13

Political Parties

"The common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it."

—George Washington, Farewell Address, 1797

Essential Question: What are the functions and impacts of political parties, and how have they adapted to change?

Political parties are organized groups of people with similar political ideologies and goals. They work to have candidates elected to public office who will represent those ideologies and accomplish those goals. Political parties developed in the aftermath of the American Revolution because of social and economic divisions that already existed in our society. In his farewell address, George Washington warned that parties were mischievous and said that Americans should not split into factions. The founders viewed political parties as being driven by self-interest rather than by a desire to enhance the wellbeing of the new nation.

However, it seems that when like-minded people desire certain policy changes in a democratic society, political parties are the inevitable result. Organized parties provide important opportunities for people to participate in politics. These parties are often influenced by special interest groups and social movements, and their goal is always to capture the largest share of the votes possible so that they can wield power. For this reason, political parties must adapt and change as society and technology evolve. The United States has traditionally had a **two-party system** that discourages third-party and independent candidates, especially at the national level.

Functions and Impact of Political Parties

Political parties (1) mobilize and educate voters, (2) create platforms that define their ideas and goals, (3) recruit candidates and manage their campaigns, and (4) govern in hopes of implementing their desired public policy. Through these functions they link the citizenry to the government. Two major parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, have dominated U.S. politics for more than 150 years. Both major parties operate in every state.

Impact on Voters

Political parties exert a great influence on voters. They both shape and reflect voters' political ideologies. They play a large role in deciding which candidates will run for office, and they exercise significant control over the drawing of legislative districts, a process that can tilt the likelihood of election victory to the party in power.

Parties also engage voters in the routines of public life. Republican or Democratic party "members" could be lifelong party loyalists, just common voters who tend to vote for the party on Election Day, or somewhere in between. Parties have no restrictions on who can become members. Neither party charges dues nor requires any loyalty pledge. People who refer to themselves as Republicans or Democrats, or who regularly vote that way, are considered party members. More active and dedicated members volunteer for the party, make donations, or run for office.

For example, more active members of the local branch of a national party may hold monthly meetings, make calls to get voters to the polls, volunteer at the polling places on Election Day, and then gather at a neighborhood restaurant to watch the election results come in. Through these activities, the party is connecting with the electorate and members are connecting with other members, building social and political bonds. These activities link the voters to government and provide access to participation.

Mobilization of Voters Political parties are always looking to add rank-and-file members, because winning elections is essential to implementing party policy. Local parties target their outreach to mobilize and register voters in their effort to recruit more members—not just the party regulars but those who are on the fence about which side to take. They contact citizens via mail, phone, email, or at the door. Volunteers operate phone banks and make personal phone calls to citizens. Parties also use robocalls to remind people to vote for their candidates and to discourage voting for opposing candidates. **Robocalls** are prerecorded messages that can be delivered automatically to large numbers of people. (See page 374 for information on push polling, a technique for calling potential voters and asking questions framed to achieve a certain result.)

Political parties also hold voter registration drives. As elections draw near, small armies of volunteers canvass neighborhoods, walking door to door spreading the party philosophy, handing out printed literature and convincing citizens to vote for their causes and candidates. What is sometimes termed a "shoe-leather campaign" can gain more votes than a less personalized email blast. On Election Day, volunteers will even drive people to the polls.

Education of Voters Parties at national, state, and local levels make efforts to educate their membership on key issues and candidates. Parties also inform members of the activities of the government, both good and bad. They may tout accomplishments of local officeholders they support and criticize officeholders from the opposing party in an effort to stop unwanted policies.

Parties provide extensive training to candidates in how to run an effective campaign. They also train volunteers in the process of building party membership, getting out the vote, and interacting with elected officials.

This education effort goes both ways. To make sure their officeholders make decisions that reflect the voters' desires, parties conduct opinion surveys on the issues and share results with officeholders and candidates to educate them on party members' positions.

Creation of Party Platforms A party expresses its primary ideology in its **platform**—a written list of beliefs and political goals. In drafting a platform, national party leaders try to take into account the views of millions of voters, perhaps a third of the country.

As you read in Chapter 11, the modern **Republican Party** supports a conservative doctrine. Republicans for decades have advocated for a strong national defense, a reduction of wasteful government spending, and limited regulations on businesses. Democrats, on the other hand, support aggressive efforts for minority rights and stronger protections for the environment. Democrats also desire more government services to solve public problems and to provide public services. These views are reflected in each party's platform.

Members are drawn to political parties in part because of the position the parties take on these and other issues. However, the party leadership also takes into account the positions of the voters, leading to some flexibility and adaptability in party positions. For example, in the 1970s, the opposition of vocal members of the Republican Party to the proposed Equal Rights Amendment forced the party to change its position from support for the amendment to opposition to it (page 545).

The developing **Democratic Party** and its leaders drafted and approved their first formal party platform at the 1840 Democratic National Convention, the gathering of party representatives from all over the nation who come together for the purpose of nominating the party's presidential candidate. That first platform contained just over 500 words. The first Republican platform, written in 1854, took a stance on only two main issues. Today's platforms, in contrast, each contain a wide array of issues and concerns for government and are more than 25,000 words long. Party members don't necessarily agree on all the issues. Platform committee members argue over the wording, and these arguments have even caused some parties to split.

Democrats and Republicans arrive at their respective **conventions** with drafts of their platforms constructed weeks earlier. Each party has an official platform committee appointed by its leadership. As multiple candidates for president compete for the nomination, party leaders address the concerns of the different factions of the party. For this reason, even the runners-up in a nominating contest have strong input to the platform. In 2016, for example, second-place Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders of Vermont got to name five members of the platform-writing committee of 15; the winning presidential nominee, Hillary Clinton, got to name six members;

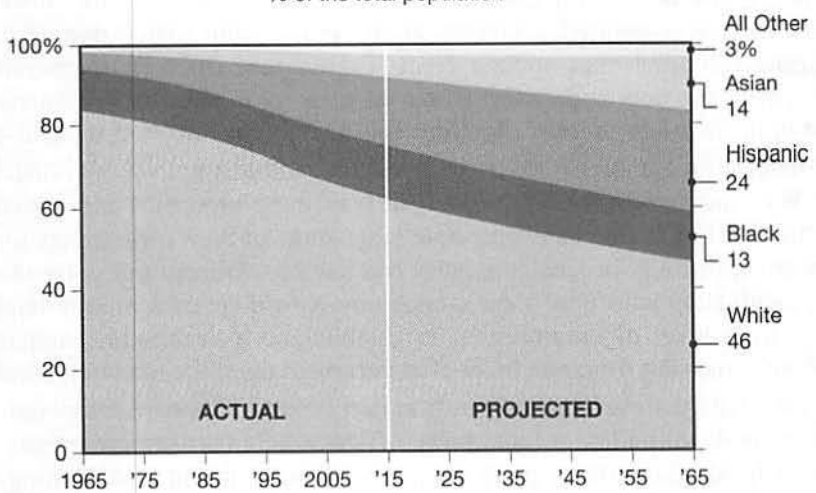
and the party chair appointed the others. Because of the influence from the Sanders members, the final platform included a desire for a $15 minimum wage—one of Sanders's most popular positions—and a commitment that the U.S. government would fight for LGBT rights in an international effort.

Giving a runner-up this much influence on the document is both principled and practical. A good portion of the party voted for the runner-up in the primary phase of the election, and the party needs those same dedicated voters to come out in the general election to support the candidate in the general election.

Political parties try to define their principles, which are shaped by the more ideological and active members, while remaining practical and looking ahead to the next election. They must strategize how to attract voters. After the Republicans lost their second straight presidential election in 2012, the party took a step back to evaluate its performance and assess how it could gain members and thus voters. Their so-called "autopsy report" suggested that the GOP needed to do more to reach out to Hispanics and younger citizens. Instead, however, during the 2016 election, the party platform and Republican winner Donald Trump took a strong position against illegal immigration—an issue affecting large numbers of Hispanics—and voiced the party's continued opposition to gay marriage—an issue that younger citizens tend to support. These policies appealed to a traditional, mostly white voter base. Trump also promoted protectionist trade policies, expanded oil and gas

Demographic Trends, 1965–2065

% of the total population



Source: *Pew Research Center 2014 report, "Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to U.S., Driving Population Growth and Change Through 2065"*

Note: Whites, blacks, and Asians include only single-race non-Hispanics;Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics can be of any race.

Political party leaders follow the population trends to determine the demographics of future voters so they can anticipate effective outreach.

drilling, and an America-first program, attracting a significant number of blue-collar voters who traditionally voted with the Democrats. Trump didn't win the popular vote, but, despite not following the recommendations of the autopsy report, he did win the majority of Electoral College votes, in part thanks to conservative voters who wanted a change in leadership.

As official statements of position, platforms matter to party leaders. However, most citizens do not follow the platform fight at the convention or read the final draft once it is available on the Internet. Nuances in platform language do not affect too many voters, but they could signal the beginning of an evolution in the party that may take a few election cycles to appear.

Candidate Recruitment Parties are always looking for talented candidates to run for office, especially those with their own financial resources or a strong, established following. For instance, at the national level, both parties sought to recruit General Dwight Eisenhower after World War II to run for president. Because he was a career soldier, mostly apolitical, and widely popular for his role in the victory over the Axis powers, a "Draft Eisenhower" movement started among some Democrats for the 1948 election. The Republicans succeeded in making him their candidate in 1952.

Party officials do sometimes court presidential candidates, but typically for the top offices, there's no shortage of experienced and well-funded contenders who have had their eye on higher office for years and are eager to compete for each party's nomination.

The party apparatus will look more aggressively for candidates to run for the state legislature or for the U.S. Congress, especially in "safe" districts where a party is assured a victory at the polls. Both major parties have recruiting programs that operate from Washington, D.C. These recruiters mark swing districts and swing states on maps and keep an eye on rising talent in those areas. Ideally, they find energetic, telegenic, and scandal-free candidates with good resumés and a talent for fundraising. National officials from Washington will sometimes call or visit these prospects and convince them to run. Those who can contribute large sums of their own money to the effort are appealing, because the party can use its own resources elsewhere. Also, candidates who fund their campaigns with their own money tend to have a high level of commitment to establishing a successful campaign. Candidates moving from one level of government up to the next may already have established a war chest of funds to carry over to the new campaign.

For the down-ballot, or local level, offices where partisan campaigns are likely, a local county-level party chair might talk a friend into running for city commissioner or school board member. Party leaders look for charismatic people who have a good grasp of the issues and who can articulate the party's positions. They also want candidates who can connect with voters. First-time candidates might include lifelong party volunteers, community leaders known around town, or people energized about a particular political issue.

Campaign Management As election season draws near, political parties get busy. Some of the regular, everyday activities continue, but an increase in engaging voters, holding campaign events, raising money, and trying to win elections for their candidates will consume the party for a months-long battle to take office and ultimately shape policy according to their ideology.

Most higher-office campaigns have a two-stage process. In the first stage, the party's rank-and-file voters nominate their candidates in a primary election. Since multiple candidates compete against one another for the party's nomination, the party will sometimes act more like a referee in the process of candidate selection than a coach. Multiple factions of members will coalesce around their favorite candidates. Sometimes these divisions are split along ideological beliefs—a primary might pit a liberal or conservative candidate against a moderate one—or they could be based on differences in personality or region.

One key part of the first stage is party-sponsored debates or forums featuring the party's declared candidates. Debates enable voters to get a sense of each candidate's principles and issue positions.

The second stage of the campaign process is the general election, in which the party candidates try to defeat their opposition. In this second phase, the party typically unites around its slate of nominees for different offices and works hard to get them elected. Parties seek success by hosting political rallies or fundraisers; canvassing for votes; distributing literature and campaign items, such as bumper stickers, signs, and buttons; and making "get-out-the-vote" phone calls.

The party assists candidates in preparing for debates, helps them create web pages, and does what it can to coordinate public events. Parties will run field offices, usually in a rented office space or a building donated by a wealthy party member, where party members coordinate local campaign efforts such as phone banks or door-to-door canvassing efforts.

Fundraising and Regulations Among the parties' most important campaign functions are raising and spending money in order to win elections. Campaign finance laws at the national and state levels limit how much donors can contribute to candidates, parties, and interest groups; define what types of items or activities the money can be used for, and regulate an enforcement mechanism that monitors this cash flow. You will learn more about campaign finance law—its evolution and how it works today—in Chapter 13. (See also page 470.)

The Federal Election Commission (FEC), an executive branch agency, monitors the flow of money and enforces financial limits. National and state party organizations must register with the FEC once they spend more than $1,000 toward any federal election effort in a calendar year. If a party organization conducts any activities with expenses within 120 days of a federal election, even generic voter registration, voter identification, or get-out-the-vote drives, those activities must be funded with money subject to federal limits.

Current party contribution limits dictate that state, local, and district-level party organizations can give a federal candidate's campaign committee up to

a total of $5,000 per election. The national party can also give up to $5,000 per election (a combined $10,000 for the primary and general elections). For the 2016 federal elections, the Democratic National Committee (including its auxiliary committees) received a little more than $755 million and spent all but $20 million of it. The Republican National Committee received more than $652 million and had nearly $44 million remaining after the election.

Media Strategy One reason fundraising is such an important function of political parties is that the cost of buying TV, radio, and other media ads is very high, but an effective media strategy is fundamental to winning votes. Over the past 50 years, people received the bulk of their news from television. Even today, the average adult watches about 3.5 hours of TV per day. About three-quarters of all voters say television is where they obtain most of their information about elections. For this reason, political parties try to develop the most effective media strategy possible, taking full advantage of the power of television.

Candidates rely on two forms of TV placement: the news story and the commercial. A news story is typically a short news segment showing the candidate in action—touring a factory, speaking to a civic club, visiting a classroom, or appearing at a political rally. Candidates send out press releases announcing their events, usually scheduled early enough in the day to make the evening news. This is free media coverage because, unlike expensive television commercials, the campaign does not have to pay for it. A campaign commercial, on the other hand, has to be paid for. In fact, the most expensive part of nearly any campaign is television advertising. The typical modern campaign commercial includes great emphasis on imagery, action-oriented themes, emotional messages, negative characterizations of the opponent, and quick production turnaround.

A candidate's appearance on camera can influence voters more deeply than words. For instance, in the first televised debate in 1960, John F. Kennedy's youthful, handsome, and charming demeanor was a stark contrast to Richard M. Nixon's nervous sweating. Kennedy won the election. In 2016, Democrat Hillary Clinton actively modulated her voice, which had a reputation for grating on voters' ears. She also used careful wardrobe selection to find a balance between appealing to women voters and maintaining a powerful image. For certain events she wore her trademark white pantsuits, which served as a reminder of the white clothing women in the suffrage movement wore in the early 20th century.

Although television is still central to media strategy, the trend in how people get their news is shifting. As of 2017, about two-thirds of Americans got at least part of their news from social media. Examples of **social media** include Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter (all social networks), YouTube (video posting), WordPress and Tumblr (blog sites), or Quora and Digg (discussion groups). These social media outlets share certain traits that make them powerful tools for parties and candidates to spread a message and build a brand:

Source: *Granger, NYC*

Television shines a spotlight on image and appearance. More than 33 million TV viewers watched Hillary Clinton deliver a speech at the Democratic National Convention in July, 2016.

- they allow people to connect online to build relationships
- they support brand awareness and permit unlimited sharing (posts can "go viral" and be shared without cost among millions of followers)
- they permit visual images that reinforce the message
- they engage people by allowing them to share their own opinions (sometimes anonymously)

Just as Kennedy became the first "television president" because he used the medium so well, Barack Obama is often called the first "social media" president. His campaign, especially for reelection in 2012, spent years on research and development creating complex programs that could link data available through social media and the party's own paper records in such a way that organizing became highly efficient and voter outreach precisely targeted. Digital ad costs were also much lower than those of television ads. For about $14.5 million, Obama's campaign bought YouTube advertising that would have cost $47 million on television.

Many supporters gave permission to the Obama campaign to access their connections on social media, which were then cross-checked in the campaign's vast data repository. Rather than being asked to share an Obama ad with all their

connections, supporters were told which of their connections, in which key states, would be most helpful to share an ad with. Since people are much more likely to trust the outreach of a friend than the outreach of a political volunteer, this strategy won many votes for Obama. Since then, parties try to develop the most efficient social media strategies to gather data for targeted outreach.

Despite the positive aspects of connectedness and free/low cost advertisement on social media, there is a negative side. Facebook and Twitter, in particular, ran thousands of "dark ads" during the 2016 election. **Dark ads** are anonymously placed status updates, photos, videos, or links that appear only in the target audience's social media news feeds but not in the general feeds. They are created to match the personality types of their audience to the message and to manipulate people's emotions—especially anger or fear—in order to sway their votes. Facebook and Twitter have both promised to provide more transparency to voters.

Impact of Political Parties on Government

In addition to their impact on voters, political parties have a significant influence on the way government works at all levels. On the national level, political committees work to write policy, elect candidates who will transform policies preferences into legislation, and maintain power. Holding onto power not only funnels funding for projects to members' home states, it also gives the dominant party the opportunity to appoint judges who will rule on the constitutionality of laws. The majority party also fills the leadership roles in the House and Senate, controlling the flow of legislation in both houses and the appointment of party members to key committee chairmanships. The most coveted prize for a president is to appoint judges to lifelong positions on the U.S. Supreme Court who are expected to represent, as much as an impartial judge can, the ideology of the president's party.

Party control over state legislatures and governorships is also important. Holding power at the state level can help parties enact legislation and create policy reflecting their party's ideology. In addition, it gives the majority party an advantage in drawing legislative district maps that can strengthen the likelihood of remaining in power (page 103) at the state level and maintaining or increasing the number of U.S. House of Representatives seats from the state's majority party . Following the 2016 election, a number of states had to redraw their voting district maps because federal courts determined that they were unfairly and unconstitutionally designed to keep incumbents in office.

Party Structures in Legislatures Both the **Democratic National Committee (DNC)** and the **Republican National Committee (RNC)** comprise a hierarchy of hundreds of employees and a complex network dedicated to furthering party goals. Each committee includes public leaders and other elite activists. The RNC and DNC meet formally every four years at their national conventions and on occasion between presidential elections to sharpen policy initiatives and to increase their influence.

National Chairs The **party chairperson** is the chief strategist and spokesperson. Though a leading official such as the president or an outspoken congressional leader tends to be the public face of the party, the party chair runs the party machinery. The chairperson's jobs include the following:

- appearing on political television shows and at major party events
- guiding the party's daily operations
- building up the membership
- seeking funding
- recruiting quality candidates for office
- conveying to voters the party philosophy

The position is nongovernmental, though some chairs have simultaneously served in Congress or as state governors. Some famous party chairpersons include Republican George H. W. Bush (before serving as vice president and then president) and former Vermont governor and Democrat Howard Dean (after his failed campaign for the presidential nomination). Republicans recently chose as their new chair Ronna Romney McDaniel of Michigan, a former state-level leader (and niece of 2012 Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney), and the Democrats elected Tom Perez, former U.S. secretary of labor.

Both the RNC and the DNC have subcommittees that manage recruitment, oversee communications and get-out-the-vote operations, and draft the party platform. Employees conduct surveys to ensure the party's philosophy aligns with that of its members and vice versa. Staffers meet with interest groups that have similar goals. They also regularly meet with their congressional leaders to further their policy agenda.

Hill Committees Both parties also have non-lawmaking committees in each house of Congress. Their purpose is to strategize how to win seats in the House and Senate. These four groups are sometimes referred to as the Hill Committees (page 86). Hill Committee members are also members of Congress. The chair of each party's Hill Committee holds a leadership position in his or her respective chamber. All four Hill Committees have permanent offices and support staff. They recruit candidates for open seats and seats held by the other party and try to reelect incumbents. They conduct polls, help candidates with fundraising activities, contribute to campaigns, create political ads, and purchase television time. Candidates running for election spend great amounts of time and energy seeking the parties' help and endorsement. During the 2016 federal election effort, the four groups each raised and spent between $130 million and $220 million in trying to keep or put their members into Congress.

PARTY COMMITTEES IN CONGRESS
National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC)
National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC)
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC)
Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC)

State and Local Parties Every state has a statewide party organization. Usually headquartered in the state's capital city, this organization carries out many of the same activities as the national party. The state party chairperson makes public appearances on local television, recruits new members, and registers voters. Within states, many counties have a party chair as well. At the state and local levels, population size, the history of the local party, and its relative strength determine its size and influence. Some chairs are full-time employees who collect a generous annual salary. Some parties have permanent office space or their own building. Some county-level chairpersons from less populated counties are volunteers on a part-time basis and operate out of their homes with nothing more than a basic web page and a box of voter registration cards.

All these organizational elements at various levels create a mammoth party operation that is loosely structured across state lines. The national party chairperson and the national committees are at the top of this operation, but no official hierarchy really exists. There is no streamlined top-down flow of money, ideas, or directives. State and local organizations can operate independently of the national party committee. Popular, self-funded candidates often have more influence on campaigns than the local party. At times, state or local parties differ from the national party on a policy stance.

Party Changes and Adaptations

Since the beginning of the party system, two parties have dominated. However, for a variety of political, social, economic, and legal reasons, parties have undergone significant transformation over the years, adapting to new conditions. One reason parties have changed is the shift from party-centered to candidate-centered campaigns. Because charismatic candidates, especially those who are self-funded, can appeal directly to voters through mainstream and social media, the parties' role in nominating candidates has been weakened. Parties often have to revise their platforms to accommodate these candidates' desires. Parties also find themselves having to keep track of shifting demographics in order to clarify the message and policies that best attract voters.

Candidate-Centered Campaigns

Historically, voters identified with political parties more than with individual candidates. Even the mechanical voting booth— by which a person could pull one lever and vote for a single party's entire slate of candidates—encouraged

this party identification. In the 1960s, this trend began to shift, for two main reasons. First, the more widespread use of television allowed candidates to build a following based on their own personalities rather than on party affiliation. Second, during the 1960s, society seriously questioned all public institutions, including political parties, as the Vietnam War dragged on, race riots burned cities across America, and the press revealed that President Nixon lied about both personal and public issues.

One result was the rise of the candidate-centered campaign. Increasingly—especially with social media and Internet technologies—candidates speak directly to the people, weakening the power of the parties. With so much access to information, people became more willing to learn about different candidates and cross party lines to vote for split tickets. Candidates who build their own campaigns are less beholden to party elites and can wield more personal power once they're in office. For this reason, parties are forced to work closely with charismatic candidates on both platform development and getting help with campaigning for down-ticket candidates.

Appeals to Demographic Coalitions

Each party has its core demographic groups, and each continually attempts to broaden its appeal to gain more voters. A demographic group—such as Hispanics, African Americans, Millennials, women, blue-collar workers, or LGBT persons—voting as a bloc can determine the outcome of an election. A party's image during televised events such as nominating conventions can convey how inclusive it is—or isn't—of various demographic groups.

For example, the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago revealed deep divisions within the party and brought major changes in how the Democratic Party nominated its presidential candidate. Old-line conservative party regulars, who favored Vice President Hubert Humphrey as the presidential candidate, faced off against the anti-Vietnam War wing, who favored Senator Eugene McCarthy. Dominated by party elites and older members, the convention nominated Humphrey, who had not run in a single primary or caucus but entered the race after the assassination of Robert Kennedy, while young antiwar protesters battled in the streets with the Chicago police. The spectacle sent the ugly message that the old, white, and still somewhat conservative delegates inside the arena made party decisions, while the younger members—who were eligible for the draft in the unpopular Vietnam conflict but ineligible in many states to vote for a candidate responsible for sending them to war—were relegated to expressing themselves in the streets. The media focused on the party's imperfect and undemocratic nominating procedure.

The Democratic Party created the **McGovern-Fraser Commission** to examine, consider, and ultimately rewrite convention rules. Headed by Senator George McGovern, the commission brought significant changes that ensured minorities, women, and younger voters representation at future conventions. However, a decade later, after having won only one presidential contest, largely as a reaction to Nixon's Watergate scandal, the Democrats

radically modified the system's emphasis on the party's rank-and-file voting to give more independence to the party's elites. The party created **superdelegates**, high-ranking delegates not beholden to any state primary vote. Superdelegates include members of Congress, governors, mayors of large cities, and other party regulars who comprise roughly 20 percent of the Democratic delegates.

Before the Democratic Convention in 2016, however, a DNC Unity Reform Commission met to reform the superdelegates' role in elections in the interest of making elections more democratic. Reforms included reducing the percentage of uncommitted delegates—those free to vote for whomever they chose—to one third, requiring the remaining two-thirds of the superdelegates to cast their votes according to the popular vote in their states.

The Republican Party faced its own challenges in appealing to a wider swath of voters. Even today, its convention delegates are overwhelmingly white, in contrast to the Democrats' now-inclusive and diverse participants. The president's State of the Union televised speeches also reflect these differences between the parties. The Republican side of the aisle tends to be older, white, and male. The Democratic side of the aisle includes more women and people of color.

Another vital way parties appeal to their demographic coalitions is through their policy views. Will party members, if elected to office, try to overturn abortion laws, thereby appealing to social conservatives, including many older white people? Will party members in office support same-sex marriage and thereby appeal to social liberals, including many young people? Will these persons provide immigration protection to Deferred Action on Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients and thereby appeal to Hispanics and other immigrant populations? What about making good on a promise to maintain broad rights to gun ownership, thereby appealing to mainly conservative white males? How will the party address climate change, the economy, taxes, and the national debt? Different demographic coalitions have different views on these issues, and party members will shape their policy positions in part to attract the demographic groups they believe they need to win elections while still working for their ideological principles.

Changes Influencing Party Structure

Parties have also adjusted to developments that affect their structure. At times throughout history, shifts in voter alignments transferred power to the opposition party and redefined the mission of each party. Campaign finance laws have brought about structural changes as well, altering the relationships among donors, parties, candidates, and interest groups. And in order to remain relevant, parties must continually adjust to changing communication technology and voter-data management systems to spread and control their message and appeal to voters.

Critical Elections and Realignments At certain points, new parties have emerged, and old ones have faded into the background. Additionally,

large groups of voters have switched allegiance from one party to another over divisive issues or in times of crisis. These political **party realignments** are changes "in underlying electoral forces due to changes in party identification," according to the *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*. They are marked by **critical elections**, those that reveal sharp, lasting changes in loyalties to political parties. Although there are various ways to classify realignments, many historians recognize political realignments occurring five times in U.S. history—associated with the elections of 1800, 1860, 1896, 1932, and 1968 — each realignment marking the emergence of a different party system. There are at least two causes of realignments: (1) a party is so badly defeated it fades into obscurity as a new party emerges, or (2) large blocs of voters shift allegiance from one party to another.

The First Alignment In 1800, power shifted from the Federalists, followers of Washington, Adams, and Hamilton, who were supporters of a strong national government that invested in national infrastructure and banking, to the **Jeffersonians**, later called the Democratic-Republicans, who favored states' rights, limited national government, and generally fewer laws. Federalists and Jeffersonians were deeply and passionately divided on the best course for the nation, yet this shift marked America's first peaceful transition of power. Federalist influence faded, and voters shifted to the **Democratic-Republicans**. In fact, for approximately two decades after the 1800 election, the only party in the United States was the Democratic-Republican Party.

In 1824, Andrew Jackson founded the Democratic Party, which emerged out of the Democratic-Republican Party and continued many of the principles of that party, while the National Republican Party formed that same year. In 1828, Jackson won the presidency with support from small Western farmers. By this time, suffrage had expanded because property qualifications had been dropped in most states, and many more citizens voted. This shift toward greater democracy for the common man (women were not permitted to vote) and away from the aristocracy that had previously held the power was called **Jacksonian Democracy**. Opponents formed the **Whig Party** and advocated for a strong central government that would promote westward expansion and investment in infrastructure and support these investments with a strong national bank. Both Northerners and Southerners joined the Whig party, with some Southern Whigs opposing slavery and some Northern Whigs supporting a lenient attitude toward Southern slaveholders. In time, the slavery issue would fracture the Whig party.

Several party innovations developed in this period that influenced the structure of parties. The Democrats started building state and local party organizations to help support the national party efforts. They established the **party principle**, the idea that the party exists independent of the government, and that, if victorious, it can reward with government jobs those who help the campaign. The Whigs and Democrats also developed more modern campaigns by holding nominating conventions. The Whigs elected only two presidents, while the Democratic Party dominated and became the party of the people.

New Alliances for the Republicans: The Second Realignment The 1850s marked a controversial time of intense division on the issue of slavery. Democrats broke into northern and southern wings.

By 1854, Northern Democrats became part of an alliance formed of abolitionists and old Whigs. They held their first national presidential nominating convention in Philadelphia in 1856, choosing John C. Fremont, who ran under the "Free Soil" banner, committed to not allowing the spread of slavery into new territories (hence "free soil"). Fremont lost to Democrat James Buchanan. At their next convention in Chicago in 1860, the alliance of abolitionists and Whigs formally took the label "Republican" and nominated Abraham Lincoln, who won the presidency.

The 1860 election marked the second national realignment. Though the new Republican Party was technically a third party at the time—the last third party to win the White House—it quickly began to dominate national politics. Today, the Republicans are often referred to as the **"Grand Old Party"** or **GOP**. From 1860 to 1932, Republicans dominated national politics with their pro-growth, pro-business agenda. Democrats became the party of the South.

Expanding Economy and the Realignment of 1896 America witnessed the third realignment period during the era of big business and expansion, with Republicans still dominant. The critical 1896 election realigned voters along economic lines. The economic depressions of the 1880s and 1890s (or *panics,* as they were often called in those years) hit the South and the Midwest hard. The Democratic Party joined with third parties such as the Greenbacks and Populists to seek a fair deal for the working class and represent voters in the South and West. Democrats also supported Protestant reformers who favored prohibition of alcohol.

For the 1896 presidential election, congressman and orator William Jennings Bryan captured the Democratic nomination. The Populist Party also endorsed him. However, anti-Bryan Democrats realigned themselves with the Republican Party, which nominated William McKinley. The Republicans were still aligned with big business, industry, capitalists, urban interests, and immigrant groups. These groups feared the anti-liquor stance of so many in the evolving Democratic Party, which increasingly focused on class conflict and workers' rights. As Democratic legislatures began to regulate industry to protect laborers, conservative Republican judges declared such regulations unconstitutional. These differences began the division that continues today between Republican free-market capitalists and Democrats who favor regulation.

Democrats, the Depression, and the Fourth Realignment In the 1930s during the Great Depression, America went from being mostly Republican to being solidly Democratic thanks to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's **New Deal coalition**, which was made up of Democratic state and local party organizations, labor unions and blue-collar workers, minorities, farmers, white Southerners, people living in poverty, immigrants, and intellectuals. At this time, blacks shifted from the Republican Party to the Democrats. The 1932 presidential election marks the first time that more blacks voted Democrat

Source: *Clifford Berryman, Library of Congress*

The 1928 presidential election pitted Democrat Al Smith against Republican Herbert Hoover. When interpreting a political cartoon, first notice the symbols and read the labels. What symbols does the cartoonist provide to indicate the party that nominated each candidate? What are the tools of persuasion in campaigning?

than Republican. This New Deal coalition sent Roosevelt to the White House four times. His leadership during the economic crisis and through most of World War II allowed the Democrats to dominate Congress for another generation. The New Deal implemented social safety nets and positioned the federal government as a force in solving social problems. It reined in business, promoted union protections and civil liberties, and increased participation by including women—granted suffrage through the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919—and minorities.

Source: *Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum*

Franklin Roosevelt's public works programs employed the unemployed and boosted the nation's infrastructure. It's no wonder such a large coalition of voters supported President Roosevelt and his Democratic Party well after the New Deal. Roosevelt is pictured in the center of the photo with his wife Eleanor beside him.

Shifts Since the 1960s Although a mix of politicians from both parties favor equality among the races, the post-World War II fight for equality for African Americans was dominated by the Northern, liberal wing of the Democratic Party. President Lyndon Johnson quietly predicted the Democratic Party would lose the South for a generation when he signed the Civil Rights Act in the summer of 1964 (page 312). He was right.

This regional realignment became apparent in the 1964 presidential election between President Johnson and Arizona Republican Barry Goldwater. Johnson handily won the election, while Goldwater won the Deep South states, a region that had been the Solid South for Democrats for most presidential elections over the previous century. Southern white voters have all but left the New Deal coalition in opposition to civil rights reforms and joined the Republican Party. Additionally, decisions that resulted in busing public school children for racial balance and those that legalized abortion convinced conservative voters to move to the GOP.

Since 1968, the major parties have continued on similar ideological paths, especially on economic issues. However, a growing number of citizens became independents or turned away from politics altogether, resulting in a **party dealignment.** The unpopular Vietnam War and Richard Nixon's Watergate scandal brought mistrust of government and a mistrust of the parties. Voter turnout dropped over the following three decades. Party loyalty decreased, a fact made obvious by an increased number of independent voters. These voters split their tickets—or voted for candidates from both parties—which resulted in phases where the presidency was held by one party and one or both houses of Congress by the other. This **divided government** has been common at the federal level.

The Democratic Party has gone from being a states' rights advocate to believing in big government, while the Republican Party has gone from being the progressive anti-slavery party of Abraham Lincoln to being conservative. These drastic transitions did not happen overnight but through a series of changing voter habits and adjusted party alignments over more than a century.

Source: *Library of Congress*

African American and white children ride a bus from the suburbs to the inner city of Charlotte, North Carolina as part of a school integration plan in 1973.

BY THE NUMBERS PRESIDENT, RUNNER-UP, AND MAJORITY PARTY IN CONGRESS				
Year	**President**	**Runner-up**	**House**	**Senate**
1968	Nixon (R)	Humphrey (D)	DEM	DEM
1970			DEM	DEM
1972	Nixon (R)	McGovern (D)	DEM	DEM
1974			DEM	DEM
1976	Carter (D)	Ford (R)	DEM	DEM
1978			DEM	DEM
1980	Reagan (R)	Carter (D)	DEM	REP
1982			DEM	REP
1984	Reagan (R)	Mondale (D)	DEM	REP
1986			DEM	DEM
1988	Bush, G. H. W. (R)	Dukakis (D)	DEM	DEM
1990			DEM	DEM
1992	Clinton, W. J. (D)	Bush (R)	DEM	DEM
1994			REP	REP
1996	Clinton, W. J. (D)	Dole (R)	REP	REP
1998			REP	REP
2000	Bush, G. W. (R)	Gore (D)	REP	REP
2002			REP	REP
2004	Bush, G. W. (R)	Kerry (D)	REP	REP
2006			DEM	DEM
2008	Obama (D)	McCain (R)	DEM	DEM
2010			REP	DEM
2012	Obama (D)	Romney (R)	REP	DEM
2014			REP	REP
2016	Trump (R)	Clinton, H. (D)	REP	REP

What do the numbers show? Since 1968, how many times did Democrats hold the majority? How many did Republicans dominate? In what years do you see a president governing with a Congress dominated by the opposing party? In which years was the Congress split? In what elections do you see a change in party power? What caused these changes?

PARTY SYSTEMS AND REALIGNMENT PERIODS		
1789–1800	**Federalists** won ratification of the Constitution and the presidency for the first three terms.	**Anti-Federalists** opposed strong national government and favored states' rights and civil liberties.
1800–1824	**Federalists** maintained beliefs in a loose interpretation of the Constitution to strengthen the nation.	**Democratic-Republicans** (Jeffersonians) put less emphasis on a strong Union and more on states' rights.
1824–1860	**Democrats** (Jacksonians) encouraged greater participation in politics and gained a Southern and Western following.	**Whigs** were a loose band of eastern capitalists, bankers, and merchants who wanted internal improvements and stronger national government.
1860–1896	**Democrats** became the second-place party, aligned with the South and the wage earner and sent only Grover Cleveland to the White House.	**Republicans** freed the slaves, reconstructed the Union, and aligned with industrial interests.
1896–1932	**Democrats** join with Populists to represent the Southern and Midwestern farmers, workers, and Protestant reformers.	**Republicans** continue to dominate after a realignment based on economic factors.
1932–Present (including dealignment starting in 1968)	The Great Depression created the **New Deal coalition** around FDR's programs. **Democrats** dominated politics until the mid-1990s.	**Republicans** have taken on a *laissez-faire* approach to economic regulation and a brand of conservatism that reflects limited government.

Campaign Finance Laws Since the early 1970s, national law and recent landmark Supreme Court cases have governed campaign finance rules. These laws, covered in Chapter 14, have affected the structure and strength of political parties.

Campaign finance laws differentiate between "hard money" and "soft money." **Hard money** is any contribution subject to the regulation of the Federal Election Commission (FEC), which was established in 1974 as the monitoring agency for campaign contributions. There are strict limits on how much can be donated, and donations can come from only individuals, political action committees, and political parties, not corporations or labor unions. A **political action committee (PAC)** is an organization that collects political donations from its members and uses the funds to influence an election, either by supporting or opposing a candidate. (See pages 503–505.)

However, donors found a way around these limits through a provision that allowed parties to receive **soft money**—donations not regulated by the FEC—as long as those contributions were for the purpose of "party-building activities," not for supporting specific candidates. Nonetheless, the parties found ways to use the money in campaigns by creating **issue ads**—advertisements highlighting an issue of concern. Such ads could point out the

opposition's stand on those issues and leave a negative impression, but as long as they didn't say, "Vote for our candidate!" they were a permissible use of soft money. In this way soft money was making its way from the pockets of influential billionaires to the political parties, and the political parties' strength was increased.

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) of 2002 put an end to this practice. As a result, money that would have gone to the parties as soft money went instead to special interest groups in support of a candidate, so candidate-centered campaigns became the norm. This change weakened the influence of political parties, which are recognized as a moderating force, and gave more power to the special interest groups to back candidates who were often at extreme ends of the political spectrum. Candidates supported by big money interests often won their seats, and the political divide in Washington widened. Observers noted that as the party influence weakened, grassroots organizing efforts also declined.

The Supreme Court decisions in *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010) and *McCutcheon v. FEC* (2014) in essence reversed the soft money prohibitions. (See page 510.) The rulings allowed a new kind of organization, the **Super PAC**, to collect unlimited funds from a variety of sources, including corporations and labor unions, as long as the money did not go directly to a candidate's election campaign or to a political party. However, the money could be used for advertising to support or disparage any candidate as long as the Super PAC did not formally coordinate with the candidate. Ads of this kind are known as **independent expenditures**, and even parties can make them.

Also, while upholding the maximum contributions for individual candidates or committees, the ruling in *McCutcheon* removed the limit imposed by BCRA on how much an individual could donate to multiple candidates in a two-year cycle. This change greatly increased the popularity of the joint fundraising committee (JFC)—a coordinated fundraising effort of a number of candidates and committees. Rich donors can now write just one large check (more than $1 million depending on how many candidates and committees are in the JFC). The contributions are then shared among the members of the JFC according to their own agreement.

These changes affected political parties in several ways. First, state party committees are often members of JFCs, so they received a share of the contributions. Once the money was in their coffers, there was no law against returning a sizable amount of it to the national committees. Through this process, the political parties worked around their limits on hard money and once again had a strong hand in passing around campaign donations and thereby influencing candidate choice and results. Second, the unofficial structure of the party has changed from a top-down vertical organization to more of a horizontal network. Although the joint fundraising committees and Super PACs are not officially part of the party, they are key players in campaigns, so the political party has become part of a web of actors, dependent on elements outside of the party for funds.

BY THE NUMBERS DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN EXPENDITURES, PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS, 1952–1968 (IN MILLIONS)					
Year	**Democrats**	**Spent**	**Republicans**	**Spent**	**Total**
1952	Stevenson	$5.03	Eisenhower	$6.61	$11.64
1956	Stevenson	$5.11	Eisenhower	$7.78	$12.89
1960	Kennedy	$9.80	Nixon	$10.13	$19.93
1964	Johnson	$8.76	Goldwater	$16.03	$24.79
1968	Humphrey	$11.59	Nixon	$25.40	$36.99

What do the numbers show? What happened to the cost of presidential campaigns in the post-World War II era? Which party spent more during each cycle? How often did the higher-spending party win the election? What factors may have caused the trend(s) in this table?

Changes in Communication and Data-Management Technology Political parties rely heavily on polling and on mining databases to gain insights into voter preferences, so they must quickly adapt to changes in technology that affect these efforts. As you read, Obama's campaigns, especially for his reelection in 2012, devoted many resources to using available technology and media to their fullest to understand and target voters.

Parties use this information to craft, control, and clarify their messages. Voter data can reveal where people eat and shop, the people they're connected to, and which media sources they use to access news and information. Increasingly, political organizations are able to target with pinpoint accuracy who gets which message thanks to data-management technology. Data-management technology is a field that uses skills, software, and equipment to organize information and then store it and keep it secure.

These digital resources are so valuable in learning about voters that they have been abused. Before the 2016 election, a British political data firm called Cambridge Analytica managed to obtain 50 million Facebook user profiles from another company's personality quiz app. The data firm was an offshoot of the SCL Group, a company owned largely by the Mercer family, which includes conservative billionaire Republican Party supporters. Cambridge Analytica then created detailed "psychographic" profiles used to target voters during the campaign. Facebook suspended Cambridge Analytica and found itself in the crosshairs over its oversight and corporate policies and the role it played in presidential politics.

Managing Political Messages and Political Outreach

Psychographic segmentation uses data about personality, lifestyle, and social class to categorize groups of voters. Demographics explain "who" the voters are—race, gender, age, neighborhood, church or political affiliation, and similar traits. Psychographics, in contrast, explain "why" they vote the way they do. What are their values, hobbies, habits, and likes? This valuable data helps

candidates and parties tailor their messages and conduct political outreach.

Part of a message's appeal is based on the candidate's appearance and choice of venues for delivery. A Western state candidate might appear wearing a cowboy hat and boots, riding on horseback along a river. An urban candidate could roll up her sleeves and visit a public works project that rehabilitates neighborhoods. Language is carefully crafted in messages to remind voters of key ideas and values espoused by the party.

Another key element of messaging and outreach is timing. In the early stages of a campaign, more abstract messages resonate. That's when the candidate will remind voters about core values and ideals. For instance, during the 2008 presidential primaries, Democrat Barack Obama spoke soaringly of hope and change, while his rivals focused on the concrete details of managing the Iraq War and closing a "doughnut hole" in Medicaid that made drug costs out of reach for some. Closer to Election Day, voters become receptive to messages that are more concrete. Candidates can specify the programs they plan to implement and how those changes will improve the lives of Americans.

Perhaps the greatest challenge for parties is to spark interest in unaligned or apathetic voters. In recent elections, Barack Obama succeeded in doing this and won two four-year terms in 2008 and 2012 with his brand and message of hope and change. In 2016, Donald Trump won the election by promising a very different brand of change—draining the Washington swamp of corrupt insiders.

Structural Barriers to Third-Party and Independent Candidates

Though a two-party system has generally dominated the American political scene, competitive **minor parties**, often called **third parties**, have surfaced and played a distinct role. Technically, the Jacksonian Democrats and Lincoln's Republicans began as minor parties. Since Lincoln's victory in 1860, no minor party has won the White House, but several third-party movements have met with some levels of success. These lesser-known groups have sent members to Congress, added amendments to the Constitution, and forced the larger parties to take note of them and their ideas. Despite these victories, structural barriers in our political system have limited the impact and influence—and therefore the success—of third-party and independent candidates.

Why Third Parties Form

Because the two major parties compete to win the majority of voters, and majorities always occupy the center, the more ideological citizens may not believe that their agenda is being heard and implemented in either party, so they create their own party. For instance, in the early 1900s as a response to conservative robber barons, uncontrolled industrial growth, and massive wealth inequality, the Socialist Party formed and was able to push a leftist agenda whose ideas were eventually incorporated into American politics. During the 1970s, following a long period of Democratic dominance, the

Libertarian party formed. Its supporters wanted a more traditional liberalism: *laissez-faire* (unregulated) capitalism, abolition of the welfare state, nonintervention in foreign affairs, and individual rights—such as the right to opt out of Social Security. Socialists and Libertarians are **ideological parties**.

Sometimes third parties form as **splinter parties**—broken off from a major party. For example, in 1968 segregationist George Wallace splintered off from the liberal Democratic Party and formed the American Independent Party. White southerners followed him, splitting the Democratic vote, and that —along with opposition to the Vietnam conflict and Humphrey's nondemocratic nomination—led to the election of Republican Richard Nixon.

Some parties form as **economic protest parties**. In the late 19th century, the Greenback Party opposed monopolies. During that same period, farmers founded the Populist Party to fight against railroads, big banks, corporations, and the politicians those interests controlled. Other third parties rise and fall as **single-issue parties**. The Prohibition Party, for example, was founded in 1869 as part of the temperance movement to ban alcohol. The Green Party arose in the 1970s to advocate for environmental awareness, social justice, and nonviolence. Some of these parties still exist in America today. Protest parties are formed within a specific context—a social condition that demands reform.

MINOR PARTY TYPES AND EXAMPLES
Ideological parties: Socialist, Libertarian
Splinter parties: Bull Moose, American Independent
Economic protest parties: Greenback, Populist
Single-issue parties: American (Know-Nothings), Prohibition

Modern Third Parties

Since 1968, there have been additional minor party candidates seeking office, but no such candidate has won a plurality in any one state, and therefore none has ever earned even one electoral vote. Texas oil tycoon H. Ross Perot burst onto the political scene in 1992 to run for president as an independent. Funded largely from his own wealth, Perot created United We Stand America (later renamed the Reform Party) and campaigned in every state. He won nearly 20 percent of the national popular vote. But with no strong following in any one state, he failed to earn any electoral votes. However, more importantly, he pulled enough votes from Republican President George H. W. Bush that Democrat Bill Clinton won the presidency.

Ralph Nader was the Green Party candidate in the 2000 election. The votes he drew from Democrat Al Gore helped propel Republican George W. Bush into the presidency in an election that was so close, it was decided by a Supreme Court decision regarding "hanging chads" on ballots in Florida. Third-party candidates are feared by the two major parties, and for this reason, there are many barriers to prevent third-party and independent candidates from gaining enough traction to mount a campaign.

MINOR PARTY CANDIDATES AND INDEPENDENT POLITICAL LEADERS	
Recent Minor Party Presidential Candidates	**Becoming Independent**
• **H. Ross Perot**—Texas millionaire ran with United We Stand America, 1992 and 1996	• **Jim Jeffords**—Vermont Republican Senator, 2001
• **Ralph Nader**—Consumer advocate ran with the Green Party, 1996 and 2000	• **Joe Lieberman**—Connecticut Democratic Senator, 2006
• **Pat Buchanan**—Conservative aide to Nixon and Reagan ran with Reform Party, 2000	• **Michael Bloomberg**—New York Republican Mayor, 2007
• **Gary Johnson**—Former governor of New Mexico ran as Libertarian, 2012, 2016	
• **Jill Stein**—Physician and activist ran as Green Party candidate in 2012, 2016	

Barriers to Third-Party Success

No minor party has won the presidency since 1860, and no third party has risen to second place in the meantime. Minor parties have a difficult time competing with the highly organized and well-funded Republicans and Democrats. The minor parties that come and go cannot effectively participate in the political process in the United States because the institutional reasons for the dominance of the two major parties are many and complex. They include single-member districts, money and resources, winner-take-all voting, and the ability of the major parties to incorporate third-party agendas.

Single-Member Districts The United States generally has what are called single-member districts for elective office. In **single-member districts**, the candidate who wins the most votes, or a plurality in a field of candidates, wins that office. Many European nations use proportional representation. In that approach, multiple parties compete for office, and voters cast ballots for the party they favor. After the election those offices are filled proportionally. For example, a party that wins 30 percent of the votes cast in the election is then awarded 30 percent of the seats in that parliament or governing body. This method encourages and rewards third parties, even if minimally. In most elections in the United States, however, if three or more candidates seek an office, the candidate winning the most votes—even if it is with a minority of the total—wins the office outright. There is no rewarding second, much less third, place.

Money and Resources Minor party candidates also have a steeper hill to climb in terms of financing, ballot access, and exposure. Both the Republican and Democratic parties have organized operations to raise money to convince donors of their candidates' ability to win—and by so doing attract even more donors. Full-time employees at the DNC and RNC constantly seek funding between elections. Even more importantly, according to campaign finance law, the nominee's party needs to have won a certain percentage of the vote in the previous election in order to qualify for government funding in the current election. Political candidates from minor parties have a difficult time competing financially unless they're self-financed, as Ross Perot was.

Independents also have a difficult time with ballot access. Every state has a prescribed method for candidates to place their names on the ballot. It usually involves a fee and getting as many as 1.5 million signatures, which is what Ross Perot did in 1992. Favored candidates in the Democratic and Republican parties can simply dispatch party regulars and volunteers throughout a state's counties to collect signatures for the ballot petition. Green Party, Libertarian, or independent candidates must first secure assistance or collect those signatures themselves. Since the ballot petition requires thousands of registered voters, this task alone is daunting and discouraging to would-be third-party candidates.

The media tend not to cover minor party candidates. Reporters are less likely to show up at an event held for a minor candidate. Independents are often not invited to public debates or televised forums at the local and national levels, especially if they aren't on the ballot in all 50 states. Buying exposure and support through advertising costs millions of dollars.

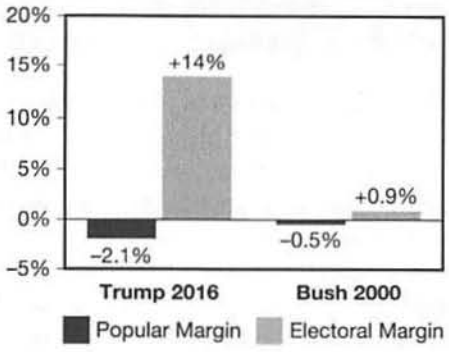
Winner-Take-All Voting Perhaps the largest barrier to third-party and independent candidates is the winner-take-all system of the Electoral College. The founders created this process as a compromise between an election of the president by Congress and an election of the president by a popular vote. The Electoral College determines the presidential candidate, but the popular vote determines how the electors cast their ballots.

Each state has a certain number of electoral votes based on population. All states, with the exception of Maine and Nebraska, award all their electoral votes to the candidate who wins the majority of the popular vote—called the **winner-take-all voting** system. The biggest problem with the Electoral College for mainstream candidates is that they may assume the presidency without having earned a mandate by winning the majority of the popular vote. The biggest problem for third-party and independent candidates is that they very rarely win a state's popular vote and thus can't accumulate the required minimum 270 (out of 538) electoral votes needed to win the presidency.

The winner-take-all system can make politics highly contentious when people feel disenfranchised. Because only two states have proportionate voting, certain voters rarely if ever see their candidates win. For instance, a Democrat in Arizona or a Republican in California might believe that there's little point in voting. However, there have been only five times when the winner of the electoral vote lost the popular vote:

ELECTORAL VOTE WINNERS WHO LOST POPULAR VOTE	
1824	John Quincy Adams
1876	Rutherford B. Hayes
1888	Benjamin Harris
2000	George W. Bush
2016	Donald Trump

Popular Margin vs. Electoral Margin



Source: *Dave Leip's Atlas of US Presidents*

The final problem with winner-takes-all voting is that **swing states**—those that could go either way in an election—tend to get most of the attention. Swing states shift party resources to certain regions, and it is always difficult for third-party and independent candidates to match that level of investment.

Incorporation of Third-Party Agendas

Throughout U.S. history, there have been 52 independent political parties, yet none of them has gained traction. No one other than a Democrat or a Republican has been elected since 1860. Does that mean third parties play no role other than as gadfly and spoiler? Definitely not.

In order to attract the third-party candidate's voters, the most closely aligned party will often incorporate items from that person's agenda into its agenda. Although this practice serves to discourage third-party candidates from running, it can also result in positive social change. For instance, Socialists promoted women's suffrage and child labor laws in the early 1900s, now taken for granted by both parties. Populists eventually got Americans a 40-hour work week. Ross Perot planted the idea of a balanced federal budget in the national consciousness. Ralph Nader fought for consumer protections and a clean environment. Minor parties play an important role as the conscience of the nation.

* * * * *

Political parties are responsible for creating many national customs, involving great numbers of people in the electoral process, and elevating political leaders into national office. Since the first political contests before the Republic was created, most citizens have fallen into two camps with very different points of view about how government should be run. Parties provide an identity that simplifies the task of parsing major issues for members. Yet, this simplification can also be divisive. More and more Americans are looking for ways to stop being "red" or "blue." They want practical compromises to solve big problems. This is the challenge for the two-party system: for each to hold on to its base voters while appealing to the middle.

THINK AS A POLITICAL SCIENTIST: *EXPLAIN CAUSATION AND CHANGE OVER TIME IN AMERICA'S TWO-PARTY SYSTEM*

Political scientists look for explanations of causes and effects when trying to understand change over time. They also try to understand what issues endure over time. The evolution of the nation's political parties affords an opportunity to study both causes and effects and constants. The causes include fundamental differences in the most important principles of government, an expanding electorate, slavery, economic booms and busts, wars, social movements, and the emergence of huge social programs. The enduring issues include big vs. small government, personal liberty vs. regulation for the public good, democratic participation vs. the power and influence of wealthy interests, and equal rights vs. racial discrimination. Today's parties take positions on these issues as well as others that are more concrete.

Practice: Using information from this chapter, create a visual or write a paper explaining the causes and effects of the shifting alignments of political parties. Also address continuity—what is the lineage of the positions of today's political parties? From which historic parties have today's parties built their policy positions, and where is there overlap in the enduring issues?

REFLECT ON THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Essential Question: *What are the functions and impacts of political parties, and how have they adapted to change?* On separate paper, complete a chart like the one below to gather details to answer that question.

Functions and Impacts	Adaptations to Change

KEY TERMS AND NAMES

conventions/454
critical election/465
dark ads/460
Democratic National Committee (DNC)/460
Democratic-Republicans/465
Democratic Party/454
divided government/468
economic protest parties/474
Grand Old Party (GOP)/466
hard money/470
Hill Committees/461
ideological parties/474
independent expenditures/471
issue ads/470
Jacksonian Democracy/465
Jeffersonians/465
McGovern-Fraser Commission/463
minor parties/473
New Deal coalition/466
party chairperson/461
party dealignment/468
party realignments/465
platform/454
political action committee (PAC)/470
psychographic segmentation/472
Republican National Committee (RNC)/460
Republican Party/454
robocalls/453
single-issue parties/474
single-member districts/475
social media/458
soft money/470
splinter parties/474
superdelegates/464
swing states/477
Super PAC/471
third parties/473
two-party system/452
Whig Party/465
winner-take-all voting/476

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Questions 1 and 2 refer to the passage below:

> "In this campaign, I've met so many people who motivate me to keep fighting for change. And, with your help, I will carry all of your voices and stories with me to the White House. I will be a president for Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. For the struggling and the successful. For those who vote for me and those who don't. For all Americans."
>
> —Hillary Clinton, Acceptance Speech, Democratic National Convention, 2016

1. Why was this passage most likely included in the candidate's message?
   (A) To cast a positive light on her opponent
   (B) To gain voters outside the Democratic Party
   (C) To show how much effort it takes to win to the White House
   (D) To promise her voters that she would implement Democratic policies

2. What guidelines of messaging best align with this passage?
   (A) Since the nominating process is over, she can start to be specific about which groups to mention.
   (B) Since the general election is months away, she needs to keep her message general and ideological.
   (C) Since the nominating process is over, she doesn't have to worry about trying to gain the support of other party members.
   (D) Since the general election is months away, she needs to start addressing specific solutions to specific problems.

Questions 3 and 4 refer to the following table.

EXIT POLL, 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION			
Voters	**Clinton**	**Trump**	**Other**
Men	41%	52%	7%
Women	54%	41%	5%
Ages 18–29	55%	36%	9%
Ages 30–44	51%	41%	8%
Ages 45–64	44%	52%	4%
Ages 65 and older	45%	52%	3%

Source: *CNN.com*

3. Which of the following statements is reflected in the data in the chart?
   (A) The youngest voting bloc favored Trump over Clinton.
   (B) Trump likely won because of the Southern and rural vote.
   (C) The support for each candidate reveals a gender gap.
   (D) The largest bloc voting for third-party candidates was the 45-64-year olds.

4. Based on the information in the table, what conclusion can you draw?
   (A) There are very few Democrats over 65 years old.
   (B) A minor party candidate will likely win the presidency this century.
   (C) Young voters tend to be more liberal than old voters.
   (D) Younger men voted for Trump more than older women did.

1968 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES' VOTES ON FIRST BALLOT	
Candidate	**Votes**
Hubert Humphrey	1759 ¼
Eugene McCarthy	601
Others	146

5. Based on the data in the table above, what was the likely outcome of this convention?
   (A) The Democrats would lose the general election.
   (B) The Republicans would lose the general election.
   (C) Eugene McCarthy would become the vice presidential nominee.
   (D) Hubert Humphrey would receive the party's nomination.

6. You believe in expanding gun-control legislation, and you support more affirmative action efforts. You oppose the death penalty. Which party best aligns with your beliefs?
   (A) Libertarian
   (B) Democratic
   (C) Republican
   (D) Green

Questions 7 and 8 refer to the following cartoon.

Source: *davegranlund.com*

7. The cartoonist likely believes that the pointing fingers represent a conflict between which two entities?
   (A) The two houses of Congress
   (B) The Democratic majority and minority leaders of the House
   (C) The state and federal governments
   (D) The two political parties within Congress

8. When was the cartoon likely published?
   (A) During partisan gridlock in Congress
   (B) After the passage of a bipartisan bill
   (C) When Democrats controlled both Congress and the White House
   (D) After the president's inaction

9. Which of the following is an accurate comparison of Democrats and Republicans?

	DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS
(A)	Lost the Solid South in a regional realignment	Have shifted the party ideology from a more liberal stance to a more conservative stance over time
(B)	Constitute the majority party in the Mountain West	Became a strong party after the creation of the New Deal coalition
(C)	Have stronger support among Asian Americans	Have stronger support among younger voters
(D)	Believe the law should forbid abortions	Believe in a woman's right to choose to have an abortion

10. Which of the following is an accurate comparison of winner-take-all voting districts and proportional voting districts?

	WINNER-TAKE-ALL	PROPORTIONAL
(A)	Guarantees occasional third or minor party success in elections	Used for U.S. House elections but not Senate elections
(B)	Common in European nations	Typical in American elections
(C)	Limits the promotion of the views of citizens who voted for second and third-place candidates	Allots seats or government positions relative to party's success in an election
(D)	Not used in the Electoral College System	Used in the Electoral College System of electing a president

FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

1. "According to the Center for Responsive Politics, of the $3.7 billion spent in the 2014 congressional midterms, Super PACs, nonprofits and other outside spenders made up around $560 million, or roughly 15%. In contrast, $1.5 billion, or 42%, was spent by candidates themselves, with the rest left to party committees. . . . The hard money chase marinates our elected representatives in the mindsets of the wealthy and special interests — and takes them away from doing the job we voters pay them to do."
—Nick Penniman and Wendell Potter, *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 2016

Based on the scenario above, respond to A, B, and C below.

(A) Describe the authors' claim.

(B) In the context of this scenario, explain how the evidence provided supports the claim described in part A.

(C) In the context of this scenario, explain how the funding situation affects the effectiveness of the political party as a linkage institution.

INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURES IN CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, 2006–2014 ($ MILLIONS)						
	Primaries		General Elections		Combined	
Year	Party	Non-Party	Party	Non-Party	Party	Non-Party
2006	5.9	8.7	211.5	30.3	217.4	38.9
2008	3.9	8.5	215.7	32.9	219.6	41.3
2010	0.2	16.6	175.3	170.3	175.5	186.4
2012	0.2	54.8	205.5	402.5	205.7	457.3
2014	0.3	102.0	222.0	418.6	222.2	520.6

SOURCE: *Campaign Finance Institute, derived from FEC data.*

2. Use the information in the graphic above to respond to the items below.
   (A) Identify the first year in which the combined spending of non-party actors exceeded that of party actors.
   (B) Describe a spending trend of non-party actors, and draw a conclusion about what caused the trend.
   (C) Explain how interactions between Congress and the judiciary led to the current state of campaign finance law.

3. After 1890, in some Southern states, the Democratic Party denied African Americans participation in primary elections, creating the so-called white primary. During the Democrats' hold on the Solid South, most officeholders were determined by the primary election rather than the general election. Blacks were therefore prevented from participating in the part of the electoral process that actually picked the candidate. Proponents of the white primary argued that all voters were free to vote in the general election. Since political parties are private institutions without government funding, they are not subject to the Constitution in defining their members. Lonnie Smith, a black Texan, tried to vote in the 1940 primary but was denied by S. S. Allwright, a county elections official. In 1944, attorney Thurgood Marshall argued in the Supreme Court that the party was so intertwined with elections and government in this process that the Constitution did, in fact, apply.

   In *Smith v. Allwright*, the Court agreed, admitting the party was a voluntary association but arguing that state statutes governed the selection of party leaders and that the party operated primary elections under state authority. A state cannot permit a private organization to practice racial discrimination in elections.

(A) Identify a difference in a constitutional provision at issue between *Smith v. Allwright* (1944) and *Shaw v. Reno* (1993). (See page 107.)

(B) Based on the difference in part A, explain why the holding in *Smith v. Allwright* is different from the holding in *Shaw v. Reno.*

(C) Explain how the ruling in *Smith v. Allwright* demonstrates the linkage between political parties and government.

4. Develop an argument that explains whether political parties strengthen or weaken American democracy.

In your essay, you must:

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning
- Support your claim with at least TWO pieces of accurate and relevant information:
  - At least ONE piece of evidence must be from one of the following foundational documents:
    - *Federalist No. 10*
    - *Brutus No.1*
  - Use a second piece of evidence from the other document in the list above or your study of modern political parties
- Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim/thesis
- Respond to an opposing or alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal

WRITING: USE TRANSITIONS FOR COHERENCE

A strong argumentative essay has clearly connected ideas and sentences that flow smoothly. Transitional words and phrases can help you achieve this coherence. Good transitions for argumentative essays include the following:

on the other hand	in contrast	though
nonetheless	however	although
first	second	the most important
because	despite	finally