

## SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE HOUSE AND SENATE

### **The House**

### **The Senate**

#### **Constitutional Differences**

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Initiates all revenue bills

Offers advise and consent to many presidential appointments

Initiates impeachments

Tries impeachments

Elected for two year terms  
(the whole House is up for reelection every two years)

Elected for six year terms

Terms are staggered; one-third of the Senate is up for election every two years

Comprised of 435 members elected from districts of about 500,000 citizens

Comprised of 100 members (two from each state; elected at-large from their states)

#### **Differences in Operations**

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More centralized; more formal

Less centralized; less formal

Strong leadership

Weaker leadership

Strong Rules Committee that is very powerful in controlling the time and rules of floor debate  
No filibusters.

No comparable rules committee

Control comes through unanimous consent of members or filibuster/cloture.

More impersonal

More personal

Power not evenly distributed

Power relatively evenly distributed

Members are very specialized

Senators are less specialized

Emphasis is on tax and revenue policy

Emphasis is on foreign affairs

Seniority very important in determining power

Seniority less important

#### **Changes in the Institutions**

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Power is becoming even more centralized in the hands of key committees

Senate workload is increasing; informality is breaking down

and leaders

House procedures are becoming more efficient with less debate (usually only one hour) with fewer amendments

Turnover is low (about 95 percent of incumbents are reelected that seek reelection).

Members are becoming more specialized than in the past

Turnover is moderate (about 90 percent of incumbents are reelected that seek reelection)