

# Congress 101: The Legislative Process and the Impact on Hearing Health

Military Audiology Short Course

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# Agenda

- Why You Should Care About Congress
- Congressional Powers
- Key Concepts
- House and Senate Overview
- Congressional Committees That Matter
- Budget Process
- Congressional Impact on Hearing Health

# Why You Should Care About Congress

## *Because Congress:*

- Authorizes your job
- Pays you
- Determines your benefits
- Promotes you
- Authorizes and funds your programs

# Congressional Powers

## *Constitution, Article 1, Section 8*

- Levy and collect taxes
- Borrow money
- Regulate commerce
- Declare war
- Raise and support an army and navy and make rules for governance
- Provide for a militia
- Make laws

# Congress

- Responsibilities: legislating, serving constituents, overseeing government operations, running for reelection
- Senate
  - 100 Members serving six-year terms
  - Committees – 20 standing, 4 special/select/other, 4 joint
- House of Representatives
  - 435 Members serving two-year terms
  - Committees – 20 standing, 3 select, 4 joint

# Key Concepts

- Authorization – Provision in law that establishes or continues a program or agency and authorizes appropriations for it
- Appropriation – Provision of law providing budget authority that permits federal agencies to incur obligations and make payments out
- Discretionary funding – controlled through annual appropriations
- Mandatory spending – funds automatically obligated by virtue of previously-enacted laws

# Committees of Interest

- Appropriations

- House Appropriations Committee

- Defense subcommittee

- Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies subcommittee

- Senate Appropriations Committee

- Defense subcommittee

- Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies subcommittee

# Committees of Interest

- Authorization

- House Armed Services Committee
  - Personnel subcommittee (formerly Total Force subcommittee)
- Senate Armed Services Committee
  - Personnel subcommittee
- House Committee on Veterans Affairs
  - Health subcommittee
- Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs

# Congressional Staff

- Personal staff - Capitol Hill and district
  - Duties include working constituent concerns; researching, developing, and tracking legislative issues; overseeing office operations; and interacting with media
- Professional staff members – committee staff
  - Focus is on issues within jurisdiction of committee
  - Influential in shaping policy
  - Duties include organizing hearings, selecting witnesses, structuring and conducting investigations, researching issues, preparing committee reports, preparing legislation, and briefing committee and non-committee Members of Congress

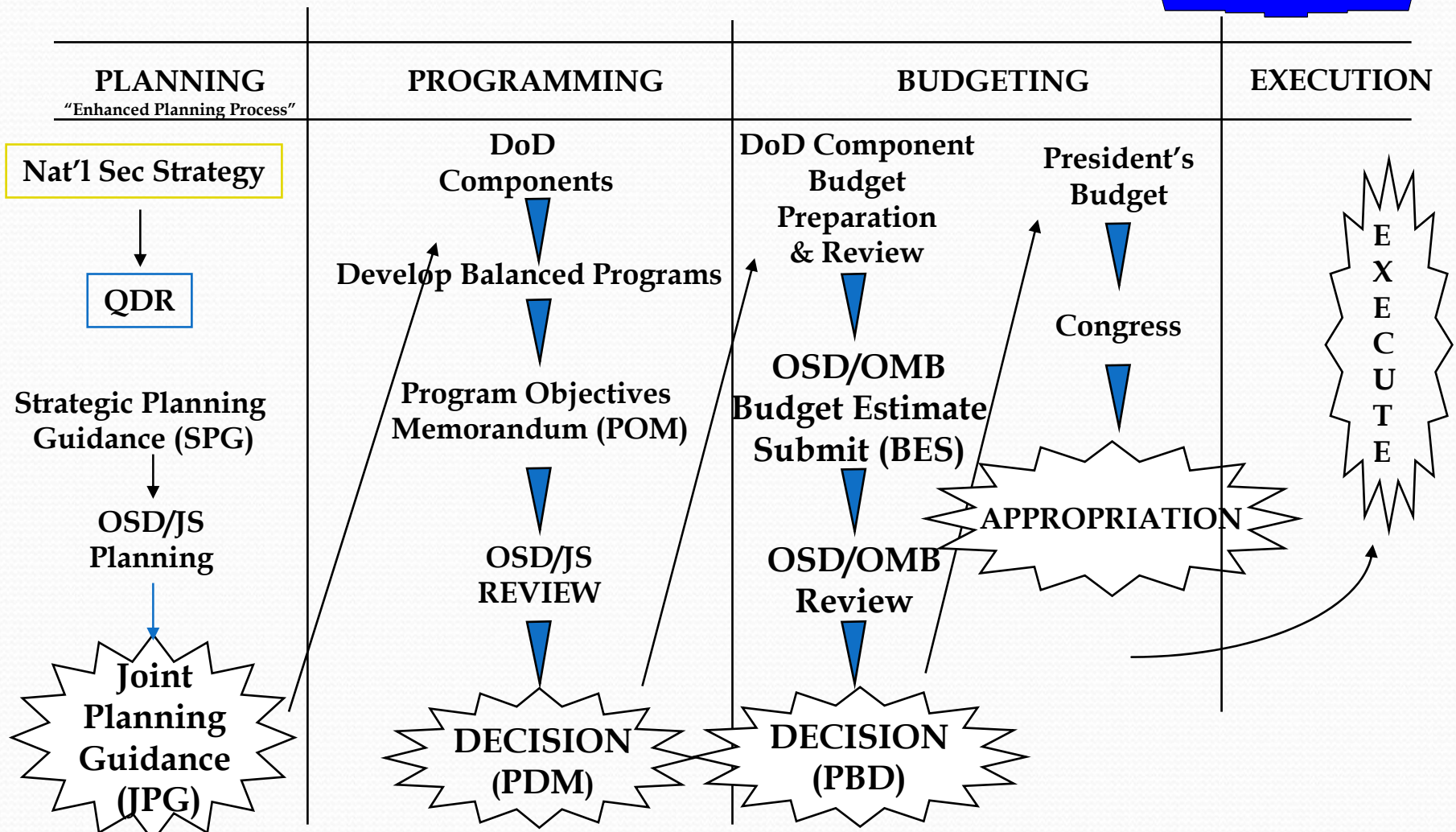
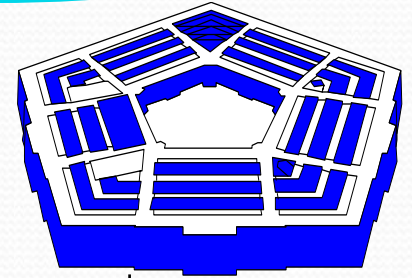
# Development of a Budget

- Budget quality and meaningfulness only as good as the process that led to its development
- It is certain that budget estimates change with time

# DOD Budget – Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE)

- Bridge between military planning and budgeting
- Continuous process

# Basic PPBE Flow



# Congressional Timetable

*"If Everything Goes As Planned"*



- President's Budget sent to Congress Feb
- Hearings (Review) Feb - Jun
- Budget Committees Complete Action Apr
- Congress Passes Concurrent Resolution Apr
- Authorization Committees Complete Action May - Jun
- Congress Passes Authorization Bill May - Jun
- Authorization Bill Sent to President Jun - Jul
- Appropriation Committees Complete Action Jun - Sep
- Congress Passes Appropriation Bill Aug - Sep
- Bill Sent to President for Signature Sep
- New Fiscal Year Begins... If no appropriation bill by end of the year, then Continuing Resolution. Oct 1

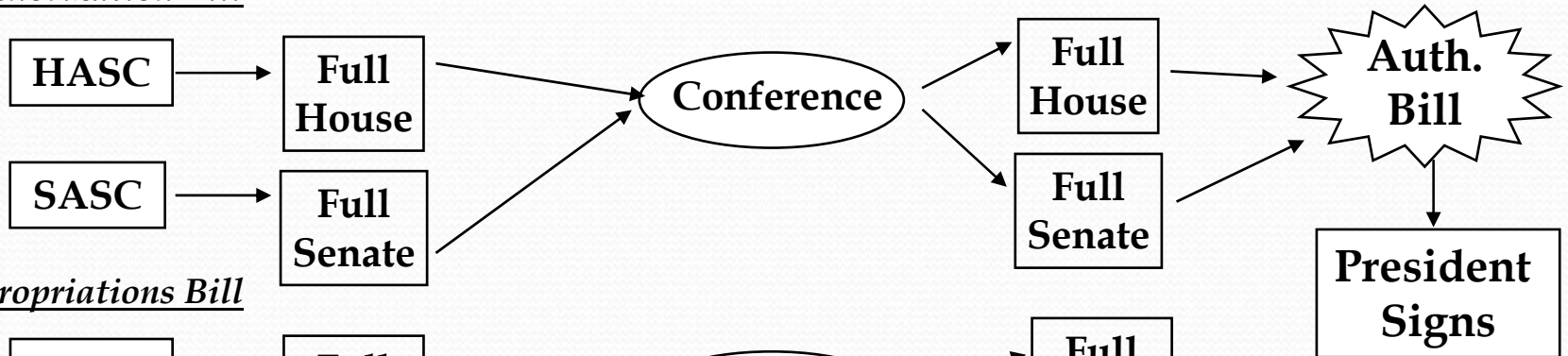
# Budget Enactment



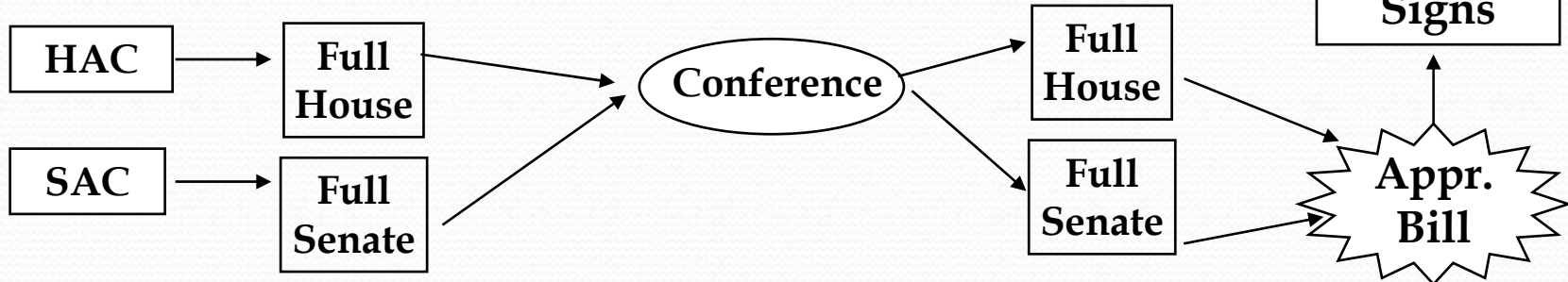
## Concurrent Budget Resolution



## Authorization Bill



## Appropriations Bill

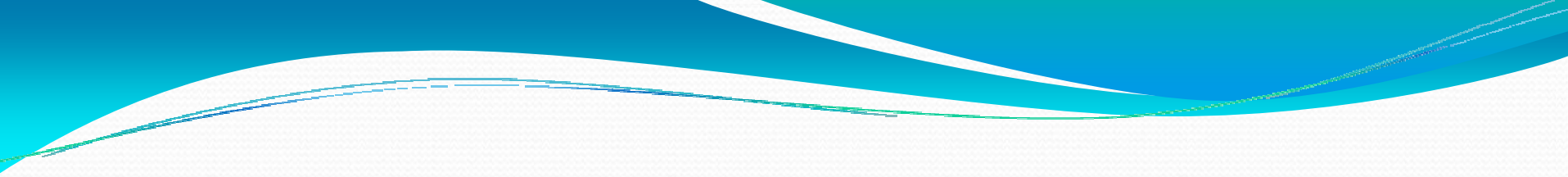


# Follow the Money

- Core funding
- Earmarks/plus-ups
- Army/Navy/Air Force Medical Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E)
- Defense Health Program (DHP)
  - Operations and maintenance
  - Procurement
  - RDT&E



# What Has Congress Done for Military and Veteran Hearing Health?



**107th CONGRESS**  
*Public Law 107-330*  
**VETERANS BENEFIT ACT OF 2002**  
December 6, 2002

*Noise and Military Service:  
Implications for Hearing Loss  
and Tinnitus (2005)*

# 109th CONGRESS

## *House Report 109-95*

# MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, FY2006

May 23, 2005

*Prevention and Treatment of Noise-Induced Hearing Loss.*--Noise-induced hearing loss is one of the most common injuries associated with military service that has an affect on medical readiness and combat effectiveness. The Committee understands that as a result of ongoing combat operations, one in three post-deploying soldiers report acute acoustic trauma and one in four report hearing loss and/or hearing complaints. While the Department has instituted hearing conservation initiatives for over 30 years, the Committee feels that efforts and effectiveness of these measures could be improved. Therefore, the Committee recommends the Department enhance its hearing conservation programs by ensuring that properly trained personnel are available to provide and manage effective and robust hearing conservation programs and to develop and test protective devices that address combat-associated noise.

# 110<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS

## *House Report 110-231*

### **DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION AND RELATED AGENCIES, APPROPRIATIONS BILL, FY2008**

July 13, 2007

***Tinnitus*** – The Committee recognizes that tinnitus, characterized by loud ringing in the ears, can be a severely debilitating medical condition. While tinnitus disproportionately impacts military personnel exposed to explosive devices or loud noise, it also affects people of all ages, including children and the elderly. In 2005, the NIDCD held a workshop to explore areas of needed research for the treatment and cure of tinnitus. The Committee encourages NIDCD to follow up on the workshop's recommendations, including increasing collaboration between NIH, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Veterans Affairs to support a multi-disciplinary research approach that promotes accurate diagnosis and treatment of cure tinnitus.

# 110<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS

## *Senate Report 110-107*

### **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICE, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, FY2008**

June 7, 2007

*Tinnitus* – The Committee recommends that the NIDCD expand its research into causal mechanisms underlying peripheral and central tinnitus and pursue research to develop therapies for treatment. In 2005, the NIDCD held a workshop to explore areas of needed research for the treatment and cure of tinnitus. The Committee urges the Institute to devote additional resources to follow up on the workshop's recommendations, including increasing collaboration with the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to support a multi-disciplinary research approach that promotes accurate diagnosis and treatment to cure tinnitus.

**110<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS**  
*Public Law 110-116*  
*Conference Report 110-434*  
**DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, FY2008**  
November 13, 2007

**PEER REVIEWED MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM**

The conferees agree to provide \$50,000,000 for the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program, and recommend the following projects as candidates for study: amyotrophic lateral sclerosis; alcoholism research; blood cancer; drug abuse; epilepsy research; eye and vision research; integrated tissue hypoxia research; Interstitial Cystitis; inflammatory bowel diseases; leishmaniasis; Lupus; kidney cancer; mesothelioma; multiple sclerosis; nutrition and health promotion; Padgett's disease; polycystic kidney disease; pulmonary hypertension; scleroderma; social work research; and tinnitus. The conferees reiterate that funds provided under the Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program shall be used only for the purposes listed above.



# Military Health Issues – FY2009

- “Sustain the Benefit”
- Reserve Component TRICARE benefits
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Wounded Warrior programs



# Questions