

## How electoral margins in the House and Senate translate into party allocations on congressional taxwriting committees

At the start of each new Congress, House and Senate leaders determine the number of seats on their respective standing committees that will be allocated to members of the majority and minority parties based on the total number of seats each party holds in that chamber. The tables below show how the majority party's overall share of seats in the House and in the Senate over the 10 most recent Congresses has compared with its share of taxwriting committee seats in each chamber. Based on this data, it appears that the majority's share of Ways and Means Committee seats has exceeded its share of total House seats by a range of roughly 3.9 to 7.8 percentage points. Across the Rotunda, the majority party's share of Finance Committee seats has more closely reflected its overall share of Senate seats, generally exceeding that threshold by less than 1 percentage point and in some Congresses even falling below it.

**Sources:** Congressional Research Service, [House Committee Party Ratios: 98th-117th Congresses](#) (Apr. 16, 2021) and [Senate Committee Party Ratios: 98th-117th Congresses](#) (Apr. 16, 2021).

Majority's share of House seats v. Majority's share of Ways & Means seats								
Congress	Majority party	Total House seats (by party)			Ways & Means seats (by party)			Variation: Majority's share of W&M seats over House seats
		D	R	Majority's percentage share <sup>1</sup>	D	R	Majority's percentage share	
117th	D	219	211	50.3%	25	18	58.1%	7.8%
116th	D	235	198	54.0%	25	17	59.5%	5.5%
115th	R	194	241	55.4%	16	24	60.0%	4.6%
114th	R	188	247	56.8%	15	24	61.5%	4.7%
113th	R	201	234	53.8%	16	23	59.0%	5.2%
112th	R	193	242	55.6%	15	22	59.5%	3.9%
111th	D	256	178	58.9%	26	15	63.4%	4.5%
110th	D	233	202	53.6%	24	17	58.5%	4.9%
109th	R	202	232	53.3%	17	24	58.5%	5.2%
108th	R	204	229	52.6%	17	24	58.5%	5.9%

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of House control calculated based on 435 total seats.

Majority's share of Senate seats v. Majority's share of Finance Committee seats								
Congress	Majority party	Total Senate seats (by party)			Finance Committee seats (by party)			Variation: Majority's share of Finance seats over Senate seats
		D <sup>1</sup>	R	Majority's percentage share	D	R	Majority's percentage share	
117th	D <sup>2</sup>	50	50	50%	14	14	50.0%	0.0%
116th	R	47	53	53%	13	15	53.6%	0.6%
115th	R	48	52	52%	12	14	53.8%	1.8%
114th	R	46	54	54%	12	14	53.8%	-0.2%
113th	D	54	46	54%	13	11	54.2%	0.2%
112th	D	53	47	53%	13	11	54.2%	0.2%
111th	D	60	40	60%	13	10	56.5%	-3.5%
110th	D	51	49	51%	11	10	52.4%	1.4%
109th	R	45	55	55%	9	11	55.0%	0.0%
108th	R	49	51	51%	10	11	52.4%	1.4%

<sup>1</sup> Headcount includes Independents who caucused with Democrats.  
<sup>2</sup> Although both parties hold 50 seats in the 117th Congress, Democrats have the majority since Vice President Kamala Harris, who serves as president of the Senate, casts the tiebreaking vote in the event of a deadlock.