

What the first Congress of 1789 can teach the Congress of 2017 – PART 1

If you think the current Congress has problems, look back 228 years to the very first Congress.

Political factions were even more divided then — yet somehow they achieved more compromise and passed numerous beneficial public policies. The lessons for the modern era are countless.

So many things America now takes for granted were up in the air. That first Congress spawned numerous precedents, from the first outside lobbying campaign, to the first treaty with a foreign nation, to the title bestowed upon the nation's chief executive. (John Adams wanted “His Majesty” instead of “President.” )

Fergus Bordewich is an award-winning author and historian who wrote the 2016 book “The First Congress: How James Madison, George Washington, and a Group of Extraordinary Men Invented the Government.” (Here's a video clip of Bordewich with Zooey Deschanel on the TLC celebrity ancestry show Who Do You Think You Are?)

<https://youtu.be/7G0336f7ZtI>

Bordewich spoke with GovTrack Insider about what the first Congress did, how they did it, and what Donald Trump and Paul Ryan could learn from their predecessors George Washington and James Madison. Plus, what can the first Congress reveal about how congressional investigations and possible impeachment with the Russia scandal could play out?