In order to do business, large bodies of persons like the Senate and House must be organized under some kind of leadership structure. *In Congress this leadership structure is provided by the two political parties.*

Both the House and Senate have traditionally been divided into two caucuses, the majority caucus, which is the party that holds *more than half the seats*; and the minority caucus, the party that holds *less than half the seats*.

**The House of Representatives.**
The Constitutional Leadership.

The Constitution of the United States does not mention political parties, but it does specify that the House "shall choose their Speaker."

The Speaker of the House is both the Constitutional leader of the House of Representatives, and the effective leader.

He is the constitutional leader because the office of Speaker is mentioned in the Constitution.
The speaker is elected by the entire house. However, each of the two parties puts up its own candidate, the candidate of the majority party is always elected.

The Speaker is the effective leader of the House because, more than any other member of the house, he can count on majority support. It is this support that makes it possible for him to act as leader.

**The Party Leadership.**

The House is divided into two political parties, often referred to as the Democratic and Republican Caucuses.

The **Majority Caucus** has a number of officers, but the most important are

The House **Majority Leader**.

This officer is elected solely by the members of the majority party, and it is his job to represent the majority. His authority is, however, subordinate to that of the Speaker, who is the real leader of his party in the House.

The House **Majority Whip**.

The Whip is the majority leader's "second in command." It is his job to count votes on any issue, and help the majority leader "whip up support" for the positions of the majority party.

The **Minority Caucus** has the same two officers:

The House **Minority Leader**; and

The House **Minority Whip**.
The Structure of Congress

The United States Senate
The Constitutional Leadership of the Senate.

The Constitution specifies two officers for the Senate:

The President of the Senate. The President of the Senate is the Vice President of the United States. However, the Vice President play no regular role in the operations of the Senate, and rarely even appears there. There are two factors which limit his role in that body.

There is often conflict between the Congress and the President, and the Vice President is presumed to be on the President's side. The Senate cannot accept his leadership in these cases.

The Vice President is often a member of the minority party in the Senate. He cannot therefore count on majority support for this positions, and without this support he cannot effectively lead.

However, the Vice President is authorized to vote in the case of a tie. For this reason, he will occasionally appear in the Senate if an important vote is expected to be close.

The President Pro Tempore. The Constitution also provides for a President Pro Temp to lead the Senate in the Vice President's absence, but this office has always been honorary. It is occupied by the longest serving member of the majority party.

The Party Leadership of the Senate.

Like the House, the Senate is divided into two caucuses.

The Majority Caucus.

The Senate Majority Leader is the real leader of the United States Senate. He is responsible for organizing the activities of that body. He does so because he is always a member of the Majority party, and can therefore count on majority support.
The Senate Majority Whip (Assistant Majority Leader).

The Minority Caucus.

The Senate Minority Leader.

The Senate Minority Whip (Assistant Minority Leader).

Legend

Direct Responsibility

Oversight Responsibility