

PSCI 3110: The Legislative Process
Fall 2019

Specifications for LegSim Mini-Project #4: Committee Request

Congressional committees are the workshops of Congress. They are where most of the work (legislating) gets done—through meetings, hearings, bill markups (amending), and debate. Richard Fenno¹ outlined three broad goals members of Congress seek to satisfy through their committee work—reelection, making good public policy, and personal power/prestige within the chamber. Members of Congress can use their committee membership to advance their goals in several ways. First, committee assignments signal your policy priorities to constituents. Second, they provide opportunities for extraordinary influence over legislation. Every bill is referred to one or more committees immediately after it is introduced. Bills are usually not taken to the floor unless they are favorably reported by the committee of jurisdiction. In addition to having the ability to exercise negative agenda control to keep issues from the floor, committees also exercise positive agenda control in terms of recommending revisions to the legislation they do report to the floor.

For this Mini-Project, you will identify the committees on which you would most like to serve and make your case to your party leaders that they should put you on one of your preferred committees.

You will earn credit for this assignment if you:

- Make your committee assignment requests in LegSim.

Under the “Committees” tab choose the two committees you most want to serve on from the drop-down menus.

- Write a letter to your party’s leadership formally requesting your committee assignments.

Your letter must:

- Be sent to your party’s leader **as a Dear Colleague letter in LegSim** by Sunday, October 20 at 11:59 pm.
- AND** be uploaded **as a PDF or Word file in Canvas** by Sunday, October 20 at 11:59 pm.
- Be between 300 and 500 words.
- Be written clearly (in paragraphs) with no more than 3 spelling or grammatical errors per page (per 250 words)
- Explain how your requested committee assignments relate to your representation and/or policy goals and any relevant personal experience or expertise.

¹Richard F. Fenno. 1973. *Congressmen in Committees* Boston: Little Brown.