the governor of the state he/she represented appoints a temporary replacement.

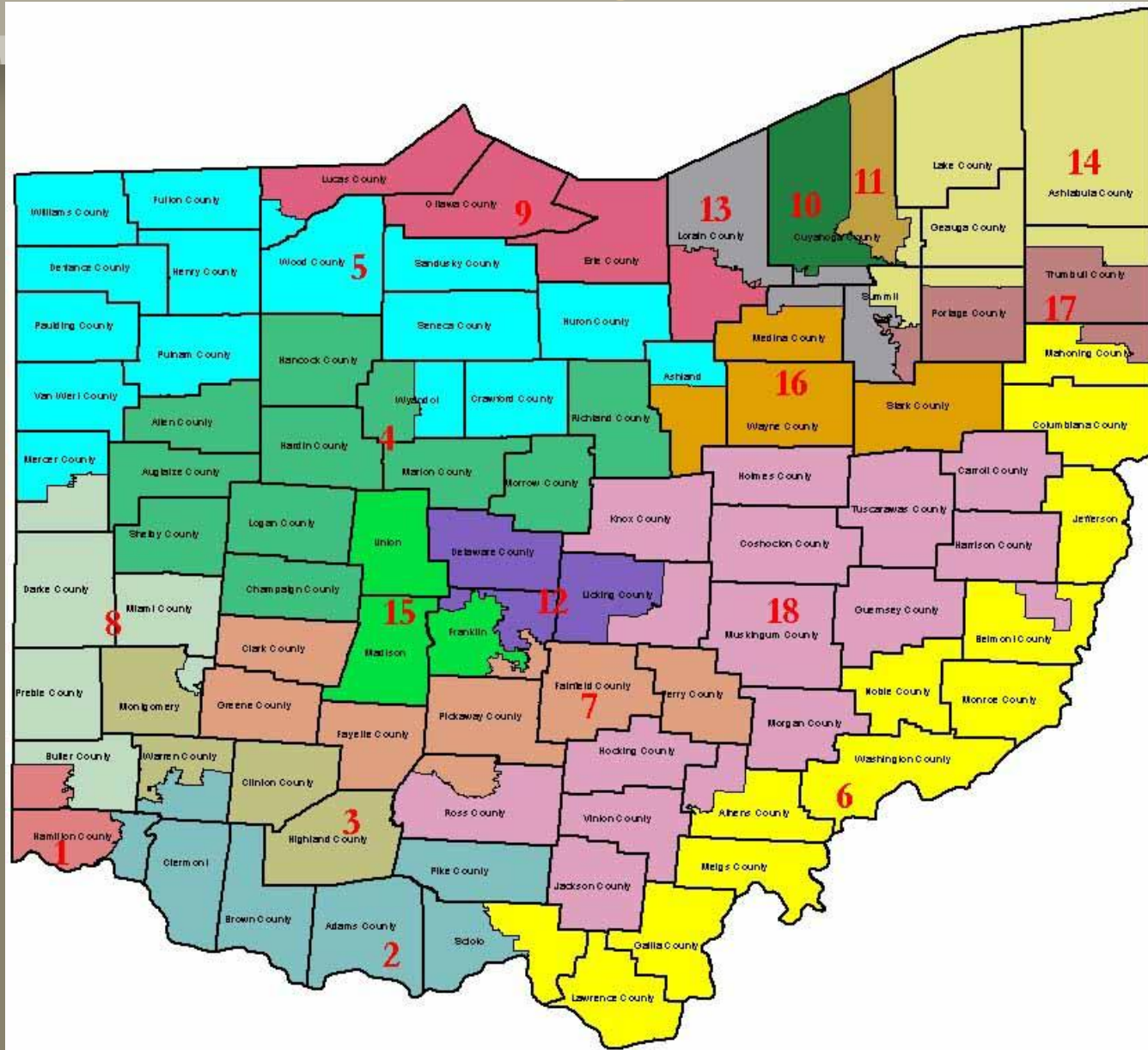
◆ Representation & Reapportionment

- ◆ Every 10 years the Census Bureau takes a survey.
- ◆ Each state's population determines how many reps. it gets. This is called reapportionment.
- ◆ The size of the House has grown over the years, but was set at 435 by the Reapportionment Act of 1929.

Congressional Redistricting

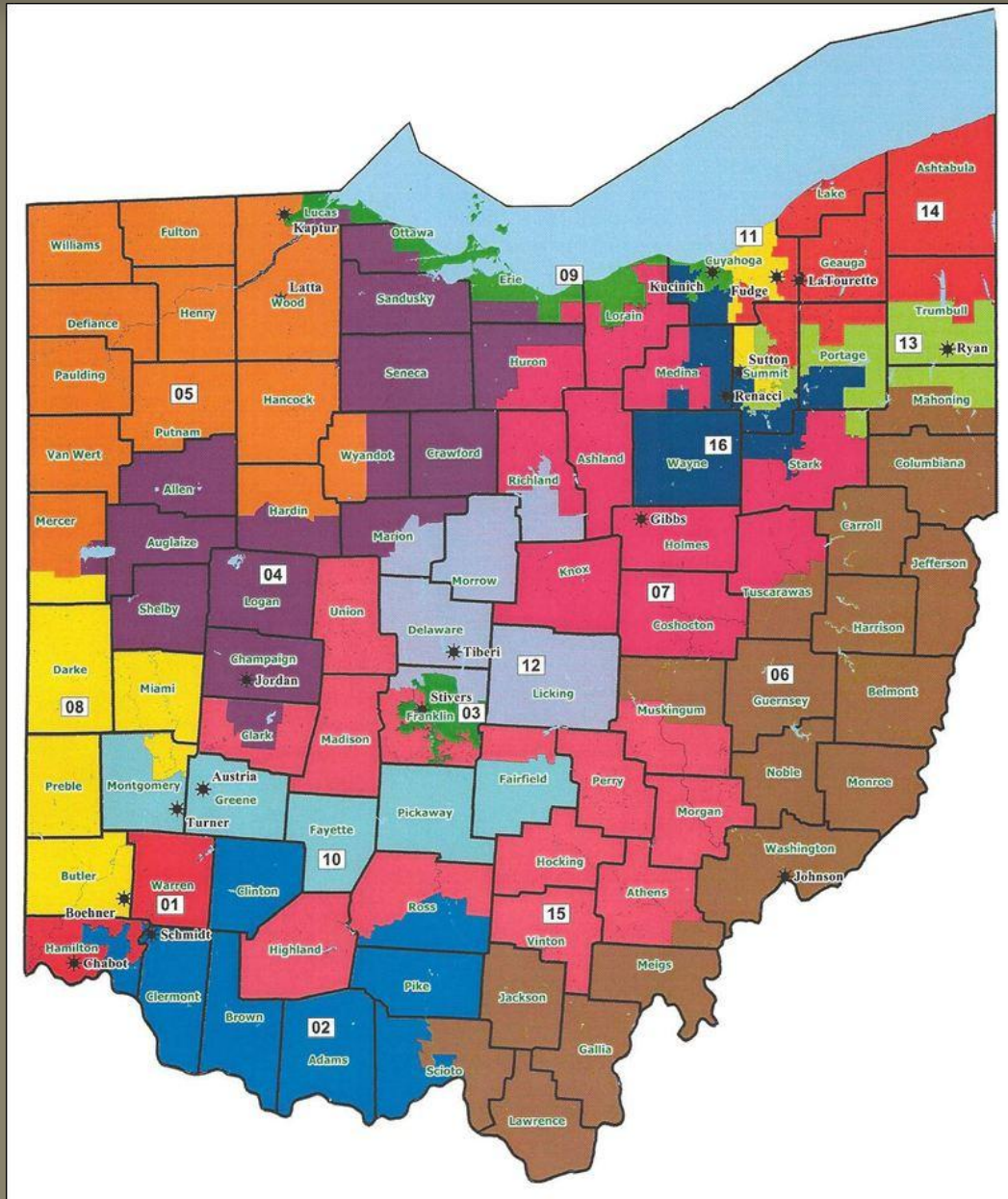
- After each state finds out it reapportioned representation, each state legislature sets up congressional districts. This is redistricting.

2002-2012 Ohio Congressional Districts



- ◆ What is your Congressional District?
- ◆ Why do you think the districts are drawn this way?

New Congressional Districts 2012-2022



◆ Some state legislatures have abused redistricting powers.

1. Congressional districts based on unequal populations

2. Gerrymandering

• There have been a series of court cases that have addressed equal reapportionment.

1. Baker v. Carr: federal courts could decide districts in dispute

2. Wesberry v. Sanders: Constitution intends that “one person, one vote” is the rule. As a result, today each congressional district contains about 600,000 people.

• The Supreme Court has ruled that congressional districts must be compact & contiguous. This *Wesberry v. Sanders* have reduced gerrymandering.

◆ House of Representatives

- ◆ Debate and political friction are unavoidable in a democratic govt.
- ◆ Rules of debate & conduct are very important in the House due to its size and partisan nature.
- ◆ House rules are based on precedent & updates that are made every 2 years. The rules of the House are geared toward moving legislation quickly once it hits the floor.
- ◆ Committee Work
 - Committees do most of the work of Congress. Committees are more important in the House than the Senate.

- ◆ Representatives tend to specialize their legislation and attempt to be on committees that reflect their background. They will also try to get on committees that are important to their constituents.

Importance of Party Affiliation

- Many procedures of Congress, & especially the House are based on party.
- Democrats sit on the right, Republicans on the left.
- Committee Chairmen are appointed by the party in the majority. The committee chairmen can control the agenda of what legislation makes the floor of the House and when it will be voted upon.

- ◆ The majority party has the ability to organize the House to meet its political & ideological goals and to write legislation & schedule when it is voted on. This is an important method of political control.

- ◆ House Leadership

- ◆ Leaders of the House serve 6 purposes:

1. Organize & unify party members
2. Schedule work of the House
3. Make sure lawmakers are present for key votes
4. Distributing & collecting information
5. Keeping the House in touch with the President
6. Influencing lawmakers to support the policies of their political party.

◆ The Speaker of the House

- ◆ Presiding officer of the House & most powerful leader.
- ◆ A caucus of the majority party selects the Speaker & is then approved by the entire House.
- ◆ As the presiding officer of the House and the majority party leader, the Speaker has great power.
 1. Presides over sessions of the House
 2. Decides which members to recognize first
 3. Appoints some committee chairs
 4. Schedules bills for action & refers bills to committees.
 5. Third in line in Presidential succession.

House Floor Leaders

Majority Leader:

1. Speaker's top assistant. Plans the majority party's legislative program.

2. Ensures chairpersons of committees are working on legislation
3. Floor leader of the majority party
 - The Majority Leader is not a House official but a party official.

Minority Leader

1. Leader of the minority party in the House & the 'heir apparent' to be the Speaker if his/her party would take control of the House.
2. Floor leader of the minority party
3. Ensures that the minority party has an opportunity to write legislation.

Whips

1. Assistant Floor leaders to the Majority and Minority Leaders.
2. Ensures that party members support legislation desired by the party leadership.

◆ Membership of the Senate

- ◆ Two Senators for each state
- ◆ Must be 30 years old, & a citizen for at least 9 years.

Terms of Office

- Elections are held on even numbered years.
- The Constitution provided for continuity in the Senate by giving senators 6 year terms & only electing one-third of the senators at a time.
- If a senator dies or resigns, the governor of the state he/she represented appoints a temporary replacement. The governor may also call for a special election.
- The Senate has a high degree of continuity because senators are most often reelected.

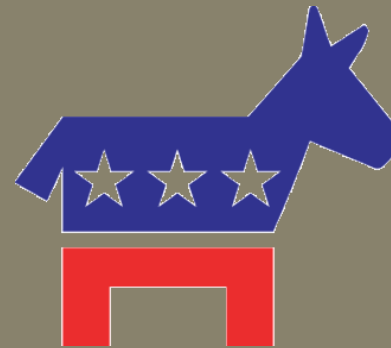
◆ Salary & Benefits

- ◆ Senate & House set their own salaries.
- ◆ 27th Amendment, first proposed by James Madison in 1789 was finally passed in 1992. This prohibits sitting Congress' from setting their own pay.
- ◆ Current salary Senators and Representatives:
\$174,000
- ◆ Congressional members also get free stationary, phone usage, medical clinic, & an allowance to pay for a large part of their staffs, and franking privilege.
- ◆ \$150,000 pension.

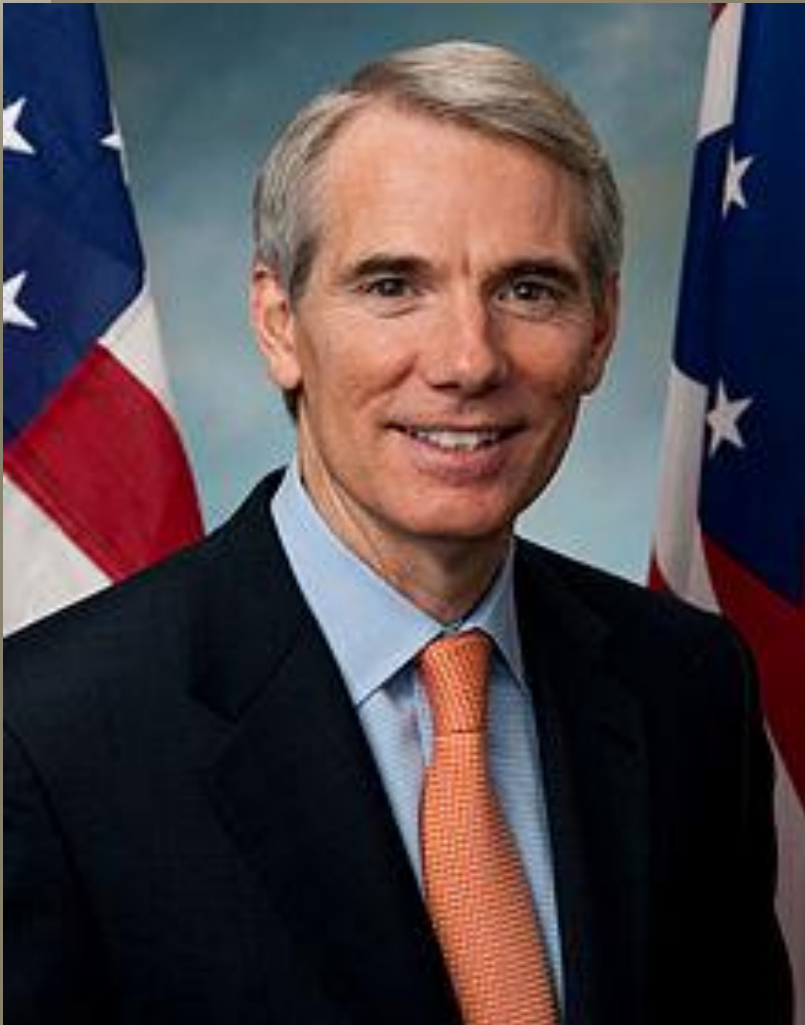
Your Members of Congress



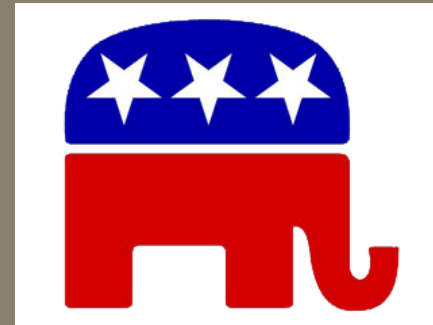
Senator Sherrod Brown
Democrat



Your Members of Congress



Senator Rob Portman
Republican



Your Members of Congress

Representative

Jim Renacci

Ohio 16th District

Republican



The 16th Congressional District

