

# Forces Shaping This Year's Budget and Appropriations Process

- Divided government
- The debt limit
- Changes in Congress over time

# Divided Government

- Small majorities + polarized parties in the Senate = difficult to adopt individual spending bills in the Senate
- House controlled by GOP + Senate controlled by Democrats + Democratic president = conflict over spending priorities
- Recent experiences with this configuration: 2011-2014

# The Debt Limit

- Why does it matter?
- How is it (not) linked to other fiscal decision-making?

# Changes in Congress Over Time

- Turnover since:
  - » 2011 debt limit fight
  - » 2014 midterms
- Means fewer “old guard” members and fewer members who experienced previous crises