

Congressional Behavior

Explain how congressional behavior is influenced by election processes, partisanship, and divided government.

1. In recent years, according to polls, Congressional approval ratings have tended to be
 - a. Higher than 80%
 - b. Between 50 – 75%
 - c. Between 25 – 50%
 - d. Lower than 25%

2. “Congressional polarization may be the most prominent stylized fact of American political science.” The experts explain this phenomenon in all of the following way EXCEPT
 - a. More conservative Republicans have replaced retiring moderates
 - b. Incoming Democrats have been more liberal
 - c. The departure of Southern Democrats
 - d. Conservative immigrants have increased in number

3. Despite apparent dysfunctions our Congress continues to do all of the following EXCEPT
 - a. Provide for social services
 - b. Fund the military
 - c. Respond to emergencies
 - d. Increase its public approval ratings

4. Which of the following quotes about Congress is less true today than in previous eras?
 - a. “There’s not a dimes worth of difference between Democrats and Republicans”
 - b. “Public policy achievements have become more and more rare”
 - c. “Democrats and Republicans block each other at every turn”
 - d. “Ideological polarization is rooted in the permanent campaign”

5. According to the U.S. Constitution the Congress is obligated every ten (10) years to
 - a. Take a census
 - b. Hold elections for the Speaker position
 - c. Take a public opinion survey
 - d. Investigate the president for abuse of power

6. When the House of Representatives reapportions it
 - a. Re-calculates the number of Districts each state receives
 - b. Counts the number of Democrats and Republicans serving
 - c. Counts the number of females and minorities serving
 - d. Re-calculates the money it provides to each state

7. When the House of Representatives redistricts it
 - a. Determines how many districts each state receives
 - b. Redraws the size and shape of its Congressional districts
 - c. Switches from a Democratic chamber to a Republican chamber
 - d. Switches from a Republican chamber to a Democratic chamber

8. Who is responsible for actually redrawing Congressional district lines?

- a. House of Representatives
- b. Senate
- c. Supreme Court
- d. State legislatures

9. In this court case it was ruled that Congressional Districts were in the purview of Court action. Having now entered into the political thicket, the Court soon would rule the “one man one vote” standard. That is, each Congressional District must have the same population. This case advanced the civil rights movement.

- a. NLRB v. Jones (1937)
- b. Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
- c. Baker v. Carr (1962)
- d. Miranda v. Arizona (1966)

10. All of the following would be true about gerrymandering EXCEPT

- a. Provides an incumbent advantage
- b. Builds public approval of Congress
- c. Helps to explain the extreme partisanship in Congress
- d. Advantages the political party in power

11. All of the following are incumbent advantages when seeking reelection in the U.S. Congress EXCEPT

- a. Gerrymandered districts
- b. Name recognition
- c. Easier time raising money
- d. High approval ratings

12. Free mail sent out by members of Congress to their constituents is called

- a. Gerrymandering
- b. Filibustering
- c. Free riding
- d. Franking

13. Although most of the members of Congress have “safe seats,” a few represent “marginal districts.” What is a marginal district?

- a. A congressional district where the winner receives less than 35% of the vote
- b. A congressional district where the winner receives less than 55% of the vote
- c. A congressional district where the winner receives less than 75% of the vote
- d. A congressional district where the winner receives less female votes

14. The U.S. Supreme Court in Baker v. Carr (1962) ruled mal-apportionment unconstitutional. Mal-apportionment is when

- a. Congressional districts have unequal population
- b. Minorities were not able to vote
- c. Corporate money is given to candidates
- d. Votes are unequally tabulated

15. When elections for the House of Representatives are nationalized it means that

- a. There is less 24/7 media coverage
- b. There is more 24/7 media coverage
- c. Incumbents are less safe
- d. Incumbents are safer

16. Tom takes every vote in Congress seriously. He also is known on the Hill as an ideologue with strong religious convictions. Most of his votes are predictably cast to reflect his faith-based conscience. What type of Congressional voter is he?

- a. Delegate
- b. Trustee
- c. Partisan
- d. Politico

17. Tom takes every vote in Congress seriously. He also is one of the most loyal party members in his caucus. Most of his votes are cast to support the party leadership positions. What type of Congressional voter is he?

- a. Delegate
- b. Trustee
- c. Partisan
- d. Politico

18. Tom takes every vote in Congress seriously. He also worries about his reelection. Most of his votes are cast to represent as best as he can his constituents back home. What type of Congressional voter is he?

- a. Delegate
- b. Trustee
- c. Partisan
- d. Politico

Critical Thinking Prompt: Explain the advantages and disadvantages of incumbency in Congress. Does incumbency explain the ills of our Congress? Explain the advantages and disadvantages of term limits for members of Congress. Would you favor term limits? Explain.