

Institutions of Government

Congress

- **Constituents** = the group of people being represented by a Congressperson
- Office Requirements
 - House of Reps
 - * At least 25 years old
 - * Citizen for at least 7 years
 - Senate
 - * At least 30 years old
 - * Citizen for at least 9 years
- Election cycles
 - House of Reps
 - * Popularly elected every two years
 - Senate
 - * Initially, elected by state legislatures every 6 years
 - Due to 17th Amendment, senators are now popularly elected

Districts

- For the assignment of representatives, **districts** are drawn
 - **District** = a section of the state in question
 - The candidate with the plurality in that district wins the seat
 - If a state has x representatives, they draw x districts
- **Redistricting** = the process of state legislatures re-drawing district boundaries
 - Meant to be a mechanism through which the electoral process keeps up to date with a changing population
 - Happens when a new census is done
 - Results in **Gerrymandering** = the drawing of districts to benefit one party
 - * Cram as many of the opposing party into a few, concentrated districts
 - * Let the rest of the districts be a narrow but predictable victory for your party

Incumbency

- **Incumbency** = the state of seeking re-election
- After cold war, there is a large increase in “career politicians”
 - People are seeking stability and level-headedness