

POLI 100B: CONGRESS

CLASS NOTES – 29 January 2008 (5:00 – 6:20PM)

C. Sinclair Chapter – Changes in the Senate

1. Realignment of the South into the Republican Party transformed the national agenda and made the Senate more *Partisan*.
2. Changes in Information Technology and Rise in Real Income coupled with (1) Increased the *Individualist* Tendencies of Senators
3. Individualism and Partisanship:
 - a. Multiple Committee and Subcommittee Assignments -- Everyone is a Chairman
 - b. The Role of Senate Rules --
 1. Non-Germane Amendments
 2. Extended Debate and its effects -- Unanimous Consent Agreements, Holds, and Blue Slips. "Move the Previous Motion" rule allows a vote to end debate – **left out of Senate Rules in 1806** (deliberate decision – {**The previous question being moved and seconded, the question from the chair shall be: “Shall the main question be now put?”** And if the nays

prevail, the question shall not then be put.} In early Senate this motion was used to prevent immediate consideration of a motion because if the Nays prevailed, consideration was postponed to the next legislative day or beyond!!!) -- Hence Debate could be unlimited!!!! **FILIBUSTER**. Only after a "small group of willful men" (Woodrow Wilson's term) filibustered the **League of Nations Treaty in 1919** did the Senate adopt the first version of Rule 22. Rule 22 - 2/3 Present and Voting can end debate - CLOTURE MOTION. 7 March 1975 changed to 3/5 total Senate (60 Votes). Effects - (Sinclair essay in Congress Reconsidered) - More **Unanimous Consent Agreements**. **HOLDS** - Threats to object to a Unanimous Consent Agreement - Results in much behind-the-scenes negotiation between Senators favoring a particular bill and those Senators who have filed "Holds" on the bill. **NON-GERMANE Amendments** - Can offer other pieces of legislation as amendments to a bill on the floor - Majority Leader can make a Motion to Table - Nondebatable - But Majority Leader's party members then HAVE TO VOTE!

3. Sinclair (p. 11) – “[v]isible filibusters are now just the tip of the iceberg.”

D. Dodd & Oppenheimer – Changes in the House

1. Realignment of the South into the Republican Party transformed the national agenda and made the House more *Partisan*.
 - a. Democrats Control the House from January 1931 until January 1995 with the exception of only 4 years.
 - b. Elections of 1946 and the Southern Democrats
 - c. Election of John F. Kennedy in 1960 and Judge Smith of Virginia
 - d. Elections of 1964 give the Northern Democrats permanent Control of the Congressional Democratic Party
 - e. Civil Rights and the Realignment of the South
 - f. Reforms of House Procedure in the early 1970s
2. Newt Gingrich and GOPAC in the late 1980s and early 1990s
3. The 1994 Elections and the 104th House -- Czar Rule Returns
4. Narrow Majorities lead to Increasingly Hardball Tactics by the early 2000's
 - a. Party Leaders Reward Loyal Members
 - b. Manipulating the Rules -- Holding Roll Call Votes open for hours; scheduling late-night votes on Controversial Legislation

- c. Limiting Democratic Participation in the drafting of Legislation to a Bare Minimum

5. Polarization Continues to Increase.

E. Hibbing and Larimer – What the Public Thinks of Congress

1. People Tend to Dislike Congress but Vote to Reelect their Representatives
2. Public Opinion is Contradictory
 - a. On the One Hand they Want Congress to *Solve Problems*
 - b. On the Other Hand they Deeply Dislike the way Congress *Normally* Operates -- Debate, Conflict, Partisan "Bickering", Nefarious "Special Interests" -- **They do not Like Seeing the Sausage Made!**
3. People Believe that Problems can be Solved if Only Politicians Would Just Sit Down Together and "Work it Out"