

For immediate release

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Association of Centers for the Study of Congress Celebrates Third Annual “Congress Week,” Sept. 16–22, 2012, to Promote the Study of Congress

The Association of Centers for the Study of Congress (ACSC) is sponsoring its third annual celebration of Congress Week with the theme “Congress: Chosen by the People.” Congress Week (September 16–22, 2012) is a national initiative of ACSC, coinciding with and complementing the annual commemoration of Constitution Day (September 17). “The central goal of Congress Week is to foster the study of the U.S. House and Senate, and to promote a wider appreciation for the vital role the legislative branch plays in our representative democracy,” said Sheryl B. Vogt, president of the ACSC and director of the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at the University of Georgia.

Congress Week is intended to promote awareness of the importance of Congress and to encourage the American people toward a more comprehensive understanding of this complex government body and its responsibilities. This year’s theme, “Congress: Chosen by the People,” is a phrase drawn directly from the Constitution, which underscores citizens’ responsibility for choosing their representatives and participating in their own government—by registering to vote, being informed, taking interest in one’s community, and making one’s opinions known to representatives.

The ACSC was founded in 2003 as an independent alliance of institutions and organizations that support a wide range of programs designed to inform and educate students, scholars, policy-makers, and members of the general public on the history of Congress, the legislative process, and current issues facing Congress. The ACSC encourages the preservation of material that documents the work of Congress, including the papers of individual members of Congress, and supports programs that make those materials available for educational and research use. The ACSC welcomes the participation of institutions and individuals committed to our goal of promoting a better understanding of Congress.

Many ACSC member institutions hold the papers of key U.S. Senators and Representatives, as well as their oral histories and related memorabilia. Based on the “Congress: Chosen by the People” theme, ACSC member organizations will host celebrations and events tailored to their unique holdings. This year’s celebration builds on successful observations of Congress Week in 2010 and 2011, celebrated by ACSC member centers around the country with programs including public lectures, a film series, exhibits, and appearances by current Senators and Representatives.

Among the potential themes and areas of focus to be explored in this year’s theme:

- The processes involved in transforming a local idea or concern into a federal law
- The impact of grass-roots citizen participation on Congress and legislation
- Current and historic campaigns and elections
- Analyses of landmark legislation
- Biographical profiles of individual Members of Congress, stressing Representatives’ and Senators’ relationship to their particular districts or states
- Congress’s constitutional responsibility as a representative body
- The 1913 adoption of the 17th Amendment to the Constitution, providing for direct election of U.S. Senators by the people, instead of by state legislatures, as provided for in the original Constitution

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