

## APGoPo Unit 5

# CONGRESS VS. THE PRESIDENT

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- Founders' intent on Congress to be the dominant branch
- In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the President has generally been more dominant

<b>SOURCES OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Separation of powers and checks and balances</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Constitution is "an invitation to struggle between the President and Congress"</li> <li>○ There is <u>supposed</u> to be conflict</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Each represents different constituencies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Members of Congress represent <u>state and local</u> interests ("All politics is local")</li> <li>○ The President represents the <u>national</u> interest</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Different times of election</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Difficult for either to gain excessive power for any great length of time</li> <li>○ e.g., Clinton was elected in '92 w/a majority of Democrats in Congress, but two years later the Republicans captured a majority of both houses</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Partisanship</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Since 1952, Presidents have often faced Congress that has had a majority of the opposing party (divided government)</li> <li>○ Even when the Congress has a majority of the same party as the President, intra-party struggles are common</li> <li>○ With the weakening of political parties, the President does not have a strong "hold" on members of his own party in Congress</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>"Two presidencies" thesis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Congress tends to be more cooperative with the President on foreign policy and national security issues (esp. in a crisis)</li> <li>○ Less cooperative on domestic and economic issues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>SOURCES OF PRESIDENTIAL INFLUENCE ON CONGRESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use of media</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Media focuses more on a single person than on 535 people</li> <li>○ President can go directly to the people with his case</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>"Mandate from the people"</b> after winning election by a large margin</li> <li>• <b>Patronage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enables a President to carry out policy his way</li> <li>○ Enables a President to cultivate members of Congress by seeking their input on appointments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Chief of Party role</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Convincing members of Congress to act in the interests of "party unity"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Personal lobbying of members of Congress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use of both favors and punishment for cooperative or uncooperative members</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Veto, or its threat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 93% of vetoes are not overridden, so even the threat of a veto carries weight</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Presence of a national emergency</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ President benefits from rally point – spike in public approval following domestic or international crisis (such as 9/11)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>