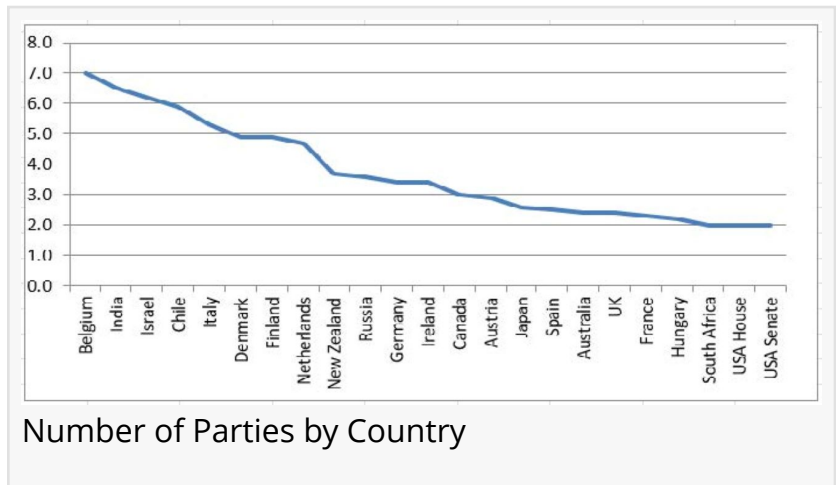


RECENT BOOK COMBATIVE CONGRESS ADDRESSES THE NEED FOR MORE COLLABORATION IN CONGRESS TO SOLVE UNRESOLVED BIG PROBLEMS

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-- Solve American Gridlock LLC

<https://www.solveamericangridlock.com/> has published *Combative Congress, Your Power! Your Voice!* Amazon <https://a.co/d/0bg3iUR>. This book

describes the history of cultural and procedural changes in Congress over the past two or three generations and how and why these changes have led to the two parties and many of their members placing party dominance and their careers over solving the major unsolved problems.



“

...the Framers had produced a Republic, if you can keep it.”

Benjamin Franklin

Failure to solve the U.S. immigration issues.

Failure in fiscal matters including budgeting, deficit spending, and a high percentage of overall spending on autopilot. The federal debt in August 2024 was \$35 trillion, or \$420,000 per family.

Failure to provide for the fiscal sustainability of major programs including Social Security and Medicare.

Failure to stem the abdication of congressional powers to the Executive and Judicial Branches.
Failure to develop a professional, comprehensive, and long-term plan for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions – the largest project America and the world have ever faced.

Failure to stop the drug-related crisis.

Failure to use regular order and procedures that worked well in the past.

Failure to allow fair competition from more than two parties.

The book uses root cause analysis to identify exactly why these changes have taken place and

what actions are needed to bring about satisfactory collaboration and problem solving. The mission of the book is to be a handbook to the electoral systems used for electing Congresspersons and the changes needed to have more cooperation by facilitating competitive viewpoints.

Combative Congress demonstrates that the electoral laws and systems used to select and elect members of Congress are root causes of its dysfunctionality. Congress has shown itself to be increasingly polarized and ineffective in addressing its tasks; this applies to both parties. Approval for Congress July 17, 2024, was 18.3%, per Congress Approval Polls, FiveThirtyEight. It is not a stretch to say that many members of Congress are aware of the situation and increasingly dissatisfied with their personal status.

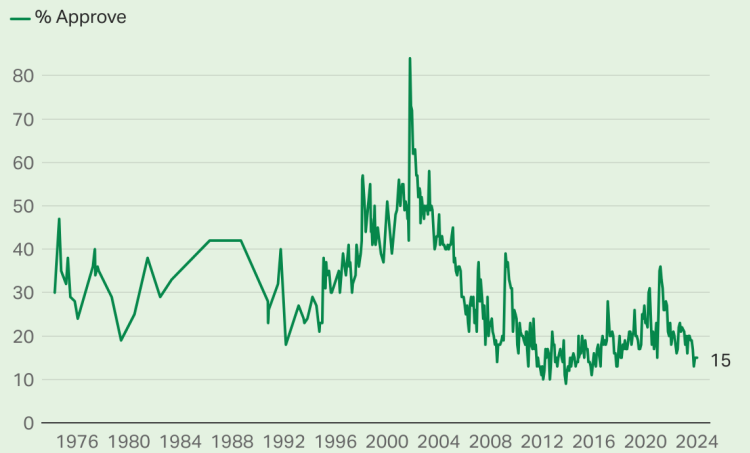
The book goes on to say that the punch line of these changes in electoral methods is that they can lead a country to have more than two parties. Over twenty leading nations have more than two influential parties per the accompanying graph. These countries have seen the advantages of getting away from two combative parties whose primary goal is to damage the opposing party, not to solve their country's problems.

Combative Congress points out that strong feelings do arise in legislative bodies, but the chances of finding a negotiating partner are much improved if there is more than one from which to pick.

Polarization in Congress is a huge problem per the book, but it baked into the cake. Extreme friction in Congress spills over into the media and the public. It is the product of electoral

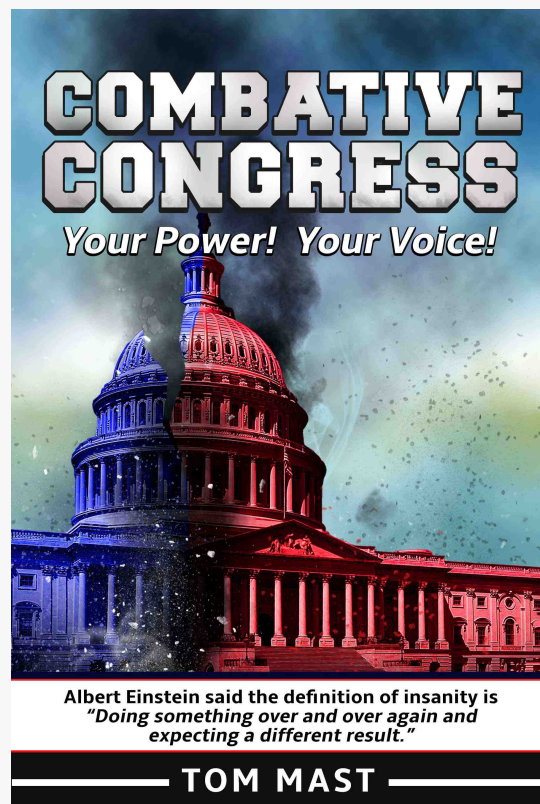
Congressional Job Approval

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?



GALLUP

Gallup 2023



Combative Congress front cover

systems for congresspersons. Laws have created the system of having only two effective parties, making a case that the zero-sum, winner-takes-all, two-party system is a big reason for Congress's difficulties. These electoral systems are generally created at the state level. Some states have made changes recently, and more of them are seriously considering improvements.



Liberty

The book recommends the electoral system changes required for collaboration and competition. First, eliminate closed-party, partisan primary elections. Substitute state-funded and operated open and nonpartisan primaries from which a small number of winners earn the right to compete in the general election. Parties would have to finance any conventions or primaries they use to select a candidate for the state primary. Second, use independent commissions or multi-member districts to mitigate the effects of gerrymandering. Third, use ranked choice voting (RCV) where appropriate to ensure that candidates must have a majority vote to win and eliminate runoff elections.

The current presidential race has laid bare the importance of finding the root causes of polarization and national friction and dealing decisively with them.

Combative Congress addresses a serious and complex topic in ways that make reading it pleasant. This nonpartisan book is unique in that its appeal stretches from a high school student to a professor, from a newly married person to a retired chemical engineer, and more. It was written to be concise and readable; it has 33 color graphs and photographs to implant images of concepts in the reader's mind; and it has short chapters and good references.

National constitutions have lasted an average of only 17 years since 1789. America's Constitution has lasted over 230 years! The book points out the need for continued vigilance. Albert Einstein said "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result."

In 2014, about 94% (https://ballotpedia.org/United_States_Congress_elections,_2014) of incumbent congressional candidates were returned to office, but the approval rate for Congress was around 15% (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/180113/2014-approval-congress-remains-near-time-low.aspx>). How in the world can that be? The answer is that we have broken electoral systems.

Solve American Gridlock LLC's primary focus is educating citizens about improvements that can

be made in the methods used to elect members of Congress.

Tom Mast is the founder of Solve American Gridlock, the author of Combative Congress, and he lives in Austin, Texas. He is a retired engineer with degrees from The University of Texas, Stanford, and the Harvard Business School. He served as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, spent his career in manufacturing and engineering management, and has long been interested in our country's polarization, the duopoly in our Congress and its causes, and what improvements we must encourage.

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