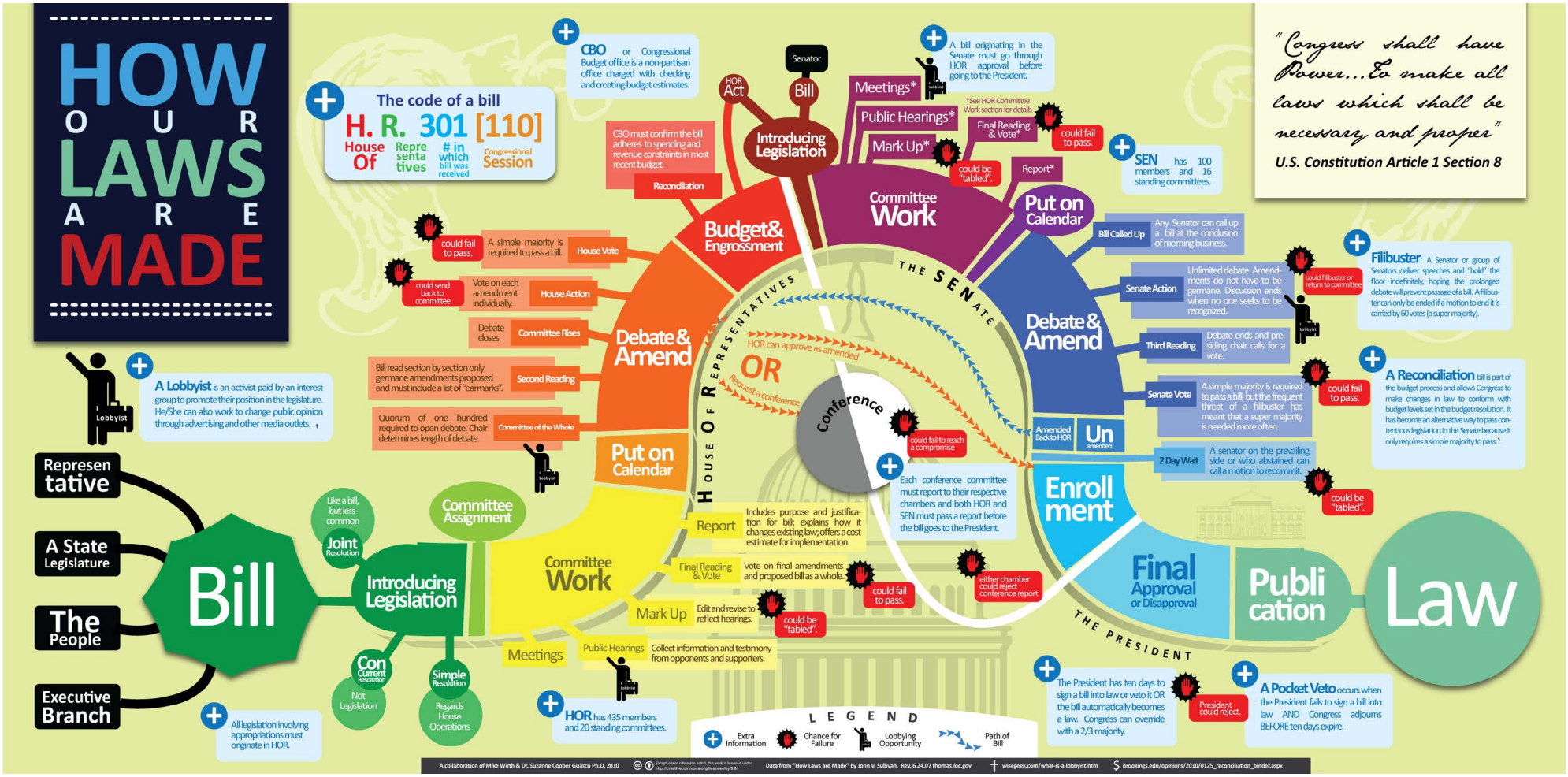
HOW OUR LAWS ARE MADE
"Congress shall have Power...To make all laws which shall be necessary and proper"
U.S. Constitution Article 1 Section 8
The code of a bill
H. R. 301 [110]
House Of Representatives
in which bill was received
Congressional Session
CBO or Congressional Budget office is a non-partisan office charged with checking and creating budget estimates.
CBO must confirm the bill adheres to spending and revenue constraints in most recent budget.
Reconciliation
Senator
Bill
HOR Act
Introducing Legislation
A bill originating in the Senate must go through HOR approval before going to the President.
Meetings*
Public Hearings*
Mark Up*
*See HOR Committee Work section for details
Final Reading & Vote*
could fail to pass.
could be "tabled".
Report*
Committee Work
SEN has 100 members and 16 standing committees.
Put on Calendar
Bill Called Up
Any Senator can call up a bill at the conclusion of morning business.
Budget& Engrossment
could fail to pass.
A simple majority is required to pass a bill.
House Vote
could send back to committee
Vote on each amendment individually.
House Action
Debate closes
Committee Rises
Debate & Amend
Bill read section by section only germane amendments proposed and must include a list of "earmarks".
Second Reading
Quorum of one hundred required to open debate. Chair determines length of debate.
Committee of the Whole
Put on Calendar
THE SENATE
Debate & Amend
Senate Action
Unlimited debate. Amendments do not have to be germane. Discussion ends when no one seeks to be recognized.
could filibuster or return to committee
Filibuster: A Senator or group of Senators deliver speeches and "hold" the floor indefinitely, hoping the prolonged debate will prevent passage of a bill. A filibuster can only be ended if a motion to end it is carried by 60 votes (a super majority).
Third Reading
Debate ends and presiding chair calls for a vote.
HOR can approve as amended
OR
Request a conference
Conference
could fail to reach a compromise
Each conference committee must report to their respective chambers and both HOR and SEN must pass a report before the bill goes to the President.
Senate Vote
A simple majority is required to pass a bill, but the frequent threat of a filibuster has meant that a super majority is needed more often.
could fail to pass.
A Reconciliation bill is part of the budget process and allows Congress to make changes in law to conform with budget levels set in the budget resolution. It has become an alternative way to pass contentious legislation in the Senate because it only requires a simple majority to pass.[5]
Amended Back to HOR
Unamended
2 Day Wait
A senator on the prevailing side or who abstained can call a motion to recommit.
could be "tabled".
Enrollment
Lobbyist
A Lobbyist is an activist paid by an interest group to promote their position in the legislature. He/She can also work to change public opinion through advertising and other media outlets.[4]
Representative
A State Legislature
The People
Executive Branch
Bill
Like a bill, but less common
Joint Resolution
Introducing Legislation
Committee Assignment
Committee Work
Report
Includes purpose and justification for bill; explains how it changes existing law; offers a cost estimate for implementation.
Final Reading & Vote
Vote on final amendments and proposed bill as a whole.
could fail to pass.
Mark Up
Edit and revise to reflect hearings.
could be "tabled".
Meetings
Public Hearings
Collect information and testimony from opponents and supporters.
HOR has 435 members and 20 standing committees.
Concurrent Resolution
Not Legislation
Simple Resolution
Regards House Operations
All legislation involving appropriations must originate in HOR.
either chamber could reject conference report
THE PRESIDENT
Final Approval or Disapproval
The President has ten days to sign a bill into law or veto it OR the bill automatically becomes a law. Congress can override with a 2/3 majority.
President could reject.
Publication
Law
A Pocket Veto occurs when the President fails to sign a bill into law AND Congress adjourns BEFORE ten days expire.
LEGEND
Extra Information
Chance for Failure
Lobbying Opportunity
Path of Bill
A collaboration of Mike Wirth & Dr. Suzanne Cooper Guasco Ph.D. 2010
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Data from "How Laws are Made" by John V. Sullivan. Rev. 6.24.07 thomas.loc.gov
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