

---

# THE CONGRESS PROJECT

---

Anthony Madonna  
POLS 4620E

## Member Spotlight Section Instructions

For their legislative history project, students are required to complete a “Member Spotlight Section” that provides additional information on a member of Congress associated with the passage of their law. The Member Spotlight section can include either on a broad overview of a member’s career and/or an interesting episode they were involved in. Students are encouraged to focus on whatever details they feel are the most interesting.

This section is due on **Tuesday, June 29th** at 5pm. The Member Spotlight section is worth 5% of the final course grade.

The member profiled can be either a supporter or an opponent of the bill. A list of possible members to write about is provided to the student in their legislative history prompt sheet. **PLEASE READ THESE!** Again, pull up your prompt sheet, find the number assigned to you (under Assignments) and locate that number on the Member Spotlight section. Students are encouraged to consult [Bioguide](#), the Congressional Record and the “Historic Newspapers” resource for background information. When possible, students are strongly encouraged to include a citation to a member’s obituary.

The Member Spotlight section does not have to relate directly to your underlying legislation. The idea is to provide readers with additional information on members who played a role in shaping the bill.

A good Member Spotlight section will likely run between six to eight paragraphs long. There’s no maximum length on it. In previous courses, the median word count for the section was 709. For students who received a 93 or higher, it was 836.

My preference would be for you to submit the Member Spotlight section via ELC as a Microsoft Word document. I do understand if you have to submit it via pdf however.

Please provide a Work Cited page and follow the [Footnote and Citation guidelines](#).

An example of an excellent Member Spotlight section can be found below. Additional examples can be found on the [Congress Project Website](#).

## Member Spotlight: Rep. Robert (“Bob”) Ney

Robert William Ney represented Ohio’s 18<sup>th</sup> congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1995 to 2006. Ideologically, Ney found himself near the median of the Republican Party during his time in Congress, though he was known for voting against his party on several issues and for being an outspoken opponent of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (Cigler 2004).<sup>1</sup> In every election prior to 2006, Ney soundly defeated his challengers. However, a variety of ethical scandals haunted his tenure. Eventually, his involvement in the Abramoff lobbying scandal catapulted him from Congress to prison.<sup>2</sup>

Ney served for several years as the Chairman of the House Administration Committee, a position that carried the nickname “the Mayor of Capitol Hill.” The House Administration Committee performs several important functions. The committee is charged with oversight of federal elections and considering bills to change federal elections laws. Additionally, the committee performs oversight and budget authorization for the various other House committees. As Chair, Ney had administrative power over the House cafeterias. After France urged the United Nations to slow down the United States’ move to war against Iraq, Ney used this power punitively. Working with Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), he led the charge to change the cafeteria menu from “French fries” to “freedom fries” in a culinary castigation against the French.<sup>3</sup> After Ney left the committee, the name was quietly changed back.

Ney was involved in several major scandals during his tenure in Congress. In 2005, Ney’s involvement with casino lobbyist Jack Abramoff came under legal scrutiny. Abramoff pled guilty to fraud, conspiracy, and tax evasion after an investigation revealed he had used Native American tribes’ lobbying payments to buy the support of politicians with lavish gifts.<sup>4</sup> Abramoff supplied information on the congressmen he had paid off as part of his plea deal, and Ney was implicated.



Above: Rep. Bob Ney (R-OH)  
(Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives).

---

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Poole and Rosenthal (1997), for more on Ney’s voting history and ideology. Ney voted against his party on several key measures. He was one of three Republicans to oppose the PATRIOT Act, he voted against the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 and President George W. Bush’s Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA).

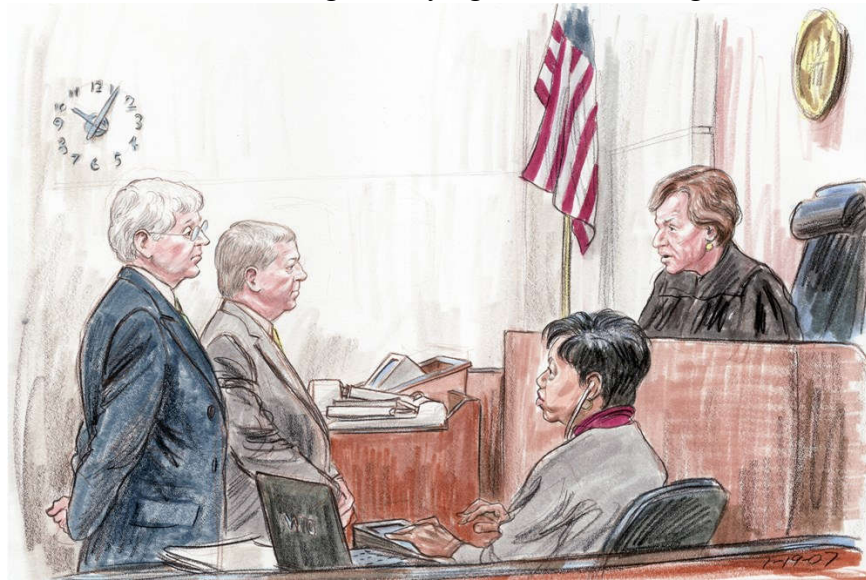
<sup>2</sup> See e.g. Hammer, David. 2006. “Rep. Ney of Ohio Resigns from Congress,” *The Washington Post*, November 4. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/04/AR2006110400194.html>

<sup>3</sup> Loughlin, Sean. 2003. “House cafeterias change names for ‘French’ fries and ‘French’ toast,” CNN, March 12. <https://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/03/11/sprj.irq.fries/>

<sup>4</sup> 2006. “Lobbyist case threatens Congress,” *BBC News*, January 4. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4579474.stm>

He was subpoenaed in the federal investigation, and claimed that he had no idea that Abramoff was committing criminal acts. One of Abramoff's staff took Ney and other representatives on an extravagant trip to Scotland. Michael Scanlon, an aide for Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX), also pled guilty on conspiracy charges to bribe Ney and three other congressmen. By January of 2006, Ney had resigned from his position as Chairman of the House Administration Committee, still maintaining his innocence. Throughout the year, many of Ney's campaign workers and legislative staffers were subpoenaed.<sup>5</sup>

In October, Ney pled guilty on several charges, including conspiracy to commit honest services fraud, making false statements, violating a lobbying ban, and making false statements to the House of Representatives. House



Above: Rep. Bob Ney (R-OH) receives his sentence ([Art Lien / NBC News](#)).

Republicans threatened him with an expulsion vote, prompting his resignation on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006. Analysts argued that Ney had betrayed the public trust by accepting bribes from several other lobbyists and corporations, and this led Judge Ellen Huvelle to give him a sentence that was harsher than what the prosecutors recommended. In January of 2007, he was sentenced to 30 months in prison, two years of parole, and community service.<sup>6</sup>

After being released from prison after only serving 17 months, he reentered the world of politics through his own radio show.<sup>7</sup> Ney (2013) also wrote a memoir called *Sideswiped: Lessons Learned Courtesy of the Hit Men of Capitol Hill*.

The book drew attention for its salacious depictions of many representatives, including Speaker John Boehner (R-OH).<sup>8</sup> By 2011, Ney was serving as a political analyst for Talk Media News and executive director for Mending Minds, a foundation that treats people with PTSD and addiction with meditation.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Weisman, Jonathan. 2006. "GOP Leaders Seek Distance From Abramoff," *The Washington Post*, January 4. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/03/AR2006010301609.html>; Stone, Peter. 2004. "From the K Street Corridor Rep. Bob Ney Seeks Legal Advice after Being Linked to Former Casino Lobbyist Jack Abramoff." *National Journal* <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edsbl&AN=RN161063744&site=eds-live>.

<sup>6</sup> Hammer, David. 2006. "Rep. Ney of Ohio Resigns from Congress," *The Washington Post*, November 4. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/04/AR2006110400194.html>; Seidman, Joel. 2007. "Ex-Rep. Ney gets 30-months in jail, \$6000 fine," *NBC*, January 20. <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/16698187/ns/politics/t/ex-rep-ney-gets--months-jail-fine/#.XtbYg55KhQI>. See also DOJ press release: [https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2007/January/07\\_crm\\_027.html](https://www.justice.gov/archive/opa/pr/2007/January/07_crm_027.html).

<sup>7</sup> Thrush, Glenn. 2009. "Ex-jailbird Ney gets radio show," *Politico*, July 13. <https://www.politico.com/blogs/on-congress/2009/04/ex-jailbird-ney-gets-radio-show-017524>

<sup>8</sup> Rogers, Alex. 2013. "Bob Ney, 'Sideswiped,'" *Time*, March 8. <https://swampland.time.com/2013/03/08/bob-ney-sideswiped/>

<sup>9</sup> Smith, Craig. 2011. "Bob Ney, post-prison," *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, July 9. <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=f750cfd0-d7f0-4ab5-ab60-da6bd201a47b%40sessionmgr4006&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%3d#db=n5h&AN=2W62815971886>

### Citations

- Cigler, Allan J. 2004. "Enron, a Perceived Crisis in Public Confidence, and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002." *Review of Policy Research* 21(2): 233-252.
- Ney, Robert. 2013. *Sideswiped: Lessons Learned Courtesy of the Hit Men of Capitol Hill*. Cleveland, OH: Changing Lives Press.
- Poole, Keith and Howard Rosenthal. 1997. *Congress: A Political-Economic History of Roll Call Voting*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. [www.voteview.com](http://www.voteview.com)