

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

**HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

SENATE

| CONGRESS | PRESIDENT | DEMOCRATS | | REPUBLICANS | | DEMOCRATS | REPUBLICANS |
|----------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| | | 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 OUR LAWS ARE MADE



Representative

A State Legislature

The People

Executive Branch

Bill

Like a bill,
but less common

Joint Resolution

Committee Assignment

Introducing Legislation

Con Current
Resolution

Not
Legislation

Simple
Resolution

Regards
House Operations

+
The code of a bill
H. R. 301 [110]
House Of
Representatives
in which
bill was
received
Congressional
Session



"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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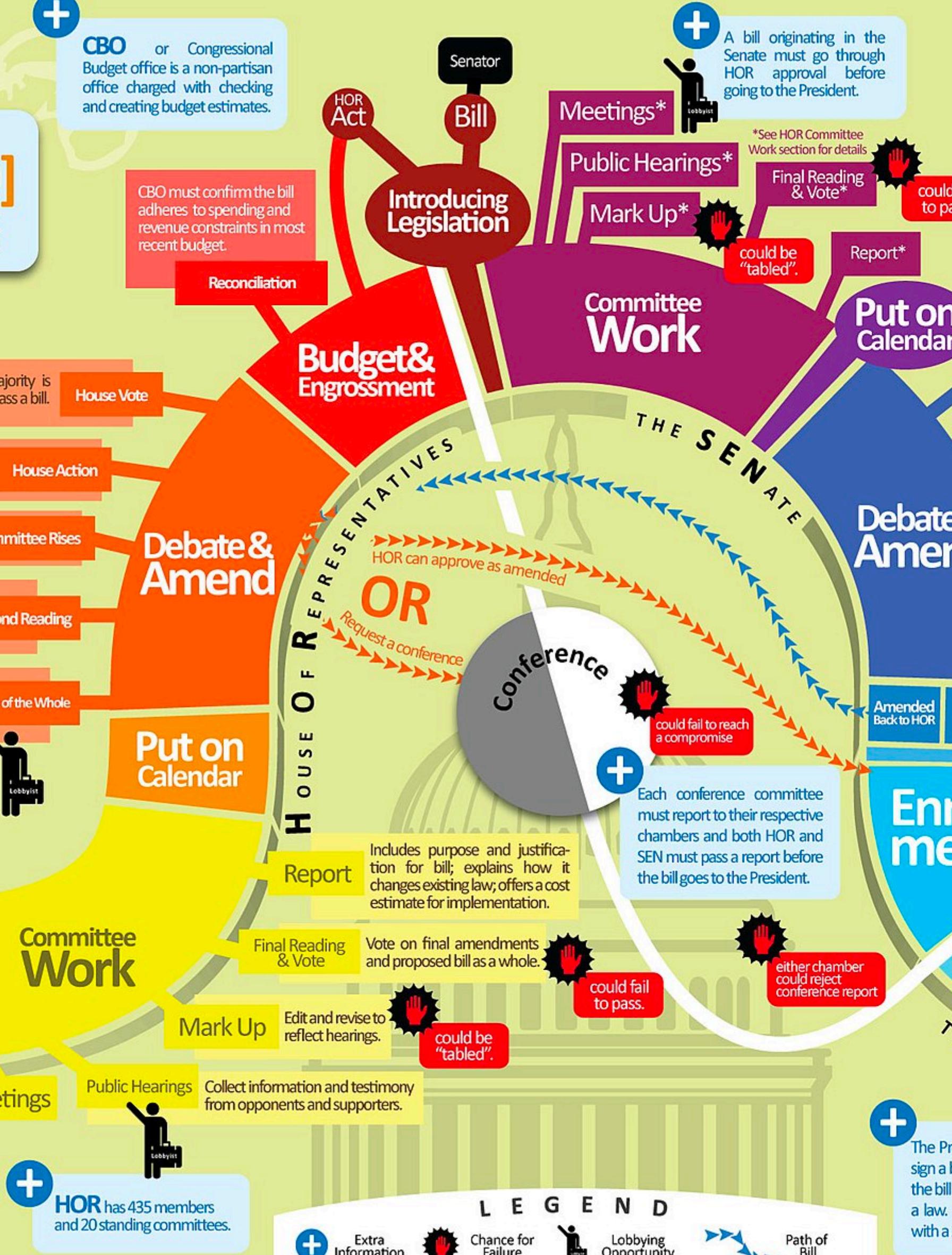
Con Current Resolution

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 - Q: Why would committee chairs matter so much to leadership power?
- 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**

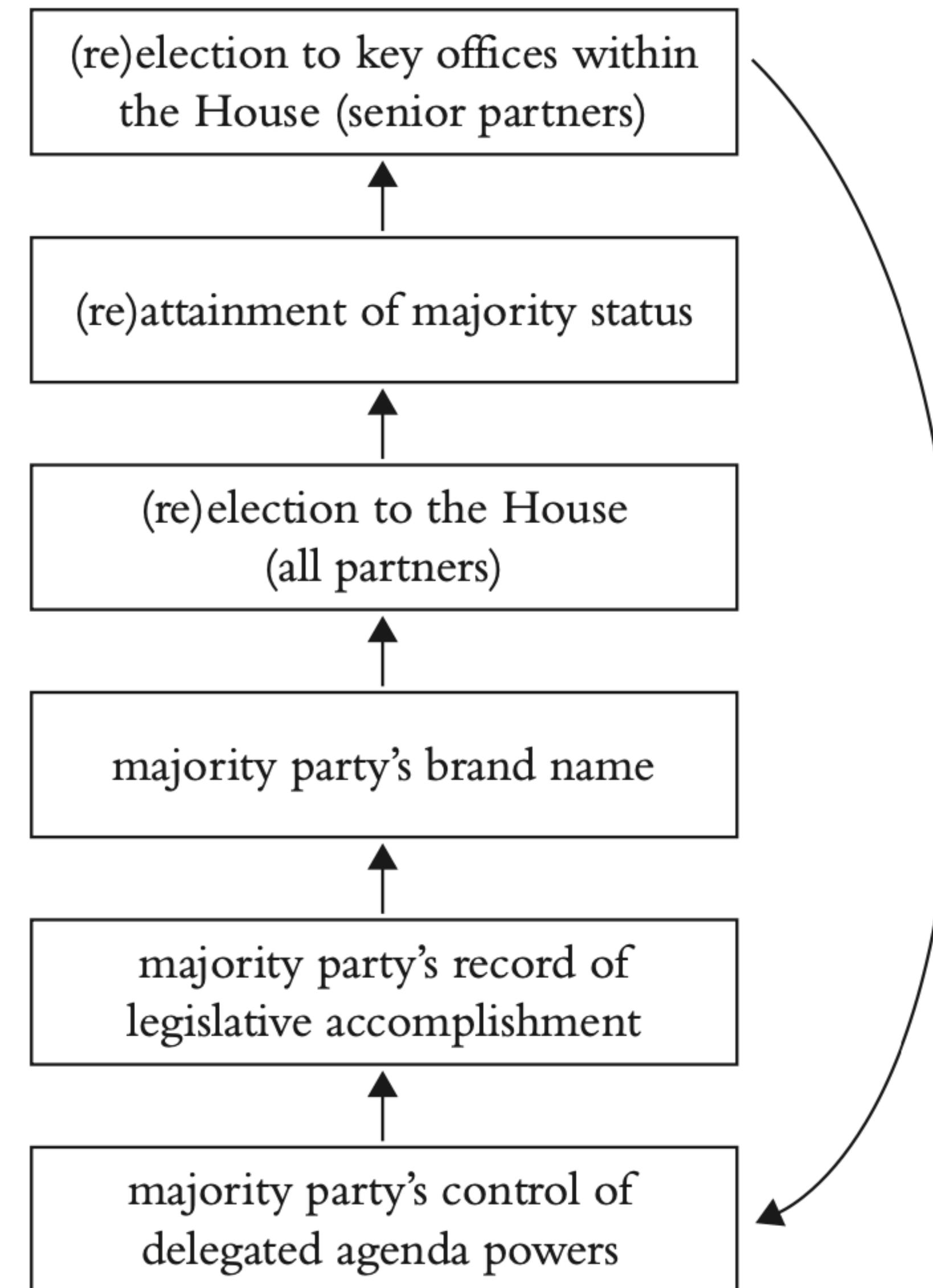


Figure 15.2. Majority-party agenda control and legislative success.

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



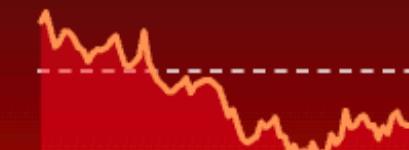
U.S. Stock Market Quotes

Quotes displayed in real-time

Quote Lookup 

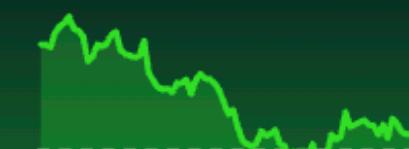
DOW JONES AVERAGES (I:DJI)

33,507.50
▼ -158.84 (-0.47%)



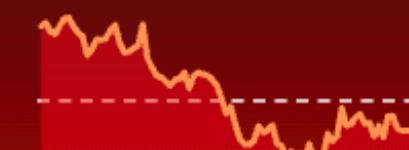
NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX (I:COMP)

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.

 Share full article



1.2K



"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

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

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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

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.

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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Attribution: Getty Images



Your Antenna + Sling TV

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

AD Sling TV



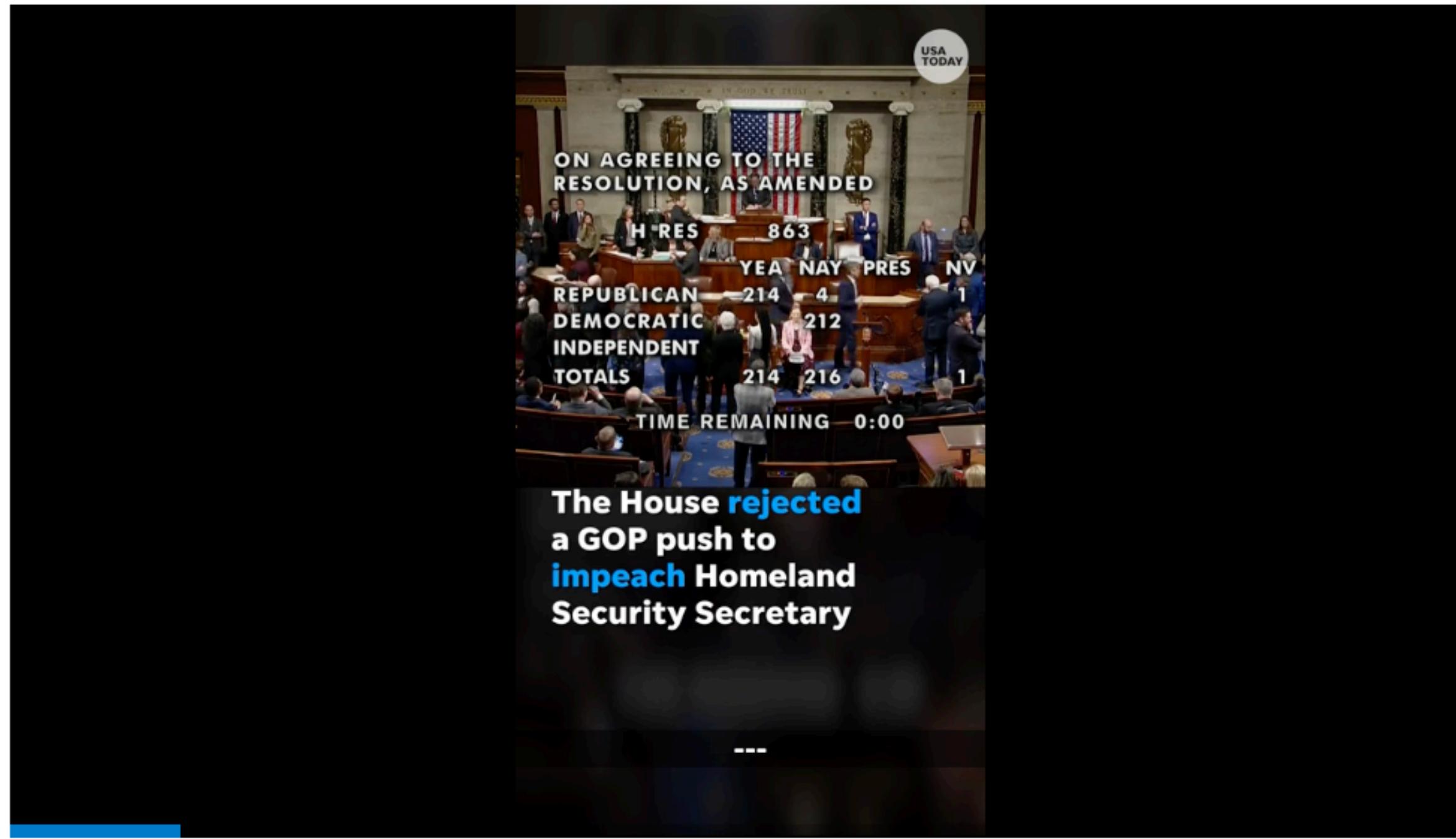
Mike Johnson and House Republicans suffered back-to-back, embarrassing defeats. What comes next?



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.