

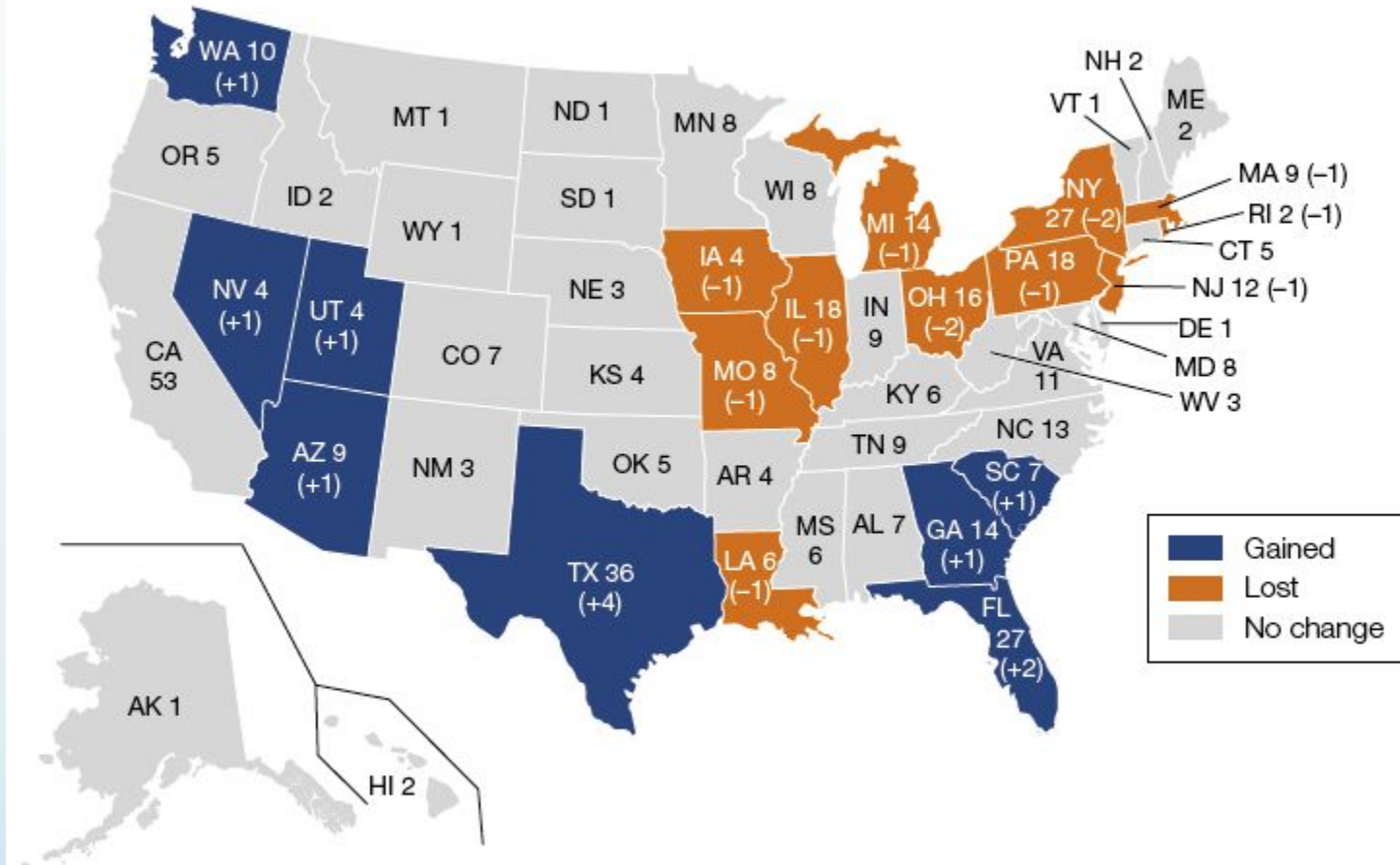
# Politics of Congressional Elections

# Constituency: The Boundaries of Representation

- **Constituencies** – bodies of voters in an area who elect a representative or senator
- Members of the *House of Representatives* serve in **single-member districts** (winner-take-all; plurality)
  - There is one seat for one Congressional district
- *Senators* serve a state in staggered elections
  - No two Senate seats from the same state will be up for grabs in the same election
  - There is *unequal* representation in the Senate
    - Wyoming population: 586,107 (2 seats)
    - California population: 39,144,818 (2 seats)

**FIGURE 4.3**

**Apportionment Gains and Losses after the 2010 Census**

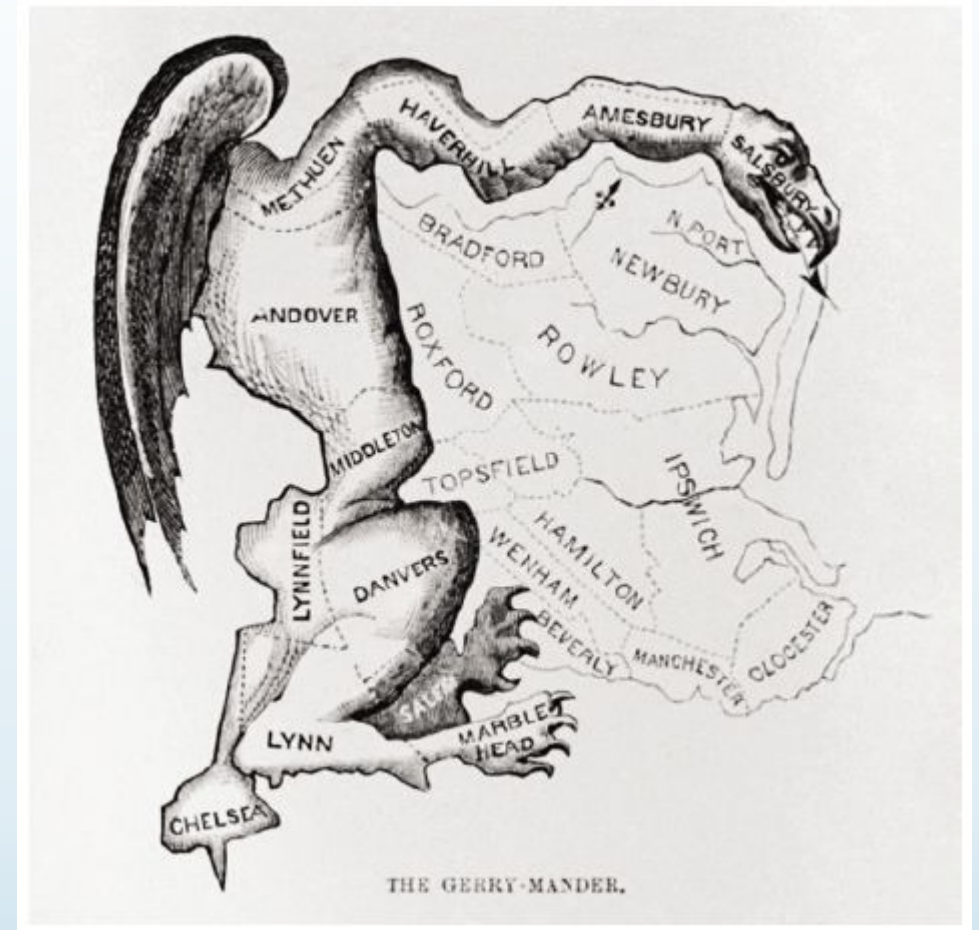


Note: Numbers to the right of the state names show the total number of representatives allocated to the state. Numbers between parentheses show the change as either a gain (+) or a loss (-).

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau

# Partisan Gerrymandering

- Increase representation of one party at the expense of another
  - Only 40 seats in House are competitive
- Districts may be drawn into strange shapes
  - “packed” districts
  - “cracked” districts

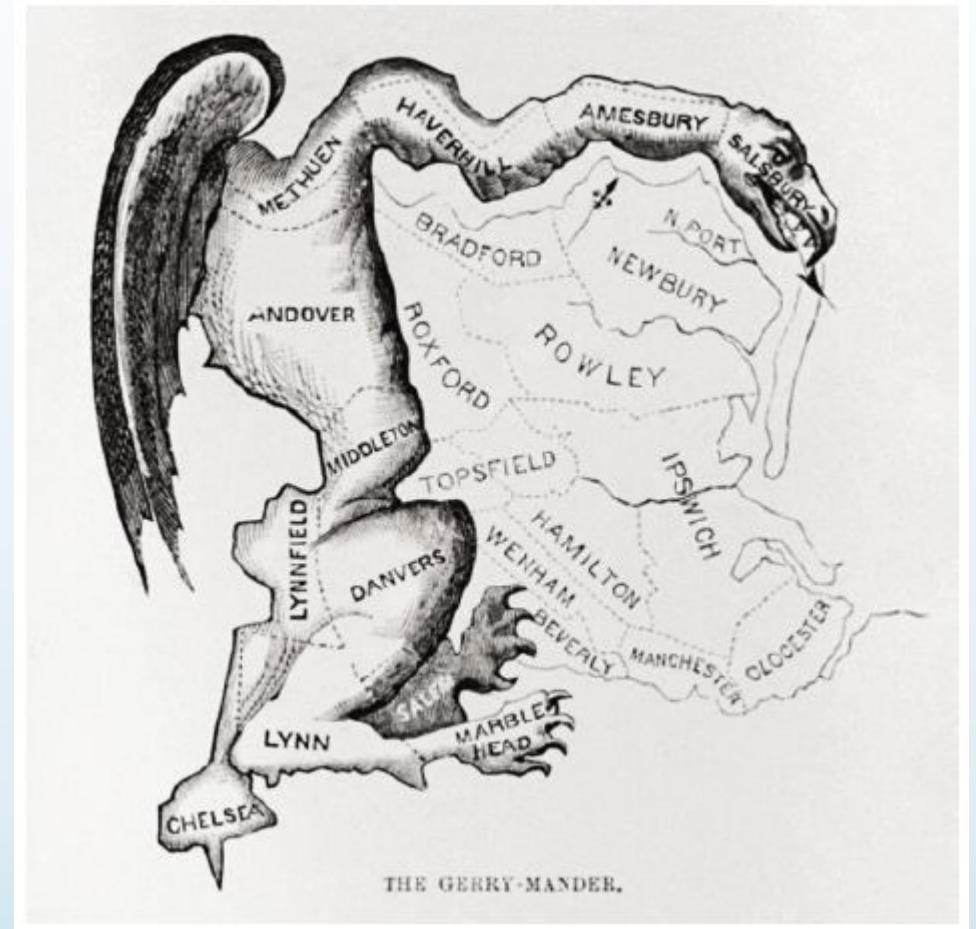


“The Gerry-Mander. A new species of Monster which appeared in Essex South District in Jan. 1812.” The cartoon was published originally in the *Boston Gazette* in March 1812 and is still widely circulated.

Bettmann/Getty Images

# Partisan Gerrymandering

How crazy can gerrymandering get?  
What are some of the most gerrymandered districts?



"The Gerry-Mander. A new species of Monster which appeared in Essex South District in Jan. 1812." The cartoon was published originally in the *Boston Gazette* in March 1812 and is still widely circulated.

Bettmann/Getty Images



## AP<sup>®</sup> REQUIRED CASES

In this chapter, you work with two Supreme Court cases related to voting rights and drawing of voting districts. The following two cases are required for the AP<sup>®</sup> U.S. Government and Politics course:

<b>Case</b>	<b>Effect of the decision</b>
<i>Baker v. Carr</i> (1961)	The equal protection clause requires legislative district boundaries to be drawn to have roughly the same number of constituents under the principle of "one man, one vote."
<i>Shaw v. Reno</i> (1993)	The Supreme Court overturned the race-conscious drawing of a strangely shaped legislative district.

# AP<sup>®</sup> Political Science PRACTICES

## Analyzing a Table of Data

Office	Incumbents in 2016					Post-WWII Period		
	Sought reelection	Lost in Primary	Lost in general	Won in general	Total success rate	Gen. election success rate	Total success rate	Gen. election success rate
House	393	5	8	380	97%	98%	93%	94%
Senate	29	0	2	27	93%	93%	80%	84%
Governor	5	0	1	4	80%	80%	73%	78%

Data from Larry Sabato's Crystal Ball

1. Describe the incumbency advantage.
2. Describe two differences in the incumbency advantages between the House of Representatives, Senate, and governors.
3. Describe the difference between the incumbency rates in the post-WWII period and incumbency rates in 2016, and explain one reason why the rates have changed.

# Maximizing the Advantage

- Incumbents advertise their experience and show off their position-taking/credit claiming
- **Franking privilege:** free use of mail for communications with constituents
- **Name recognition**
  - “The devil you know...”
- **Casework:** ability to use the office to aide constituents with federal services
- All of these help to face challengers and win



"I'm Just a Bill"

# “I’m Just a Bill”



- Making a bill is a step by step process
- Thousands of bills get introduced into each Congress, but most die

Bill, star of the classic *Schoolhouse Rock!* video, sits on the shoulder of a smiling congressperson, sporting his new medal “Law.” In the real world, Bill would have faced frustration. Most bills do not make it through the legislative process to become laws.

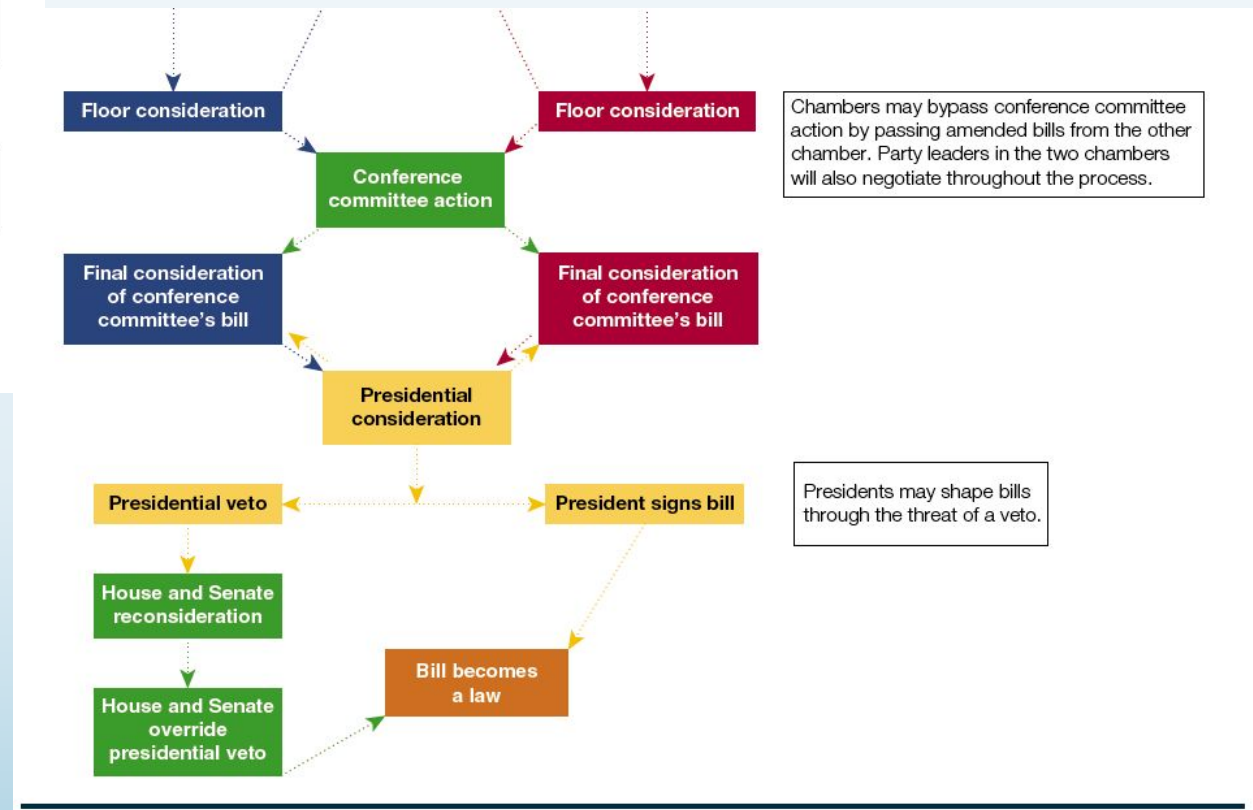
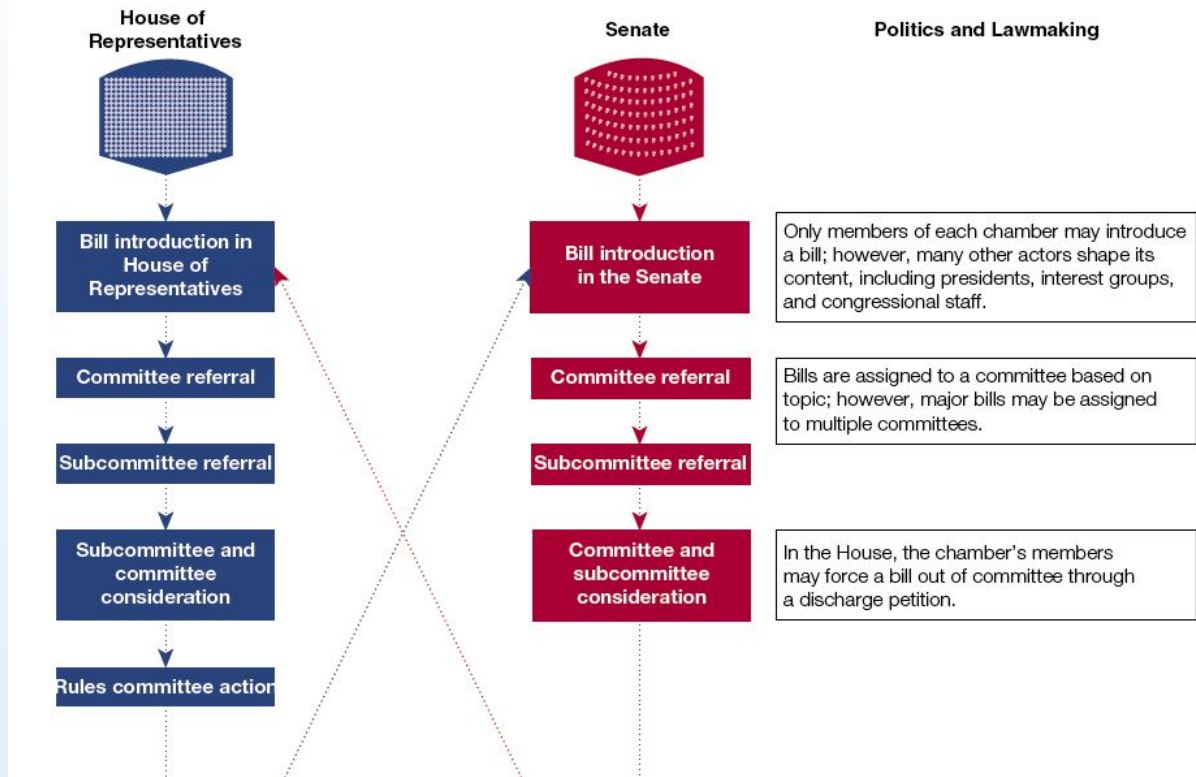
Kari Rene Hall/Getty Images

# The Lawmaking Process

- Introduction
- Committee Assignment
- Committee and Subcommittee Action
- Floor Consideration
- Resolutions of Differences Between House and Senate Bills (Conference)
- Presidential Action

**FIGURE 4.5**

**The Legislative Process**



# How Bills Can Die: House of Representatives

- Once assigned to a committee it may never come out
- **Discharge Petition:** House procedure to get a bill out of committee
  - Motion filed by a member of Congress to move a bill to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote
- **House Rules Committee:** sets the rules for debate, can limit



# How Bills Can Die: Senate

- **Hold:** when a senator objects to a bill or part of a bill
  - Must communicate reservations to majority leader
  - Delays the bill's passage
- **Unanimous consent agreements:** sets terms for consideration of a specified bill
  - May limit debate time
- **Filibuster:** using unlimited debate with the intention of talking a bill to death
  - Delay a motion or postpone action
  - **Cloture:** 60 senators vote to end filibuster and proceed to action

# The Fate of Most Bills

- Party polarization in Congress has caused an increase in usage of procedures to halt passage of bills
- Senate holds, filibusters, and threats of filibusters are common practice

The filibuster by Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) of John Brennan's nomination as CIA director was surpassed in length by Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT). This photo shows Sen. Murphy concluding his speech by showing a photo of a boy killed through gun violence at Sandy Hook School, which happened in Sen. Murphy's home state.  
C-Span



# “I’m Just a Bill” SNL Remake



- What can the executive do when legislation cannot get passed?