

2013 Engineering Deans Council Public Policy Colloquium

Tobin Smith
Vice President for Policy
Association of American Universities



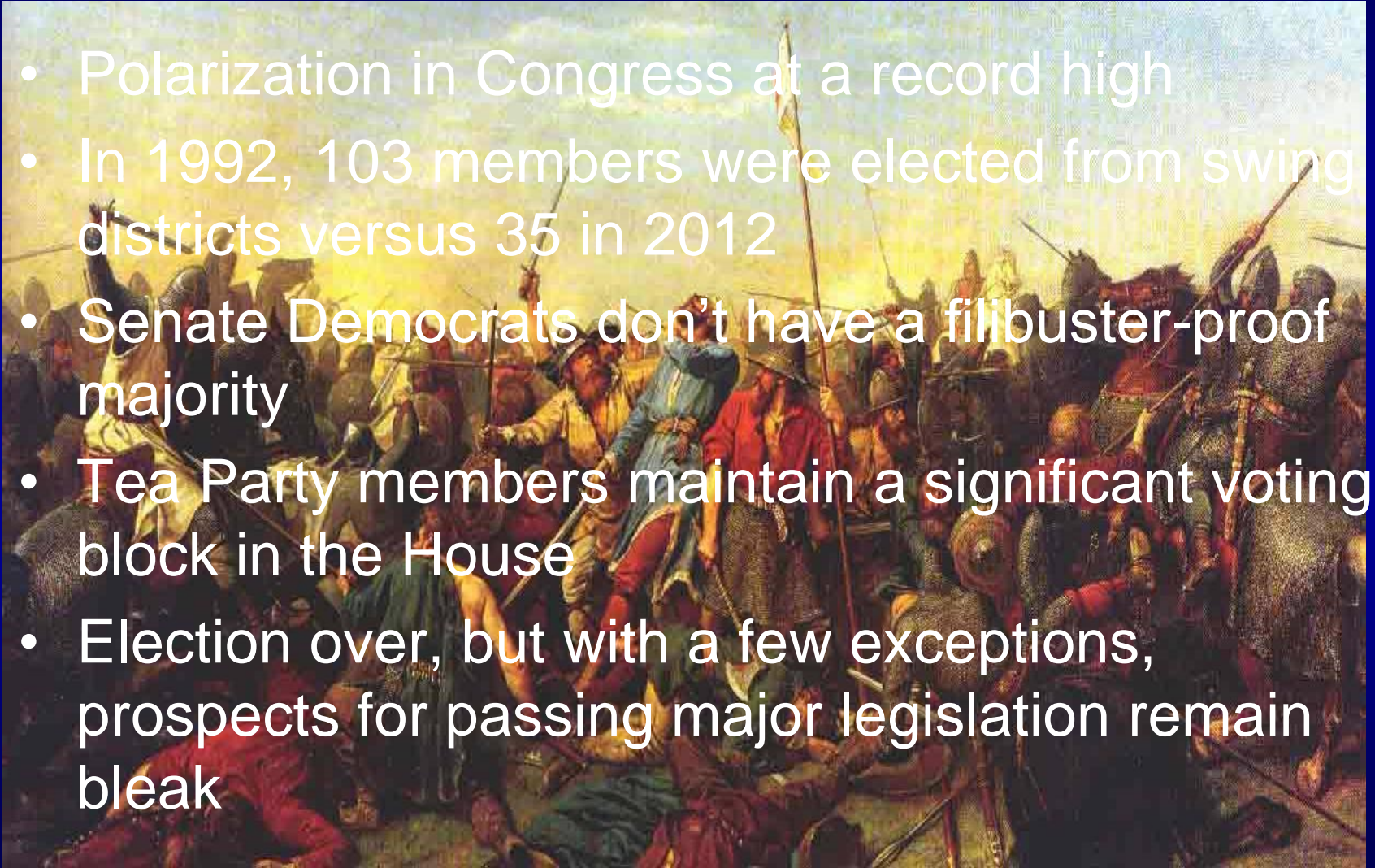
February 12, 2013

Overview

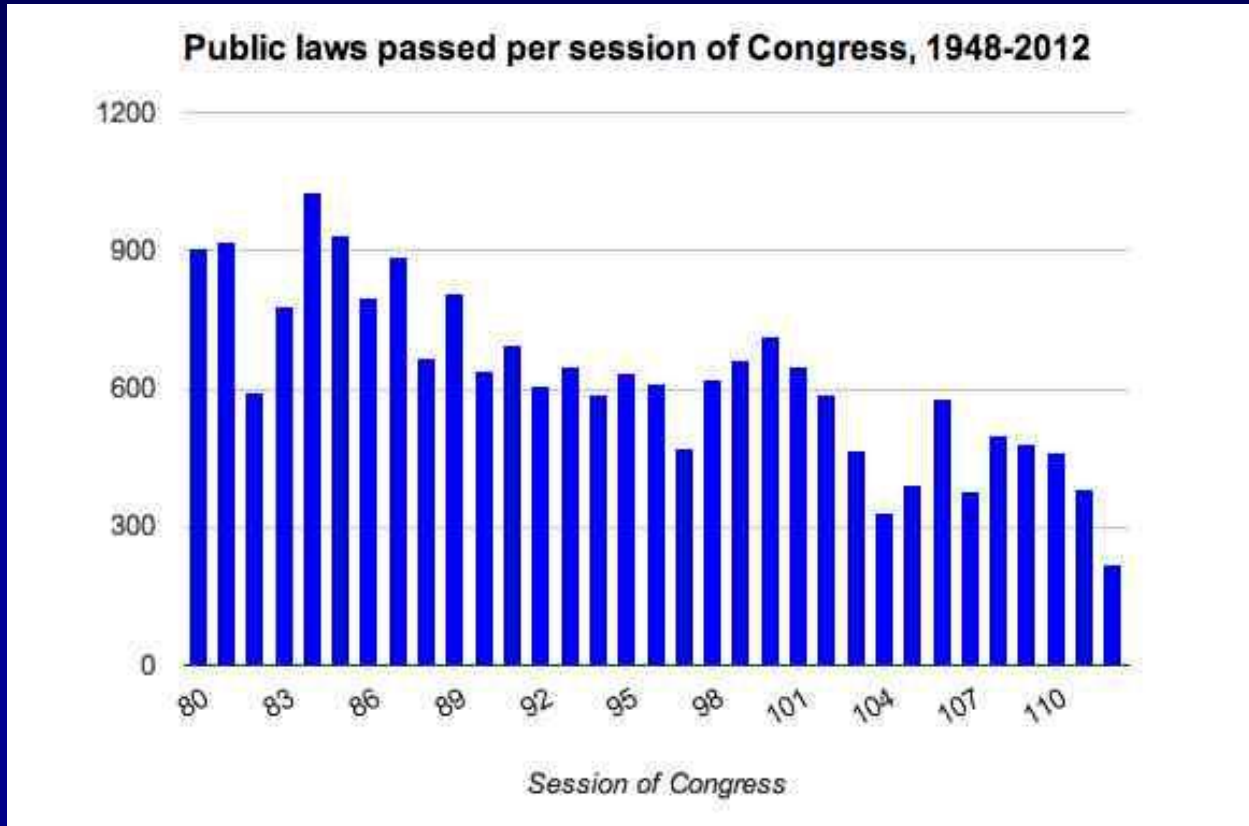
- The current political and fiscal climate
- Key messages for Capitol Hill visits
- Profile: 113th Congress and its Members

The Political Climate

- Polarization in Congress at a record high
- In 1992, 103 members were elected from swing districts versus 35 in 2012
- Senate Democrats don't have a filibuster-proof majority
- Tea Party members maintain a significant voting block in the House
- Election over, but with a few exceptions, prospects for passing major legislation remain bleak



Legislative Productivity:



--112th Congress (Sept 1, 2012): 220 Public Laws

--80th Congress (1947-1948) 900 Public Laws

The Fiscal Climate

- Reducing the deficit is the top priority for both Rs & Ds
- Increasing 'revenues' not viewed favorably by Republicans
- Entitlement reform not viewed favorably by Democrats
- Sequestration has become a real possibility
- Science has been protected, but...



Key Fiscal Decision Points

- House Republicans extend action on the debt for three months until May 19.
- Absent some preventative legislative action, sequestration will occur March 1.
- The current six-month Continuing Resolution funding the federal government expires March 27.
- House and Senate leaders plan to consider budget resolutions for FY14 that include reconciliation instructions setting targets for tax reform and entitlement spending.

Key Messages for Hill Visits

- *Stop sequestration from taking effect*
- If the sequester is implemented, it will have a significant negative impacts
- Discretionary spending has already been cut
- We need a balanced approach to debt reduction that includes additional revenues and entitlement reforms
- Sequestration will damage the very investments our nation needs to grow our economy and that drive job creation
- We must make strategic investments in research and education if we are to compete with other nations and to ensure our future economic and national security
- Other messages, e.g. advanced manufacturing, STEM education, energy R&D, defense, etc.

Congressional Profile

- Less than 5 percent have background in science or engineering
- In the 112th Congress, 6 members had engineering degrees, 24 had medical degrees and 222 had law degrees
- More members have no educational degree beyond a high school diploma than have PhDs
- 97 new members in the 113th Congress
- House: 233 Republicans & 200 Democrats
- Senate 53 Democrats, 45 Republicans & 2 Independents
- 2 in 5 House members (39%) have served for less than 3 years
- The Senate has seen a 43% turnover rate since 2008