

## WHAT RECONCILIATION IS—AND IS NOT

- ✓ “Reconciliation” is a budget process used nowadays to pass **partisan legislation**.
- ✓ Generally, because of the **filibuster**, it takes 60 votes to pass a bill in the Senate—but not a reconciliation bill.
- ✓ Reconciliation plays by **special rules** that require only a simple majority—51 votes instead of the usual 60, or just 50 votes when the vice president is of the same party as the majority.
- ✓ The reconciliation process begins with each chamber passing an **identical budget “resolution”** that is not law and not signed by the president.
- ✓ The budget resolution contains **reconciliation instructions** that direct some committees to achieve certain budgetary effects over a specified period of time. Committees then write legislation consistent with the instructions.
- ✓ Provisions of the reconciliation bill must involve **spending, taxes, or both**.
- ✓ At least one chamber must go through the **full committee process** of writing and marking up legislation. If the legislation includes tax changes, the House goes first.
- ✓ Before final passage of the reconciliation bill, the Senate holds a **“vote-a-rama”**—a seemingly endless process of considering politically charged amendments.
- ✓ Generally, the **Senate parliamentarian** decides what stays in the bill and what goes.
- ✓ The reconciliation process cannot be used to cut funding for **Title I or special education**—for that, lawmakers must use the annual budget process called “appropriations.”