

English Version

# The Federal Senate

Welcome to the House of the Federation





# Welcome to the House of the Federation

Thousands of people from all over Brazil and the world walk the halls of the Palace of Congress every year.

Here, senators draft laws, approve the nomination of those who will hold some of the most important positions in the country, prosecute and judge public officials in impeachable offenses, deliberate on debt ceilings of federal entities, among other duties established by the Federal Constitution.

In addition to admiring the beautiful architecture of the building and enjoying works of art, visitors can better understand the work of senators and the history of the Federal Senate.

**The Federal Senate wishes you an enjoyable visit!**

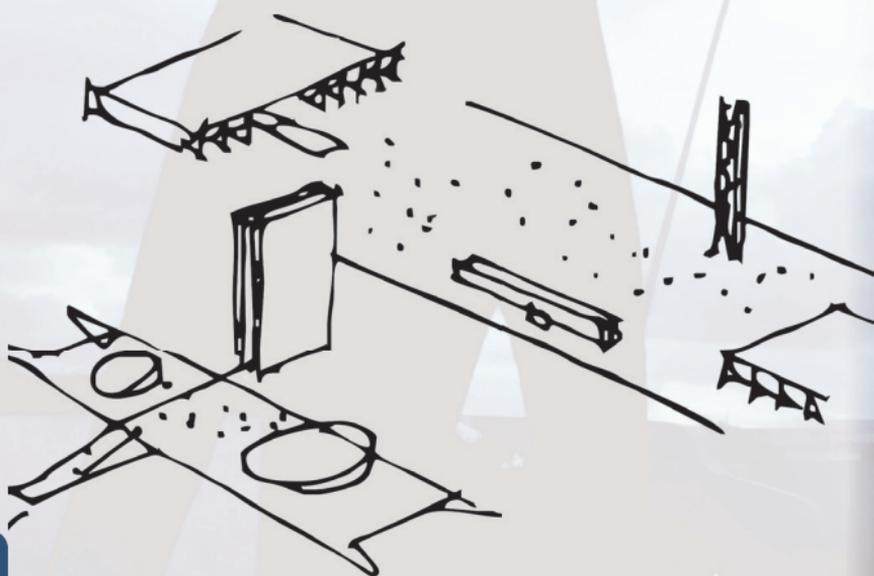
## Three Powers Square and National Congress

In the Three Powers Square — a highlight of the project of urban planner Lucio Costa — we find the headquarters of the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary powers.

The Planalto Presidential Palace and the Supreme Federal Court are at the base of the equilateral triangle defined by the square, and in the vertex is the National Congress.

The architectural ensemble of Congress was designed by Oscar Niemeyer and is composed of the headquarters of the Federal Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. This set consists of two domes, which comprise the Plenary Halls of the Legislative Houses, and a pair of 28-storey towers, connected in the middle.

The convex dome, turned downwards, belongs to the Senate and the concave dome, turned upwards, to the Chamber of Deputies.



“

*The work continued. It was not an isolated structure, but one of the palaces that would be part of the Three Powers Square, where it would be integrated with other buildings. And the distances worried me, so much so that I kept the upper portion of Congress at street level. I wanted passers-by to view the building at this level, with their eyes reaching the plaza between the two domes. And the palace arose, simple and monumental, with loose domes in the air, highlighting the hierarchical importance that they represent. It was the integration of technology and architecture—both of which are supposed to emerge together and nourish one another.*

”

*Oscar Niemeyer*

(Source: Correio Braziliense newspaper, February 25, 1999)

# Black Hall



The Black Hall is the main entrance of the National Congress, and it is used for official ceremonies.

It was named after the color of the floor and is ornamented by a panel of white marble and

black granite, created by artist Athos Bulcão, and a tapestry made by Burle Marx.

The Black Hall is reached via the ramp of the National Congress.





## Noble Hall

It is the place where the President of the Senate hosts official guests. It houses the Senate Historical Museum Senator Itamar Franco, which highlights the gallery of portraits of former Senate presidents. Opened in 1991, the museum displays works of art, furniture of former Senate headquarters, silver ballots used in Senate voting, among other features of the collection covering the period from the Empire (1822-1889) to the Republic (1889-present).



### **Museum opening hours:**

The museum is open from Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Weekends and public holidays, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

# Senate Plenary Hall

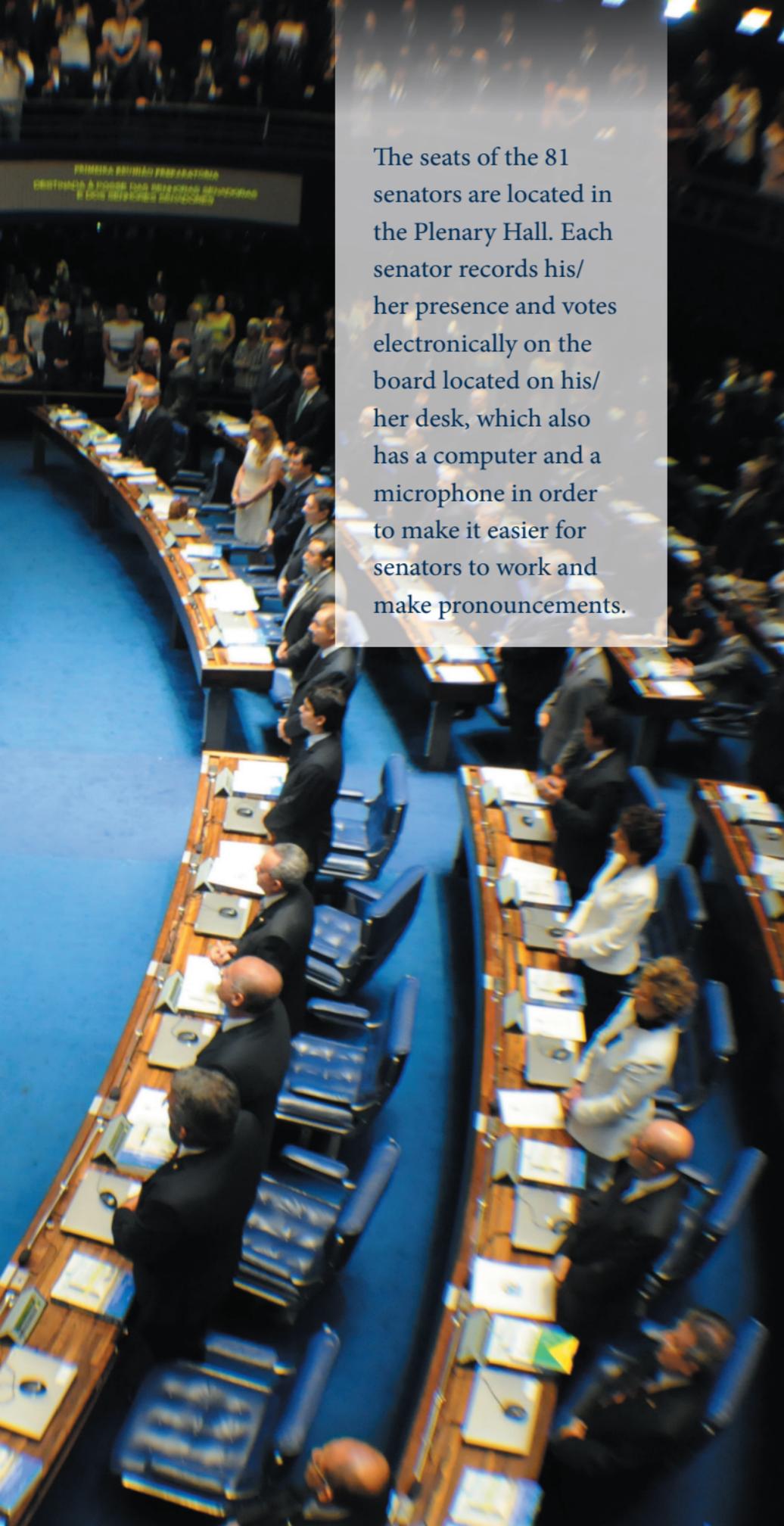
Designed to host Senate sessions, the Plenary Hall is the main area of the House, where speeches, debates and voting take place.



Artist Athos Bulcão was responsible for creating the metal panel behind the presiding desk as well as the headliner, composed of about 135,000 plates. Made of aluminum, they help improve both acoustics and lighting of the Plenary.

The electronic panels located on both sides of the hall identify sessions and acknowledge the presence of senators, as well as voting results.

Senate galleries can seat about one hundred people and are open to public visitation. It is a place designed to accommodate citizens interested in following public sessions.



PRIMEIRA REUNIÃO PREPARATÓRIA  
DESTINADA À POSSE DAS DELEGACIONES BRASILEIRAS  
E DAS DELEGACIONES ESTRANJEIRAS

The seats of the 81 senators are located in the Plenary Hall. Each senator records his/her presence and votes electronically on the board located on his/her desk, which also has a computer and a microphone in order to make it easier for senators to work and make pronouncements.

# Structure of the Plenary

Tribune of Honor

## Senate Plenary Hall

Senators' seats are distributed in alphabetical order by state, starting with Acre, in front, and finishing with Tocantins. The audience follows the sessions in the upper galleries.

Senators may vote electronically – in person – indicating that they agree or disagree with a proposition or symbolically – through party leaders.

Stenographers

## Senate Board

In addition to senators' seats, the Plenary Hall has a platform where Senate Board members conduct sessions. On the sides there are two tribunes for pronouncements. Below, stenographers take turns transcribing pronouncements.

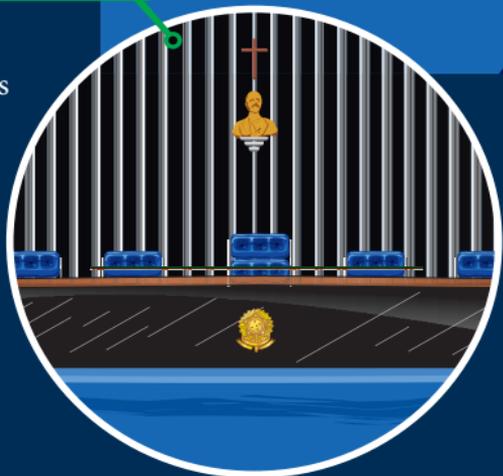
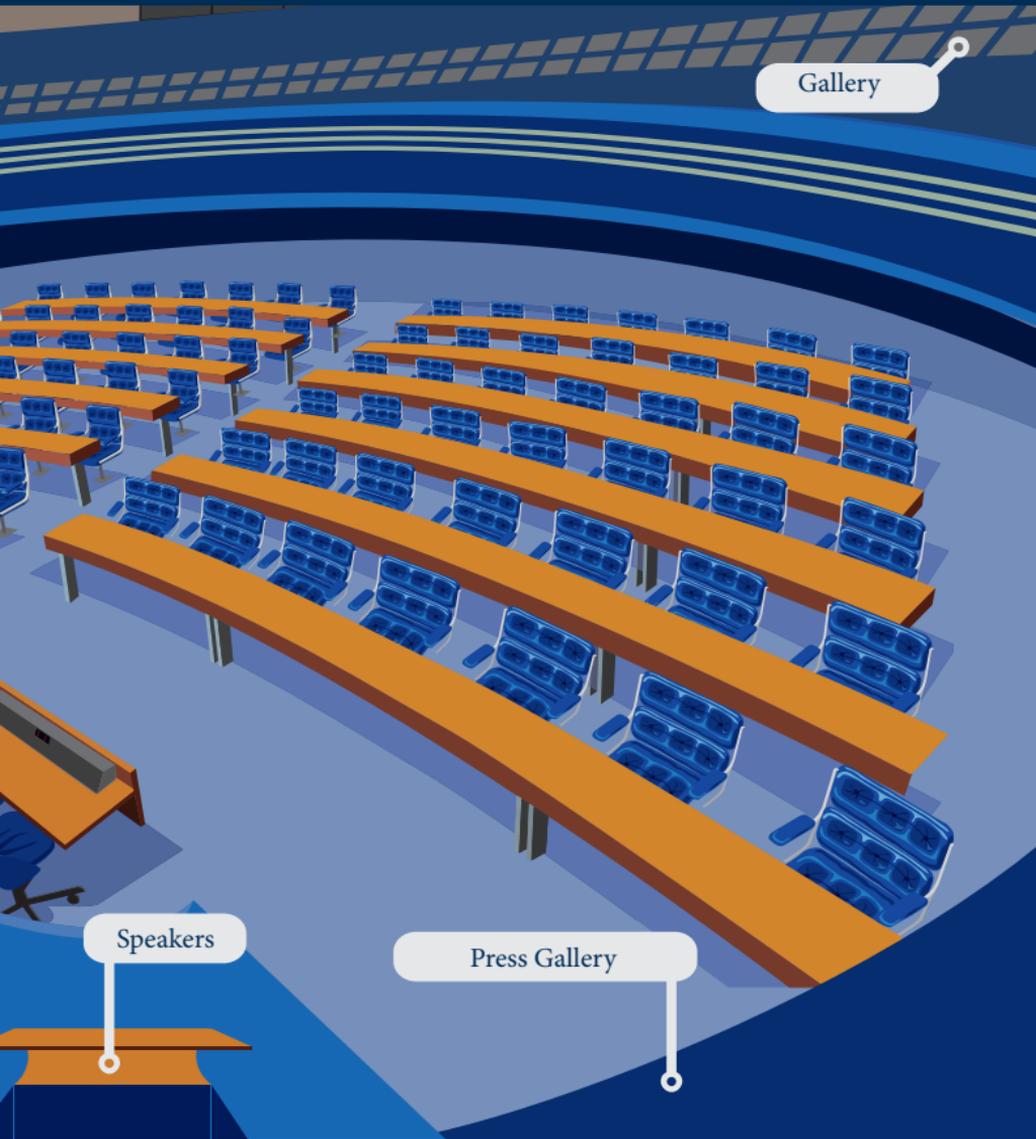


illustration  
*Marcelo de Faria Campos*

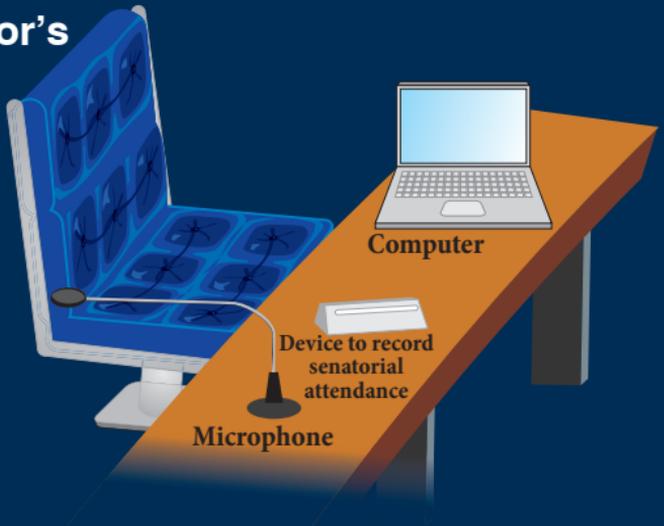


Gallery

Speakers

Press Gallery

## Senator's Seat



Computer

Device to record senatorial attendance

Microphone

## White Hall (Cloakroom)

In the past, it was common for public buildings to provide a service to keep visitor's hats, coats and canes, usually at the main entrance. Even though such services are no longer available at the Senate and hats have gone out of fashion, the main entrance of Congress, the White Hall, continues to be called Cloakroom.

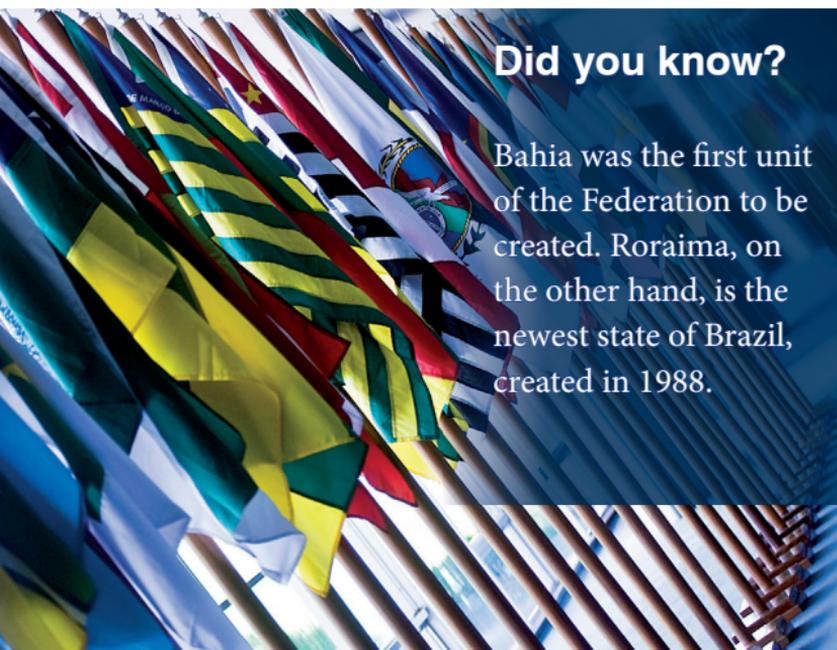




## Blue Hall and Flags Square

The Blue Hall gives access to three key areas of the Senate: the Plenary Hall, the office of the President of the Senate and the Secretariat-General of the Board. The flags of Brazil and of the 27 units of the Federation are displayed in an area of the Blue Hall known as the Flags Square.

The flags are arranged in chronological order, following the historic dates in which each state was formed. The Brazilian flag stands in the center.



### Did you know?

Bahia was the first unit of the Federation to be created. Roraima, on the other hand, is the newest state of Brazil, created in 1988.



## Time Tunnel



The Time Tunnel connects the main building to Annex 2. On its walls, there are panels telling the story of the Brazilian Senate, since it was created by the Imperial Constitution of 1824 until today.

## Antique Plenary Furniture (*Plenarinho*)

The furniture of the two former seats of the Senate (Conde dos Arcos Palace and Monroe Palace, in Rio de Janeiro) was transferred to the current site and rearranged in order to be permanently exposed. Inmates of the Rio de Janeiro Prison, under the supervision of Casa Leandro Martins (a furniture store), made the furniture in hardwood in 1867. This ensemble is called today *Plenarinho* and its disposition is similar to the one existing at the Plenary Hall today.





# Committee Wings

Committee wings house rooms where meetings of standing committees (such as the Committee on Economic Affairs and the Committee on Constitution, Justice and Citizenship), temporary committees (such as parliamentary investigating committees) or select committees take place. In these committees bills are discussed in depth, and in certain cases standing committees can also perform final voting, obviating a floor vote. The Senate has 12 standing committees.

# Office Wings

Annex 2 of the Senate houses the wings where most of senators' offices are located. Annex 2 also houses the Senate bookstore and the Senate Library (open to the general public from Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.).



# Visit the Federal Senate



The Federal Senate conducts, in partnership with the Chamber of Deputies, a program of guided tours of the National Congress Palace. On business days, visitors enter the building through the White Hall, also known as “Chapelaria”. On weekends and holidays, entrance is through the access ramp of the Black Hall, on the side of the palace facing the Esplanade of Ministries.



Tours take place every day, including Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the service is provided only for groups booked in advance. The groups leave from the Black Hall every 30 minutes.



Exceptionally, as a result of force majeure, access to one or both institutions may be temporarily suspended. In such cases, tours will be resumed as soon as possible.



On business days, groups with over 15 people must book in advance. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, groups with any number of people must also book in advance.



People with disabilities or limited mobility are advised to schedule their tour in advance.



On business days, the Congress administrative rules do not allow entrance of visitors wearing: shorts, Bermuda shorts, sleeveless shirts, flip-flops, miniskirts (allowed only in the Chamber of Deputies). These restrictions do not apply to children under 12 years of age.



For visits in foreign languages, kindly schedule or contact us for further information.



All visitors must pass through metal detectors.



(61) 3303-4671 / 3303-1588 (Monday through Friday)

(61) 3303-4410 (weekends and holidays)



Take a virtual tour by accessing the link:

[www.congressonacional.leg.br/visite/visitas-virtuais](http://www.congressonacional.leg.br/visite/visitas-virtuais)



The tours are guided and free of charge, and show the points of interest of the National Congress. The itinerary may change according to the agenda of the legislative and administrative works.

# Knowing what happens at the Senate is at your fingertips

Every day, the various media of the Senate cover legislative activities conducted in its premises: news, full broadcast of plenary sessions and committee meetings, calendars of activities, and information on legislation and the work of senators. You can access this content via TV, radio, newspaper, internet, blog or cell phone.

## Digital Media

### Senate Website

Access the website at [www.senado.leg.br](http://www.senado.leg.br) and learn about all 81 senators, read their speeches, and follow the bills discussed and approved by them. Follow the plenary sessions and committee debates.

For English: [www12.senado.leg.br/internacional/en](http://www12.senado.leg.br/internacional/en)

For Spanish:

[www12.senado.leg.br/internacional/es?set\\_language=es](http://www12.senado.leg.br/internacional/es?set_language=es)

### e-citizenship

Give your opinion on issues of public interest, suggest topics for discussion at public hearings and new bills. In the cyberspace of e-citizenship you can also monitor the Government spending as well as that of the Federal Senate.

Access: [www.senado.leg.br/ecidadania](http://www.senado.leg.br/ecidadania)

### Smartphone Applications

You can download the Senate application for iPhones, Android phones and BlackBerries and stay on top of the news produced by the Senate News Agency, the schedule of activities of the House, and the senators' profiles.

Download at: [www.senado.leg.br/noticias/aplicativos.aspx](http://www.senado.leg.br/noticias/aplicativos.aspx)

## Senate TV Multiprogramming on the Internet

Other than the regular programming, Internet users with broadband access can now watch seven additional channels that broadcast, in real time, plenary sessions and committee and subcommittee meetings.

Check: [www.senado.leg.br/noticias](http://www.senado.leg.br/noticias)

## Social Networks

The Senate is present on social networks on the Internet in order to establish a direct connection with citizens.

Check out the profiles at: [www.senado.leg.br/noticias](http://www.senado.leg.br/noticias)

## Citizen Service

### “Alô Senado”

“Alô Senado” is the communication and interactivity channel between the citizen and the Federal Senate.

You can debate topics under discussion in the legislature, take part in public hearings, send messages to the Senators and make suggestions for new bills over the internet, social networks or the phone. You can also express criticism, praise, and send your feedback about topics discussed in Congress.

The telephone service is available from Monday through Friday, from 8a.m. to 7p.m., by calling **0800 612211**.

On the Internet, access: [www.senado.leg.br/alosenado](http://www.senado.leg.br/alosenado)

Twitter: [@AloSenado](https://twitter.com/AloSenado)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/alosenadofederal](http://www.facebook.com/alosenadofederal)

## Senate Ombudsman

The Senate Ombudsman is another service made available to the public, focusing on the record of suggestions, criticism, complaints, reports, and praise

related to the activities of the Federal Senate. With such information, the Office of the Ombudsman may suggest changes and inform the interested party about the course of action related to their communication. The Senate General Ombudsman, in charge of providing this service, is a Senator elected by the Plenary Assembly for a two-year term.

See the contact details:

- **The Office of the Ombudsman website on the Internet**

[www.senado.leg.br/ouvidoria](http://www.senado.leg.br/ouvidoria)

- **Post Letter**

Senado Federal – Anexo 2, Biblioteca – térreo – Sala da Ouvidoria.

- **Filling in forms**, distributed by the Office of the Ombudsman, which can be found at specific locations of the Federal Senate

- **Alô Senado 0800 612211**, choose the option “**Fale com a Ouvidoria**” (Talk to the Office of the Ombudsman)

## Sources of information and research

### Federal Senate Digital Library

The Federal Senate Digital Library (BDSF, in the Portuguese acronym) provides Internet access to over 260,000 documents of legislative interest.

The digital collection is diverse, including books, rare works, magazine and newspaper articles, intellectual production of senators and Senate employees, text and audio legislation, among other documents.

All works available on the Federal Senate Digital Library are either public domain or have been granted copyrights by the authors, making it possible for the users to access and download them for free.

Access at: [www.senado.leg.br/biblioteca](http://www.senado.leg.br/biblioteca)

## Senate Archives

The Senate archives provide publications regarding the legislative memory of the Institution, documents and multimedia content with records of the construction of Brazilian democracy, biographic data of senators, as well as search tools on the website for the Institution's historical collections.

Access the web page:

[www.senado.gov.br/senado/secretarias/arquivo](http://www.senado.gov.br/senado/secretarias/arquivo)

## Institutional Actions

### Campaigns

The institutional campaigns contribute to bringing transparency and publicity to the legislative work. These communication actions, planned in a collaborative process, are designed to build a solid institutional image, consistent with the constitutional mandate of the Federal Senate.

Check it at: [www.senado.leg.br/campanhas](http://www.senado.leg.br/campanhas)

### Brazilian Young Senator Program

Once a year, 27 students – one from each Unit of the Federation – are chosen through a Writing Contest and brought to Brasilia to experience, as young senators, legislative activities in a simulation of a full plenary session. The Program provides the high school students with knowledge about the structure and functioning of the Brazilian Legislative Branch, and fosters an everlasting relationship between the young citizens and the Parliament.

For more information, check

[www.senado.leg.br/jovemsenador](http://www.senado.leg.br/jovemsenador)

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**Public Relations – Institutional Visit**

Service from **9 a.m.** to **5:00 p.m.**

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[www.congressonacional.leg.br/visite](http://www.congressonacional.leg.br/visite)

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