

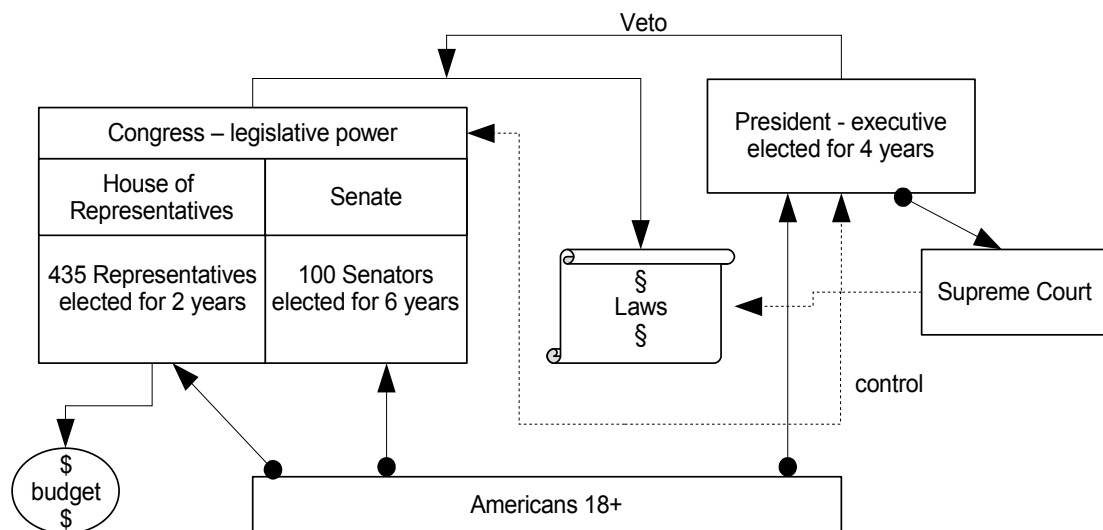
United States Midterm Election 2006

In the United States parliamentary elections are held every 2nd year on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. In elections the Americans who are over 18 years old and live in one of the 50 states or do military service abroad (about 200 millions people altogether) are eligible to vote for

- one third of the Senate (33 out of 100). - But only the Americans in the states whose senators have to be elected are allowed to take part.
 - all members of the House of Representatives (435)
 - the President who is elected only every 4 years
 - ◆ State Parliaments
 - ◆ Governors (36 of 50)
 - ◆ institutions (e. g. Sheriff)
 - ◆ new laws
- } In some states only

The people who are older than 25 and who have been citizens for more than 7 years can be elected in the states in which they live.

The Representatives are elected in constituencies¹ - the candidate who gets the most votes in one constituency is automatically a Representative (→ majority vote system) . Logically there are 435 constituencies all over the USA.



U. S. system of government: checks and balances

Campaign:

The parties receive giant donations from industry and other supporters every year. Most companies donate money to both the Democrats and the Republicans. By looking at the ratio one can figure out which party they think will win the elections.

Both parties use giant sums for negative advertisements and the campaigns are getting nastier every year – because the media are eager to publicize negative news more often.

The parties also spend about 35 million dollars each to animate people just to go to the elections and they try to mobilize voters by phone calls and door-to-door-campaigning up to the very last minute.

Internet plays an important role because many people get informed about the elections by the Internet. Some bloggers have figured out a possibility to get better rankings in *Google* for their negative articles by creating links to each other.

¹ The constituencies are drawn by the state governments. They often (ab)use their power to disperse voters, who would probably vote for political opponents. Thus the oppositional candidate cannot win in a certain constituency and will not become Representative. → “gerrymandering” technique → only about 10%-15% of the seats in the House of Representatives can actually be taken over by the other party.