

# Why it's Valuable to Talk to Members of Congress

*Even when it seems like nothing is happening*

The AGU logo consists of a stylized circular icon to the left of the letters "AGU". The icon is a square with rounded corners containing a circular shape with a central dot, resembling a globe or a stylized 'A'. The letters "AGU" are in a bold, sans-serif font. The entire logo is enclosed in a white rectangular border.

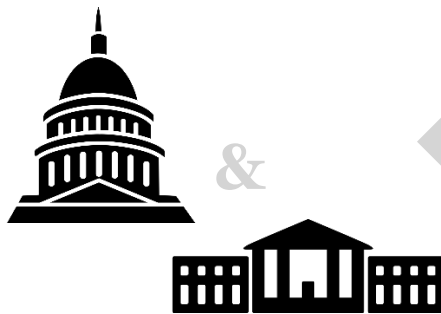
AGU

4/14/16

# Advocacy in Washington Influences the Governing Bodies

**Congress and the White House create laws and regulations to govern citizens**

**Citizens influence governing behavior by participating in advocacy efforts**



- Show Support
- Ask for Change
- Tell Stories
- Share Ideas
- Provide Information

# Yes... Members of Congress Actually Want to Hear From You

## Guide to Reaching Out to Members of Congress



Members highly value staying in touch with constituents

- Constituent conversations guide policymaking
- Reelection hinges on their ability to serve the constituents who vote them into office
- Members trust their staff to help them listen to constituents, so advocates should not be surprised if they meet with staff in lieu of a Member

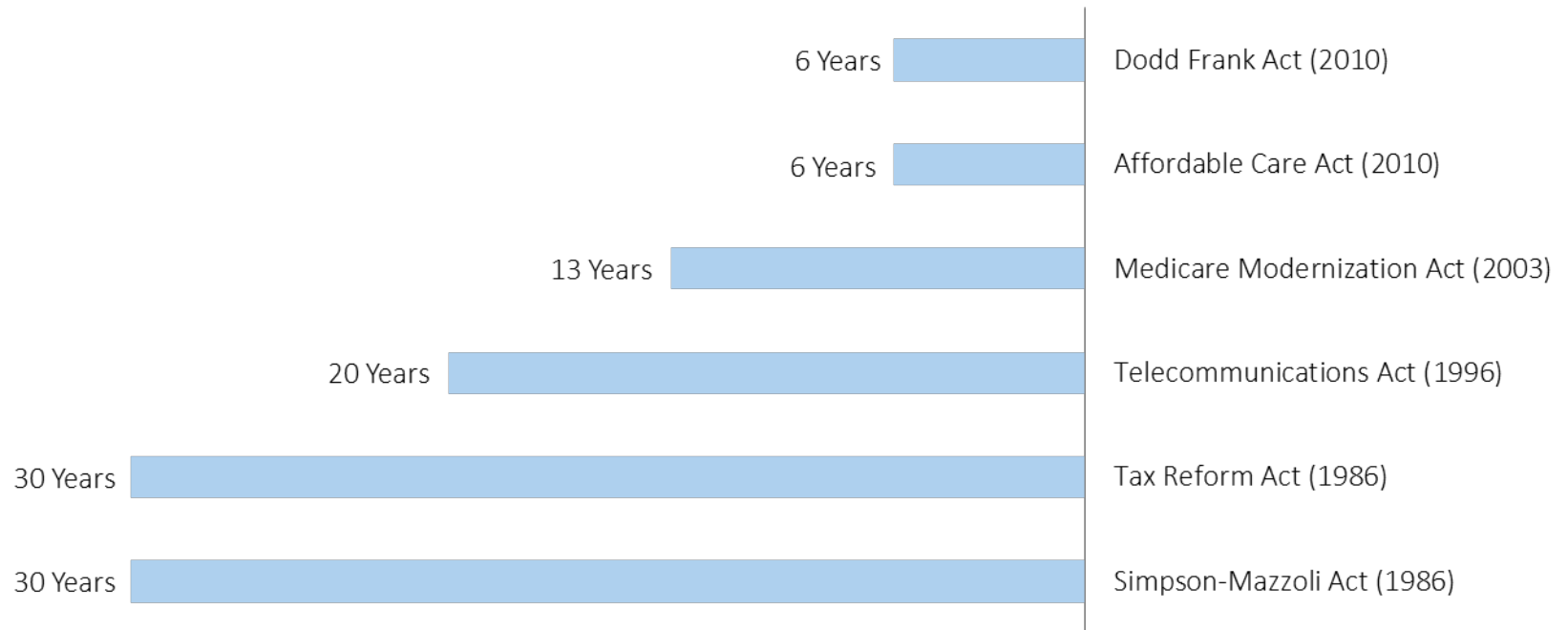


Members find personal and engaging content more persuasive than form letters

- Individual letters and e-mails can have greater influence on member decision-making than formal letters
- Advocates should focus on sending more personal messages to their Member of Congress to capture the individual voice or perspective

# Legislation Moves Slowly, Advocacy Success Takes Time

## Time Lapsed Since Most Recent Comprehensive Law Enacted



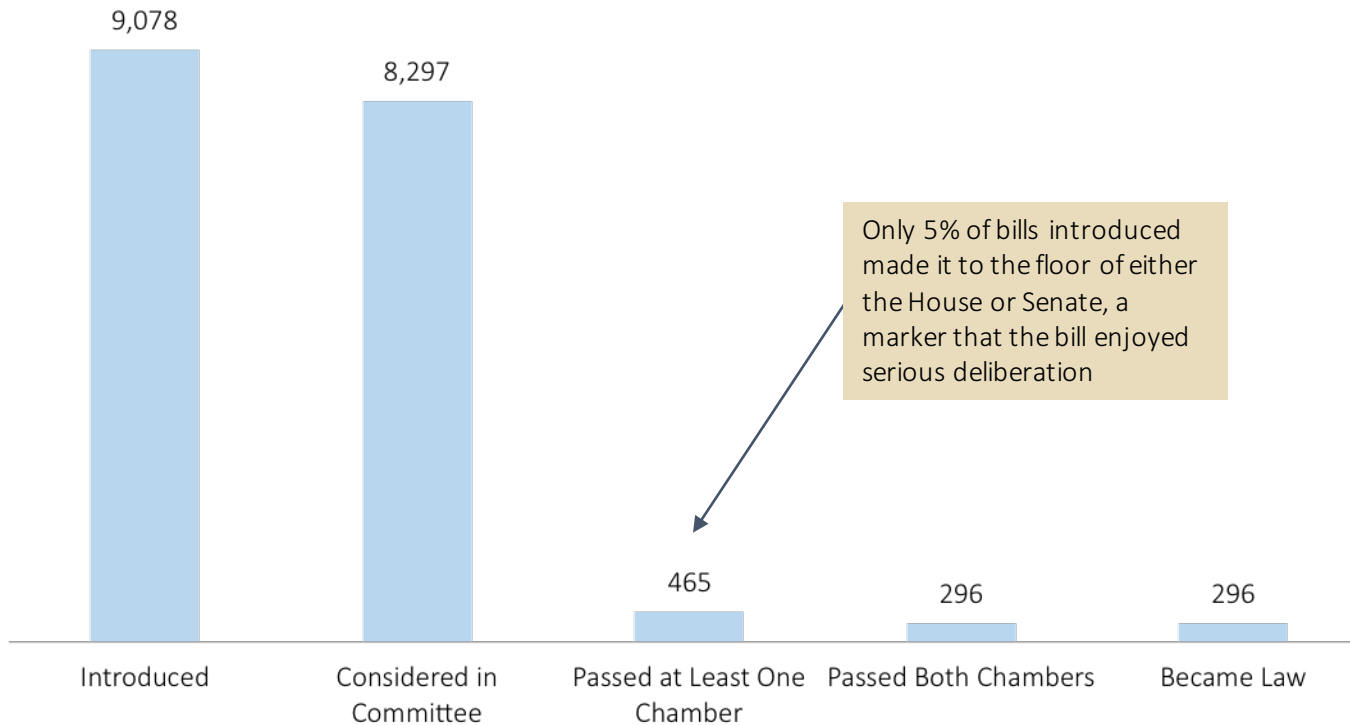
### Analysis:

- The vast majority of bills (97%) introduced in the 113th Congress failed to become law, and most never even came close; only 5% of bills introduced passed at least one chamber
- Introducing a bill or starting the conversation in Congress can lead to advocacy success in the long-term, but advocates must remember the process takes patience and persistence

# Success in the Advocacy Space Can Take Time as Legislation Can Slowly Move Through Congress

## Number of Bills and Joint Resolutions,

*By Stage of Consideration (113<sup>th</sup> Congresses)*

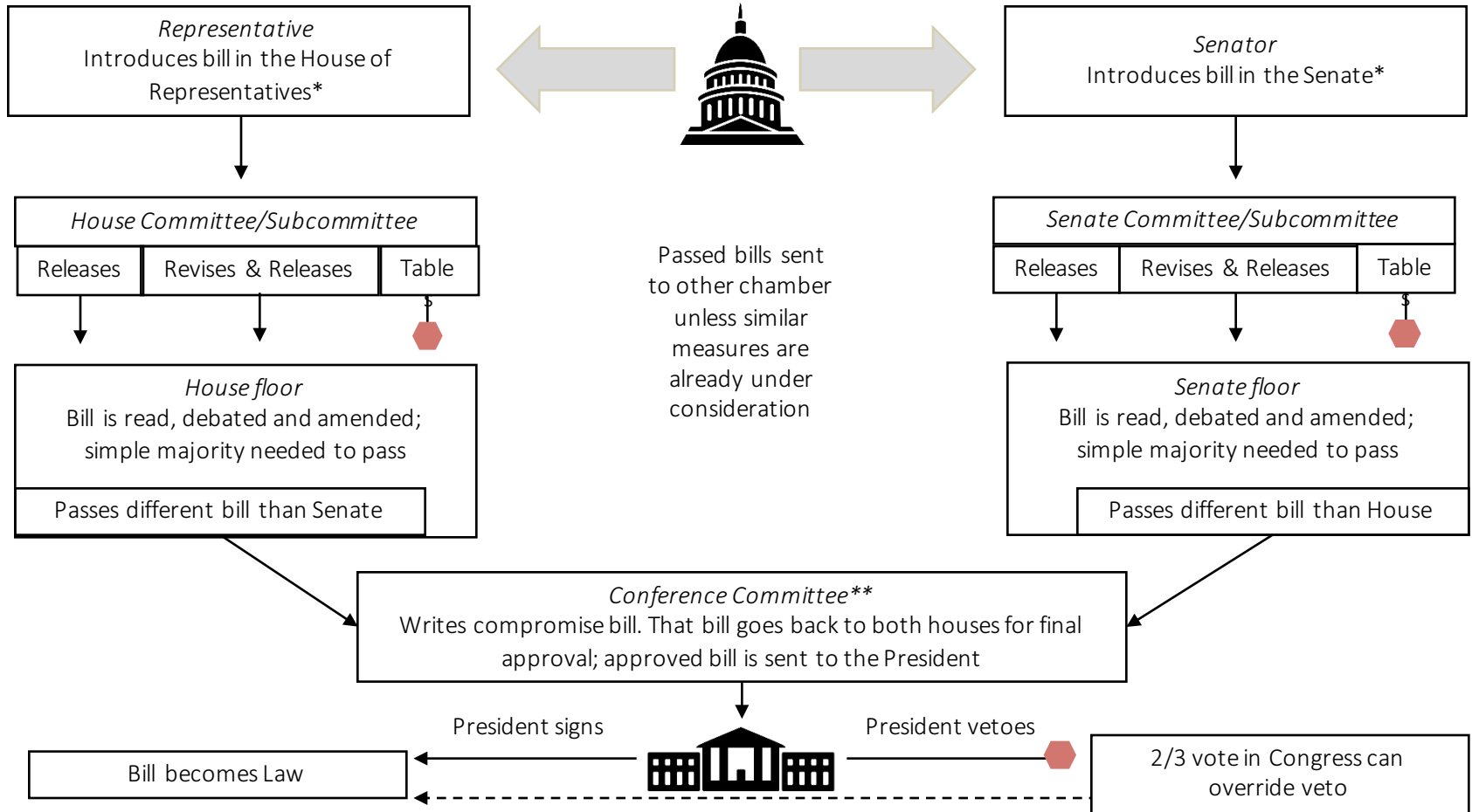


Sources: National Journal Research, 2016; Govtrack.us, 2015.

**Introducing a bill or starting the conversation in Congress can lead to advocacy success in the long-term, but you must remember the process takes patience and persistence!**

# The Legislative Process

# How a Bill Becomes a Law



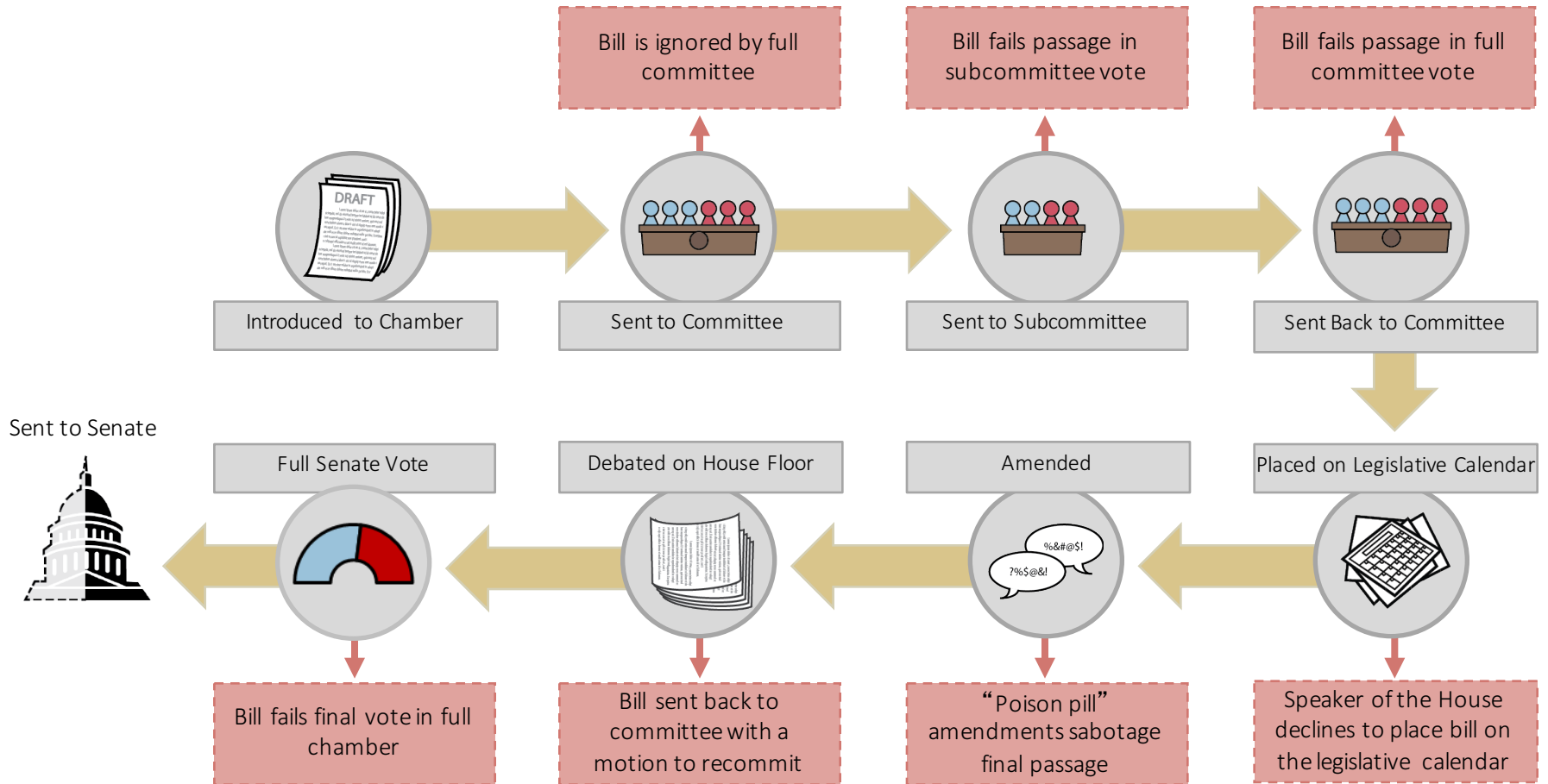
\*Legislation may be introduced in either chamber except for tax law, which must originate in the House

\*\*Most major legislation goes to conference committee; When one chamber passes legislation originating in the other without making changes, bill goes directly to President



# House Rules Allow Majority Party to Prevent Passage

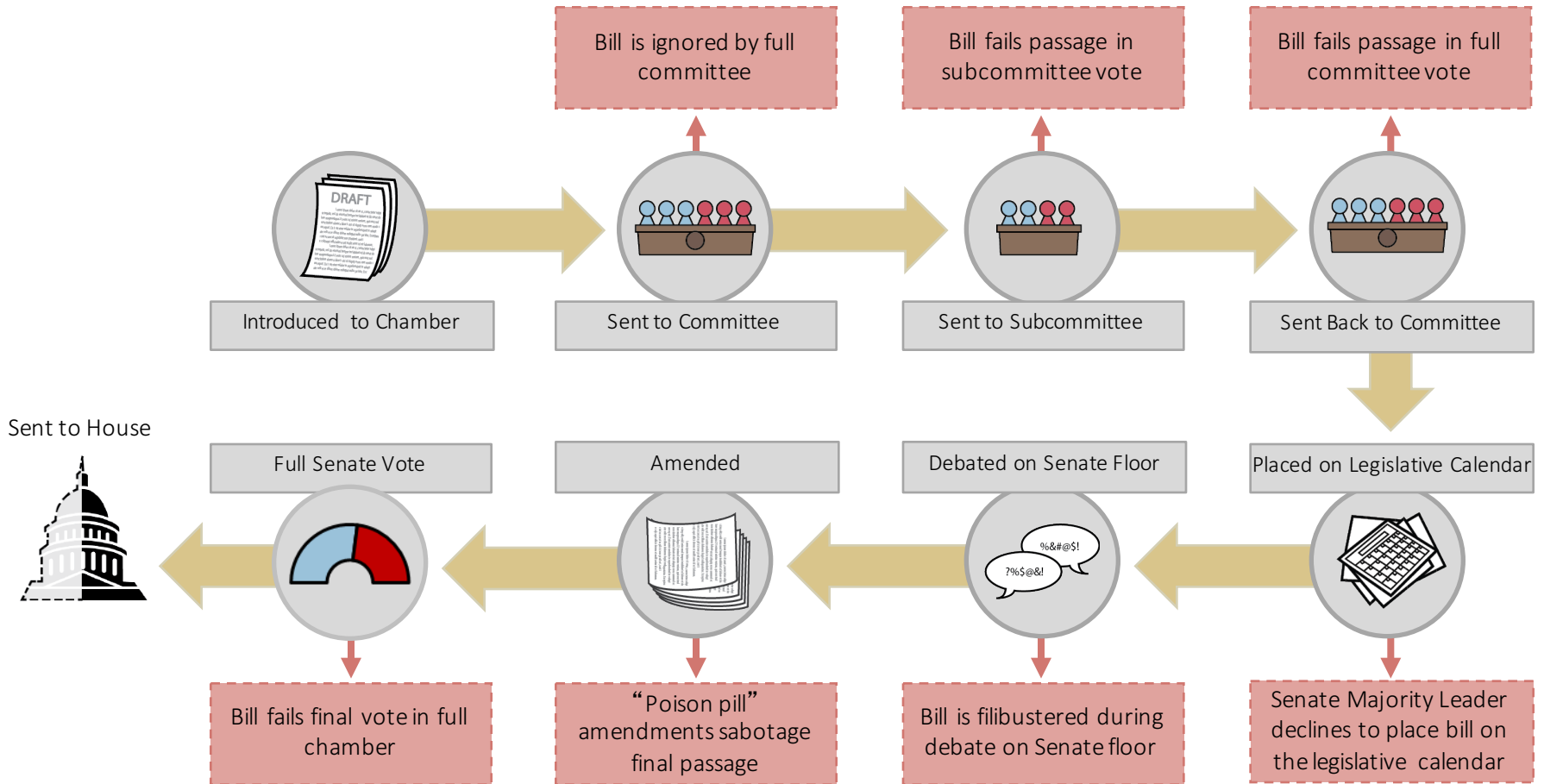
## The Legislative Process and Obstacles in the House



The Senate relies on unanimous consent to operate efficiently; therefore, individual Senators have the power to delay or prevent a bill's passage by creating additional procedural hurdles, including filibusters.

# Bills Face Numerous Obstacles to Passage in Senate

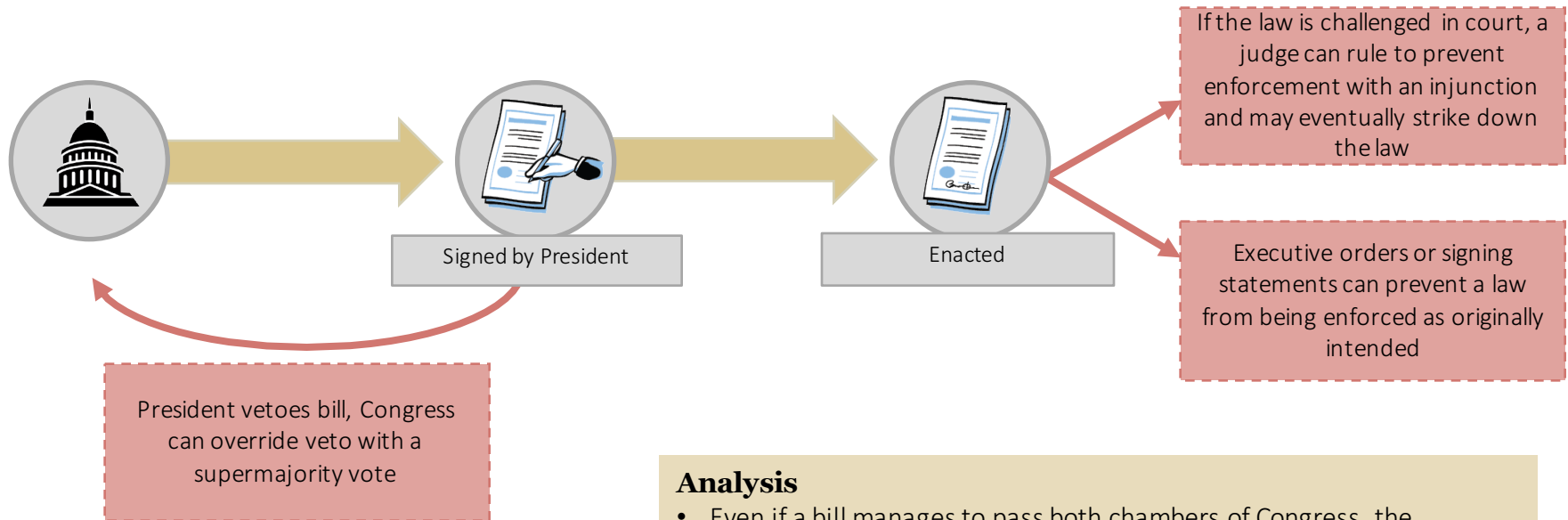
## The Legislative Process and Obstacles in the Senate



The Senate relies on unanimous consent to operate efficiently; therefore, individual Senators have the power to delay or prevent a bill's passage by creating additional procedural hurdles, including filibusters.

# Bills Continue to Face Hurdles After Passage

## Process and Obstacles for Enacting and Enforcing Laws



### Analysis

- Even if a bill manages to pass both chambers of Congress, the President can use vetoes, executive orders, or signing statements to prevent the bill from being enacted or enforced
- Opponents of the bill, including those outside of the legislative process, can prevent the law from being enacted by mounting a successful legal challenge

# Authorization vs. Appropriations Bills

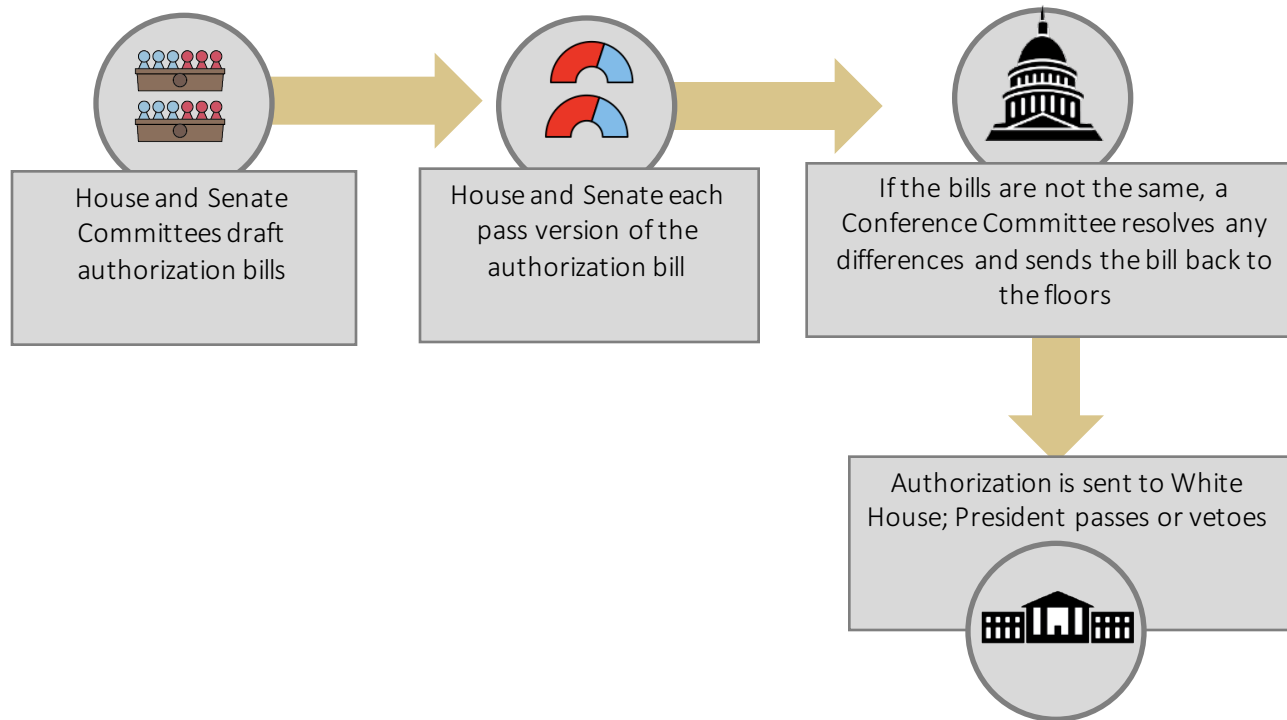
# The Authorization and Appropriations Processes Establish and Fund Federal Programs

## Authorization v. Appropriations

	Authorization	Appropriation
What it does	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establishes federal programs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Outlines how money will be spent on federal programs during the next fiscal year</li></ul>
Who does it How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Congressional committees with jurisdiction over specific subject areas write the legislation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>There are 12 appropriations subcommittees in each house of Congress; they are divided among broad subject areas and each writes an annual appropriations measure</li></ul>
How it works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Authorization legislation authorizes the expenditure of funds from the federal budget; it may specify how much money should be spent on a program, but it doesn't actually set aside the money or elaborate on where the money to pay for the budget will come from</li><li>The committees are supposed to review programs before their expiration to determine how well they are working</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>After subcommittees in the House and Senate mark up appropriations bills in response to the President's budget, the House and Senate must pass the same version of an appropriation bill to give a program funding</li><li>It is very possible for programs to be authorized but not funded</li></ul>

# In Order For a Program to Be Funded, It Must First Be Authorized

## 1. Authorization Process



# The Budget Process Has Six Steps

## The Federal Budget Process (In Theory)



In early February, OMB, after reviewing agency proposals, submits the President's annual budget request, detailing the administration's goals for federal revenue and spending, program-by-program funding levels, and project deficits and surpluses.



By April 15, Senate and House Budget Committees draft budget resolutions to set total levels of funding available for the next fiscal year. If a resolution fails to pass both chambers, a chamber will pass a "deeming resolution" to establish enforceable budget levels.



Working within the funding limits set by the budget resolutions, House and Senate Appropriations Committees assign to each of their twelve subcommittees the task of determining program-by-program funding.



The Appropriations Committees amend and pass subcommittee appropriations bills.



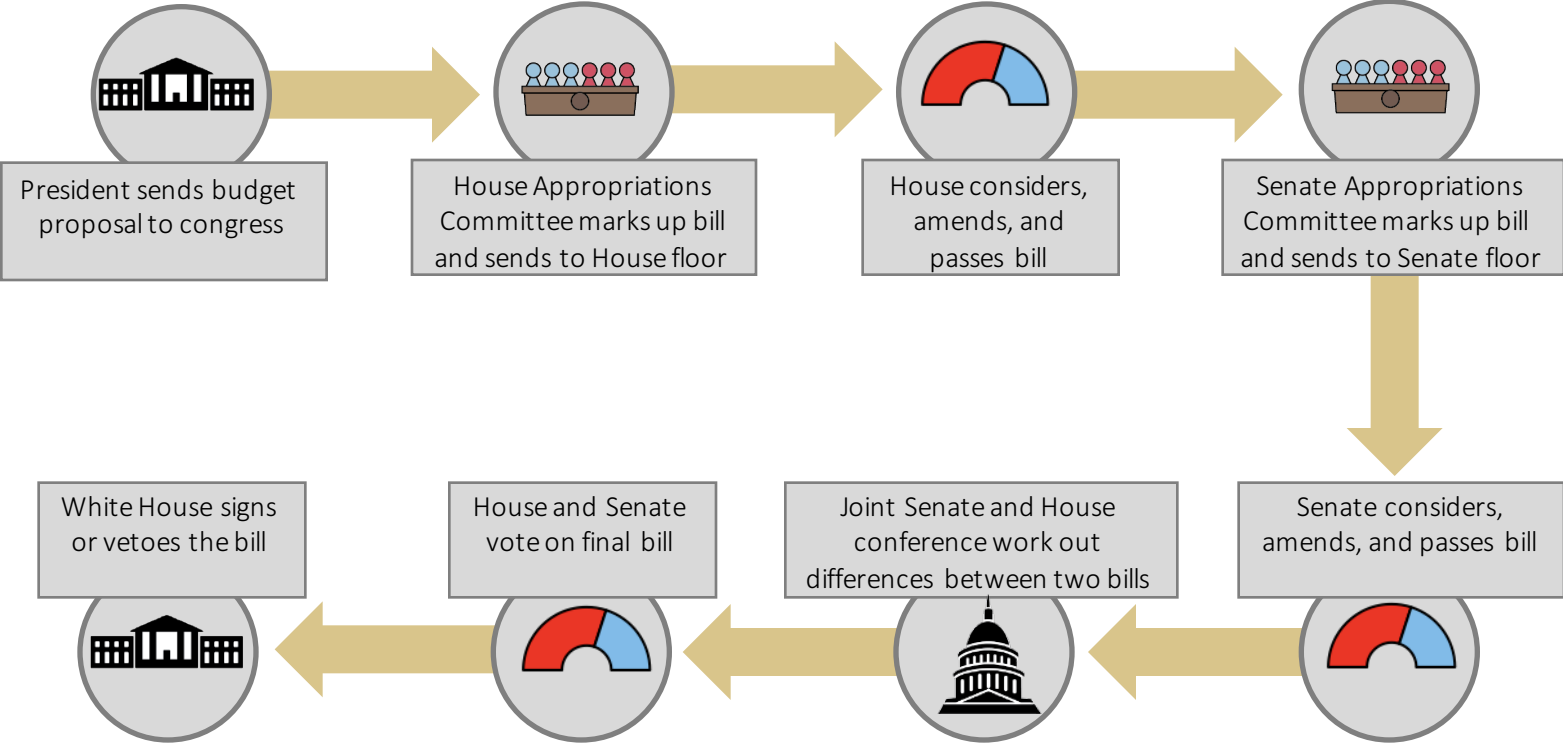
Senate and House leadership negotiate passing all unfinished subcommittee bills together in an omnibus bill. If Congress fails to do this by October 1, it must pass a continuing resolution to keep programs funded, or face partial government shutdown.



The President signs the omnibus bill or continuing resolution.

# Once a Program is Authorized, It Can Be Funded Through an Appropriations Bill

## 2. Appropriations Process

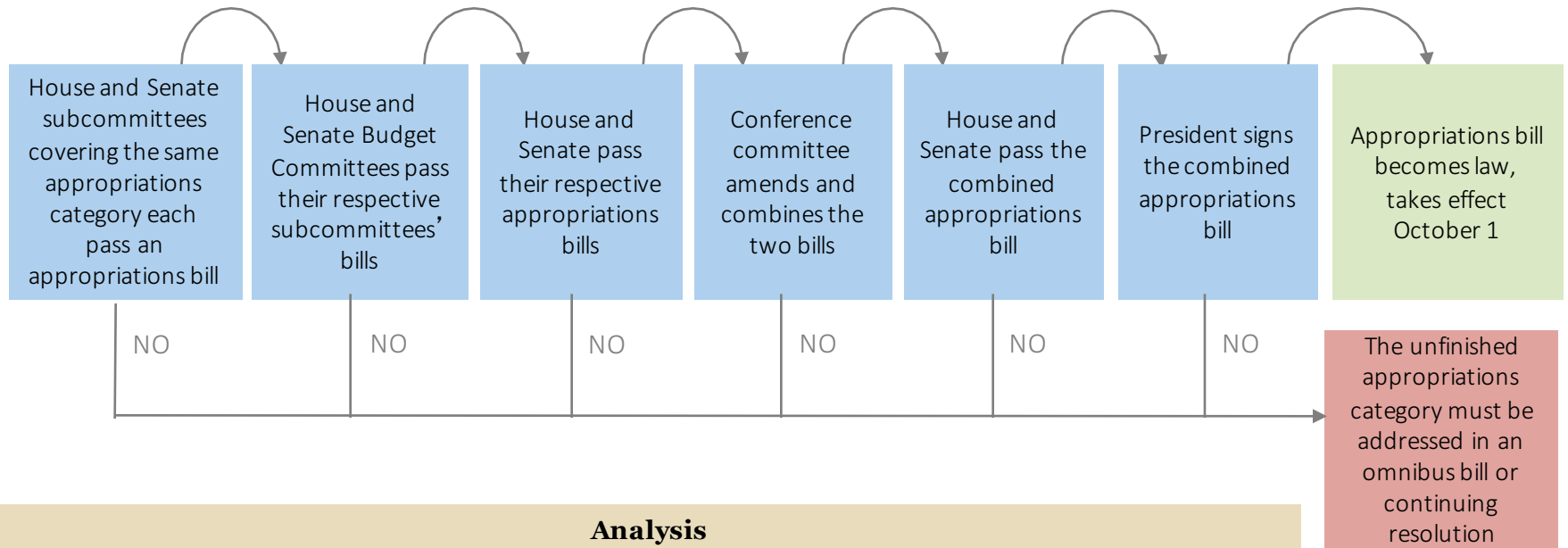


Source: National Journal Research, 2016.



# Appropriations Process Has Many Failure Points

## Appropriations Process for a Single Appropriations Category



### Analysis

- Any appropriations bill that is not completed before the new fiscal year begins on October 1 will be folded into an omnibus bill or CR before the beginning of the new fiscal year in order to prevent funding gaps
- Because each appropriations bill is passed as a separate law, the President can veto an individual appropriations bill without affecting the other categories
- President Obama threatened to veto appropriations legislation containing defense spending increases beyond budget caps unless Congress also passes spending increases for nondefense programs

**For more information visit:  
<https://sciencepolicy.agu.org/>**