Record Nr.	UNINA9910824201203321
Titolo	Is Congress broken? : the virtues and defects of partisanship and gridlock / / William F. Connelly, Jr., John Pitney Jr., Gary J. Schmitt, editors
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Washington, DC : , : Brookings Institution Press, , 2017 ©2017
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (267 pages)
Classificazione	POL006000POL016000POL017000POL007000
Disciplina	328.73
Soggetti	Representative government and representation - United States Political leadership - United States Political culture - United States United States Politics and government 21st century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references at the end of each chapters and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction / William F. Connelly Jr. and John J. Pitney Jr Two pathways for congressional reform / Daniel Stid Congressional representation and contemporary critiques / Andrew E. Busch Return to deliberation? : politics and lawmaking in committee and on the floor / Daniel J. Palazzolo Changing House rules : from level playing field to partisan tilt / Donald R. Wolfensberger Reclaiming institutional relevance through congressional oversight / Melanie Marlowe The other end of Pennsylvania Avenue / Gary J. Schmitt and Rebecca Burgess The Constitution and congressional leadership / Kathryn Pearson Ending the omnibus : restoring regular order in congressional appropriations / Peter C. Hanson Political realism : how hacks, machines, big money, and back-room deals can strengthen American democracy / Jonathan Rauch A return to Madisonian republicanism : strengthening the nation's most representative institution / William F. Connelly Jr. and John J. Pitney Jr.
Sommario/riassunto	"Making Congress Work, Again, Within the Constitutional System Congress for many years has ranked low in public esteem-joining

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journalists, bankers, and union leaders at the bottom of polls. And in recent years there's been good reason for the public disregard, with the rise of hyper-partisanship and the increasing inability of Congress to carry out its required duties, such as passing spending bills on time and conducting responsible oversight of the executive branch. Congress seems so dysfunctional that many observers have all but thrown up their hands in despair, suggesting that an apparently broken U.S. political system might need to be replaced. Now, some of the country's foremost experts on Congress are reminding us that tough hyper-partisan conflict always has been a hallmark of the constitutional system. Going back to the nation's early decades, Congress has experienced periods of division and turmoil. But even in those periods Congress has been able to engage in serious deliberation, prevent illconsidered proposals from becoming law-and, over time, help develop a deeper, more lasting national consensus. The ten chapters in this volume focus on how Congress in the twenty-first century can once again fulfill its proper functions of representation, deliberation, legislation, and oversight. The authors offer a series of practical reforms that would maintain, rather than replace, the constitutional separation of powers that has served the nation well for more than 200 vears"--