

Assignment Two

Part One: As we have discussed, members of Congress are very dependent on their districts (see Fenno and Mayhew). Select any member of the House of Representatives and briefly discuss such things as the district's demography, political characteristics and history, industries and important interest groups, and other relevant data on the district. Give a two to three paragraph summary (keep it short) of the major district characteristics that help determine the ideology and behavior of the legislator. Post this description on the Panfora website. You will need to have your summary posted by May 24 to receive full credit.

You will probably want to consult the specific member's website (link through <http://loc.thomas.gov>) and the *National Journal* (<http://nationaljournal.com> This is a subscriber site that you can access through the Stanford domain, the *Almanac of American Politics* can be searched on the site.) or *Congressional Quarterly* almanacs.

Part Two: Take your House member and select one other member from the list of them in Panfora. Please choose a second member that is somewhat different from the first member. They need not be polar opposites, but they should be unlike in at least a few ways. Then draft a brief essay (1200 words or less) explaining how these two members might vote on the following (semi-hypothetical) issues:

- *Social Security Privatization:* The social security commission returns a recommendation to privatize the system. Though benefits will remain the same for people already in the system, younger workers will be allowed to invest some of their withholdings in private accounts.
- *Defense Appropriations Bill:* The Bush administration having finished its analysis of the armed services has recommended significant future budget cuts for all four services. The appropriations bill for the military has a significantly smaller level of spending than expected. Several House members propose to raise the spending levels. This

vote is a decision between the two plans. “Yea” means accepting the president’s plan, “Nay” is a vote for the proposed alternative.

- *Environmental Protection:* The administration proposes a bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. European and Asian allies are highly critical of the bill arguing it does not go far enough. American environmental groups are also strongly against the bill, though members of Congress argue that any step towards reducing emissions is a positive action.

Your essay is due in class on May 31. Essays must be double spaced, and a word count must be displayed at the end of the essay.