

The capital of the United States, Washington D.C. is located on the east coast. At the time it was established, this was a near perfect central location. However, since then, the country has expanded almost 3000 miles west to the Pacific Ocean and further to Hawaii and North to Alaska. Some U.S. territories are even further to the west.

**Problem:** The immense east-west size of the country creates onerous travel burdens on individuals who reside in western states but must work on the east coast. In particular, I am referring to members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate who must physically reside in the state and/or district that they represent, yet must be physically present at the Capital in order to vote in congress.

It requires roughly five hours of flight time to go from California to the District of Columbia and almost ten hours to fly from Hawaii. This does not count the time spent traveling to the airport, time spent in the airport, and is far less than the travel time required if one or more connections must be made during the journey. According to a Huffington Post story, some members of congress spend 20 hours a week flying back and forth, and at least one congressman declined to seek re-election because of the stresses of frequent commuting. Of course, not all of the time is wasted. Undoubtedly, most members of congress fly first class (I assume) and work during the trip and/or catch some much needed sleep. However, given this massive commute, it is almost surprising that most members of congress have very good attendance when Congress is in session.

**Possible solution:** The travel burden on members of congress could be eased if Congress would emulate the practices of modern business and make use of the advances that have been made in audio video technology. With large video screens and instantaneous audio transfer, members of congress could conduct many of their duties without being physically present, without any loss of effectiveness or efficiency. There are, of course, many variations of how this might be done. For example, congress could require that audio visual participation be conducted in a Federal building, of which all States have many. Congress could limit the number of days such participation is permitted. Etc.