

## Elections & Political Parties

### Election Campaigns

#### Campaign Organization

Candidate

Campaign Manager

Speechwriters, Public Relations, Finance, Voter Research

State & Local Organizations

#### Campaign Finance

##### Hard Money

regulated by federal government

Federal Election Campaign Acts('71,'74,'76,'02)

\$2000/candidate

\$40,000/party

\$50,000/campaign season total

new limits try to ban soft money

2010 – Citizens United v. FEC

SuperPacs

candidates who play by limits receive matching funds

must disclose money publically on regular basis

##### Soft Money

money spent by “private” organizations

Political Action Committees(PAC's)

protected by 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment

##### Dark Money

money donated to charity

charity donates to SuperPac

since charities don't disclose donors, political money untraceable

### Factors affecting voting

#### Types of voters

independent vs. party voters

issues vs. image voters

cross-pressured voters

#### Age

younger = liberal

older = conservative

#### Education

more formal education = conservative

less formal education = liberal

#### Economics

poor = liberal

wealthy = conservative

#### Cultural Background

minorities = liberal

WASP males = conservative

Voting rights have significantly expanded over time

suffrage – the right to vote

in absence of Constitutional law, states determine right to vote

Why don't some people vote?

Voting requirements

age

residence

length of time required determined by state

citizenship

naturalization – the process of becoming a citizen

must file application and fee with U.S. Citizenship and

Immigration Services

must pass English and Civics test

must submit fingerprints for background check

must pass interview with gov. official

registration

periodic vs. permanent

ghost voting

Apathy

Lack of Knowledge

Too difficult to vote

How could voter turnout be increased?

Elections on weekends

Election holiday

Uniform voting hours across time zones

simplify the ballot, registration process

Fine non-voters

Some states have increased citizen involvement in democracy

Initiative

Direct – laws passed directly by voters, bypassing legislature

Indirect – voters pass only if legislature fails to pass

Referendum

Optional – legislature decides what bills to put before voters

Mandatory – law requires certain bills to be put before voters

Recall

allows voters to remove officeholder before end of term

Political Parties

groups of likeminded people who run candidates for office

Functions of political parties

recruiting and nominating candidates

educating the public

simplifying political choice

operating the government

acting as the opposition party

party that isn't in power

helping to reduce conflict

## Organization of political parties

decentralized

no national control, many localized branches

National Nominating Convention

meets once every four years

nominates President & VP, writes party platforms

National Committee

organizes the party

plans conventions

organizes fund-raisers

coordinates advertising campaigns

State Committee

nominates and elects statewide party members

Precinct

local organization on county or city level

Patronage

system of rewards and favors given to those who assist the party

## The Two Party Tradition

Why has the U.S. always had two major political parties?

Consensus

helps to simplify political choice

tradition

Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists

Republicans vs. Democrats today

single member district

plurality wins most elections

Third parties occasionally arise to challenge ideas of major parties

Types

single issue parties

Prohibition, Green

total change parties

Communists, Socialists, Libertarians

person party

Bull Moose (TR), Reform (Perot)

Impact

raise new issues and can swing elections

Problems

lack money, visibility, and organization

## How do political parties select candidates for office?

Nomination methods

Petition

everyone who has certain number of signatures qualifies

Caucus

small number of party leaders select candidate

Nominating convention

see below

## Direct Primary

election to see who will run for election ☺

closed primary

only party members vote

open primary

any registered voter eligible

runoff primary

if majority is necessary

## Selecting Presidential Candidates

Republicans and Democrats have state primaries

most states have direct primaries

Iowa has caucus

electors are chosen to represent state at national convention

states determine the date of primaries

President & Vice-President nominated at Convention

four day televised event

Public speeches set tone and attempt to connect with voters

Keynote speaker (Wed) and nominating speaker (Thur)

prominent speeches that can launch careers

Rules Committee

sets rules for balloting of nominations

The Platform Committee

writes the party platform

consists of many “planks”

outlines party position on key issues

Nomination is determined by state by state balloting

all delegates must vote as instructed on 1<sup>st</sup> ballot

free agents after 1<sup>st</sup> ballot if no majority

dark-horse candidates

Vice President is selected by the Presidential nominee

balancing the ticket

geography, age, military experience, philosophy

Thursday night candidates give acceptance speeches

mending fences within the party

Presidential Candidates must win Electoral College to become President

elections held 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday after 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in November every four years

popular vote determines electoral college vote

winner take all vs. proportional system

most states have winner take all electoral college votes

candidates need 270 out of 538 possible to win election

if there is no majority, House of Representatives chooses President

Senate chooses Vice President

each state gets one vote total in each House of Congress

Presidents are sworn into office on January 20<sup>th</sup> of the following year

spend interim building cabinet and getting briefed