

# Congressman Filemon Vela



34th District of Texas

# Personal Background



Currently, serving the Second Session of 1<sup>st</sup> Term in Congress

- ✧ Born in Harlingen and raised in Brownsville
- ✧ Graduate of Georgetown University and the University of Texas School of Law
- ✧ Practiced law for over 20 years representing clients in civil disputes



# 1 of 9 Members Representing Southern Border



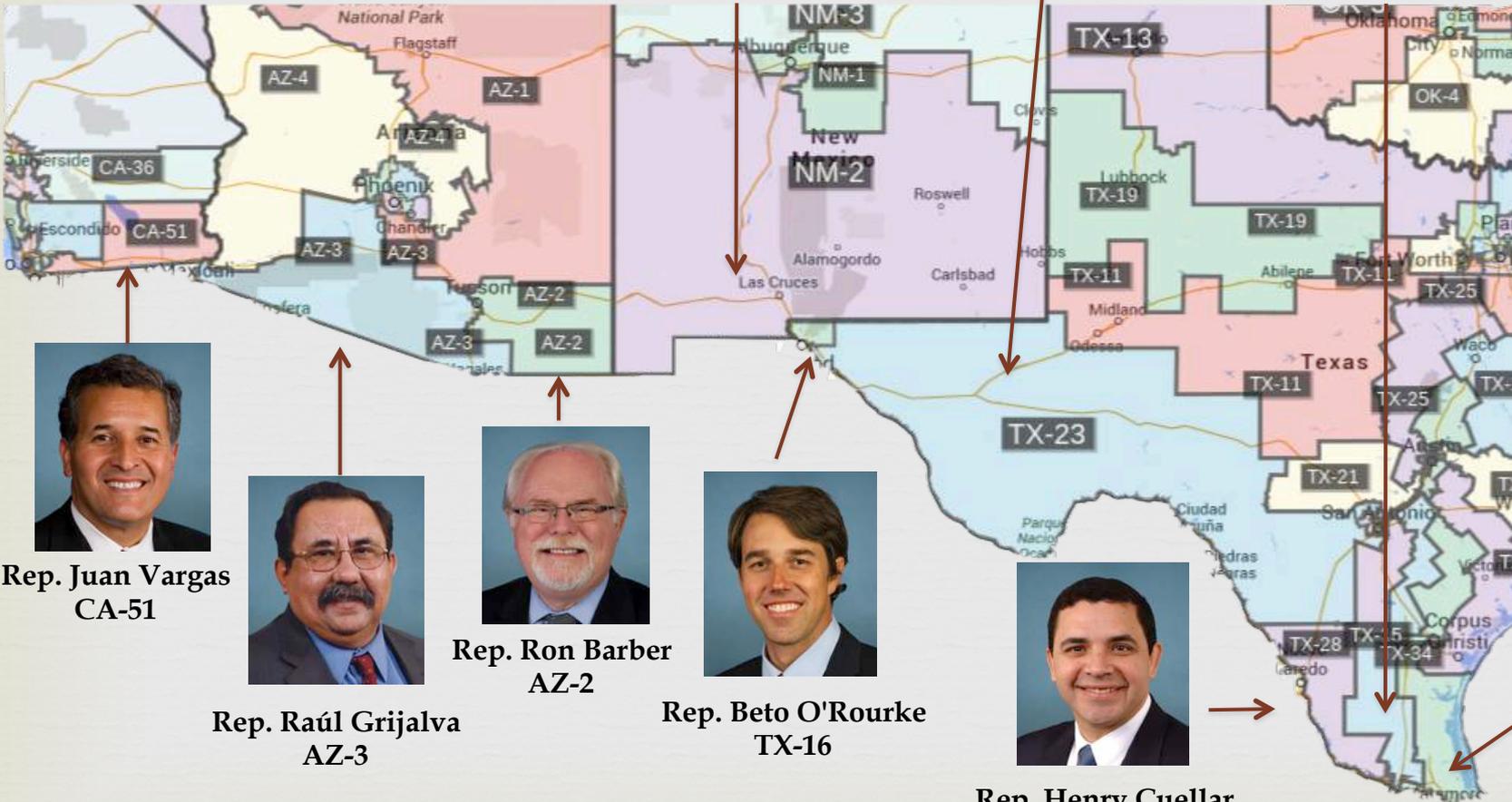
Rep. Steve Pearce  
NM-2



Rep. Pete Gallego  
TX-23



Rep. Rubén Hinojosa  
TX-15



Rep. Juan Vargas  
CA-51



Rep. Raúl Grijalva  
AZ-3



Rep. Ron Barber  
AZ-2



Rep. Beto O'Rourke  
TX-16



Rep. Henry Cuellar  
TX-28



Rep. Fil Vela  
TX-34

# HOUSE CALENDAR

ERIC CANTOR MAJORITY LEADER

## JANUARY

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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## FEBRUARY

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## APRIL

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## MAY

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## JUNE

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## JULY

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## AUGUST

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## SEPTEMBER

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## OCTOBER

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## NOVEMBER

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## DECEMBER

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House Calendar is set by Majority Leader Eric Cantor



# 12

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

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Wednesday	March 12, 2014
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- 9:00AM - Meeting - with Angie Flores.**  
 Loc: 437 Cannon 8 AM to 8:30 AM
- 10:00AM - Meeting - with Noe Garcia III,**  
 Loc: 437 Cannon 9 AM to 9:30 AM
- 11:00AM - Meeting - with City of Robstown- Mayor Rodrig...**  
 Loc: 437 Cannon 10 AM to 11 AM
- 11:30AM - Meet with 12 students and teachers from the...**  
 Loc: 437 Cannon 10:30 AM to 11 AM
- 12:00PM - Team Pallone Whip Meeting. Lunch will be served.**  
 Loc: 237 Cannon 11 AM to Noon
- 12:30PM - 1:30PM - New Dems lunch.**  
 Loc: HVC-200 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM
- 1:15PM - 2:15PM - CHC Immigration Task Force meeting.**  
 Loc: H-144, the Capitol 12:15 PM to 1:15 PM
- 1:15PM - 2:15PM - TX Delegation lunch.**  
 Loc: H-122, the Capitol 12:15 PM to 1:15 PM
- 2:30PM - 3:30PM - Leader Pelosi meeting on Ukraine.**  
 Loc: H-203 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM
- 8:35PM - FYI - Mayor arrives in DC.**  
7:35 PM to 8:05 PM

Example of a Day in Congressman Vela's Washington Office

# Two District Offices in Cameron County



☞ Brownsville and San Benito

☞ Local offices handle constituent outreach and casework, which includes:

- VA benefits and military disability claims
- Immigration Issues, Visas and Passport
- Service Academy Nominations
- Social Security and Disability Benefits
- Military Medal Replacement Requests
- Help coordinate constituent visits to DC

# Committee Assignments



## ☞ Agriculture Committee

- Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management
- Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit

## ☞ Homeland Security Committee

- Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies

# Sample of Issues in Southern Part of District



**Dredging at South Texas Ports**



**Immigration Reform and Trade**



**SpaceX**



**Veterans Issues**

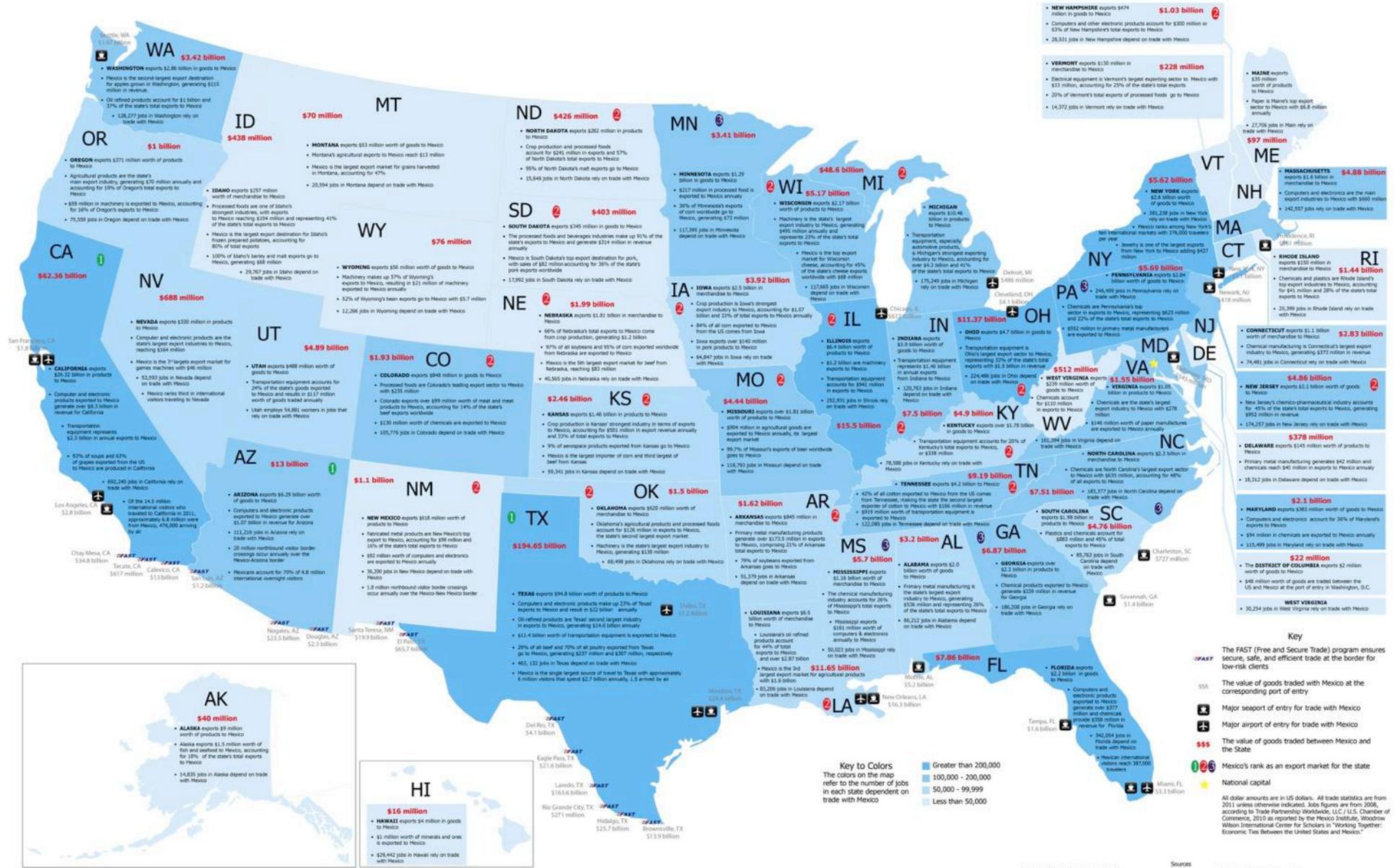


**Interstate 69**



**Water Treaty with Mexico**

# 6 million US jobs depend on trade with Mexico



**NEW HAMPSHIRE** exports \$74 million in goods to Mexico

- Computers and other electronic products account for \$300 million or 63% of New Hampshire's total exports to Mexico
- 28,317 jobs in New Hampshire depend on trade with Mexico

**MAINE** exports \$35 million worth of products to Mexico

- Paper is Maine's top export sector to Mexico with \$6.8 million annually
- 27,296 jobs in Maine rely on trade with Mexico

**MASSACHUSETTS** exports \$4.88 billion in merchandise to Mexico

- Computers and electronics are the main export industries to Mexico with \$600 million
- 142,573 jobs rely on trade with Mexico

**NEW YORK** exports \$2.8 billion worth of goods to Mexico

- Mexico ranks among New York's top 10 international markets with \$730.8 million
- Mexico is one of the largest export markets from New York to Mexico adding \$427 million
- 381,238 jobs in New York rely on trade with Mexico

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**VERMONT** exports \$130 million in merchandise to Mexico

- Electrical equipment is Vermont's largest exporting sector to Mexico with \$73 million, accounting for 20% of Vermont's total exports to Mexico
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All dollar amounts are in US dollars. All trade statistics are from 2011 unless otherwise indicated. Job figures are from 2008, according to Trade Partnership Worldwide, LLC U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 2011 as reported by the Mexico Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in "Working Together: Economic Ties Between the United States and Mexico."

Sources: Arizona Office of Tourism - azot.gov; Bureau of Transportation Statistics - bts.gov; California Travel and Tourism Commission - industry.visitcalifornia.com; International Trade Administration - trade.ita.doc.gov; Nevada Commission on Tourism - travelnevada.com; NY & Company - nyco.com

Tradestats Express - the.export.gov; US Customs and Border Protection - customs.gov; USSETrade - ussestrade.org; Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corp. - visitflorida.com; Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office - travelstate.texas.gov

# Sample of Issues in Northern Part of District



**Eagle Ford Shale Oil Play**



**Navy Air Station Kingsville**



**Wind Energy**



**Farm Bill**

# Farm Bill



- Appointed by Democratic Leadership to Farm Bill Conference Committee
- Conference Report recently passed House and Senate and was signed into law by POTUS on Feb. 7, 2014



# More on Farm Bill

- Provides transition payments to producers of upland cotton in light of the repeal of direct payments;
- Extends current sugar policy through 2018;
- Continues to support consumer demand for fresh fruits and vegetables and increases support for farmers' markets;
- Supports new farmers and ranchers with training and access to capital;
- Increases assistance for food banks;
- Creates initiatives to help veterans start agriculture businesses;
- Invests in research to promote agricultural innovation; and
- Reduces SNAP (food stamp funding by about \$8 billion, initial cuts were \$39 billion)



# Example of Homeland Security Committee Hearing

## “Taking Down the Cartels: Examining United States – Mexico Cooperation”

- Witnesses included: James Dinkins, Executive Associate Director of Homeland Security Investigations; John Feeley, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of State; Christopher Wilson from the Wilson Center; and Alan Bersin, Assistant Secretary of International Affairs at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- Brought issue of Violence in Tamaulipas to Forefront of the hearing
- One of this country's most important foreign policy challenges is convincing the Mexican central government to address cartel violence especially in Tamaulipas



# Example of Homeland Security Committee Hearing

## “The Boston Marathon Bombings, One Year On: A Look Back to Look Forward”

- Witnesses included: Edward Davis, former Commissioner of the Boston Police Department; Edward Deveau, Chief of the Watertown Police Department; and Jeffrey Pugliese, a sergeant with the Watertown Police Department
- The witnesses explained the strong cooperation amongst different law enforcement agencies over the last year to investigate the Boston Marathon bombings and now to prosecute Dzhokhar Tsarnaev. Additionally, the witnesses testified to the resilience of the Boston and Watertown communities



# Example of International Issue

## On the brink of war

### Military balance



## UKRAINE



Hundreds of unidentified gunmen supported by four armoured vehicles surrounded the Ukrainian military base trapping troops, tanks and armoured vehicles

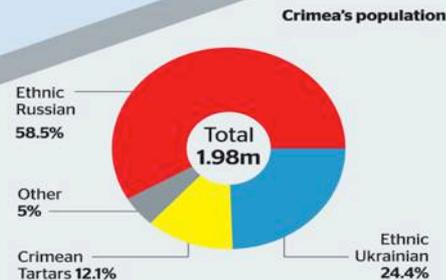


**1954**  
Crimea became part of Ukraine

**1994**  
Ukraine gave up its nuclear arsenal. In return US, UK and Russia agreed to never threaten Ukraine's independence

**1997**  
Russia allowed to base Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol and up to 25,000 personnel

**2014**  
Russian parliament approves deployment of troops

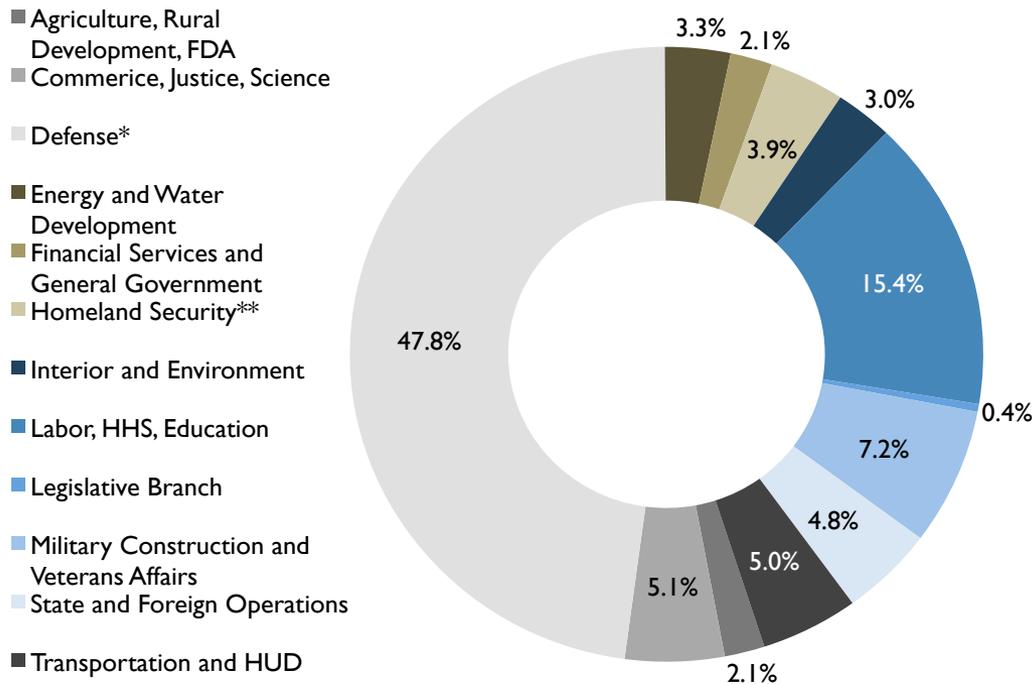


March 12 - U.S. House passed H.Res 499 which condemns the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty

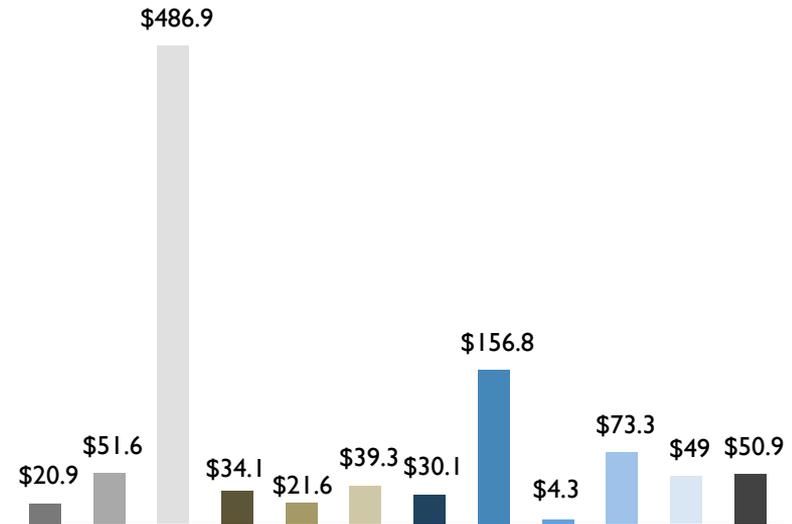
# Overview of the Federal Budget Process

## Defense, Labor Take Greatest Share of FY2014 Appropriations

**Breakdown of FY2014 Appropriations**



**FY2014 Appropriations (in billions)**



### Analysis

- The largest share of FY2014 appropriations went to Defense and Labor, HHS, and Education funding; the two categories combined to account for 63.2% of all funding, or \$643.7 billion
- Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Commerce, Justice, and Science appropriations were the third and fourth-most funded categories in the omnibus bill

\*Does not include overseas contingency operations funding

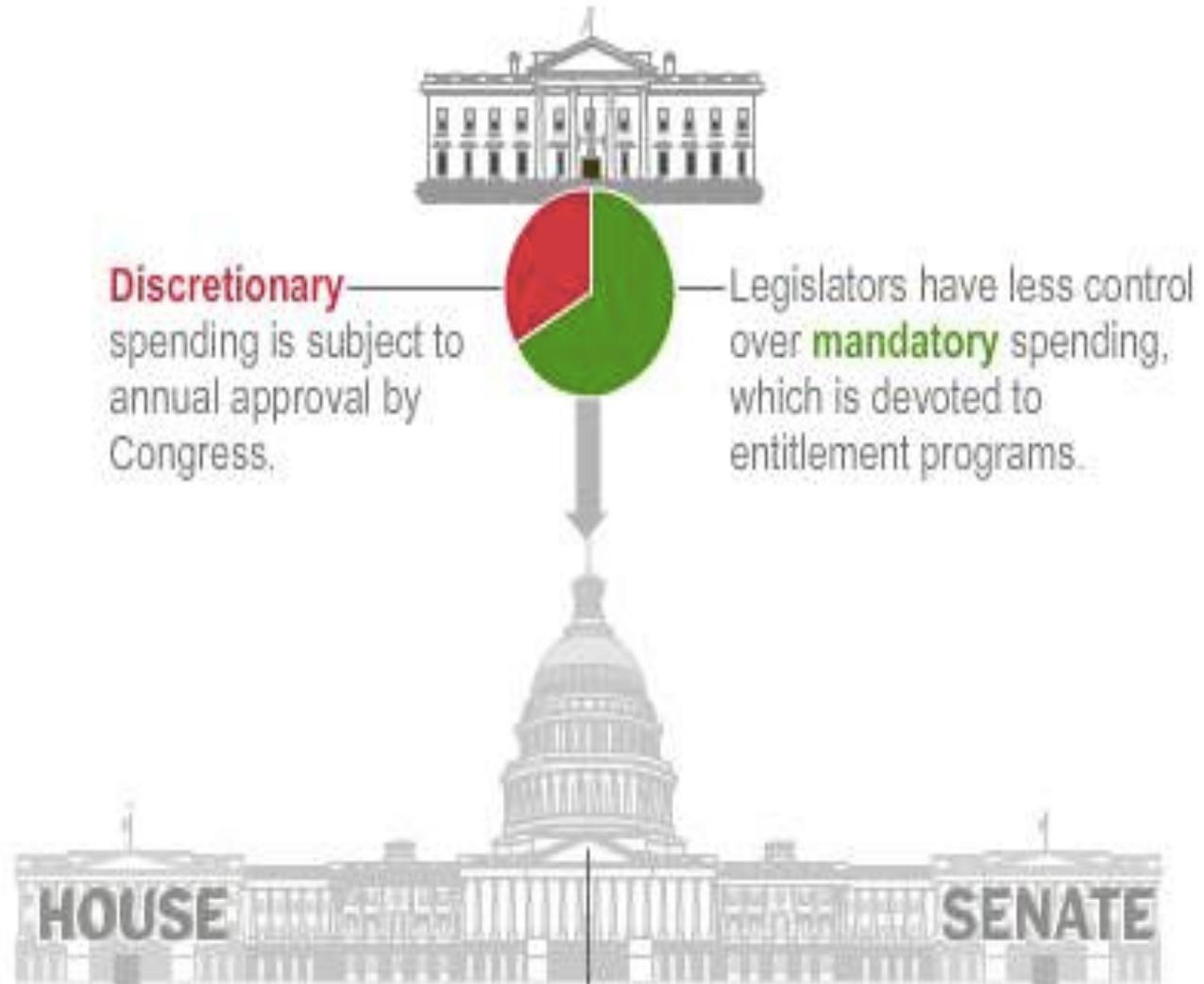
\*\*Includes disaster relief funding

Source: U.S. House of Representatives, 2014.

Source: The National Journal

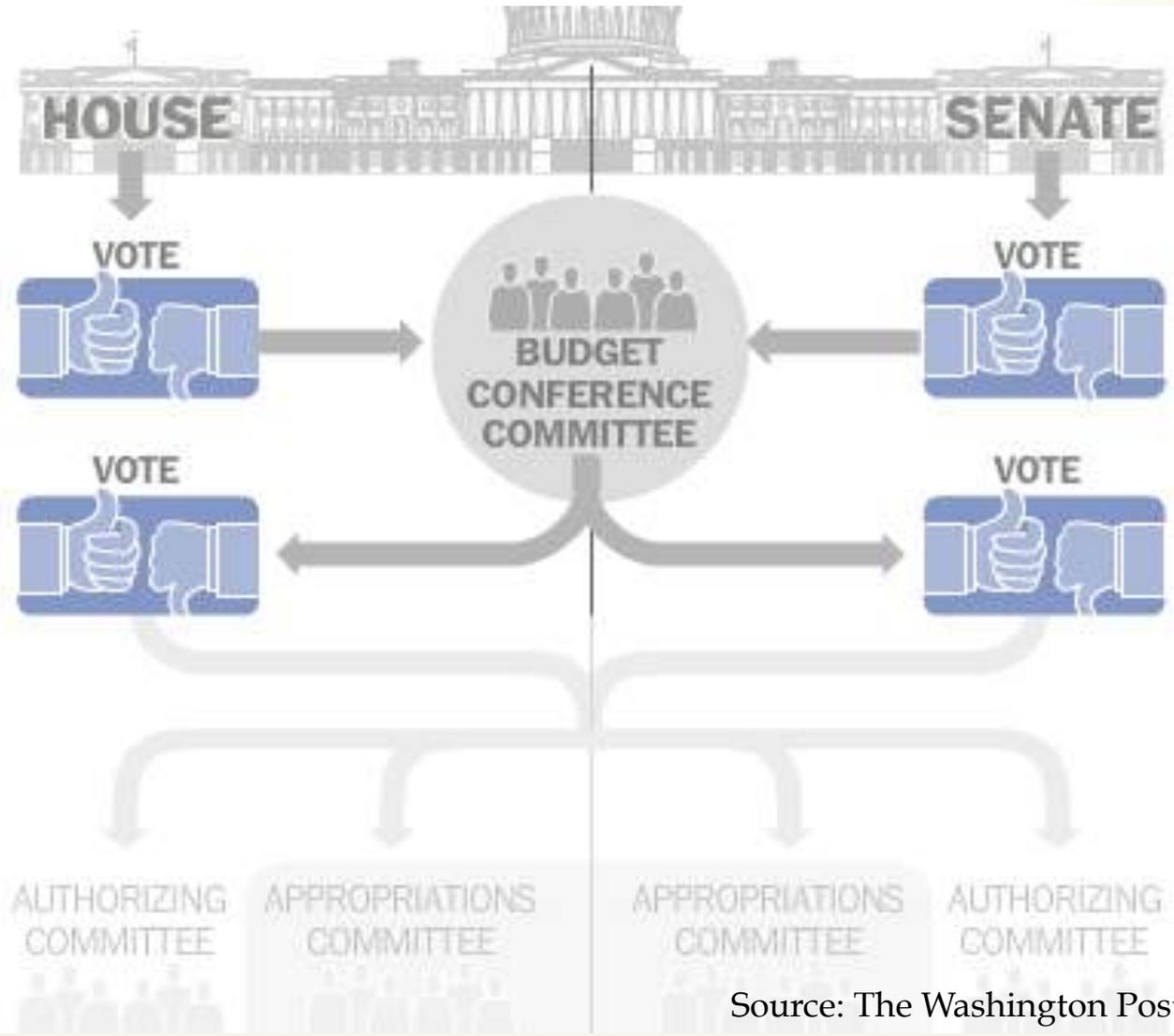
# The Federal Budget Process

The annual budget process kicks off with the president's budget submission, which is presented to Congress on or before the first Monday in February. The budget estimates spending, revenue (i.e., taxes) and borrowing levels for the following year.



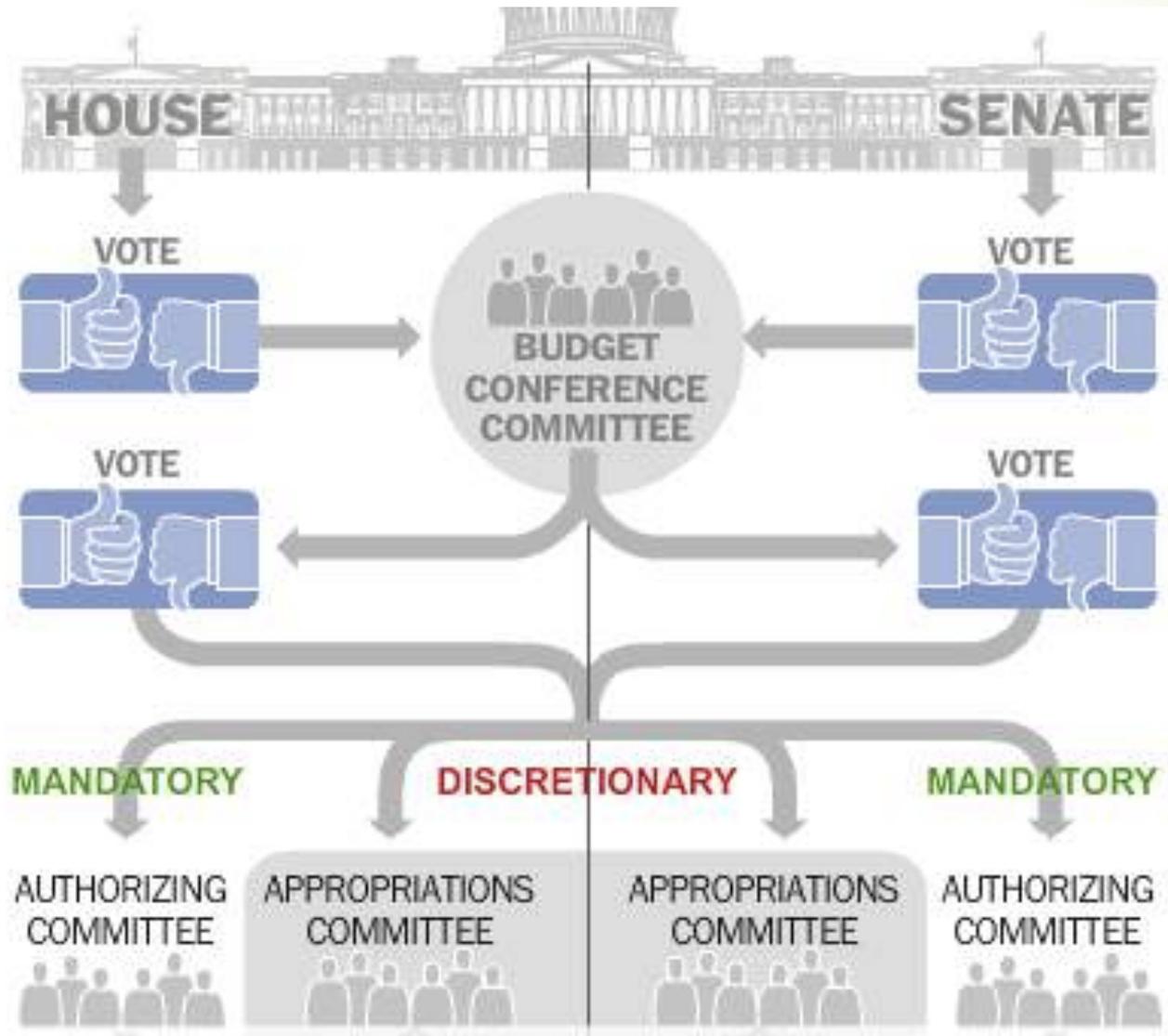
## Congress takes the ball

Once the president lays out his proposal, the House and Senate budget committees can begin writing their budget resolutions. The budget resolution sets targets for spending and tax revenue and identifies any policies that will need to move through reconciliation. The resolutions are sent to the floor for a vote, and differences are resolved in conference.



## Following two tracks

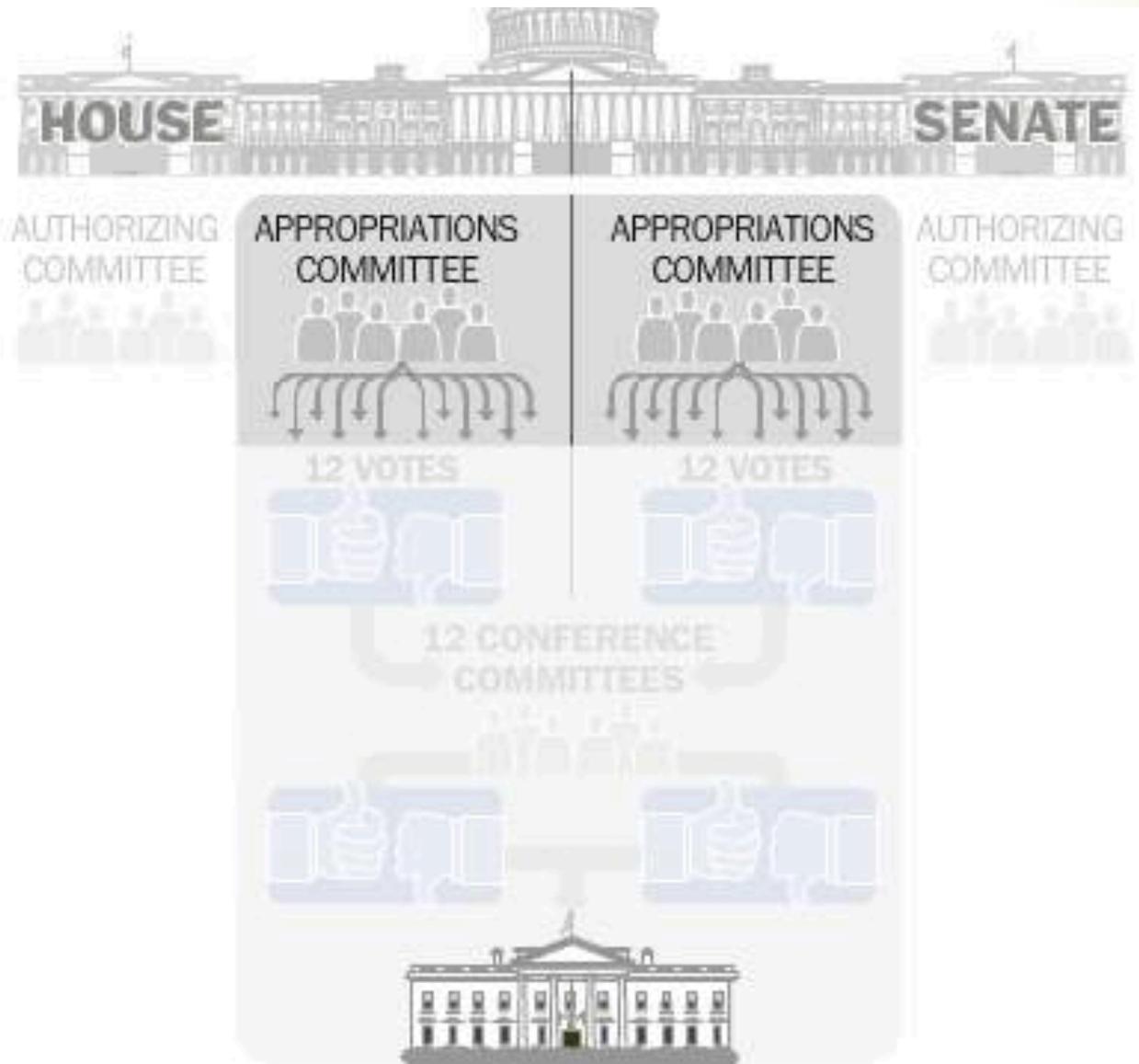
The appropriations committees decide how the discretionary allocation will be spent. The authorizing committees grapple with the spending that occurs through entitlement programs and make decisions about appropriate levels of federal revenues.



## DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

### Appropriations committee

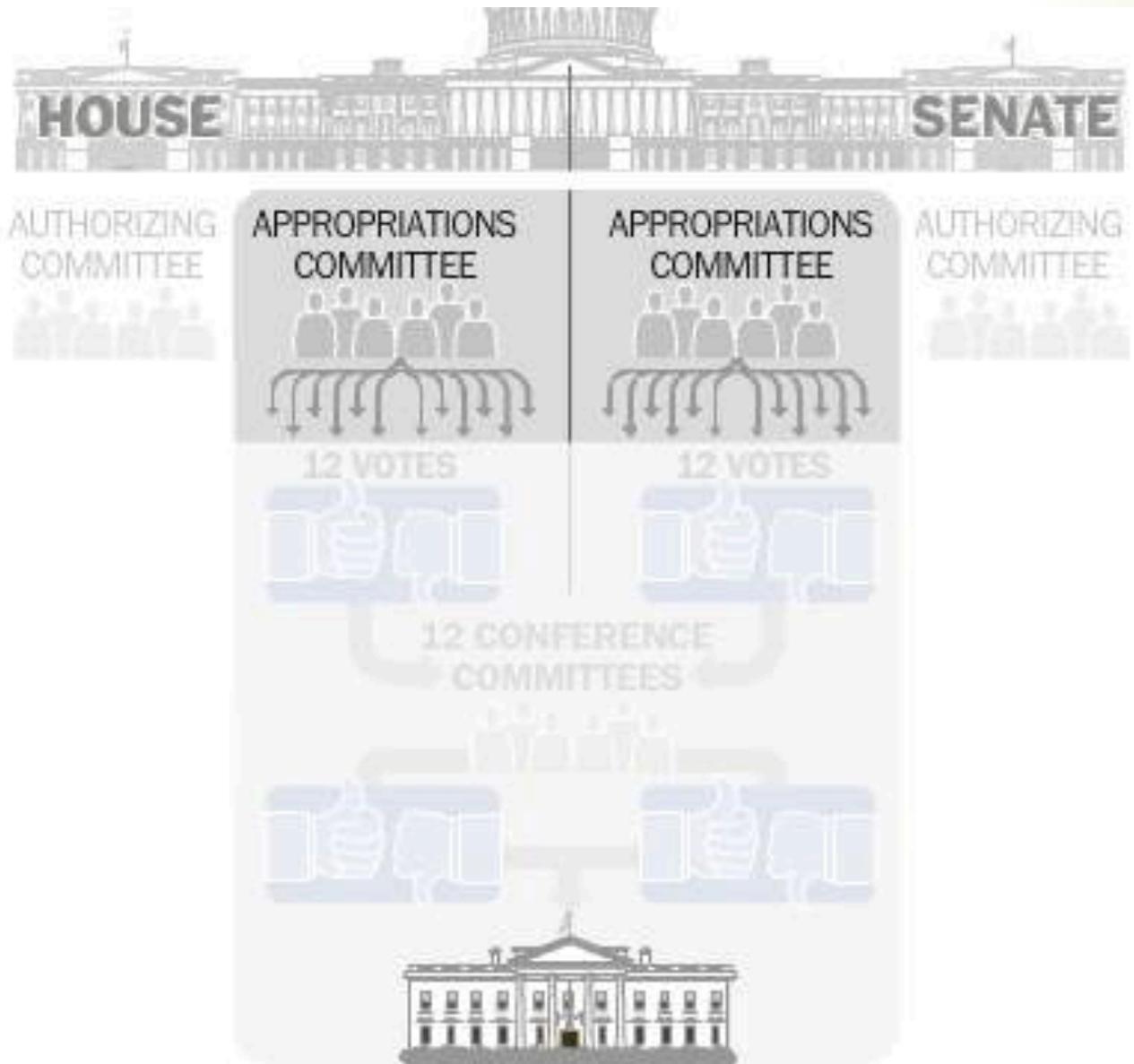
The appropriations committees divide the aggregate discretionary spending total provided by the budget resolution among each of their subcommittees.



## DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

### Dividing the total

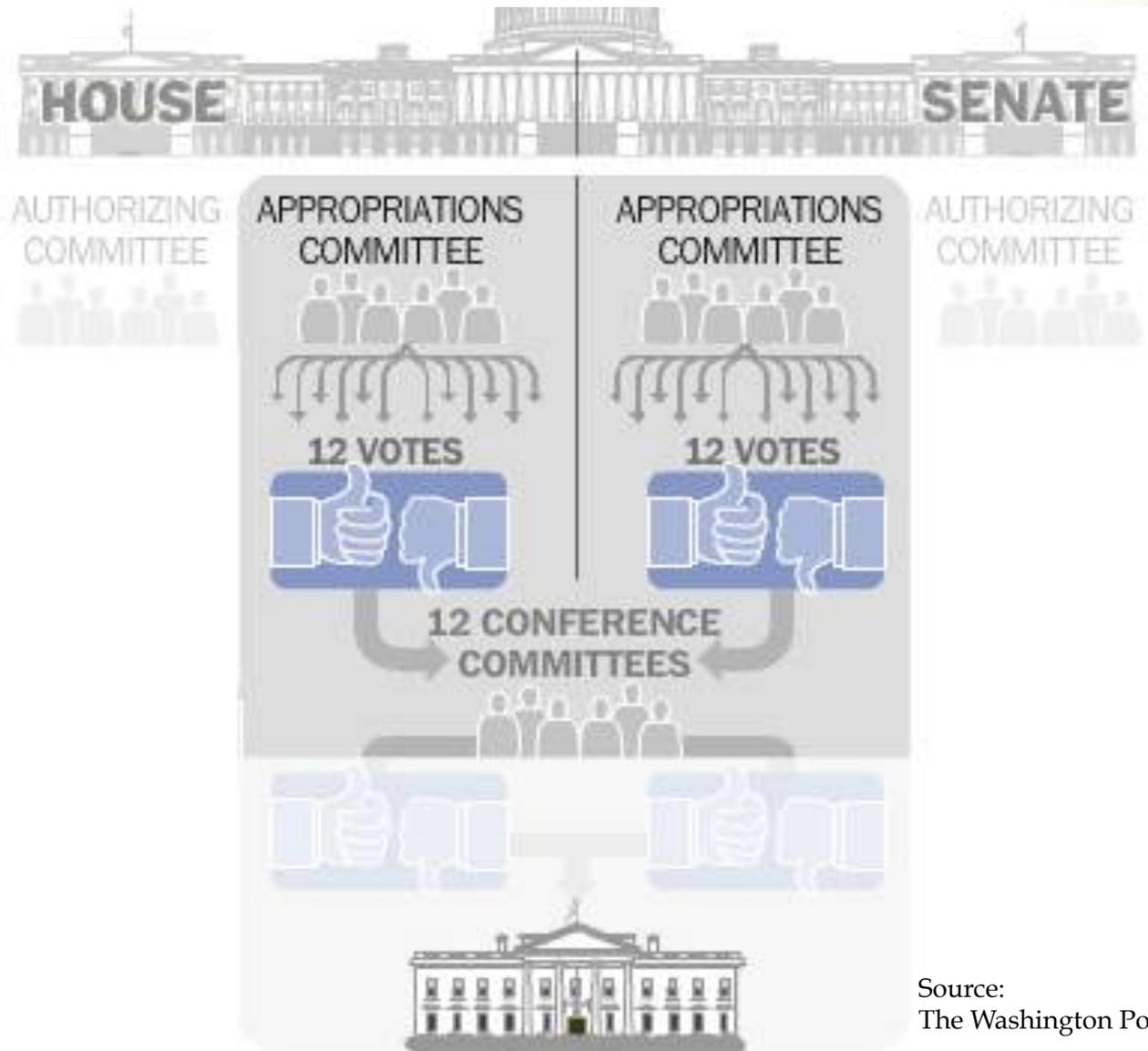
Each subcommittee conducts hearings on the programs under their jurisdiction and votes out a bill. The full appropriations committee marks up the bill and sends it to the floor. Both chambers pass their bills and iron out the differences in conference.



## DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

### Final bill goes to president

The House and Senate vote again, and the conference report is sent to the president for his signature or veto. All of the appropriations bills are supposed to be signed by the president by Oct. 1, but this rarely happens. To avoid a government shutdown, a series of continuing resolutions are approved to continue funding the agencies at their current levels.

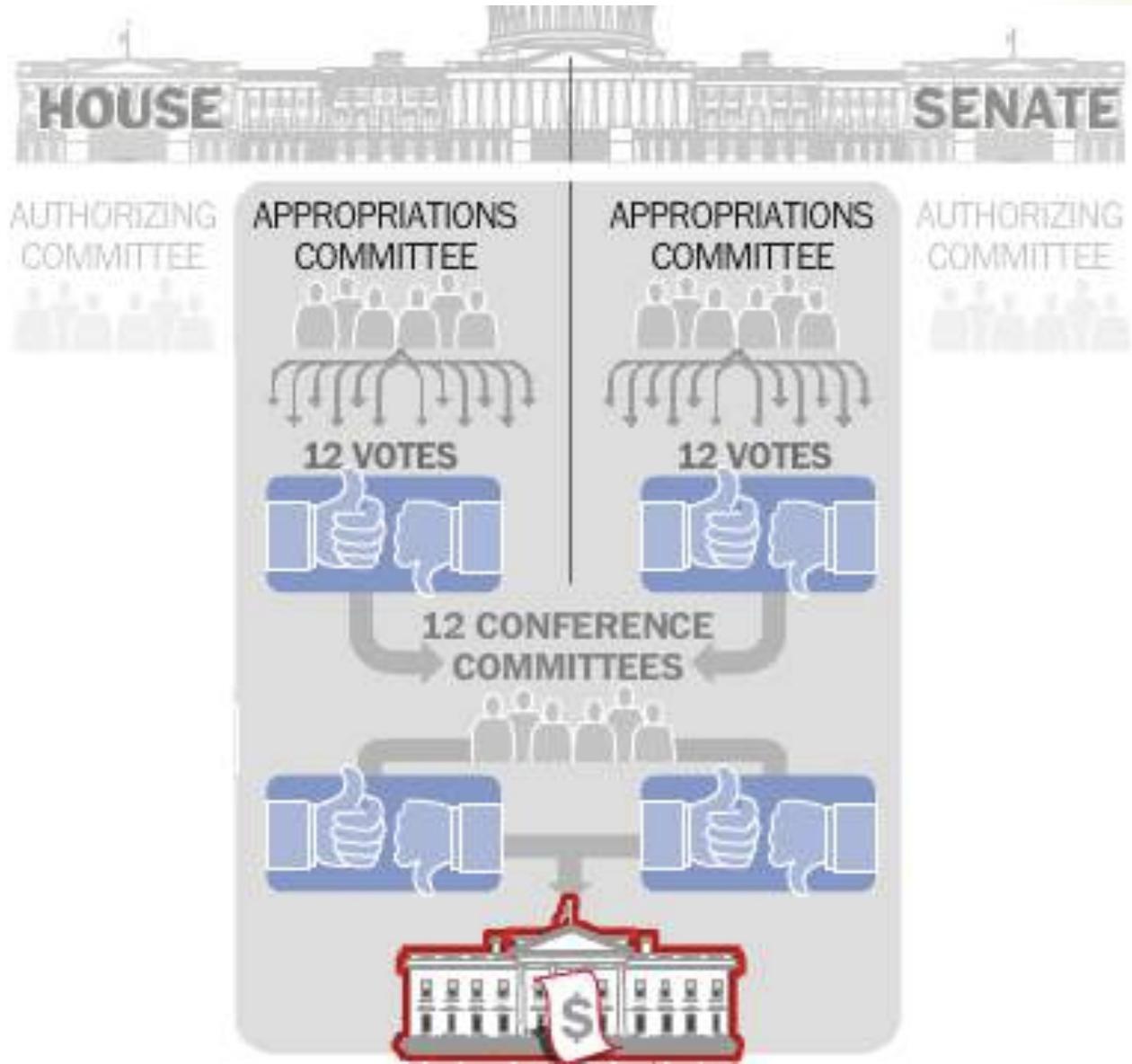


Source:  
The Washington Post

## DISCRETIONARY SPENDING

### Reconciling differences

The process of reconciliation occurs if Congress needs to legislate policy changes in mandatory spending or tax laws to meet the annual targets laid out in the budget resolution. The resolution requires the relevant authorizing committees to come up with plans and report back to the budget committees.



## MANDATORY SPENDING/REVENUE

### Packaging the omnibus

The budget committees combine all of the authorizing plans into an omnibus package and send it to the floor for a vote.



AUTHORIZING  
COMMITTEE



AUTHORIZING  
COMMITTEE



**MANDATORY  
SPENDING/REVENUE**

**Omnibus in  
conference**

The House and Senate work out differences in conference.



AUTHORIZING  
COMMITTEE



BUDGET  
COMMITTEE



VOTE



AUTHORIZING  
COMMITTEE



BUDGET  
COMMITTEE



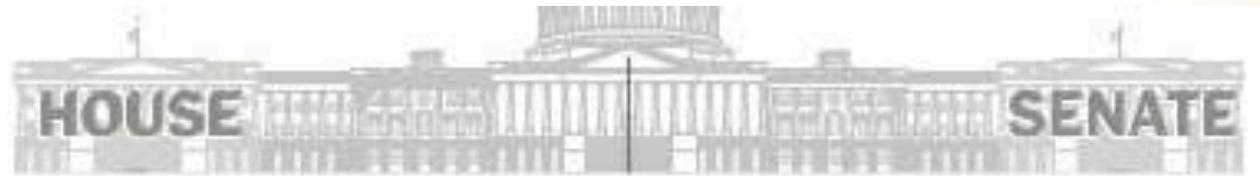
VOTE



**MANDATORY  
SPENDING/REVENUE**

**Final version to  
president**

The House and Senate vote again. The final version is sent to the president for signature or veto.



AUTHORIZING  
COMMITTEE



BUDGET  
COMMITTEE



VOTE



CONFERENCE  
COMMITTEE



AUTHORIZING  
COMMITTEE



BUDGET  
COMMITTEE



VOTE



# Bringing Washington Policy Makers to South Texas



**Walter Bastian**

Deputy Assistant Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce



**Miriam Sapiro**

Ambassador &  
Deputy U.S. Trade Representative



**Victor Mendez**

Acting Deputy Secretary  
Department of Transportation



**Rep. Xavier Becerra**

Chair  
House Democratic Caucus



**BGen Thomas Kula**

Commander U.S. Army  
Engineer Division,  
Southwestern Division



**Rep. Joe Crowley**

Vice-Chair  
House Democratic Caucus



**Ashok Kumar Mirpuri**

Ambassador  
The Republic of Singapore



**Rep. Nick Rahall**

Ranking Member  
Transportation and  
Infrastructure Committee

# Good Resource: [www.vela.house.gov](http://www.vela.house.gov)



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## Attracting Investment to South Texas

South Texas has a strong labor force, cheap energy, and multiple land and seaports, which make it a perfect location to do business.

[TO READ MORE, CLICK HERE](#)



[Comprehensive Immigration Reform](#)



[Negotiating a Farm Bill](#)



[Attracting Investment to South Texas](#)



[Promoting Infrastructure](#)



[Highlighting U.S.-Mexico Trade Relationship](#)

# Contacting Congressman Vela



**District Director:**  
Marisela Cortez  
Cell (956) 203-1340

**District Director**  
Jose Pereida  
Cell (361) 230-9776

**District Director**  
Humberto Garza  
Cell (956) 203-9580

## District Offices

333 Ebony Avenue  
Brownsville, TX 78520  
956-544-8352

1390 W. Expressway 83  
San Benito, TX 78586  
956-203-1662

500 East Main Street  
Suite 312A  
Alice, Texas 78332

<http://vela.house.gov>

# Questions???

