



POLS 30005: The U.S. Congress

Dr. Rachel Porter

Why does Congress need political parties?

Why Parties in Government?

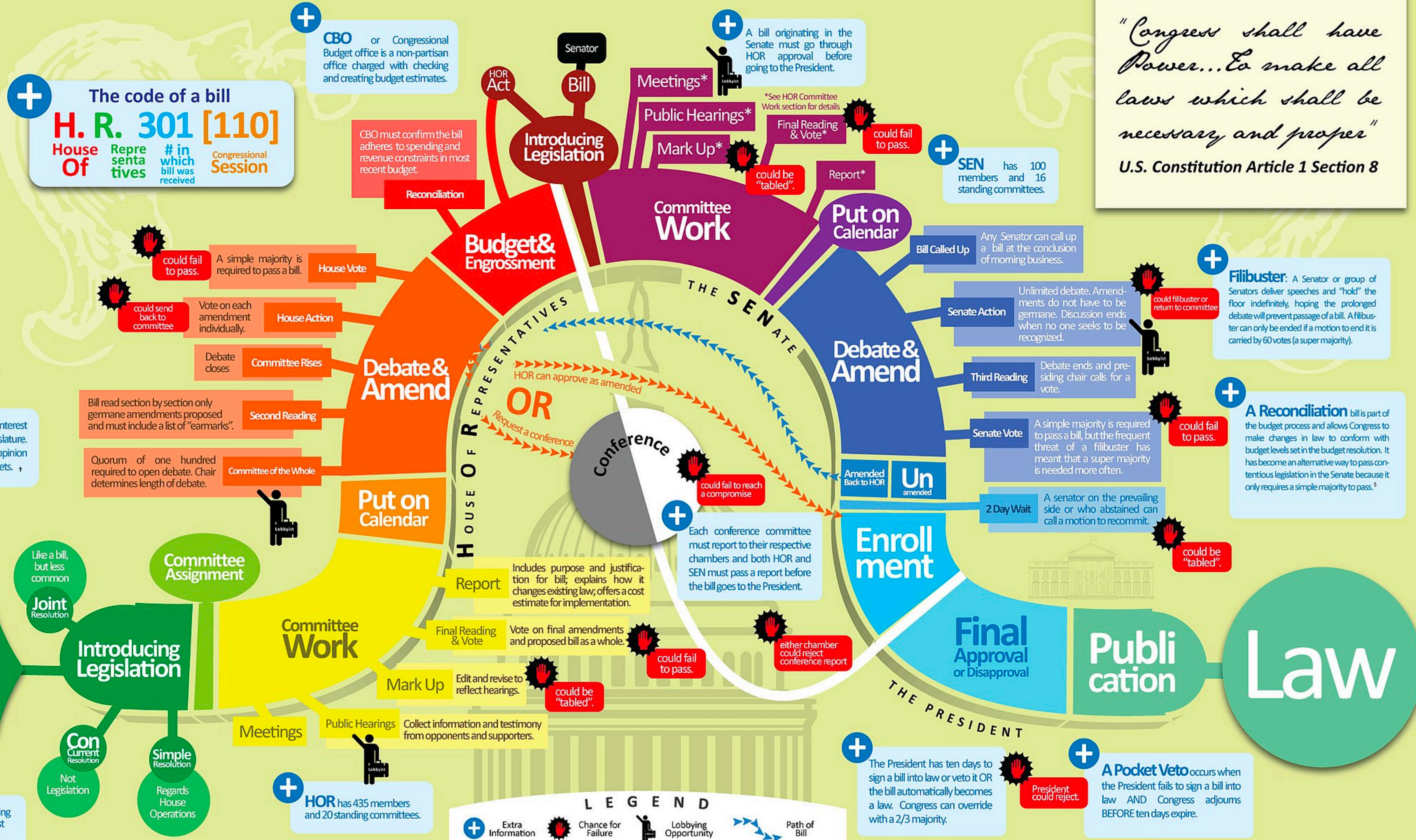
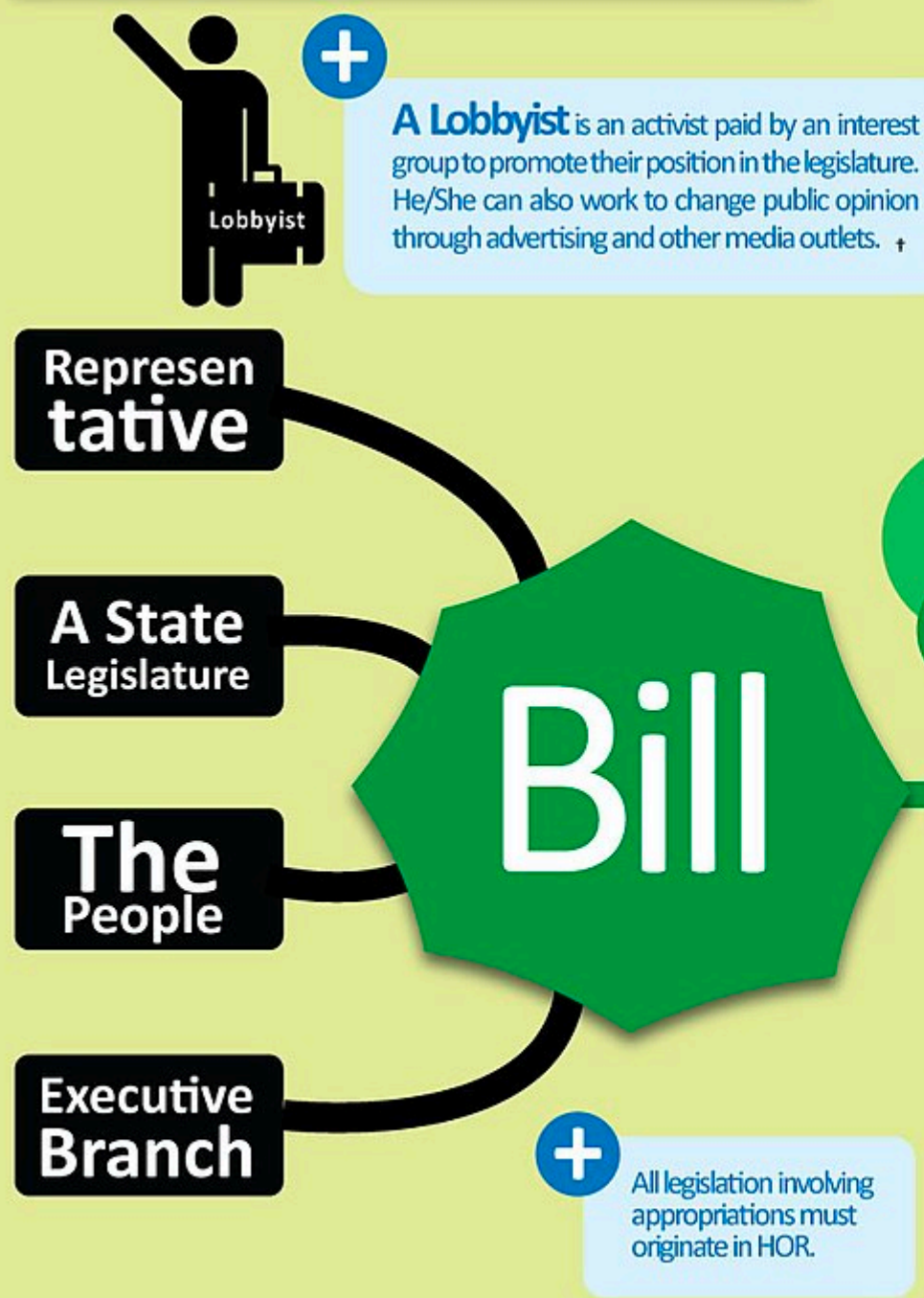
- **Parties are tools shaped by political actors (i.e. politicians)**
- **Parties help politicians accomplish their goals**
 - Gain political office, achieve policy goals, maximize power in government
- **Parties do this by aggregating interests to resolve collective action problems**
 - Conflict between individual interests & group interest; creates gridlock in government

CONGRESS		PRESIDENT	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES		SENATE	
			DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS	DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS
73rd	1933-1935	Franklin D. Roosevelt	313	117	59	36
74th	1935-1937	Franklin D. Roosevelt	322	103	69	25
75th	1937-1939	Franklin D. Roosevelt	333	89	75	17
76th	1939-1941	Franklin D. Roosevelt	262	169	69	23
77th	1941-1943	Franklin D. Roosevelt	267	162	66	28
78th	1943-1945	Franklin D. Roosevelt	222	209	57	38
79th	1945-1947	Harry Truman	243	190	57	38
80th	1947-1949	Harry Truman	188	246	45	51
81st	1949-1951	Harry Truman	263	171	54	42
82nd	1951-1953	Harry Truman	234	199	48	47
83rd	1953-1955	Dwight D. Eisenhower	213	221	46	48
84th	1955-1957	Dwight D. Eisenhower	232	203	48	47
85th	1957-1959	Dwight D. Eisenhower	234	201	49	47
86th	1959-1961	Dwight D. Eisenhower	283	153	64	34
87th	1961-1963	John F. Kennedy	262	175	64	36
88th	1963-1965	Kennedy/Johnson	258	176	67	33
89th	1965-1967	Lyndon B. Johnson	295	140	68	32
90th	1967-1969	Lyndon B. Johnson	247	187	64	36
91st	1969-1971	Richard Nixon	243	192	58	42
92nd	1971-1973	Richard Nixon	255	180	54	44
93rd	1973-1975	Nixon/Ford	242	192	56	42
94th	1975-1977	Gerald R. Ford	291	144	61	37
95th	1977-1979	Jimmy Carter	292	143	61	38
96th	1979-1981	Jimmy Carter	277	158	58	41
97th	1981-1983	Ronald Reagan	242	192	46	53
98th	1983-1985	Ronald Reagan	269	166	46	54
99th	1985-1987	Ronald Reagan	253	182	47	53
100th	1987-1989	Ronald Reagan	258	177	55	45
101st	1989-1991	George H.W. Bush	260	175	55	45
102nd	1991-1993	George H.W. Bush	267	167	56	44
103rd	1993-1995	Bill Clinton	258	176	57	43

Recall...

- **Mid 20th Century**
 - New Deal Coalition of Democrats from North and South
 - Overwhelming Democratic majorities in Congress
- **Late 20th Century**
 - Northern & Southern Democrats begin to clash — particularly over the passage of civil rights legislation
 - Southern Democrats serve as the **chairs** on many pivotal **committees** and hold up the consideration process
 - This is why conservative Southern Dems. stayed with the party so long!

HOW LAWS ARE MADE



"Congress shall have Power...To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper"

U.S. Constitution Article 1 Section 8

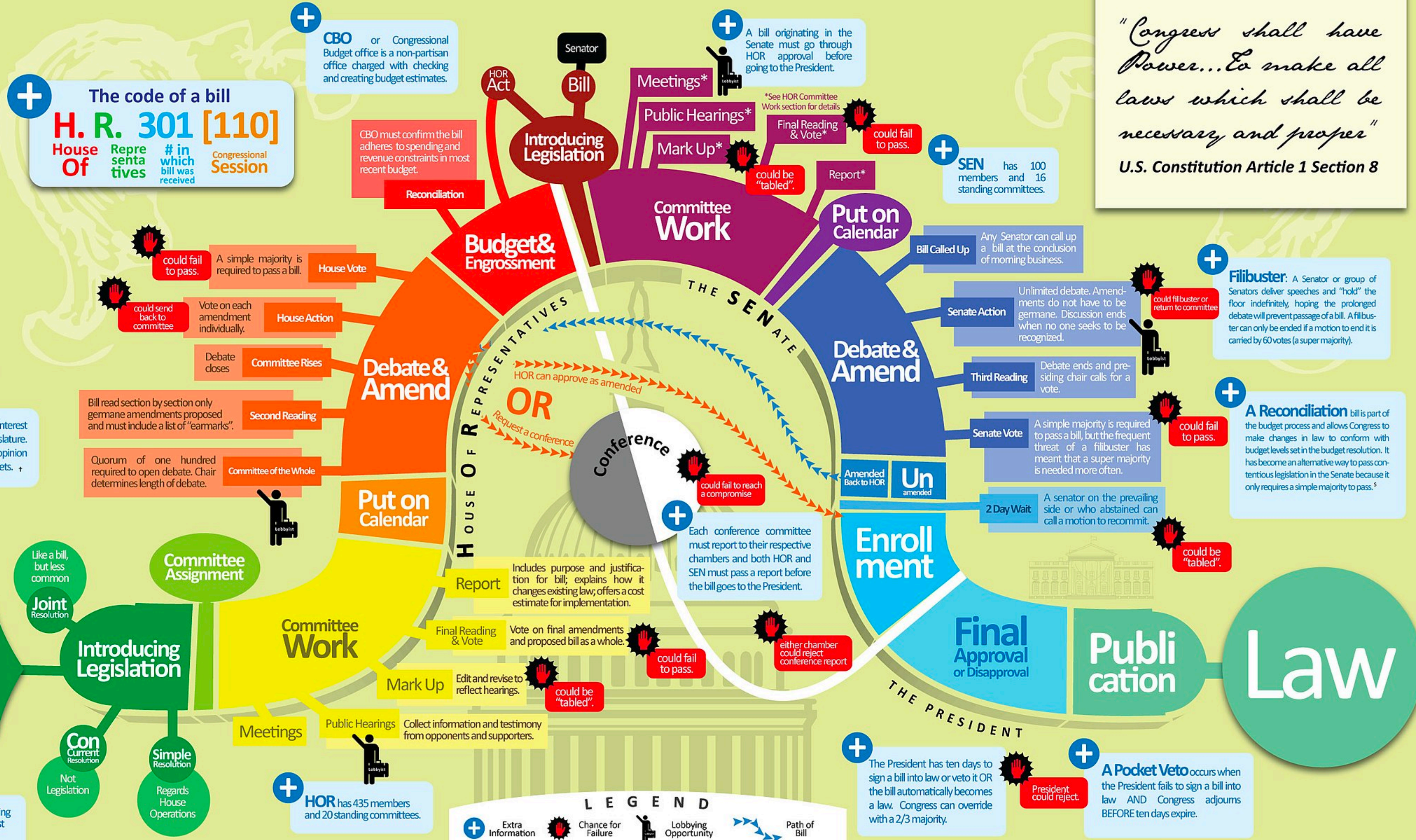
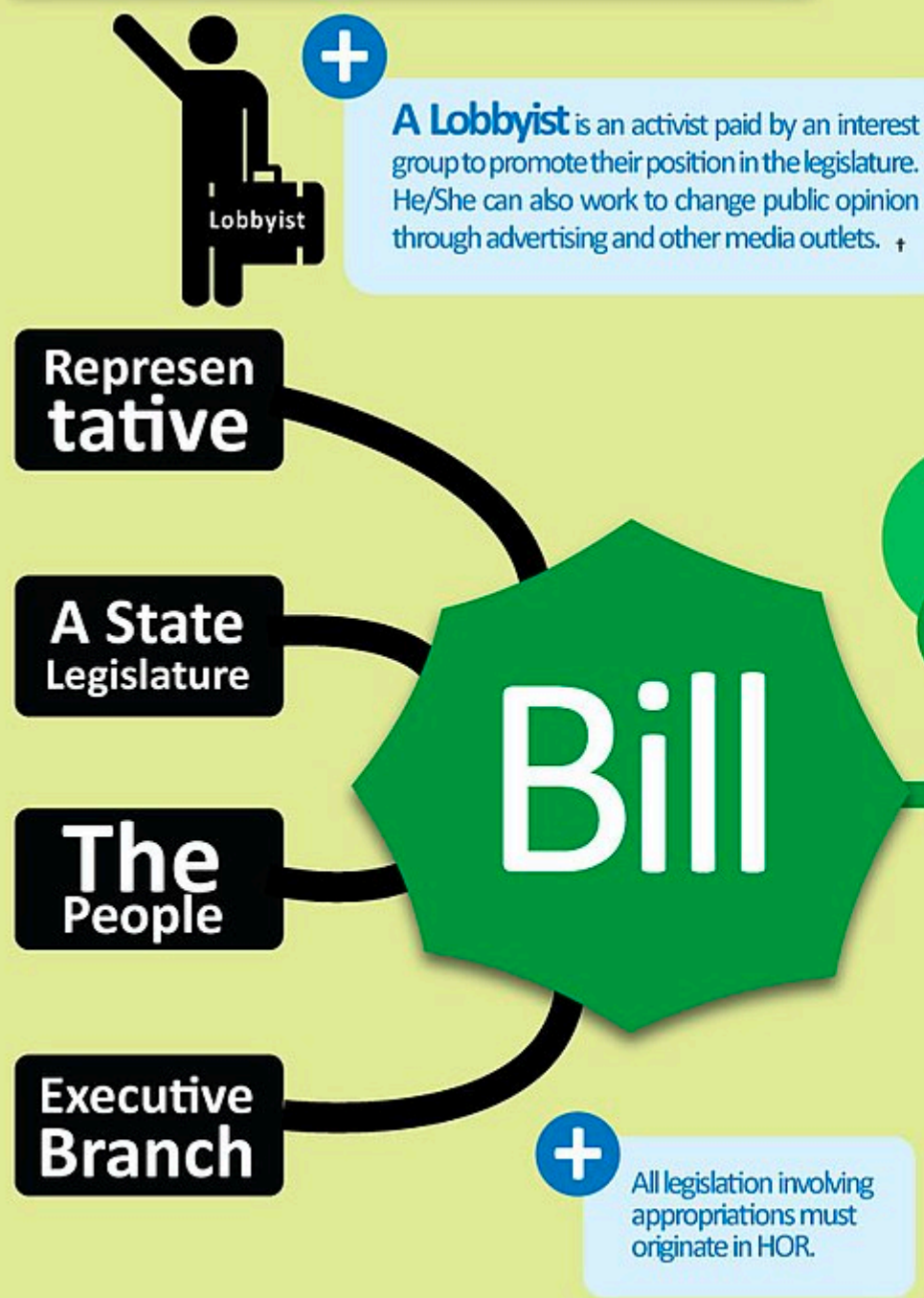
Remaking the Rules in Congress

- **Committee Chairs**
 - Rulers of their committee's fiefdom: determine agenda, call hearings, lead markups, determine staff, complete control over committee schedule
- **The Seniority System**
 - System under which members were guaranteed chairmanship of a committee if they were the **most senior member** in the **majority party**
 - This means that long-serving southern Democrats held the chairs for many pivotal committees...and they were set on blocking civil rights legislation

Remaking the Rules in Congress

- **In the 1970's the seniority system is abolished**
 - Speaker of the House chooses the chairman of the Rules Committee
 - Committee assignments now made through “Steering and Policy” committee — which is stacked with leadership picks
- **Power beginning to centralize with majority party leadership**
 - Once it was the case the majority leadership simply kept the trains running...
 - *...now* majority leadership possess all-encompassing power
 - Q: Why would committee chairs matter so much to leadership power?

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- Q: Why would rank-and-file members cede power to leadership?

A Theory of Conditional Party Government (CPG)

- **Multiple goals: reelection, policy goals, power**
 - How much emphasis is placed on each depends on the member
- As a consequence, **CPG** predicts that a party's strength within the legislature will be determined by the homogeneity of preferences within each party
 - If parties are heterogeneous, members *will not* delegate power
 - If parties are homogeneous, members *will* delegate power
- Q: Why would diversity in party preferences impact members' willingness to cede power to leadership?

A Theory of Conditional Party Government (CPG)

- **Under heterogeneous parties...**
 - Members fear giving away power, policy outcomes may not align with their prefs.
 - Members may *prefer* policy outcomes that align with the other party
 - Will not cede power; weaker party power
- **Under homogeneous parties...**
 - Policy outcomes that favor the other party will likely be less desirable
 - Members have an incentive to try to resolve collective action problems to pass policy
 - Will cede power; stronger party power
- Party power is government is, therefore, **conditional**
 - **Parties are strong or weak conditional on their usefulness to politicians**

What is party power?

Majority Party Leadership Power — Cartel Theory

- **Parties as cartels (not drug cartel, think law or accounting firm)**
 - Senior partners; junior partners
 - Each member has equal voting power; but *agenda setting power is unequal*
- **Party Power = Agenda Power**
 - Agenda power: ability to choose what does (and doesn't) come up for consideration
- **Agenda power is concentrated in majority party *senior partners***
 - Senior partners: Speaker of the House; other majority party leaders (whips, majority leader, important committee chairs...)

Majority Party Leadership Power — Cartel Theory

- **Leadership exercises positive agenda control**
 - Advancing bills that are highly favored by the party
- **Leadership exercises negative agenda control**
 - Avoiding legislation that will split the party, that is favored by the minority party
- **Leadership possesses carrots and sticks**
 - Carrot: benefits for district, pet project advancement
 - Stick: removal from committee, skipped for promotion
- **The more powerful majority party leadership is, the better of a record they can build of legislative accomplishments**

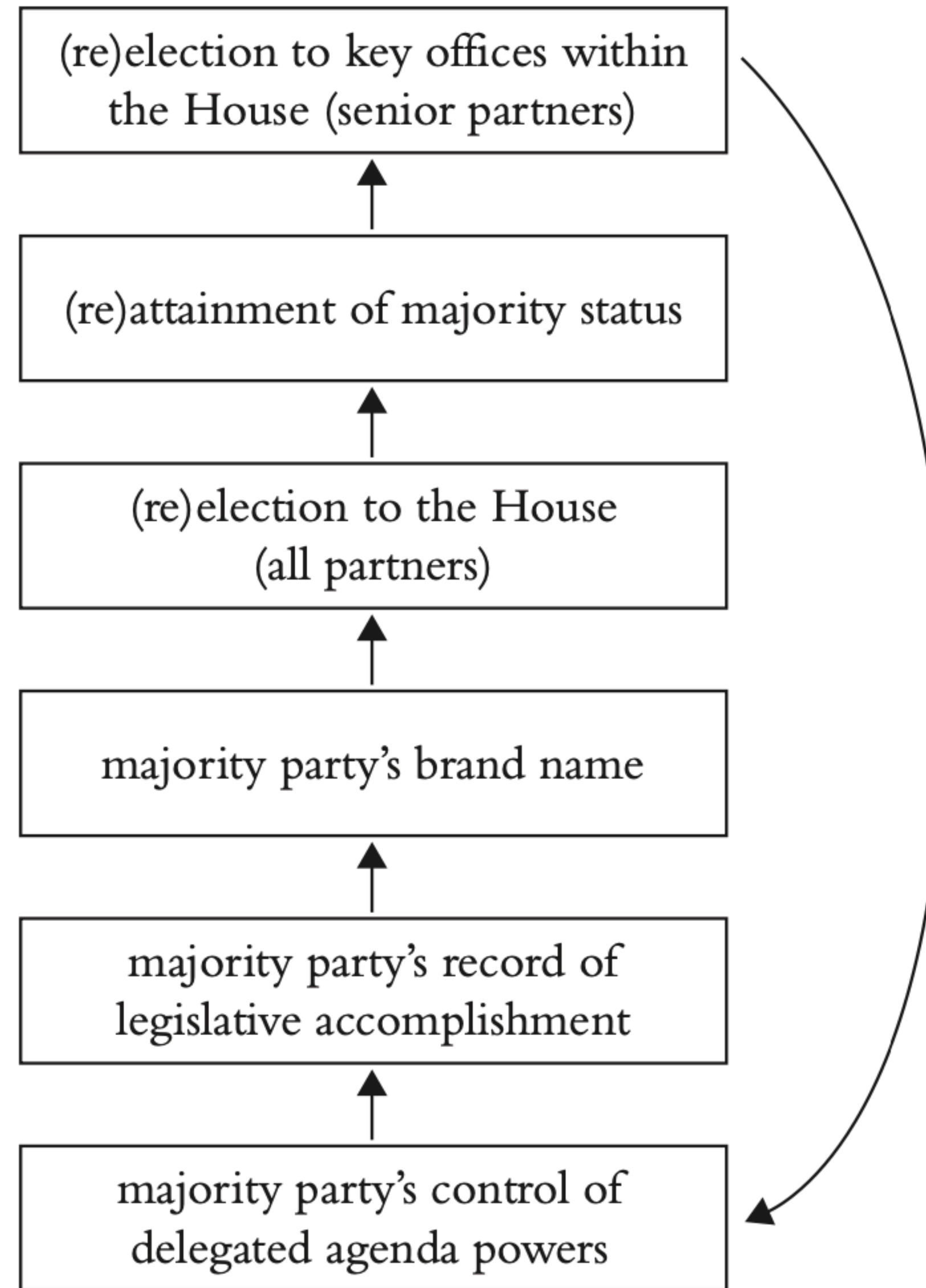


Figure 15.2. Majority-party agenda control and legislative success.

What happens when...

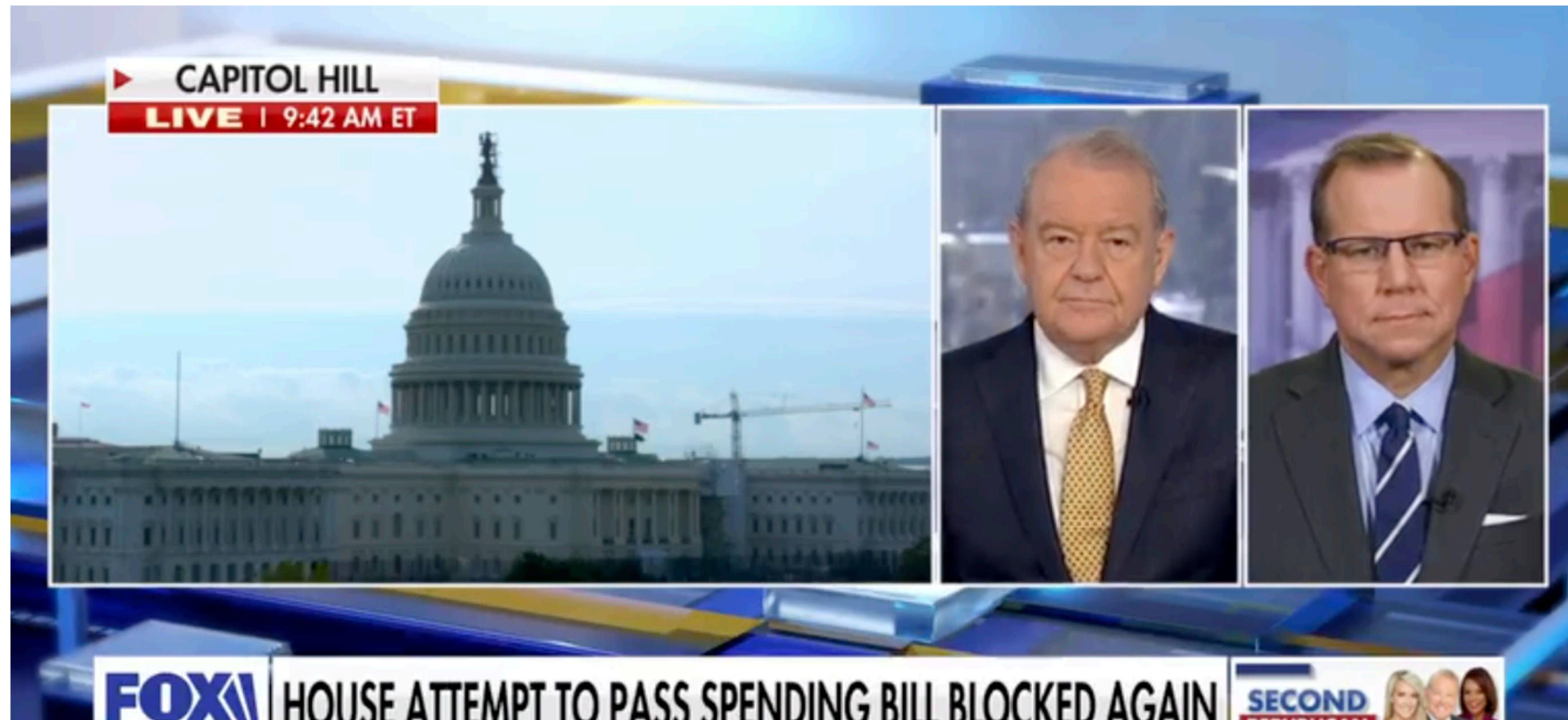
- **Heterogeneity comes from disagreement within a central ideology (CPG)**
 - If “activist” primary voters are more ideologically-extreme, they will pull their representatives to the extremes as well
 - If primary voters are *not* systematically extreme, this will create preference diversity within the parties
- **Leadership are not able to satisfy party members (Cartel Theory)**
 - Cartel sticking together is built on (1) fear of punishment, (2) members need for party brand name to remain untarnished, and (3) the fact that nearly all divisive legislation can be blocked
- **Consequences...?**

CONGRESS · Updated on September 30, 2023 8:51am EDT

Government shutdown looms if Congress doesn't act: What to know

If government shutdown occurs, federal workers may go without pay, national parks to close

By [Eric Revell](#) , [Chris Pandolfo](#) | [FOXBusiness](#) |



U.S. Stock Market Quotes

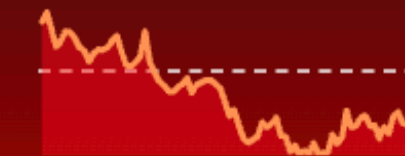
Quotes displayed in real-time



DOW JONES AVERAGES (I:DJI)

33,507.50

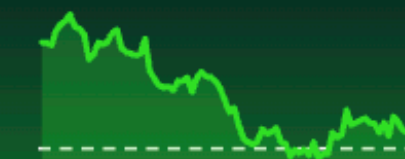
▼ -158.84 (-0.47%)



NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX (I:COMP)

13,219.32

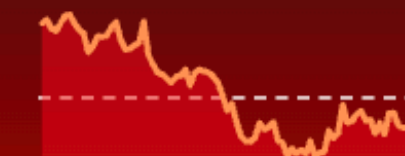
▲ 18.05 (+0.14%)



S&P 500 (SP500)

4,288.05

▼ -11.65 (-0.27%)



The ~~2023~~ 2024 Government Shutdown

- **What is a government shutdown?**
 - Under the Antideficiency Act of 1884, no spending without approval
 - When Congress fails to enact 12 annual appropriations bills that fund the government before the start of the fiscal new year, the government “shuts down”
 - Fiscal appropriations must be enacted by *SEPTEMBER 30TH*
- **What does a shutdown entail?**
 - Non-essential federal employees are told not to report to work
 - Essential employees work without pay
 - National parks close down, passport processing stops, food safety inspections cease, small business loans halted...

The ~~2023~~ 2024 Government Shutdown

- **Why is there a threat of a government shutdown now?**
 - Since last fall, there have been a string of **continuing resolutions** — temporary spending bill that funds government operations until a specified date (in this case, ~~November 17th, January 19th, March 1st!~~)
- In September 2023, a far-right faction of the Republican Party wanted to cut spending; refuse to vote for Senate resolution
 - Q: Why doesn't far-right faction want to sign on to the continuing resolution?
 - Q: What options did Speaker McCarthy have?
 - **Q: Why did McCarthy have to try to appease far-right faction?**

Right Wing Tanks Stopgap Bill in House, Pushing Government Toward a Shutdown

More than 20 hard-right Republicans defied Speaker Kevin McCarthy and defeated their own party's bill, making a lapse in funding at midnight on Saturday all but certain.



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“Every time we vote for a continuing resolution, we make no changes in policy or spending,” said Representative Matt Gaetz, Republican of Florida, who led the charge against Mr. McCarthy’s funding plan. Haiyun Jiang for The New York Times



By Catie Edmondson, Kayla Guo and Carl Hulse

Reporting from Capitol Hill

Published Sept. 29, 2023 Updated Sept. 30, 2023

Congress averts shutdown and McCarthy faces speakership fight

By Maureen Chowdhury and Matt Meyer, CNN

Updated 6:01 PM ET, Sun October 1, 2023



Schumer calls out McCarthy during remarks about passing spending bill 01:43

What we covered here

- Congress passed a stopgap funding bill Saturday to [avert a government shutdown](#) ahead of a midnight deadline. President Joe Biden signed it late Saturday night, keeping the government open through November 17.

All | Catch Up | McCarthy | Ukraine Aid

22 Posts

SORT BY Latest ▼

3 hr 32 min ago

We've wrapped up our live coverage for the day. You can read more about [the spending bill](#) and [Kevin McCarthy's brewing speakership fight](#), or scroll through the posts below for today's developments.

So why isn't the government shutdown?

The ~~2023~~ 2024 Government Shutdown

- **McCarthy joins with House Democrats to pass bill (335-91)**
 - Senate passes 88-9, Biden signs before midnight to avoid shutdown
- Q: Why did McCarthy end up working with the Democrats?
- Q: What does this tell us about preference cohesion in the Rep. Party?
- Q: Per CPG, do you think Republican Party is strong?
- Q: Per Cartel Theory, do you think Republican Party leadership is strong?

Inside McCarthy's Shutdown Turnabout That Left His Speakership at Risk

The Republican speaker opted to keep the government open the only way he could — by partnering with Democrats — in a surprise reversal that left him as politically vulnerable as ever.

Matt Gaetz says he will attempt to oust Kevin McCarthy from the speakership this week



By [Aileen Graef](#), CNN

Updated 11:52 AM EDT, Sun October 1, 2023

POLITICS

How the far right could remove McCarthy and why his fate could be in Democrats' hands

Updated October 1, 2023 · 9:28 AM ET ⓘ



[Susan Davis](#)




By –
**Lisa
Mascaro,**
Associated
Press

By –
**Farnoush
Amiri,**
Associated
Press

Kevin McCarthy ousted as House speaker in dramatic vote

Leave your

House speaker forced to choose whether to save the government or himself

by  Joan McCarter for Daily Kos
Daily Kos Staff

🕒 Friday, February 16, 2024 at 1:15:12p EST


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You bring the antenna and we bring the cable channels. Live sports, news & more for less.

AD Sling TV

CONGRESS

The government funding fight is about to flare again

Top lawmakers have less than three weeks to finish the first half of a federal spending agreement that’s expected to top \$1.7 trillion, with the first of two deadlines hitting on March 1.

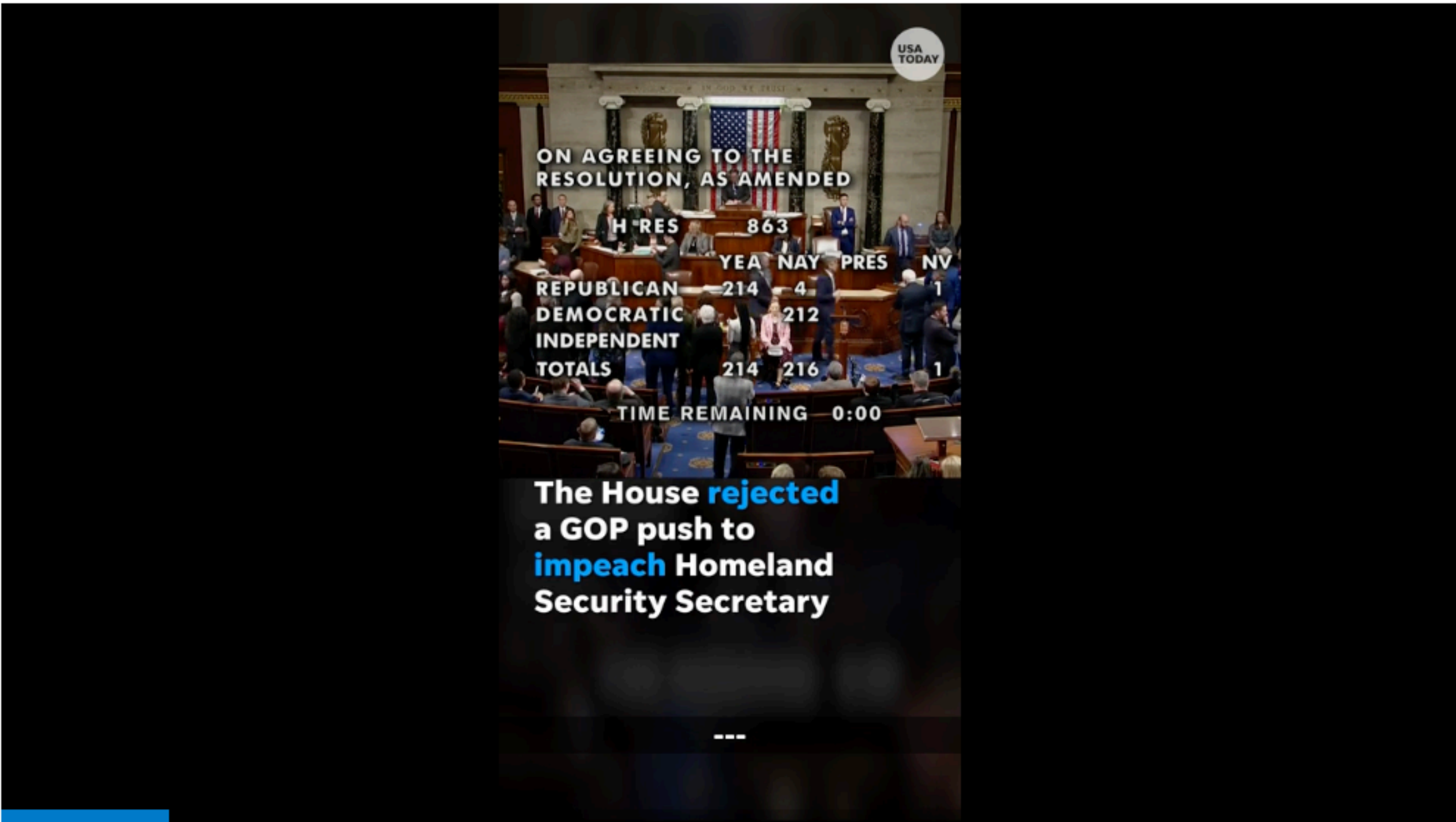


Mike Johnson and House Republicans suffered back-to-back, embarrassing defeats. What comes next?



Ken Tran
USA TODAY

Published 2:37 p.m. ET Feb. 7, 2024 | Updated 3:44 p.m. ET Feb. 7, 2024



House fails in vote to impeach Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas over border crisis

The House vote to impeach Homeland Security Sec. Alejandro Mayorkas failed by a count of 214-216, with a handful of Republicans joining Democrats.

WASHINGTON – Republicans in the House had perhaps one of their most embarrassing and confusing days in recent memory on Tuesday.

GOP leaders called votes on two key legislative priorities for Republicans: [impeaching Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas](#) and [funding U.S. aid to Israel](#). Both of those votes failed in back-to-back, stunning losses on the House floor, and Republicans suffered what they described as disappointing and demoralizing defeats.

- “Not good,” Rep. Ralph Norman, R-S.C., said.
- “Very frustrating,” Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Mont., reflected.
- “Shameful. Embarrassing,” remarked Rep. Troy Nehls, R-Texas.