

Chapter 5:
Congress: The Legislative Branch
Section 4:
The Senate
(pg.143-147)

Senate:

Terms, Salary, Benefits & Privileges

- Term: 6 years
- Salary: Senators-\$174,000
- President Pro Tempore- \$188,100
- Majority & Minority Leaders \$193,400
- Tax deduction for two residences
- Travel allowances
- Staff
- Health and retirement
- Franking privileges -the ability to send mail by one's signature rather than by postage
- Free printing
- Use of gym, restaurants, and other amenities in the Capital
- Legal immunity for statement made while Congress is in session



Patty Murray

The Senate and Its Membership

- It is often called the upper house
- Senators tend to be better known
- They have to win statewide election
- Many House members try to “move up” to the Senate
- And many Senators try to become President, although only a few have succeeded.



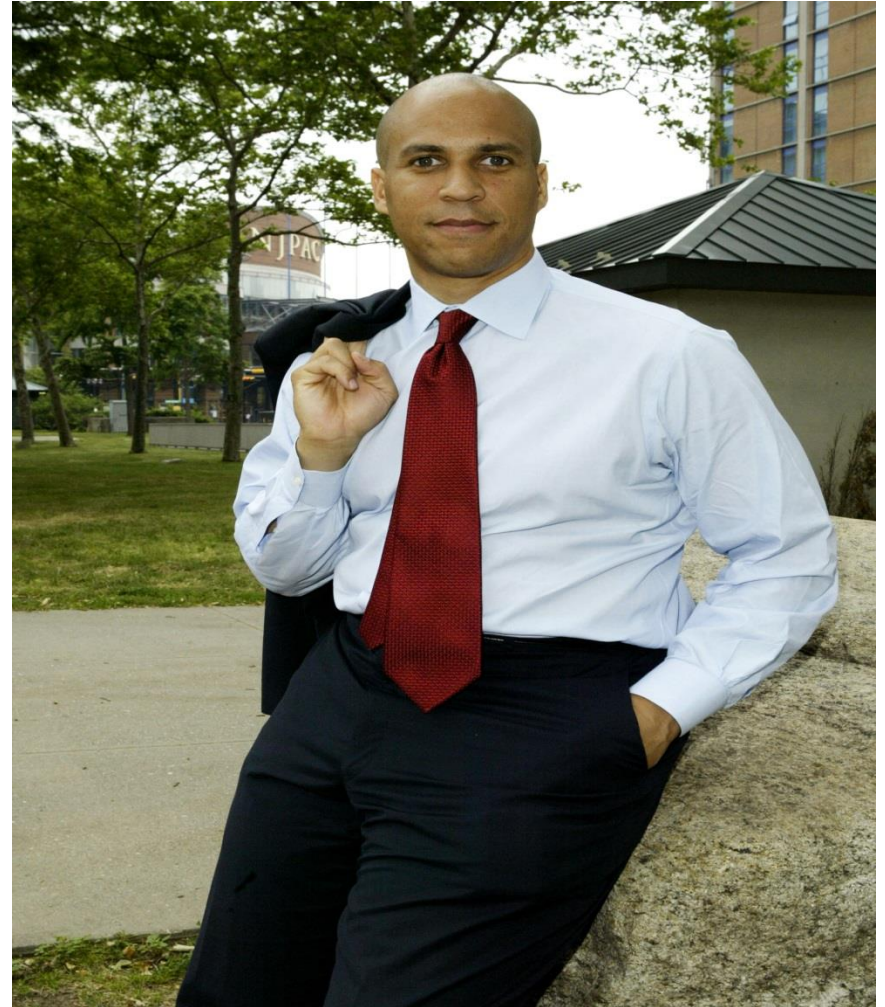
Formal Qualifications

- At least 30 years old-5 years older than House members
- A citizen for 9 years-2 years longer than House Members
- A resident of the state they represent
- In 1913, Senators started to be elected.
- Only a third are up for election every 2 years, to stop rapid shifts and pose of experienced leaders.



Informal Qualifications

- Senators are usually older than members of the House
- Senators are usually wealthier (sometimes called the millionaires club)
- In 2010, Senate candidates spent over \$400 million in 33 races (that's over 12 million each)
- Congress overall has become more diverse but the Senate has lagged behind, with only 16 women, 1 A/A, 2 Asians, & 2 Hispanic Americans in the Senate. This is not an accurate reflection of U.S. population.
- There has only been 9 A/A in the Senate.



Cory Booker from NJ the only A/A in the Senate

Senate Leadership

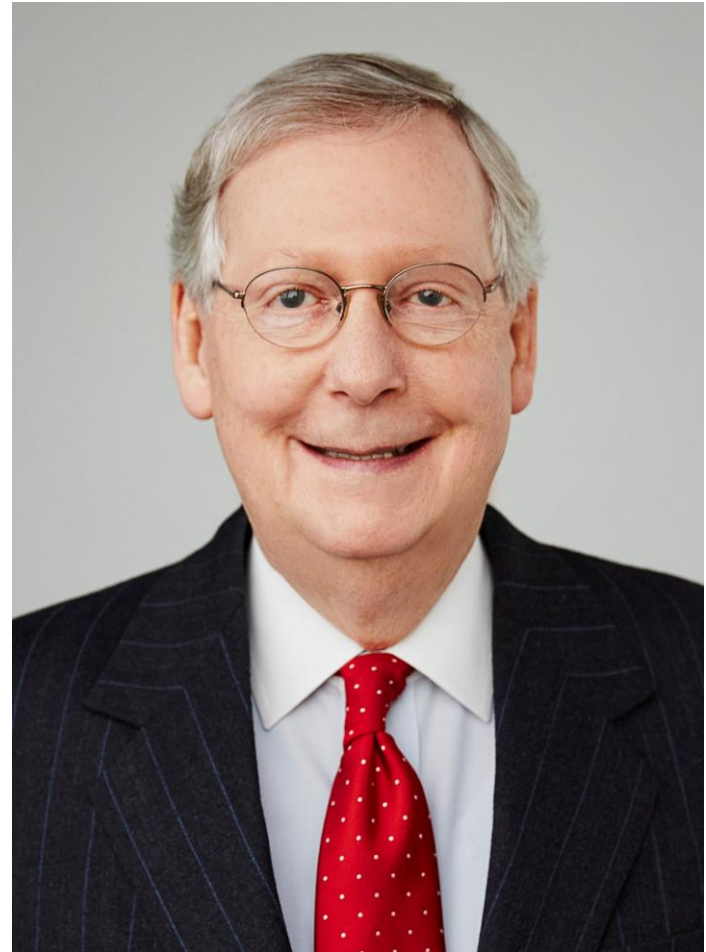
- The Senate leadership is generally less powerful than the House
- The official president of the Senate is the VP, but today he doesn't appear unless to break a tie vote
- **President pro tempore** is the person who presides in the absence of the VP. It is the senior most Senator from the majority party and is 3rd in line to succeed the president
- The Senate **Majority Leader** is the most powerful member and he works to carry out his party's agenda
- The Senate also has a **Minority leader**
- Both leaders have **whips**



Majority Leader Chuck Schumer

Committees in the Senate

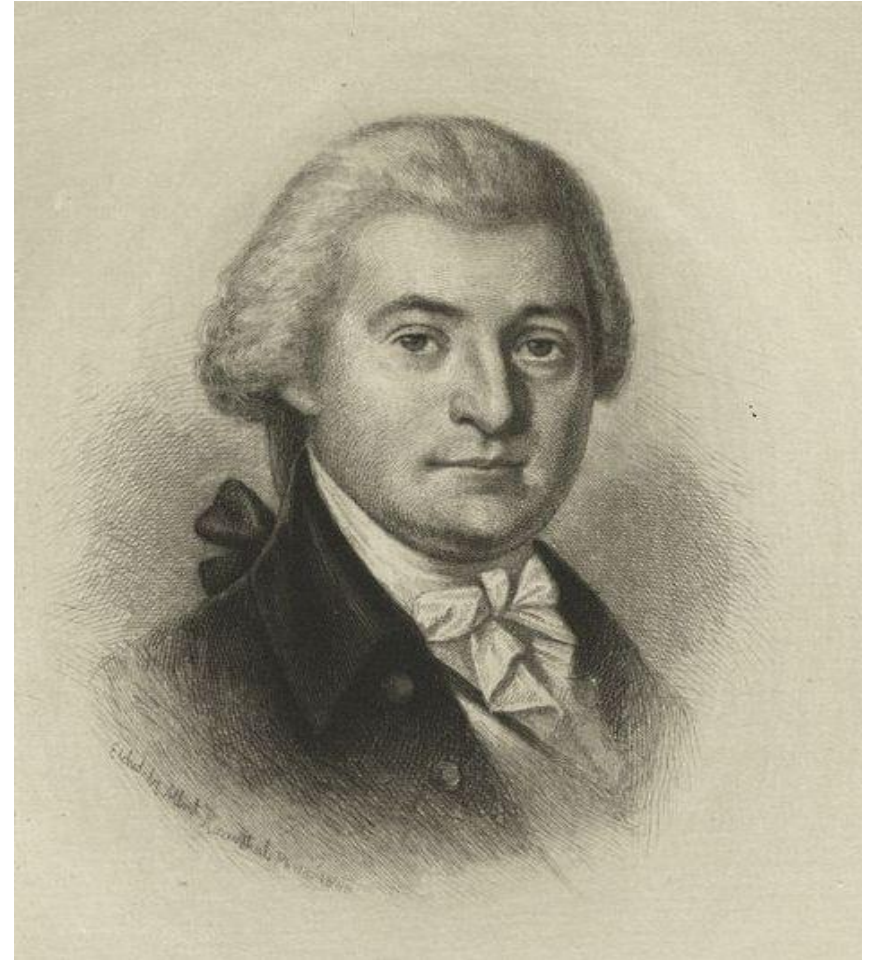
- As in the House the Senate performs much of its work in committees
- The Senate has 16 standing committees (see list on pg. 146)
- In general, senators serve on no more than 3 committees and 5 subcommittees.
- Senators seek assignments that align w/ their interests and needs of their state.
- The proportion of seats each party receives on a committee reflects numbers in the overall Senate.
- Committee Chairs hold great power and is based on the seniority rule but starting in 1995 chair could only be in power 6 years.
- Presidential nominees are usually 1st examined by the relevant Senate committee
- The Senate also debates and votes on any treaties the government negotiates.



Minority Leader Mitch McConnell

Rules and Traditions

- Unlike the House the Senate places few limits on debate.
- A **filibuster** occurs when opponents of a measure take the floor of the Senate and refuse to stop talking in an effort to prevent the measure coming up for a vote. The minority uses this when they know that the measure is likely to pass if it comes to a vote.
- In 1917 the Senate trying to limit filibuster, it adopted a rule by which two-thirds vote would impose **cloture**-an end to debate. In 1975 cloture was lowered to 60 votes.
- Like the House the Senate can censure (9 times) and expel (15 times)
- If there is a vacancy usually the governor of that state gets to fill the position until a special election can be held.



Expelled Senator William Blount