Student’s Name

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Date

Political Science

**Introductio**n

This paper offers the answers to the given set of questions and provides the definition of various terms in Political Science.

**Differences between the House and the Senate**

The Senate has 100 members while the House has 435 members. The House is, therefore a democratic representation of the States, while the Senate is an aristocratic representation of the states. There are only two Senators per state, but a state can have a different number of Representatives according to the number of people who live in that state. Due to the high number of Representatives in the House as compared to the Senate, there are debate limitations in the House. The Senate, however, has no limitation in the amount of time that a Senator can take on the floor. The debate time is therefore unlimited.

**Functions of the Congress**

The Congress makes laws. The Congress deals with a plethora of matters that govern business activities of the citizens, regulation of communications and matters encompassing the security of citizens. The Congress also represents the citizens. The members of the House serve their constituents, the people residing in the district from which they are elected. The Representatives must, therefore, ensure that the interests of their respective constituents are presented to the house distinctly. The Congress also does service to the constituents. The representative plays the role of the ombudsperson to affected citizens. This task entails the investigation of complaints against government parastatals or government staff. The Representative, therefore must spend as much time in the district interacting with the citizens on the ground and getting to know what is ailing them socially.

The Congress also does public education by keeping the constituents engaged on what issues are prevailing at a given time so that the public are posted. The Congress holds public hearings and takes part in floor debates on various issues such as drugs and substance abuse, possession of firearms, climate change, environmental conservation and incorporation of small and medium enterprises into the larger federal economy. The issues that will come up are settled on through the process of agenda setting.

**Components of Responsiveness:**

Policy responsiveness: Great public issues is the target which agitates the political process. Service responsiveness involves the efforts of the representative to secure particularized benefits for individuals or groups within the constituency. Allocation responsiveness refers to the Representative’s efforts to obtain benefits for his constituency through pork-barrel exchanges in the appropriations process or through administrative interventions. Symbolic responsiveness involves public gestures of a sort that create a sense of trust and support in the relationship between the representative and the represented.

**The Congress as defined by the Constitution:**

The Congress is defined as a legislative body consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The House of Representatives shall include members who have attained the age of twenty-five years of age and must have lived in the U.S for at least seven years. The Senate consists of two Senators from each state, and any Senator must have attained the age of 30 years and must have stayed in the U.S for at least nine years. The responsibilities of the Congress include Laying, collecting taxes, regulation of commerce with foreign nations, the establishment of Post offices and post Roads, promoting the Progress of Science and useful Arts, raise and support Armies, to provide and maintain armies, exercising exclusive Legislation in all cases, among other responsibilities. The Congress has the powers including revenue bills must originate in the House of Representatives, impeachment power against the President and civil officers is given to the house. Further, major presidential appointments must be confirmed by the Senate, Treaties with other nations entered into by the President must be approved by a two-thirds vote by the Senate and impeachment trials occur in the Senate. A two-thirds majority can convict an individual and remove him or her from office. The Congress is not permitted to pass Ex Post Facto Laws, which outlaw acts that have already been committed. The Congress is unable to pass Bills of Attainder, which punish severely individuals outside of the structures of the court system. The Congress can’t discontinue the Writ Of Habeas Corpus, a court order that requires the federal government to charge individuals arrested for crimes. The Congress is permitted to suspend the writ of Habeas Corpus during times of national emergency.

**How the legislative reforms of the 1970s changed the Congress:**

The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 overhauled congressional internal procedures and administration for the very first time within a good number of years. The final bill was passed by the house on October 8, 1970. The changes made the House and Senate process more transparent by making all committee hearings public, except the national security meetings and appropriations. The reforms further permitted televised broadcasts of quite a good number of these committee hearings. Electronic voting to the House Chamber was introduced in the House of Representatives. The system which cost several million dollars went into operation on January 23, 1973. This improved greatly on the time taken for the roll call as compared to the prior method of voting. The new electronic system could last for 15 minutes, while the old method of voting took an average of 30 to 45 minutes. The electronic system, therefore, brought about a lot of saving in time.

**Standing Committees and the importance of committees:**

Standing Committees are a type of congressional committee which is permanent and they consider bills and issues and recommend measures for consideration by their respective chambers. They also monitor agencies, programs, and activities within their jurisdictions. They exist even after the adjournment of each two-year meeting of the Congress. Standing committees also conduct investigations. The standing committee system has been in place since 1816. During the second session of the Fourteenth Congress meeting in December 1816, the Senate agreed to create 11 permanent outstanding committees. On top of the legislative duties, the committees provided a platform for assignment of long-term studies and investigations to particular panels. Committees are relevant and important now as they were even in the past. Bills begin and end their lives in committees, whether they are passed as law or not. Committees help to organize the ultimate duty of the Congress – considering, shaping and passing laws to govern the nation.

**Senate Malapportionment:**

Malapportionment is a situation in which a political unit is structured in a manner that prevents large sections of a population from having equitable representation in a legislative body. The Senate is malapportioned since the number of Senators is limited to only two, which is fair to lowly populated states. This is, however, unfair to the States that have a large population. The small states are therefore under-represented while the large states are over-represented. This is totally against the principle of democracy, as the voices of huge populations in the under-represented states are not heard appropriately due to the inadequate representation.

**Definition of terms:**

**Filibuster:**

The filibuster is an aristocratic feature of the Senate, which states whoever gets the floor can keep it for as long as they want, and they can talk about whatever they want, even if it is not of importance to the subject being discussed. This kind of freedom always leads to surprising events in the Senate, and it is a technique that can allure members to split the difference among themselves. Due to this, the minority can at times have the lead in the Senate.

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**Rules Committee:**

A standing committee, also known as ‘The Speaker’s Committee’ because it is the mechanism that the Speaker uses to maintain control of the House floor. It has two categories of jurisdiction: special orders for consideration of legislation and original jurisdiction matters.

**Trustee:**

It is a means of citizen representation in which a representative elected by the people, whose judgment and experience they trust, gives their preferred opinion as an opinion for all the constituents. The representative votes for what he or she terms as being sound and right, disregarding the opinion of the constituents. The constituents are okay with whatever choice the representative makes.

**Reeds Rules:** They state that every member present in the house must vote unless financially interested in a measure, that members present and not voting to be counted for a quorum, and that no dilatory motions be entertained by the chair.

**Redistricting:** It is the way in which districts that determine the representatives are adjusted.

**Ticket Splitting:** It is the tendency of voters in the U.S. to cast votes simultaneously for the candidates based upon their appeal to the voter, regardless of the party affiliation.

**Germaneness rule:** It states that no motion or proposition on a subject different from that under consideration shall be admitted under color of amendment.

**Conservative coalition:** It was a coalition in the U.S. Congress that brought together the majority of the Northern Republicans and a conservative, the mostly Southern minority of the Democrats. It largely controlled Congress from 1937 to 1963. It continued as a potent force until the 1990s when most of the conservative southern Democrats were replaced by Southern Republicans.

**Conditional Party Government:** This is a theory which stipulates that political parties will be strong when they are polarized and homogeneous. The homogeneity comes from the homogeneity of constituent coalitions.

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