Conflicts and Agreements between House and Senate

**Areas of Conflict**

**HOUSE**

- **Different Reelection Cycles**
  Representatives serve two-year terms and must always be concerned about the next election; therefore, they may be more eager to get legislation passed.

- **Appropriation Abilities**
  The House has been delegated the exclusive right to initiate revenue bills. Thus the House Ways and Means Committee, created in 1811, became a powerful force.

- **Influence on Appointments and Foreign Affairs**
  House members have no power over presidential appointees and much less power than the Senate over foreign affairs.

**SENATE**

- Senators serve six-year terms that give them more flexibility in their agendas and more time to carry out their programs.

- The Senate Finance Committee was regarded as the House’s much weaker partner until the Legislative Reorganization Act was passed in the 1970s; this Act weakened the House Ways and Means Committee. Still, the Senate attaches major tax amendments to minor House tax bills as a way to exert more financial control.

- The Senate was given the power to “advise and consent” for foreign treaties and in the confirmation of presidential appointees to federal positions, making it stronger than the House in foreign affairs and in its check on presidential power.

**Areas of Agreement**

- **Focus on Constituencies**
  Because House and Senate members can be reelected an unlimited number of times in many states, they have many opportunities to address the needs of their constituents. They tend to focus on serving their constituents rather than on national policies.

- **Regional Members Work Together**
  Members of Congress from the same geographic regions work together to push through legislation that benefits their states. For example, senators and representatives from Midwestern states usually work together on agricultural policies.

- **Party Members Work Together**
  Senators and representatives of the same political party cooperate in passing legislation that is endorsed by their party leadership. For example, Republicans in Congress cooperated to push through bills to reform the Medicare system in 1995.