

**UNITED STEELWORKERS**  
**Rapid  
Response**

**2022 VIRTUAL LEGISLATIVE  
AND POLICY CONFERENCE**

# Legislating in the 2020's

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# Congressional Quiz



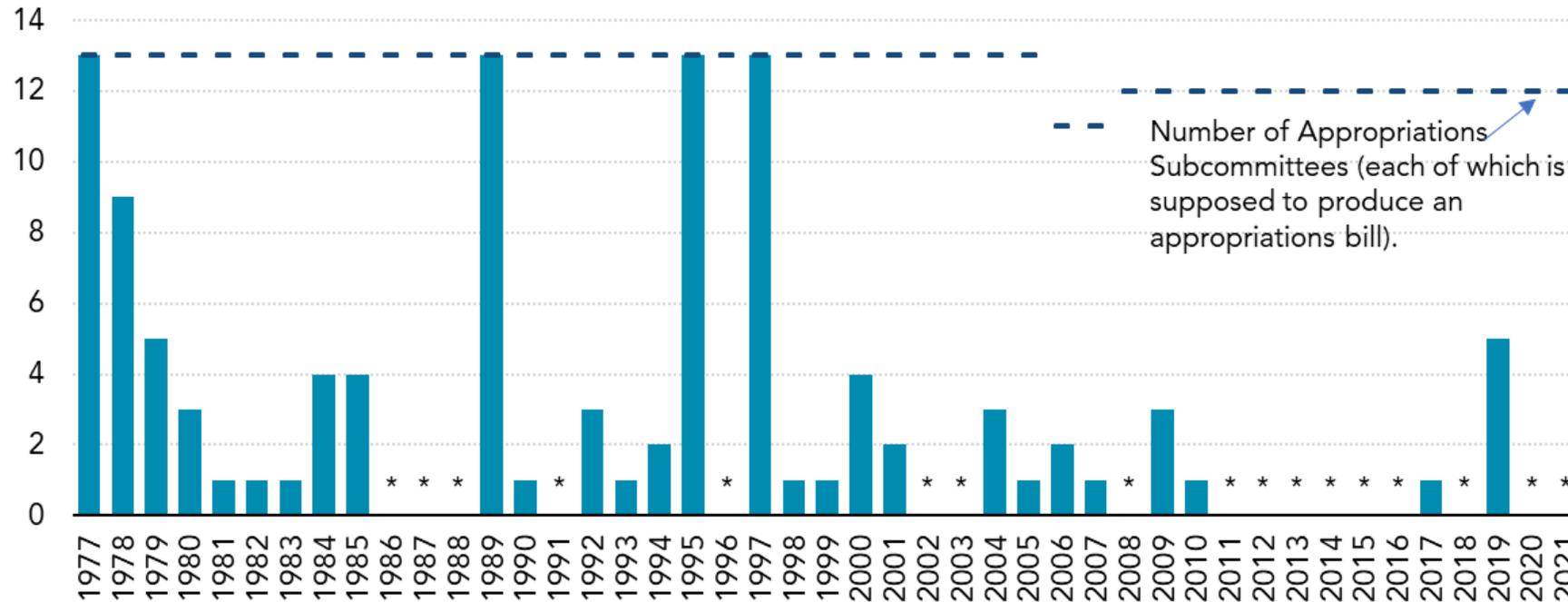
1. Every year Congress is expected to pass 12 separate spending bills to fund the federal government and its programs. In what year did Congress last pass all 12 spending bills separately and before the deadline?

- A) 2003
- B) 1997
- C) 2009
- D) 1990
- E) 2017



# Number of Appropriations Bills Enacted On Time

FY1977-2021



Source: Congressional Research Service, "Continuing Resolutions: Overview of Components and Practices," R42647, April 19, 2019; and "Appropriations Status Table," <https://crsreports.congress.gov/AppropriationsStatusTable>, accessed October 4, 2020.

\* No appropriations bills were passed before the start of the fiscal year; this occurred 17 times since FY1977.



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2. Congress has passed some lengthy bills over the past few years. What bill is the longest bill ever passed by Congress?

- A) The Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act
- B) The Affordable Care Act
- C) The 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act
- D) The No Child Left Behind Act
- E) The 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act



3. How many substantive bills did the last Congress pass (these bills include changes in law, policy, or spending tax dollars)?

- A) 233
- B) 368
- C) 295
- D) 463
- E) 195



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## More than three decades of congressional productivity

*Number of public laws enacted by each Congress, by type*

	Substantive	Ceremonial
101st ('89-'90)	408	242
102nd ('91-'92)	393	197
103rd ('93-'94)	325	140
104th ('95-'96)	287	46
105th ('97-'98)	350	44
106th ('99-'00)	463	117
107th ('01-'02)	294	83
108th ('03-'04)	368	130
109th ('05-'06)	342	140
110th ('07-'08)	295	165
111th ('09-'10)	274	109
112th ('11-'12)	208	75
113th ('13-'14)	212	84
114th ('15-'16)	232	97
115th ('17-'18)	306	136
116th ('19-'20)	233	111

Note: "Substantive" laws are those statutes that make a change in federal law, set policy or spend tax dollars, no matter how small. "Ceremonial" laws include those that rename federal facilities, award medals, designate special days, authorize commemorative coins, or otherwise memorialize people or historic events. Public laws are laws of general applicability. Private laws affect specific individuals or small groups.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of data from congress.gov.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

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# It's Just Not Like It Used to Be!



# What is Reconciliation?

Congress has been using a relatively unique tool to pass legislation called reconciliation. Created by the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, reconciliation allows for expedited consideration of particular tax, spending, and debt-limit legislation. In the Senate, reconciliation bills aren't subject to a filibuster, which requires 60 votes to overcome, and the scope of amendments is limited. The reconciliation process only requires a simple majority or 51 votes.

# When has it been used in the past?

Reconciliation has been used 22 times since 1980. President Reagan used this process to enact significant spending cuts. Clinton used the process to enact welfare reform, and both Presidents Bush and Trump used it to pass tax bills.

# How does it work?

- Under the Congressional Budget Act, the House and Senate are supposed to adopt a budget resolution to set guidelines for action on spending and revenue each year.
- Next, House committees take action. The various aspects of the bill are dealt with in the committees that have jurisdiction over those issues. These committees will send their recommendations along to the House Budget Committee when they finish.
- The Budget Committee then takes those recommendations and bundles them together for a floor vote in the House. If it passes, the bill goes to the Senate.
- Suppose the Senate adopts a different bill than the House. In that case, they will work out the differences between the two by using a “conference committee” made up of members from both the Senate and House.
- Both chambers will then take an up-or-down vote on the final, compromise version.
- If they approve it, the bill goes to the President for signature, and it will become law.

# Why does it matter?

- In order to avoid the filibuster, Congress is attempting to move some legislation through the reconciliation process.
- Even bills that aren't moving as part of reconciliation are being packaged differently.
- These bills are being lumped together into larger packages in hopes of getting an agreement in conference between the Senate and House.

# We Have to Be Persistent!

# We're Adapting . . .

- We are educating members of Congress and their staff on our issues
- We are advocating for stand-alone legislation and building co-sponsorship lists to show support
- And we are pushing for inclusion of these bills and policies in the larger bills

# We're Adapting . . .

- The America COMPETES Act, which recently passed the House of Representatives, is a legislative package that boosts American semiconductor manufacturing and competitiveness with China.
- The bill contains **63 bipartisan bills alone – 29 of those have previously passed the House.**
- This includes trade enforcement reforms, including H.R. 6121, commonly known as the "Leveling the Playing Field Act 2.0" which aids domestic manufacturers and workers in their ability to defend against illegally dumped and subsidized goods from entering the U.S. market and which the USW has supported.

# And It's Working!

- **Butch-Lewis**

- Once again, legislation was introduced to protect multiemployer pension plans.
- Thanks to years of efforts, education efforts with Senators and Representatives, and building a strong cosponsor list for the legislation, the Butch Lewis Act was ultimately included in the American Rescue Plan, a bill that was passed under reconciliation.
- In March, the bill became law and it provided \$86 billion for struggling multiemployer pension plans, protecting the future of 120,000 active USW members and retirees.

- **The Health Coverage Tax Credit**

- The credit covers 72.5 percent of health care insurance premiums for individuals who receive PBGC or TAA benefits. After years of advocating for permanent fixes and ensuring short term extensions in the interim, a permanent extension included in the House's Build Back Better legislation. Another permanent fix was included in the America COMPETES Act.

# But We Need Your Voices!

- While the Legislative and Policy Department (LAPD) engages with members of Congress and their staff to help enact policy changes that benefit our members, their families, and their industries, the number one thing offices ask for is personal stories spotlighting why these policies are necessary.
- Members of Congress and their staff want to hear your voices – they want to hear from their voters like you.
- You provide a face and a voice for the need for their policy changes and help them to get across the finish line!

# But We Need Your Voices!

Here's What YOU can do:

- Set up a Rapid Response Team in your Local!
- Take part in actions when asked. Every letter, phone call, and email makes a difference!
- Share your stories! Legislators will move on issues if their constituents let them know why it matters.



# We Cannot Get Discouraged!

