

Frequently Asked Questions: My Work in Congress

How do you become a Member of Congress?

Members of Congress are elected by the people living in the district they represent. Usually, there are at least two candidates who run for Congress. The candidate who gets a majority of the votes wins.

How many Members of the United States Congress are there?

There are 435 voting Members of the U.S. House of Representatives plus 5 Delegates and 1 Resident Commissioner. There are 100 U.S. Senators. The amount of Representatives from each state is based on the population of the state. That's why California has over 50 Members and some states only have 1! Each state gets two Senators, no matter how many people live in the state.

Where do you work?

I have an office in Washington, D.C. and an office in San Jose, CA.

When the Congress is in session, I am generally in Washington from Monday through Friday. When Congress is not in session, I often spend my time in California meeting with people from our District.

What does a U.S. Representative do?

Congressional Representatives are responsible for representing the people of their District in the United States Congress. Part of this responsibility is writing and voting on bills in the U.S. Congress. We decide whether to vote for or against every bill that comes before Congress. All bills must pass Congress before they can go to the President to be signed into law. We also draft our own bills and work to get the other Representatives to vote for our legislation so that it can become law.

In order to do our job well, we spend a lot of time meeting with people who live in our states to tell them about what is happening in government and to listen to their ideas about how to improve life in our country. I regularly meet with people from different backgrounds. I especially enjoy meeting with kids to learn about what is happening at our schools.

Another important part of my job is to [help residents](#) of the District if they have a problem with the federal government. For example, if your mail is not being delivered on time, my office can help you by contacting the U.S. Postal Service to bring attention to your problem.

What is the difference between a U.S. Senator and a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives?

The U.S. Congress is made up of two "houses": the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. There are 100 members of the Senate and 435 members of the House. Each state gets two Senators, regardless of how many people live in that state. The number of Representatives each state gets, however, is based on the number of people that live in the state. Senators serve for six year terms. Representatives serve for two year terms. There are also some things that only Members of the House or only members of the Senate can do. For example, only Senators can vote on whether or not to confirm the president's nominees for judgeships.

How does a bill become a law?

In the simplest terms, a bill becomes a law after it passes the Senate and the House and the President signs it. For more information about how a bill becomes a law, visit the Library of Congress' [guide](#) on how a bill becomes a law.

My family is visiting Washington, DC. Will I be able to see you?

I enjoy meeting District residents who visit Washington, although my busy schedule prevents me from meeting everyone who visits. If your family is planning to visit Washington, I encourage you to visit my office to pick up passes to watch the House from the House Gallery, where you might see me voting or making a speech. You can find more information about visiting DC [here](#)

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