

## **FRED W. BEUTTLER, Ph.D.**

### **Deputy Historian, United States House of Representatives**

Dr. Beuttler's hometown is Oak Park, Illinois, a Chicago suburb. He earned a B.A. from the University of Illinois, an M.A. from Trinity International University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. His dissertation, "Organizing an American Conscience: The Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, 1940-1968," focused on debates on the philosophical foundations of democracy.

Dr. Beuttler is a frequent presenter with both teacher groups and the general public. He has developed workshops on various aspects of House history, including: "The First Branch: How to Teach About Congress"; "How the Really Important Bills Become Law"; "The Power of the Purse: Understanding the Congressional Appropriations Process"; and "The Virtues of the House."

When asked about House history – the good, the bad, and ugly – Dr. Beuttler has stories to tell. On brawls on the House floor, he describes this one in the 1800's: "At one point, one of the members grabbed the other man's wig and it came right off, and that sort of stopped everything because everybody burst out in laughter and a sort of civility sort of returned to the House floor."

When Dr. Beuttler considers more contemporary congressional history, he thinks the most important story was in May 2006, when, "for the first time in American history, an executive-branch agency raided a congressional office." He explains, "that reminded me of Jan. 4, 1642, when King Charles I entered Parliament with soldiers to arrest members, a breach of legislative prerogative which led to the English Civil War. Our Founders knew that history, and our Congress is a descendant of that English Parliament. In response to the FBI raid, the House Speaker and minority leader joined together in a rare statement defending constitutional separation of powers and the independence of the legislature."

His interests outside of work include his family, bicycling, canoeing and studying the history of central Europe.

#### Sources:

THE HILL, Inside the House Historian, Fred W. Beuttler by Kris Kitto, 4/12/10;  
NPR Talk of the Nation, A Quick Trip Through the History of Capitol Hill, January 4, 2007;  
United States House of Representatives, Office of the Historian.