

## *Political Parties: Essential To Democracy*

**Political parties have existed since the first decade of the new government's existence. Americans have always had ambivalent feelings about them.**

**Parties are necessary, and they perform vital functions. But they have always been complicated, full of internal conflict, disorganized and decentralized, rigid but capable of being taken over by reformers.**

**Parties often mirror American society and are deeply rooted in the democratic process.**

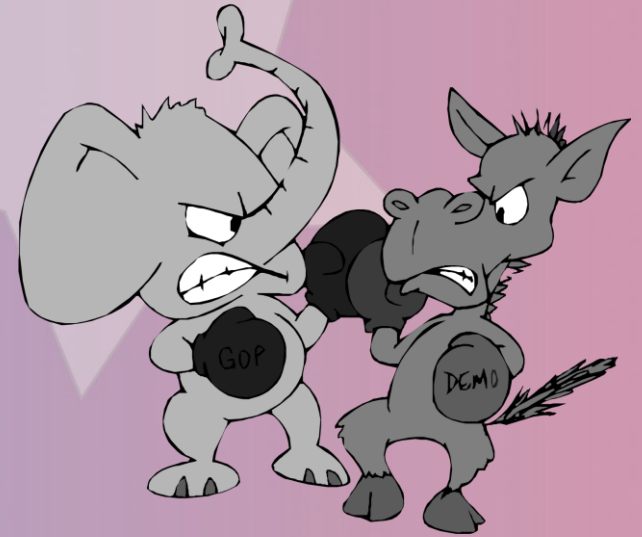
# What Parties Do for Democracy

## •Party Functions

- Organize the Competition
- Unify the Electorate
- Inspire and Inform Voters
- Translate Preferences into Policy
- Provide Loyal Opposition
- Organize Government
- Help Govern
- Act as Watchdogs
- Nominate Candidates
- Ensure Candidate Quality

## •Party Systems – Multiparty and Two Party System

## •Minor Parties: Persistence and Frustration



# Party Systems

## Multiparty

- Coalition government is necessary
- Minor parties have an incentive to persevere
- Proportional representation
- Governments tend toward instability

## Two party

- Winner-takes-all system
- “Wasted vote” syndrome discourages minor parties
- Government tends toward stability
- Policy change is incremental

**The U.S. is a two-party system; most other democracies have a multiparty system**

# Party Systems

Although the United States has many minor parties, only the two major parties have much of a chance to win elections. Multiparty systems are almost always found in countries that have a parliamentary government, in contrast to our presidential system.

## Barriers to Minor-Party Success

### Institutional Barriers

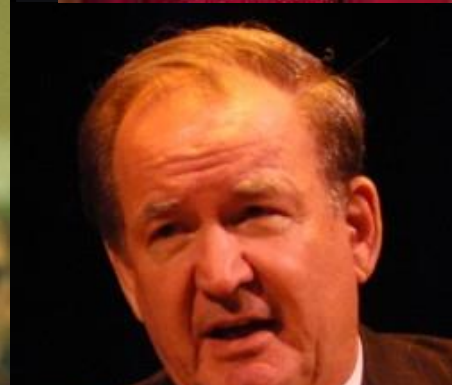
- Single-member district, first-past-the-post system
- Electoral college, winner-take-all system
- Ballot access laws

### Attitudinal Barriers

- Wasted votes syndrome
- History
- Tradition
- Consensus

# Minor Parties: Persistence and Frustration

- Ideological Parties
- Protest Parties
- Single Issue Parties
- Splinter Parties



- Libertarian Party
- Green Party
- Reform Party



# **The purpose of Political Parties is to**

- a. recruit potential officeholders**
- b. simplify alternatives**
- c. unite the electorate**
- d. all of the above**

## **Which of the following is not a present-day function of Political Parties**

- a. distribution of welfare handouts**
- b. stimulation of interest in public affairs**
- c. recruitment of political leadership**
- d. linkage between the mass public and government**

# **A Brief History of American Political Parties**

## **•Our First Parties**

- Political parties emerged largely out of practical necessity. Federalists and Anti-Federalists**
- In 1787, parties began to form as citizens debated the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.**

## **•Realigning Elections**

- 1824 Andrew Jackson and the Democrats**
- 1860 The Civil War and the Rise of the Republicans**
- 1896 A Party in Transition**
- 1932 FDR and the New Deal Alignment**

## **•Divided Government**

## **•The 2008 Election: Witnessing History**



# American Party History

- Federalist Party
- Anti-Mason Party
- Two minor anti-slavery parties in the 1840s:
  - Liberty Party
  - Free-soil party
- Greenback Party
- People's Party
- American Socialist Party
- Socialist Labor Party

|      | MAJOR PARTIES         | THIRD PARTIES       |                      |                           |      |
|------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|------|
| 1789 |                       | Federalists         | 1789                 |                           |      |
| 1792 |                       |                     | 1792                 |                           |      |
| 1796 |                       |                     | 1796                 |                           |      |
| 1800 | Democratic-Republican |                     | 1800                 |                           |      |
| 1804 |                       |                     | 1804                 |                           |      |
| 1808 |                       |                     | 1808                 |                           |      |
| 1812 |                       |                     | 1812                 |                           |      |
| 1816 |                       |                     | 1816                 |                           |      |
| 1820 |                       |                     | 1820                 |                           |      |
| 1824 |                       |                     | 1824                 |                           |      |
| 1828 |                       | National Republican | 1828                 |                           |      |
| 1832 | Democratic            | Whig                | Anti-Mason           | 1832                      |      |
| 1836 |                       |                     |                      | 1836                      |      |
| 1840 |                       |                     |                      | 1840                      |      |
| 1844 |                       |                     | Liberty              | Free Soil                 | 1844 |
| 1848 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1848 |
| 1852 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1852 |
| 1856 |                       | Republican          | Whig-American        |                           | 1856 |
| 1860 |                       |                     | Constitutional Union | Southern Dem.             | 1860 |
| 1864 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1864 |
| 1868 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1868 |
| 1872 |                       |                     | Liberal Republican   |                           | 1872 |
| 1876 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1876 |
| 1880 |                       |                     | Greenback            |                           | 1880 |
| 1884 |                       |                     |                      | Prohibition               | 1884 |
| 1888 |                       |                     | Union Labor          |                           | 1888 |
| 1892 |                       |                     | Populist             |                           | 1892 |
| 1896 |                       |                     | National Democratic  |                           | 1896 |
| 1900 |                       |                     |                      | Prohibition               | 1900 |
| 1904 |                       |                     | Socialist            |                           | 1904 |
| 1908 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1908 |
| 1912 |                       |                     | Bull Moose           |                           | 1912 |
| 1916 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1916 |
| 1920 |                       |                     |                      | Farmer Union              | 1920 |
| 1924 |                       |                     | Progressive          |                           | 1924 |
| 1928 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1928 |
| 1932 |                       |                     | Socialist            |                           | 1932 |
| 1936 |                       |                     | Union                |                           | 1936 |
| 1940 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1940 |
| 1944 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1944 |
| 1948 |                       |                     | Progressive          | States' Rights Democratic | 1948 |
| 1952 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1952 |
| 1956 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1956 |
| 1960 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1960 |
| 1964 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1964 |
| 1968 |                       |                     | American Independent |                           | 1968 |
| 1972 |                       |                     | American             |                           | 1972 |
| 1976 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1976 |
| 1980 |                       |                     | Libertarian          | Independent               | 1980 |
| 1984 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1984 |
| 1988 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 1988 |
| 1992 |                       |                     | Independent          |                           | 1992 |
| 1996 |                       |                     | Reform               |                           | 1996 |
| 2000 |                       |                     | Green                |                           | 2000 |
| 2004 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 2004 |
| 2008 |                       |                     |                      |                           | 2008 |

# The Last Half Century

- Major shifts in party demographics have occurred in recent decades.
- Since 1953, divided government, with one party controlling Congress and the other the White House, has been in effect twice as long as united government.
- Elections during the past few decades have seen power change hands numerous times without any long-term shifts in the population in party allegiance.

**CONTROL OVER NATIONAL POLITICS HAS GONE BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE PARTIES SINCE THEIR BEGINNING**

|            |                               |             |      |      |      |      |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------|-------------------------------|-------------|------|------|------|------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1789       | 1800                          | 1860        | 1932 | 1968 | 2000 | 2011 |   |   |   |   |   |
| Federalist | Anti-Federalist;<br>Democrats | Republicans | Dem  | R    | D    | R    | D | R | D | R | D |

# Minor Parties in the United States

| Year | Party                        | Presidential Candidate | Percent Popular Vote | Electoral Votes Received |
|------|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1832 | Anti-Masonic                 | William Wirt           | 8%                   | 7                        |
| 1856 | American                     | Milliard Fillmore      | 22                   | 8                        |
| 1860 | Democratic<br>(Secessionist) | John C. Breckenridge   | 18                   | 72                       |
| 1860 | Constitutional Union         | John Bell              | 13                   | 79                       |
| 1892 | People's (Populist)          | James B. Weaver        | 9                    | 22                       |
| 1912 | Bull Moose<br>(Progressive)  | Theodore Roosevelt     | 27                   | 88                       |
| 1912 | Socialist                    | Eugene V. Debs         | 6                    | 0                        |
| 1924 | Progressive                  | Robert M. LaFollette   | 17                   | 13                       |

# Minor Parties in the United States

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Party</b>                      | <b>Presidential Candidate</b> | <b>Percent Popular Vote</b> | <b>Electoral Votes Received</b> |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>1948</b> | <b>States' Rights (Dixiecrat)</b> | <b>Strom Thurmond</b>         | <b>2%</b>                   | <b>39</b>                       |
| <b>1948</b> | <b>Progressive</b>                | <b>Henry A. Wallace</b>       | <b>2</b>                    | <b>0</b>                        |
| <b>1968</b> | <b>American Independent</b>       | <b>George C. Wallace</b>      | <b>14</b>                   | <b>46</b>                       |
| <b>1980</b> | <b>National Unity</b>             | <b>John Anderson</b>          | <b>7</b>                    | <b>0</b>                        |
| <b>1992</b> | <b>Reform</b>                     | <b>Ross Perot</b>             | <b>19</b>                   | <b>0</b>                        |
| <b>1996</b> | <b>Reform</b>                     | <b>Ross Perot</b>             | <b>8</b>                    | <b>0</b>                        |
| <b>2000</b> | <b>Green</b>                      | <b>Ralph Nader</b>            | <b>3</b>                    | <b>0</b>                        |
|             | <b>Reform</b>                     | <b>Pat Buchanan</b>           | <b>0</b>                    | <b>0</b>                        |
| <b>2000</b> | <b>Independent</b>                | <b>Ralph Nader</b>            | <b>0</b>                    | <b>0</b>                        |
| <b>2008</b> | <b>Reform</b>                     | <b>Ralph Nader</b>            | <b>#</b>                    | <b>#</b>                        |

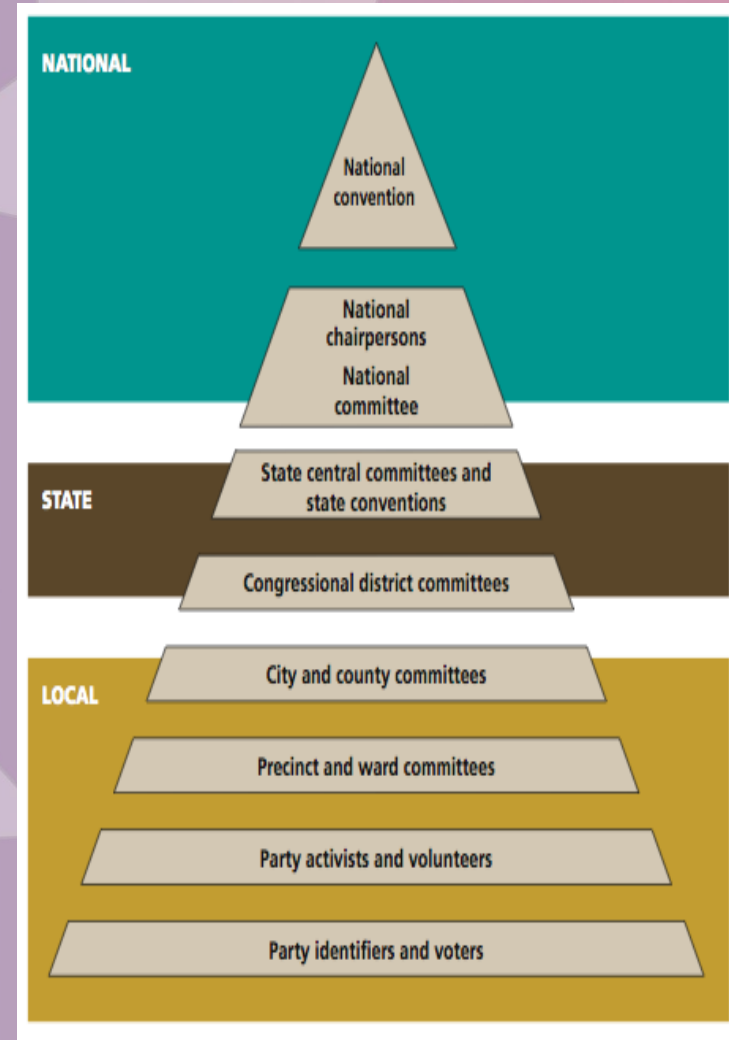
# American Parties Today

## Parties as Institutions

- **National Party Leadership**
- **Party Platforms**
- **Parties at the State and Local Levels**

## Parties in Government

- **In the Legislative Branch**
- **In the Executive Branch**
- **In the Judicial Branch**
- **At the State and Local Levels**



# American Parties Today

## Party Platforms

|                   | Democratic Platform  | Republican Platform   |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Abortion          | <p>The Democratic Party strongly and unequivocally supports <i>Roe v. Wade</i> and a woman's right to choose a safe and legal abortion, regardless of ability to pay, and we oppose any and all efforts to weaken or undermine that right. The Democratic Party also strongly supports access to comprehensive affordable family planning services and age-appropriate sex education which empower people to make informed choices and live healthy lives.</p>   | <p>We assert the inherent dignity and sanctity of all human life and affirm that the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We support a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose using public revenues to promote or perform abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We support the appointment of judges who respect traditional family values and the sanctity and dignity of innocent human life.</p> |
| Energy            | <p>Democrats are committed to fast-track investment of billions of dollars over the next ten years to establish a green energy sector that will create up to five million jobs. We'll create an energy focused youth job program to give disadvantaged youth job skills for this emerging industry. We must invest in research and development, and deployment of renewable energy technologies as well as technologies to store energy through advanced batteries and clean up our coal plants.</p>   | <p>We must draw more American oil from American soil. We will encourage refinery construction and modernization and, with sensitivity to environmental concerns, an expedited permitting process. Republicans will pursue dramatic increases in the use of all forms of safe nuclear power. We must continue to develop alternative fuels, such as biofuels, especially cellulosic ethanol, and hasten their technological advances to next-generation production.</p>  |
| Taxation          | <p>We will shut down the corporate loopholes and tax havens and use the money so that we can provide an immediate middle-class tax cut. We'll eliminate federal income taxes for millions of retirees, because all seniors deserve to live out their lives with dignity and respect. For families making more than \$250,000, we'll ask them to give back a portion of the Bush tax cuts to invest in health care and other key priorities. We will expand the Earned Income Tax Credit, and dramatically simplify tax filings so that millions of Americans can do their taxes in less than five minutes.</p> | <p>Republicans will lower the tax burden for families by doubling the exemption for dependents. We will continue our fight against the federal death tax. Republicans support tax credits for health care and medical expenses. We support a major reduction in the corporate tax rate so that American companies stay competitive with their foreign counterparts and American jobs can remain in this country. We support a plan to encourage employers to offer automatic enrollment in tax-deferred savings programs.</p>   |
| National Security | <p>We must first bring the Iraq war to a responsible end. We will defeat Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where those who actually attacked us on 9-11 reside and are resurgent. We will fully fund and implement the recommendations of the bipartisan 9-11 Commission. We must invest still more in human intelligence and deploy additional trained operatives with specialized knowledge of local cultures and languages. We will review the current Administration's warrantless wiretapping program.</p>  | <p>We must regularly exercise our ability to quickly respond to acts of bioterrorism and other WMD-related attacks. We must develop and deploy both national and theater missile defenses to protect the American homeland, our people, our Armed Forces abroad, and our allies. We must increase the ranks and resources of our human intelligence capabilities, integrate technical and human sources, and get that information more quickly to the war-fighter and the policy maker.</p>   |

# American Parties Today (continue)

## Parties in the Electorate

- **Party Registration**

When voters register to vote in the states, they are asked to state their party preference.

- **Party Activists**

People who invest time and effort in political parties

- **Party Identification**

Partisanship is what political scientists

- **Partisan Dealignment?**



# Party Identification

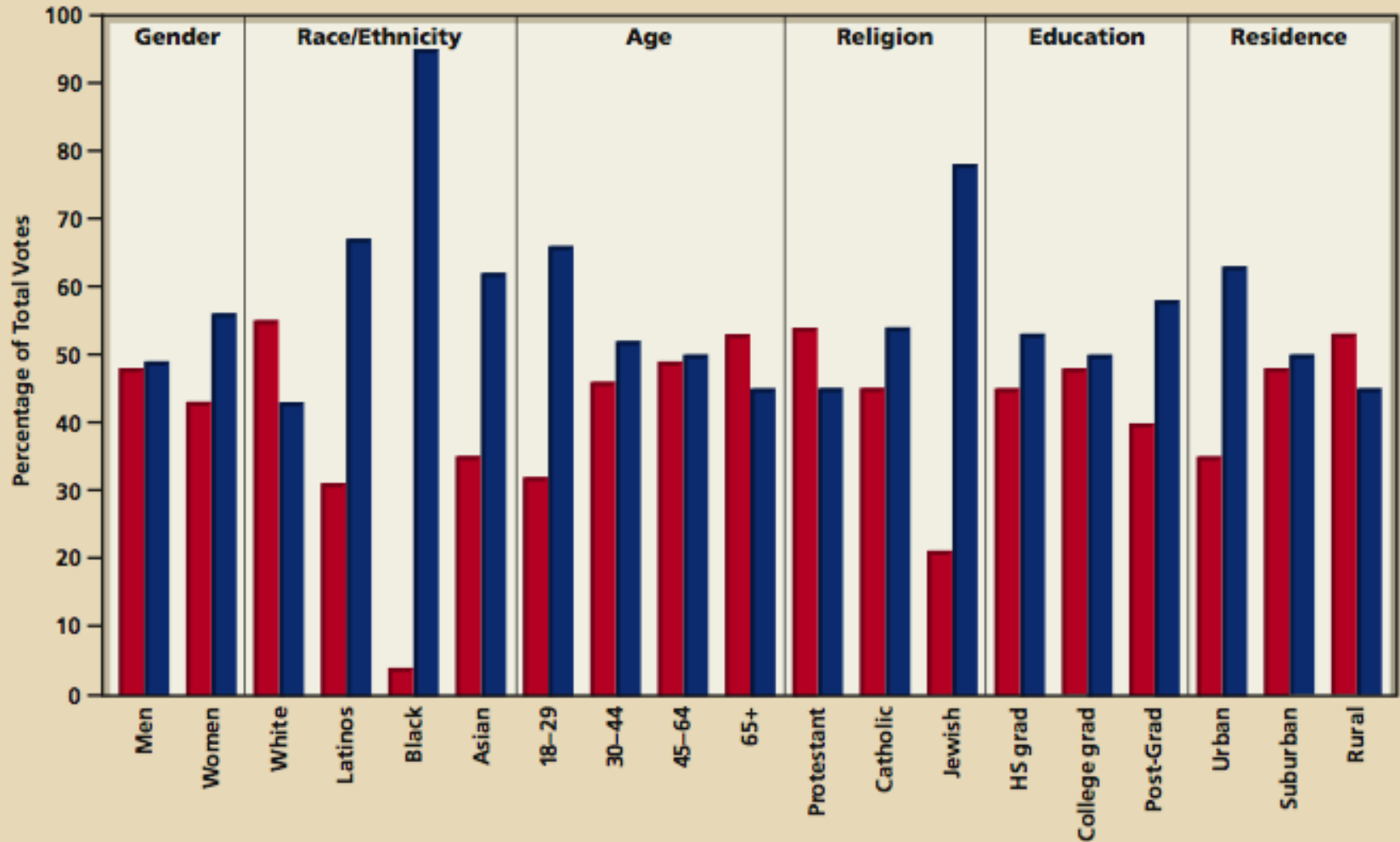
|                       |                       | Democratic  | Independents | Republican  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
|                       |                       | Identifiers |              | Identifiers |
| Region                | Northeast             | 33          | 45           | 23          |
|                       | Midwest               | 35          | 44           | 21          |
|                       | South                 | 34          | 41           | 26          |
|                       | West                  | 33          | 39           | 29          |
| Gender                | Male                  | 30          | 45           | 25          |
|                       | Female                | 37          | 39           | 24          |
| Race                  | Black                 | 66          | 31           | 3           |
|                       | Hispanic              | 37          | 47           | 17          |
|                       | White                 | 27          | 42           | 30          |
| Age                   | <30                   | 35          | 46           | 19          |
|                       | 30–49                 | 30          | 42           | 28          |
|                       | 50+                   | 36          | 40           | 24          |
| Income                | <30,000               | 41          | 15           | 44          |
|                       | 30,000–74,999         | 31          | 30           | 39          |
|                       | 75,000+               | 39          | 32           | 39          |
| Education             | High School or Less   | 34          | 24           | 43          |
|                       | College               | 28          | 32           | 40          |
|                       | Advanced Degree       | 39          | 22           | 39          |
| Union Member          | Yes                   | 47          | 22           | 32          |
| Military Veteran      | Yes                   | 29          | 27           | 45          |
| Religion Type         | Protestant            | 34          | 39           | 37          |
|                       | Catholic              | 34          | 23           | 43          |
|                       | Jewish                | 48          | 18           | 34          |
| Evangelical Christian | Yes                   | 31          | 33           | 36          |
| Marital Status        | Married               | 28          | 31           | 41          |
|                       | Not Currently Married | 39          | 19           | 42          |
| Ideology              | Conservative          | 21          | 33           | 45          |
|                       | Moderate              | 35          | 48           | 17          |
|                       | Liberal               | 53          | 42           | 6           |

Note: In this table, independent leaners are collapsed into the independent column. Partisans and strong partisans are collapsed into the party columns. Due to rounding, not all rows equal 100 percent.

Why do you suppose 1/3 to 40% of the electorate considers themselves non-partisan?



# Group Voting Patterns



# Party Identification, 1950 – 2000s

| Decade | Strong Democrat | Weak Democrat | Independent-Leaning Democrat | Independent | Independent-Leaning Republican | Weak Republican | Strong Republican | Other |
|--------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------|
| 1950*  | 23%             | 23%           | 8%                           | 7%          | 7%                             | 15%             | 13%               | 4%    |
| 1960   | 22              | 25            | 8                            | 10          | 7                              | 15              | 12                | 2     |
| 1970   | 17              | 24            | 12                           | 14          | 10                             | 14              | 9                 | 2     |
| 1980   | 18              | 26            | 11                           | 12          | 11                             | 14              | 11                | 2     |
| 1990   | 18              | 19            | 13                           | 10          | 12                             | 15              | 13                | 1     |
| 2000†  | 18              | 16            | 16                           | 10          | 12                             | 13              | 14                | 2     |

\* 1950s percentages based on years 1952, 1956, and 1958.

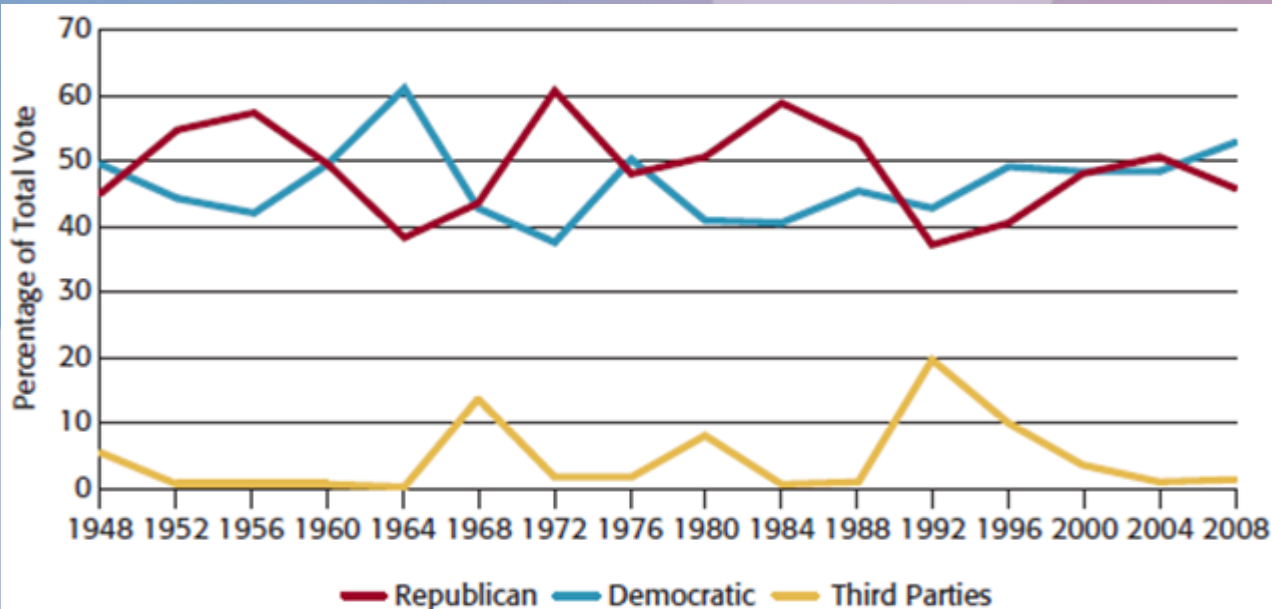
† 2000s percentages based on years 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2008.

NOTE: Data may not sum to 100 percent because of averaging.

■ How has the strength of party identification changed over time?

SOURCE: National Election Study (Center for Political Studies, University of Michigan, 2004).

## Are the Political Parties Dying?



■ Based on this graph, what share of the vote do third parties generally get? How many elections since 1952 have been exceptions to this?

SOURCE: Stanley and Niemi, *Vital Statistics on American Politics 2009–2010*, pp. 20–21.

# **Are the Political Parties Dying?**

- **Critics of the U.S. party system make three allegations against it.**
  - (1) parties do not take meaningful and contrasting positions on most issues,**
  - (2) party membership is essentially meaningless, and**
  - (3) parties are so concerned with accommodating the middle of the ideological spectrum that they are incapable of serving as an avenue for social progress.**
- **Some analysts fear that parties are in severe decline or even mortally ill.**
- **Legislation limiting the viability and functions of parties was bad enough, say the party pessimists, but parties suffer from additional problems.**

# Are the Political Parties Dying?

## Reform Among the Democrats

- Agreed to a number of reforms, responding to the disarray and to disputes about the fairness of delegate selection procedures
- Established a process that led to greater use of direct primaries for the selection of delegates to the national convention and greater representation of younger voters, women, and minorities as elected delegates.
- Abolition of the winner-take-all rule (the *unit rule*) that gave all delegates to the primary or convention winner.

## Reform Among the Republicans

- Republicans did not make changes as drastic as those made by Democrats
- Did give the national committee more control over presidential campaigns

# **Are Political Parties Dying?**

## **Continued Importance of Parties**

- Political parties are vital to the functioning of democracy, organizing electoral competition, unify large portions of the electorate, simplify democracy for voters, help transform individual preferences into policy, and provide a mechanism for opposition.
- Parties are just as important in organizing the government, straddling the separation of powers as fellow partisans cooperate between the executive and legislative branches or between the House and Senate.
- Parties provide an important way for citizens to influence government.

# How Parties Raise and Spend Money

## How Parties Raise and Spend Money

- Political parties rely on contributions from individuals and interest groups to fund their activities.
- Because of the close connection, political parties have with office holders, the courts have long permitted regulation of the source and amount of money people and groups can contribute to parties, as well as the amount parties can spend with or contribute to candidates.

# Effects of the 2002 Campaign Finance Reforms (BCRA)

|  | Before 2002 Reform   | After 2002 Reform   |
|--|--|---|
| Party contributions to candidates  | \$5,000 per election or \$10,000 per election cycle  | Unchanged   |
| Party-coordinated expenditures with candidates   | <i>Senate:</i> State voting age population times 2 cents, multiplied by the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), or \$20,000 multiplied by the COLA, whichever is greater.<br><i>House:</i> \$10,000 multiplied by the COLA; if only one representative in the state, same as the Senate limit. | Unchanged (but the Federal Election Commission is considering new rules on this). Parties may choose either independent expenditures or coordinated but not both  |
| Party soft money contributions to the national party committee                                       | Unlimited  | Banned  |
| Soft money to national or state and local parties for voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives | Unlimited  | Limit of \$10,000 per group to each state or local party committee (Levin Amendment)  |
| Contributions to parties for buildings   | Unlimited  | Banned  |
| Party-independent expenditures   | Unlimited  | Unlimited, except if ad falls under "electioneering communications definition." Then source of funding is subject to FECA regulations and limits, and the ad may not be broadcast within 30 days of a primary or 60 days of a general election. Parties may choose either independent expenditures or coordinated but not both. |
| Individual contributions to candidates per two-year election cycle                                   | \$2,000  | \$4,000   |
| Aggregate individual contribution limit to candidate or parties per two-year election cycle          | \$50,000   | \$95,000  |

# How Parties Raise and Spend Money

## Party Expenditures

- Party committees are permitted to make contributions to candidates and can spend a limited amount of money in what are called “coordinated expenditures.”
- Compared to other countries, the U.S. has less public funding of political parties and candidates.

Contribution Limits for 2007-2008

|  | To each candidate or candidate committee per election | To national party committee per calendar year | To state, district & local party committee per calendar year | To any other political committee per calendar year <sup>1</sup> | Special Limits   |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Individual may give                              | \$2,300*  | \$28,500*                                     | \$10,000 (combined limit)                                    | \$5,000   | \$108,200* overall biennial limit:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$42,700* to all candidates</li> <li>• \$65,500* to all PACs and parties<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> |
| National Party Committee may give                | \$5,000   | No limit                                      | No limit   | \$5,000   | \$39,900* to Senate candidate per campaign <sup>3</sup>  |
| State, District & Local Party Committee may give | \$5,000 (combined limit)                              | No limit                                      | No limit   | \$5,000 (combined limit)  | No limit   |
| PAC (multicandidate) <sup>4</sup> may give       | \$5,000   | \$15,000                                      | \$5,000 (combined limit)                                     | \$5,000   | No limit   |
| PAC (not multicandidate) may give                | \$2,300*  | \$28,500*                                     | \$10,000 (combined limit)                                    | \$5,000   | No limit   |
| Authorized Campaign Committee may give           | \$2,000 <sup>5</sup>                                  | No limit                                      | No limit   | \$5,000   | No limit   |



**Which of these is NOT a characteristic of a realigning election?**

- a. Weak voter involvement**
- b. Disruptions of traditional voting patterns**
- c. Changes in the relationships of power within the broader political community**
- d. The formation of new and durable electoral groupings**

**A major cause for the persistence of the two-party system in the United States is that**

- a. the major parties have become disciplined and issue-oriented.**
- b. election districts have a single incumbent.**
- c. third parties have failed to point out issues.**
- d. major party ideas and platform are too much like religious dogma.**

**The \_\_\_\_\_ party evolved out of the crisis over slavery.**

- a. Whig**
- b. Democratic**
- c. Modern Republican**
- d. Second Federalist**

**The \_\_\_\_\_ party put together a grand coalition lasting from the Civil War until 1932.**

- a. Whig**
- b. Democratic**
- c. Republican**
- d. Bull Moose**

**Third-party leaders have included all of the following except**

**a. Ralph Nader**

**b. Ross Perot**

**c. George Wallace**

**d. California Governor Jerry Brown**

**When a voter must be registered in a party to vote in the primary, it is called**

**a. closed**

**b. open**

**c. direct**

**d. crossover**

**After passage of the BCRA, \_\_\_\_\_.**

- a. Political parties were weakened because of limits on funding**
- b. There was a surge in individual contributions resulting in a strengthening of political parties**
- c. There was no change in contributions**
- d. There was a short weakening of contributions followed by a modest increase**