

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910958455903321
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Titolo	America's Congress : actions in the public sphere, James Madison through Newt Gingrich / / David R. Mayhew
Pubbl/distr/stampa	New Haven, : Yale University Press, 2000
ISBN	9786611722234 9781281722232 1281722235 9780300130027 0300130023
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (268 p.)
Disciplina	328.73/09
Soggetti	Legislators - United States - History
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- ONE. Member Actions in the Public Sphere -- TWO. Canvassing for Actions Through American History -- THREE. A Basic Profile of Member Roles -- FOUR. The House, the Senate, and the Presidency -- FIVE. Action Patterns in Capitol Hill Careers -- SIX. The Stability of American Institutions -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	To understand American politics and government, we need to recognize not only that members of Congress are agents of societal interests and preferences but also that they act with a certain degree of autonomy and consequence in the country's public sphere. In this illuminating book, a distinguished political scientist examines actions performed by members of Congress throughout American history, assessing their patterns and importance and their role in the American system of separation of powers. David R. Mayhew examines standard history books on the United States and identifies more than two thousand actions by individual members of the House and Senate that are significant enough to be mentioned. Mayhew offers insights into a wide range of matters, from the nature of congressional opposition to presidents and the surprising frequency of foreign policy actions to the

timing of notable activity within congressional careers (and the way that congressional term limits might affect these performances). His book sheds new light on the contributions to U.S. history made by members of Congress.

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