

## **How the *Really Important* Bills become Law: The Appropriations Process**

### **I. The American Political System**

Separation of Powers: Legislative, Executive, Judicial

Independence of the Legislature

Congress at Work: The Committee System

Committees of Jurisdiction

Authorizing Committees and the Appropriations Committee

### **II. Bills and Laws**

Civics version of how a bill becomes a law

Bill, committee, hearings, floor vote, "other body," conference, to president

### **III. History of Federal Budget Process**

Executive vs. Legislative Control

Federal budgeting and appropriations in 19c

Federal budgeting and appropriations in early 20c

President Nixon and Congress

"Impoundment"

Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974

Congressional budget office

Current appropriations cycle

## **IV. How the really *Important* Bills become Law**

**Appropriations vs. Revenue:** ie. Spending vs. Taxation

*"All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives;*

*but the Senate may propose or concur with Amendments as on other Bills."* Article I, Section 7

House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee

"Tax expenditures"; "Pay-go" Rules; deficit spending

### **The Appropriations Process**

*"No money shall be drawn from the Treasury but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law."*

Article I, Section 9

Federal Spending: approx. \$2.9 trillion FY08

Discretionary (40%) c925 bil. vs. Mandatory Entitlements (60%) c2 tril.

## **Annual Appropriations Cycle** (for discretionary spending only)

Federal Fiscal Year FY08: 1 Oct 07 – 30 Sept 08

**Agency Requests:** Nov-Dec

**Presidential Budget:** early February (week or so after State of Union) Is this a bill?  
FY09 Budget request, Monday, Feb 4 2008 FY09 3.1 Trillion  
“off budget” items

**Congressional Budget:** April 15<sup>th</sup> (required by law by Apr 15, usually passes mid-May or so)  
Budget Resolution (not law) House and Senate Budget Committees  
Establishes five year spending levels by committee jurisdiction (not law)

**House Appropriations Committee:** May-July (usually finish by August recess)  
Twelve Subcommittees “The College of Cardinals”  
Twelve Appropriations Bills: Hearings and Markups (Feb-Apr)

“Earmarks” or “Legislatively directed spending”  
What is an earmark? What is “pork”? and “kosher pork”?

Are these legitimate parts of the legislative process,  
or evidence of a corrupt system?

**Senate Appropriations Committee:** June-Sept, (or so, if they get around to it)

**Floor Debates:** House Rules Committee (June-July)  
open rule but leadership agreements for floor debate and amendment process  
Senate leadership: “unanimous consent” or 3/5ths for “cloture” (close debate)

**House-Senate Conference Committee** or (‘ping-pong’ amendment process)  
[eg. transport bill \$100 billion House vs. \$120 Senate = \$130]

**Continuing Resolutions “CRs”** (temporary funding measures for when time runs out)  
and **Omnibus bills**

**President signs or vetoes** 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Congress vote to override

### **Supplemental Appropriations**

**Decision making in Real Life** – eg. buying a car

How much car can we afford?  
Do we need a second job or a loan?  
What car should we buy? Hummer? Yugo?  
Signing the contract  
Writing the monthly payment check  
Transmission busts, so, home equity loan!

Budget Committee  
Ways and Means/Finance  
Authorizing Committee  
Authorizing Committee  
Appropriations Committee  
Supplemental appropriations

## **V. Conclusions**

“Broken Branch”? Or Founder’s Intent?