

The functions of congress essay sample

Law



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The bicameral structure of Congress was designed to enable the legislative body and its members to perform certain functions for the political system. These functions include lawmaking, representation, service to constituents, oversight, public education, and conflict resolution.

The first of the functions of Congress is lawmaking. Lawmaking is the process of establishing the legal rules that govern society. This function is one of the two most important functions Congress, without lawmaking, society would be chaos. Lawmaking requires decisions about the size of the federal budget, about health-care reform and gun control, and about the long-term prospects for war or peace. A majority of lawmaking decisions oftentimes comes from bills originated from the executive branch, interest groups and/or political party organizations.

Another function of Congress is representation, this being the other of the two most important functions. Representation is the function of members of Congress as elected officials representing the views of their constituents. It includes both representing their desires and demands and representing larger national interest such as farmers or the environments. Because the interests of constituents in a specific district may be at odds with the demands of national policy, the representation function is often in conflict with the lawmaking function for individual lawmakers and sometimes for Congress as a whole. There are several views on how legislators should fulfill representation (i. e. The Trustee View of Representation and The Instructed-Delegate View of Representation.).

The next function of Congress is the service to constituents. Individual members of Congress are expected by their constituents to act as brokers between private citizens and the imposing. This function usually takes the form of casework, which is the personal work for constituents by members of Congress. The legislature spends a lot of their time in casework activities, such as tracking down a missing Social Security check. This ombudsperson strongly benefits the members of Congress. A government characterized by a large, confusing bureaucracy and complex public programs offers innumerable opportunities for legislators to come to the assistance of (usually) grateful constituents.

The oversight function is also a function of Congress. Oversight is the process by which Congress follows up on laws it has enacted to ensure that they are being enforced and administered in the way Congress intended. Oversight of the bureaucracy is essential if the decisions made by Congress are to have any force. This is done by holding committee hearings and investigations, changing the size of an agency's budget, and cross-examining high-level presidential nominees to head major agencies.

Another function of Congress is the public-education function. Educating the public is a function that is performed whenever Congress holds public hearings, exercises oversight over the bureaucracy, or engages in committee and floor debate on such major issues and topics as political assassinations, aging, illegal drugs, and the concerns of small businesses. Congress also decided what issues will come up for discussion and decision, called agenda-setting.

The last of the functions is the conflict-resolution function. Congress is commonly seen as an institution for resolving conflicts within American society. Organized interest groups and representatives of different racial, religious, economic, and ideological interest look on Congress as an access point for airing their grievances and seeking help.

Congress, with all of its functions are very important in society. They enable the legislative body and its members to run the country more smooth than if Congress did not have them. These functions assist Congress to be more organized and help it to make more of an impact of what Congress is trying to do.