

POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS



UNIT 3

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL CULTURE AND IDEOLOGY

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE

POLITICAL CULTURE

- **Underlying beliefs and patterns of behavior people have about government and politics that they hold most deeply**
 - **Involves political participation, rights and liberties, views of politicians/government**
 - **How we participate does make a difference to political culture**

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE

CORE VALUES

- **Liberty**
- **Individualism/rugged individualism**
 - **As opposed to collectivism/statism**
 - **Yet, Americans often turn to government when it suits their needs**
- **Equality**
 - **Equality of opportunity more than equality of result**
 - **Political equality more than economic equality (although we try to help everyone achieve the American Dream)**
- **Democracy**
- **Civic duty**
 - **Yet Americans know little about political affairs**

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE

CORE VALUES

- **Distrust of gov't**
 - **Especially since the 1960s.**
 - **Impact of Vietnam War and Watergate.**
- **Political efficacy - belief that one can make a difference in politics by expressing an opinion and acting politically**
 - **Internal efficacy - the belief that one can understand politics and therefore participate in politics**
 - **External efficacy - the belief that one is effective in making a difference when participating in politics, for example that the government will respond to one's demands**

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CULTURE

CORE VALUES

- **Political tolerance**
 - **The willingness to extend basic rights and civil liberties to persons and groups whose viewpoints differ from one's own**
- **Justice**
 - **Government is based on a body of law applied equally and by just procedures**
 - **Americans believe strongly in the principle of fairness and in the rule of law**

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS GOVERNMENT

IDEOLOGY

- **Integrated set of beliefs and values that shape a person's views.**

LIBERALISM (GENERALLY DEMOCRATS)

CARDINAL ATTRIBUTES OF LIBERALISM

- **Positive uses of government to bring about justice and equality of opportunity (larger government) such as social programs in the past**
- **Emphasis on protection of individual rights and liberties**
- **Emphasis on human rights in issues regarding foreign aid**
- **Less emphasis on military spending**
- **Higher taxes for the rich than for the poor**
- **Larger government**

LIBERALISM (GENERALLY DEMOCRATS)

CARDINAL ATTRIBUTES OF LIBERALISM

- **Believe in possibility of progress, better future, equality of opportunity, minimum income level**
- **Liberals charge that conservatives act in self-interest, concerned with rich; Liberals concerned government should take care of weak**
- **Liberal view holds all people equal; wish to *lessen impact* of great inequalities of wealth**
- **Corporations seen as chief threat to liberty; Need for a strong central gov't to “smooth out the rough edges of capitalism.”**
- **Set up programs to help criminals**

LIBERALISM (GENERALLY DEMOCRATS)

CRITICISMS OF LIBERALISM

- **Too much reliance on governmental solutions, higher taxes, and bureaucrats**
- **Forgets that government has to be limited**
- **When government grows too big, it tends to start dictating us**
- **Too many governmental controls and too much taxation undermine the self-help ethic**
- **Welfare and regulatory state pushed by liberals will destroy true equality of economic opportunities**

CONSERVATISM (GENERALLY REPUBLICANS)

CARDINAL ATTRIBUTES OF CONTEMPORARY CONSERVATISM

- **Private property rights and belief in free enterprise (free market economy)**
- **Keep government small except in the area of national defense**
- **Government needs to ensure order; more pessimistic about human nature**
- **Preference for the status quo and desire change only in moderation**
- **Taxes should be low for everyone**
- **Prayers in public schools should not be banned**

CONSERVATISM (GENERALLY REPUBLICANS)

CARDINAL ATTRIBUTES OF CONTEMPORARY CONSERVATISM

- **Abortion is the murder of a fetus**
- **Strong defense budget**
- **Don't make America a welfare state**
- **Lock up criminals for crimes**
- **Human needs cared for by families/charities**

CONSERVATISM (GENERALLY REPUBLICANS)

CARDINAL ATTRIBUTES OF CONTEMPORARY CONSERVATISM

- **Emphatically pro-business**
- **Favor dispersing power broadly to avoid concentration of power at the national level**
- **Subordinate economic and social equality to liberty and freedom**
- **Government social activism has been expensive and counterproductive**
- **In 2000 campaign, Bush built upon churches in providing aid to needy but also tried to avoid hostility to all government assistance (“compassionate conservatism”)**

CONSERVATISM (GENERALLY REPUBLICANS)

CRITICISMS OF CONSERVATISM

- **Hostility to government as counterproductive and inconsistent**
- **Conservatives have a selective opposition to government**
- **Government deficits grew during the 1980s when conservatives were in control**
- **Insensitivity to the social needs of the homeless and mentally ill**
- **Too much faith in our market economy**
- **Failure to acknowledge and endorse policies that deal with racism and sexism**

LIBERTARIANISM

- **An ideology that cherishes individual liberty and insists on a sharply limited government (Federal government should only be used for national defense)**
- **Preaches opposition to government and just about all its programs**
- **Opposes all government regulation**
- **End government subsidies for businesses and farmers**
- **No gun laws, no drug laws, no gambling laws**

SOCIALISM

- **An economic and governmental system based on public ownership of the means of production and exchange**
- **American socialists favor a greatly expanded role for the government, favor stepped-up efforts toward greater equality in property rights; would cut defense spending**

ENVIRONMENTALISM

- **Ideology that has taken root in democracies in recent decades**
- **"Green movement" in parts of Europe; U.S. Green party stresses social justice, diversity, etc.**
- **U.S. Green party website-stresses good agriculture, energy efficiency, integrity of nature**
- **Ralph Nader was Green party presidential candidate in 2000 - won 3 percent of vote**

CHAPTER 8

PUBLIC OPINION, PARTICIPATION, AND VOTING

WHAT IS PUBLIC OPINION?

DEFINITIONS

- **Public opinion is the distribution of individual preferences for or evaluations of a given issue, candidate, or institution within a specific population**
- **Distribution means the proportion of the population that holds one opinion or viewpoint as compared to those with opposing opinions or those with no opinion at all**
- **Individual preference means that when we measure public opinion, we are asking individuals about their opinions**

TYPE OF OPINIONS

- **Stable:** change very little (e.g., death penalty)
- **Fluid:** change frequently (e.g., presidential popularity)
- **Latent:** dormant, but may be aroused (e.g., military draft)
- **Salient:** have some personal importance to individuals (e.g., Brady and gun control)
- **Consensus:** shared by 75% of the people or more (e.g., having a balanced budget)
- **Polarized:** shared by less than 75% (e.g., gun control, ERA)

MEASUREMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION

- **By elections: deceiving – does not tell us WHY people voted as they did**
- **By straw polls – inaccuracies**
- **By scientific polls**
 - **Through random means: where each person in universe has an equal chance of being selected (most important for getting an accurate measure of public opinion)**
 - **National polls typically require ~1,500-2,000 respondents**
 - **Margin of error: expressed in +/- terms**
 - **Can reduce margin of error by adding more respondents, but at some point diminishing returns set in**
 - **Questions must avoid a bias**

MEASUREMENT OF PUBLIC OPINION

- **Uses of polls (remember - polls are a snapshot of opinion a point in time)**
 - **Informing the public**
 - **Informing candidates**
 - **Informing office-holders**
 - **Making election night projections through the use of exit polls**
- **Abuses of polls**
 - **“Horse race” mentality emphasized during campaigns at expense of issues**
 - **Pandering to whims of public by candidates and office-holders**
 - **Early projections from exit polls may discourage voter turnout, esp. in West**

HOW DO WE GET OUR POLITICAL OPINIONS AND VALUES?

- **Political socialization refers to the process by which we acquire our political beliefs**

SOURCES (AGENTS) OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

FAMILY

- **Strongest**
- **Correlation between parent' s party affiliation and child' s party affiliation**
- **Less of a correlation on civil liberties and racial issues**
- **Fairly equal influence of mother and father**
- **When parents differ, child tends to associate w/beliefs of parent with whom he/she more closely identifies**

SOURCES (AGENTS) OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

SCHOOLS

- Convey basic values (e.g., civic duty, patriotism)

RELIGION

- **Protestant**
 - Generally more conservative
 - Evangelicals, especially, are most conservative on social issues
- **Catholic**
 - Traditionally more liberal
 - Greater acceptance of Catholics, greater inclusion into mainstream of society, and increasing importance of various social issues (abortion, gay rights) >> greater degree of conservatism. A majority of Catholics voted for Clinton, but Bush 43 won Catholic vote in 2004
- **Jewish**
 - Liberal influence, support for the Democratic Party

SOURCES (AGENTS) OF POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

MASS MEDIA

- **Wide exposure to papers, Internet, movies, TV**
- **Media provides link between individuals and values/behavior of others**
- **In 2000 attention was directed to problems of voting systems, Electoral College**

AWARENESS AND INTEREST

VARYING LEVELS OF INTEREST IN POLITICS

- **Elites**
 - Those w/disproportionate amounts of political resources
 - Raise issues and help set national agenda
 - Influence the resolution of issues
- **Attentive public: those with an active interest in gov' t and politics - 25 percent of the American public (better educated)**
- **Mass: those with little interest in gov' t and politics**
 - Nonvoters – 35 percent of the American public (subset "political no-nothings")

COUNTING VOTES

VOTING

- **Political activity most often engaged in by Americans**
- **Originally the Constitution left the individual states free to determine the question of who could vote; eligibility standards for voting have been expanded by legislation and constitutional amendments**
 - **Religion (eliminated by state legislatures)**
 - **Property (eliminated by state legislatures)**
 - **Race (eliminated by 15th Amendment)**
 - **Gender (eliminated by 19th Amendment)**
 - **Income (eliminated by 24th Amendment banning poll tax)**
 - **Literacy (eliminated by Voting Rights Act of 1965)**
 - **Minimum of age 21 (eliminated by 26th Amendment)**

VOTING

CURRENT QUALIFICATIONS

- **Citizenship**
- **Residency**
- **Age**
- **Registration (in all states but ND)**

VOTING

VOTER TURNOUT IN U.S. AS COMPARED TO FOREIGN NATIONS

- One of the lowest of any industrialized nation
- U.S.: < 50% in presidential elections, 30% - 40% in midterm congressional elections
- A decline since 1960
- Comparable industrialized nations in the West: as high as 90%
- Deceiving because the U.S. doesn't penalize for not voting

VOTING

REASONS FOR LOW VOTER TURNOUT

- **Institutional barriers**
 - *Registration*
 - **Voter registration discourages voting**
 - **Registration laws vary by state, but is required in order to vote**
 - **The most important provision of voter registration is the closing date (no state can stop registration more than 30 days before election)**
 - **Effect of “motor voter” bill?**
 - **Allows people to register when applying for a renewal of driver's license**
 - **States can also use schools/libraries/city/county offices as registration sites**
 - **States can permit mail registration**
 - **Most registered claim to be Independents – thus neither party helped**
 - **Does not appear to have increased turnout**

VOTING

REASONS FOR LOW VOTER TURNOUT

- **Institutional barriers**
 - *Long ballot*
 - *Weekday voting*
 - *Weakness of parties in mobilizing voters*
 - *Type of election*
 - **General election turnout > primary election turnout**
 - **Chief executive election turnout > legislative election turnout**
 - **Presidential elections have highest turnout**
 - **National election turnout > state election turnout**

VOTING

REASONS FOR LOW VOTER TURNOUT

- **Institutional barriers**
 - *Difficulties in obtaining absentee ballots*
 - *Too many elections*
 - *Voting in 19th century was filled with fraud – turnout may have been overstated – Progressive reforms (registration, Australian ballot) may have reduced fraud and therefore “turnout”*

VOTING

REASONS FOR LOW VOTER TURNOUT

- **Political reasons**
 - *Lack of Political Efficacy*
 - *“Costs” of voting seem to outweigh benefits to many*
 - *Dissatisfaction with candidates, parties, and politics in general*
 - *Young people tend to have the lowest turnout. When the 26th Amendment was ratified, turnout “naturally” declined*

TURNOUT

- **Turnout is highest in presidential general elections**
- **Turnout is higher in general elections than in primary elections and higher in primary elections than in special elections**
- **Turnout is higher in presidential general elections than in midterm general elections and higher in presidential primary elections than in midterm primary elections**
- **Turnout is higher in elections in which candidates for federal office are on the ballot than in state elections in years when there are no federal contests**
- **Local elections have lower turnout than state elections, and local primaries have even lower rates of participation**

WHO VOTES?

- ***Educational level***
 - High levels of educational achievement are more likely to vote than those with low levels
 - Greatest predictor of voting that cuts across other factors
- ***Race***
 - Whites vote at a higher rate than Blacks
 - Blacks vote at a higher rate than Hispanics
- ***Gender***
 - Women voters exceed that of men

WHO VOTES?

- ***Income and career***
 - Higher family incomes are more likely to vote than those with lower incomes
 - Higher-status careers are more likely to vote than those with lower-status jobs
- ***Age***
 - Older people, unless they are very old and perhaps infirm, are more likely to vote than younger people
 - Persons 18 to 24 years of age have a poor voting record; so do persons over 70

OTHER FORMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION (INVOLVEMENT OTHER THAN VOTING)

- **Petitions**
- **Demonstrations/marches/rallies**
- **Local party meetings**
- **Making campaign contributions**
- **Writing letters to the editor (or the internet equivalent)**
- **Trying to persuade others**

FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOR

POLITICAL PARTY AFFILIATION

- **Probably the strongest predictor of voting**
- **More people now “vote the man, not the party” than in the past → increase in Independents**
- **Straight ticket voting: decline in recent years**
- **Split ticket voting: increase in recent years**

FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOR

GEOGRAPHY (RED STATES & BLUE STATES)

- **South: Increasingly Republican (because of Civil Rights Acts in 60s)**
- **Great Plains: Republican**
- **Rocky Mountain Region: Republican (Colorado swinging democratic)**
- **New England: Democratic**
- **West Coast: Democratic**
- **Great Lakes Region: Democratic**
- **Metropolitan/Urban Centers: Democratic**
- **Rural Areas: Republican**

FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOR

TIME

- **Realignment elections: long-term change in political alignment (1860, 1896, and 1932)**
- **Midterm elections: party in power has lost seats in Congress every year since 1938 (except 1998 & 2002)**

FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOR

OTHER FACTORS

- ***Gender***
 - **Women are more likely to vote Democratic, especially if they are single**
 - **More liberal on issues such as military action, capital punishment, gun control, social programs such as Social Security, education funding, and environmental initiatives**
 - **Men are more likely to vote Republican**
 - **Sex-sensitive issues (e.g., abortion, pornography, gun control, war) provoke different views among the sexes**
 - **Gender gap – in voting refers to the difference in the percentage of women and the percentage of men voting for a given candidate.**

FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOR

OTHER FACTORS

- *Race*
 - Whites: more conservative, greater support for Republicans
 - Blacks: more liberal, strongest supporters of Democratic Party (>90% Democratic in recent presidential elections)
 - Blacks are the most loyal Democratic voters
 - Hispanics:
 - Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans more liberal and supportive of Democrats
 - Cubans more conservative and supportive of Republicans
 - Asians: supportive of Democrats (Obama won 62% in 2008 and 73% in 2012 elections)

FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOR

OTHER FACTORS

- ***Social class***
 - Lower: more likely than upper to vote Democratic
 - Upper: more likely than lower to vote Republican

- ***Religion***
 - Protestant: more likely to vote Republican
 - Catholic: more likely to vote Democratic, but some slippage in recent years
 - Jewish: more likely to vote Democratic

FACTORS AFFECTING VOTER BEHAVIOR

OTHER FACTORS

- *Issues* (especially state of the economy)
- *Retrospective voting*: looking back on whether or not things have gotten better or worse since the last election
- *Prospective voting*: looking at the candidates' views on the issues, and how they will accordingly handle the office if elected
- *Candidate appeal*

CHAPTER 9

CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS: DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ELECTIONS

- **Elections are held at fixed intervals that cannot be changed by the party in power. (National government establishes WHEN they will be, States determine HOW the voting will occur.)**
- **It does not make any difference if the nation is at war, as we were during the Civil War, or in the midst of a crisis, as in the Great Depression; when the calendar calls for an election, the election is held.**
- **Elections for members of Congress occur on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of even-numbered years.**
- **Although there are some exceptions (for special elections or peculiar state provisions), participants know *in advance* just when the next election will be.**
- **The predetermined timing of elections is one of the defining characteristics of democracy in the United States.**

FIXED, STAGGERED, AND SOMETIMES LIMITED TERMS

- **Electoral system is based on fixed terms, meaning that the length of a term in office is set, not indefinite**
 - **The term of office for the U.S. House of Representatives is two years (can be elected as many times as they want)**
 - **The term of office for the Senate is six years (can be elected as many times as they want)**
 - **The term of presidency is four years (can only serve two full terms – 22nd amendment)**

FIXED, STAGGERED, AND SOMETIMES LIMITED TERMS

- **Our electoral system has staggered terms for some offices, meaning that not all offices are up for election at the same time**
 - **All House members are up for election every two years**
 - **Only one-third of the senators are up for election at the same time**

FIXED, STAGGERED, AND SOMETIMES LIMITED TERMS

- **Our electoral system has limits on the number of terms a person can hold a particular office**
 - **The Twenty-second Amendment limits presidents to two terms**
 - **Despite their popularity, proposals for term limits have repeatedly lost when they have come to a vote in Congress**
 - **If term limits are to be imposed on Congress, it will have to be done either by an amendment to the U.S. Constitution since the Supreme Court has ruled term limits for congressional offices (as set by the states) unconstitutional**

WINNER-TAKES-ALL

- **The candidate with the most votes wins**
- **Most American election districts are single-member districts, meaning that in any district for any given election, the voters choose one representative or official**
- **When a single-member district is combined with the winner-takes-all rule, there is a powerful push to sustain a two-party system**
- **In contrast to the winner-takes-all rule, proportional representation rewards minor parties and permits them to participate in government**

RUNNING FOR CONGRESS

PRIMARY ELECTIONS

- ***Closed***
 - Used in most states
 - Only registered party members can vote for partisan offices, no crossing of party lines
- ***Open***
 - Independents may vote, voters get ballot of any one party they wish
 - Crossing of party lines allowed >>> danger of “raiding”
- ***Blanket (“free love”)***
 - Independents may vote, voters can “mix and match” their votes
 - i.e. vote for candidates of different parties for different offices
 - Unconstitutional

RUNNING FOR CONGRESS

FACTORS AFFECTING OUTCOMES OF CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

- **Incumbency: The Greatest Influence**
 - **Scope of incumbency advantage**
 - **+90% of Congressmen who run are reelected, +80% of Senators**
 - **Lack of competitiveness >> charges of “permanent congress” and the call for congressional term limits (ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court)**
 - **Advantages of Incumbents**
 - **Franking Privilege**
 - **Staff already in place**
 - **Patronage**
 - **Casework done for constituents**
 - **Gerrymandered Districts (Safe Seats)**
 - **Name Recognition**
 - **Pork Barrel projects for the district**
 - **“War Chest” built up to discourage challengers from running**

RUNNING FOR CONGRESS

FACTORS AFFECTING OUTCOMES OF CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

- **Coattail effect – The extent of presidential popularity affects both House and Senate elections**
- **Media, especially in Senate Elections**
- **Party Affiliation – still a strong predictor of voting behavior**
- **Issues – House seats lost relates to presidential popularity/economic conditions**

RUNNING FOR CONGRESS

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- **Incumbent campaigns; In 2000, 98% of House incumbents were successful**
- **Weak challenger campaigns (don't have perks such as franking privilege)**
- **Strong challenger campaigns (due to incumbent vulnerability and challenger wealth)**
- **Open seat campaigns (through death, retirement, redistricting-promotes some turnover)**

RUNNING FOR CONGRESS

THE SENATE

- **The six-year term and the national exposure make a Senate seat competitive**
- **The essential tactics of Senate races are much like those for the House**
- **Incumbency is an advantage for senators, although not as much as for representatives**
- **Competitive elections increase in number when Senate only controlled by a few votes**

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

- **“Invisible Primary”**
- **Declaration of Candidacy**

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

STAGE 1: THE NOMINATION PHASE (CANDIDATE MUST BEGIN CAMPAIGN WELL BEFORE PRIMARIES)

- **Primary**
 - Used by more than three-fourths of the states
 - Increased use of primaries in the last 30 years
 - More power to the people
 - Political parties have less control over nominations
 - More money is spent on elections to win peoples' votes
 - A state presidential primary is the main method of choosing delegates; in 2000, 84% of Democrats chosen by primaries, 89% of Republican delegates.

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

STAGE 1: THE NOMINATION PHASE (CANDIDATE MUST BEGIN CAMPAIGN WELL BEFORE PRIMARIES)

- **Primary**
 - **Two main features of presidential primaries**
 - **A "beauty contest," in which voters indicate which candidate for president running in the primary they prefer, but do not actually elect delegates to the convention**
 - **Actual voting for delegates pledged to a candidate**
 - **Different combinations of these two features have produced the following systems**
 - **Proportional representation**
 - **Winner-takes-all**
 - **Delegate selection**
 - **Delegate selection and separate presidential poll**

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

STAGE 1: THE NOMINATION PHASE (CANDIDATE MUST BEGIN CAMPAIGN WELL BEFORE PRIMARIES)

- **Primary**
 - **Importance of the New Hampshire Primary: 1st state to hold primary each election year.**
 - **“Super Tuesday” – Date in which many southern states held their primaries early in the election season**
 - **“Front Loading” trend – primaries are held earlier and earlier (California moved primary to March 2000 – since moved back) to be more relevant**

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

STAGE 1: THE NOMINATION PHASE (CANDIDATE MUST BEGIN CAMPAIGN WELL BEFORE PRIMARIES)

- **Caucus**
 - **Some states use caucus (also called convention or conference) method of sending delegates to National Convention**
 - **A caucus is a meeting of party members and supporters of various candidates; it centers on the party organization**
 - **The process starts at local meetings open to all party members, who take positions on candidates and issues and elect delegates to represent their views at the next level; this process repeats until national nominating convention delegates are chosen**
 - **Local Caucuses >> District Convention >> State Convention >> National Convention. Each level selects delegates to attend higher level.**
 - **Importance of Iowa Caucuses – first in nation (even before New Hampshire)**

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

STAGE 2: THE NATIONAL CONVENTION

- **Selection of presidential nominee**
 - A mere formality since the winner is known well ahead of time
 - Emphasis on “image” instead of “scrimmage” - “ratification rather than nomination”
- **Selection of Vice-President Nominee**
 - Chosen by the Presidential nominee and rubber stamped by the convention
 - “Balancing the Ticket”
- **Development of Party Platform**
- **Reconciliation and unification of party by the end of the convention**

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

STAGE 3: THE GENERAL ELECTION

- **Fall Campaign >> Election Day >> Electors Election >> Inauguration Day**

RUNNING FOR PRESIDENT

ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATING SYSTEM

- **Pro:**
 - Highly participatory: caucuses, primaries, conventions
 - Highly representative
 - Weeds out weaker candidates

- **Con:**
 - Low rates of turnout
 - Too lengthy
 - Does not test candidates for qualities they need as President. Too much emphasis on media game – horse race.
 - Delegates at caucuses and conventions tend to be unrepresentative: more ideological, more activist, more educated, less moderate, much more wealthy. “Selectorate” replaces the “electorate.”
 - Voters in primaries tend to be better educated and more affluent than those in general elections.

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

RATIONALE FOR SUCH A SYSTEM AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

- **Poor communication >> common people would lack essential information**
- **Desire to have the nation's elite select the President. Fear that demagogues might sway the common people.**
- **A compromise by those who wanted direct election and those who wanted the Congress to elect the President**

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

ALLOTMENT OF ELECTORAL VOTES TO THE STATES

- Each state has as many electoral votes as it has members of Congress
- Minimum Number = 3
- Washington D.C. has 3 votes by virtue of Amendment 23
- Total of 538 Votes
- California has the highest number (55)
- Implications of movement of people from “Rust Belt” to “Sun Belt” – California and other western states picked up votes in Census 2000 and Census 2010

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

SELECTION OF ELECTORS

- Each party develops a “slate” of electors prior to the election
- Typically loyal party members

WINNING OF ELECTORAL VOTES

- Candidate with most popular votes (plurality) wins all of that state’s electoral votes (winner-take-all) >> concentration of campaigning in large, competitive states (swing states)
- Electors meet in state capitals in December to cast ballots

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

WINNING THE ELECTION

- **Majority of Electoral Votes (270) needed to win**
- **If no candidate has majority – 12th amendment**
- **House selects President among top 3 candidates**
- **Each state has 1 vote**
- **Done in 1800 and 1824**
- **Senate selects V.P. from among top two candidates**
- **Every senator casts a vote**

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

CRITICISMS

- **Concentration of campaigning in a few large, swing states to tip the balance of the electoral college**
- **The allocation of electoral votes in the winner-take-all system exaggerates the margin of victory**
- **President can be elected with only a plurality, rather than a majority, of popular votes, especially with presence of strong 3rd party candidates**
- **Possibility of a “minority” President (1824, 1876, 1888, 2000)**
- **“Faithless Electors” - no Federal law requires electors to vote the way they are “supposed” to vote**
- **Small states proportionally over-represented**
- **Small states ridiculously over-represented if election goes to the House (Alaska would have same voting power as California)**
- **Inhibits development of third parties**

THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

ALTERNATIVES

- **Direct Election: Everyone's vote would be worth the same**
- **District System: Candidate who wins a Congressional District wins that district's electoral vote**
- **Proportional System (Candidate gets same % of electoral votes as popular votes)**
- **Keep electoral votes but abolish the electors themselves**

MONEY IN U.S. ELECTIONS

EFFORTS TO REFORM

- ***Strategies to prevent abuse in political contributions***
 - Imposing limitations on giving, receiving, and spending political money
 - Requiring public disclosure of the sources and uses of political money
 - Giving governmental subsidies to presidential candidates, campaigns, and parties, including incentive arrangements
- ***The Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA)***
 - FECA limits amounts that candidates for federal office can spend on media advertising, requires the disclosure of the sources of campaign funds as well as how they were spent, and requires political action committees active in federal campaigns to register with the government and report all major contributions and expenditures
 - FECA provides a tax checkoff that allows taxpayers to direct \$3 of general revenue to a fund to subsidize presidential campaigns (not done for congressional campaigns)

MONEY IN U.S. ELECTIONS

EFFORTS TO REFORM

- ***Post-Watergate reforms***
 - 1974 amendments to FECA established realistic limits on contributions and spending, tightened disclosure, and provided for public financing of presidential campaigns; the amount of public subsidy rises with inflation
 - The law had to be amended after the 1976 *Buckley v. Valeo* decision, but the basic outline of the act remained unchanged
 - ***Buckley v. Valeo***
 - Challenged most of the provisions in the Federal Campaign Election Act, as amended in 1974
 - SC upheld the law's requirements that candidates, parties, PACs and groups engaging in express advocacy disclose their fund-raising and spending
 - SC affirmed voluntary public financing and limits on individual contributions
 - SC struck down, as infringements on free speech:
 - Limits on campaign spending (unless the candidate accepts public financing)
 - Limits on contributions by candidates to their own campaigns (unless publicly financed)
 - Limits on independent expenditures (election spending by outside interest groups not coordinated with candidates or their committees)

MONEY IN U.S. ELECTIONS

EFFORTS TO REFORM

- *The unsolved problem of soft money*
 - No limits are set on the amount of soft money – funds given to state and local parties by political parties, individuals, or PACs for voter registration drives and party mailings
 - Federal law does not require disclosure of its source or use
 - Although soft money is supposed to benefit ONLY state and local parties, it influences federal elections

MONEY IN U.S. ELECTIONS

EFFORTS TO REFORM

- ***Advocacy Advertising***
 - Surge of this campaign activity in 1996 election; unlimited due to issues, not candidates
 - In 2000, some issue ad campaigns have exceeded \$1 million
 - One main problem with issue ads is accountability; groups have reinforced cynicism and voter alienation; some recent reforms before Congress place limitations on issue ads
 - Proponents point to ad campaigns aimed at legislation (tobacco tax, health plan)

- ***Candidates' personal wealth***
 - Campaign finance legislation cannot constitutionally restrict rich candidates from giving heavily to their own campaigns (Rockefellers, Kennedys, Perot and Jon Corzine, in 2000 the latter of whom spent 60 million dollars)

MONEY IN U.S. ELECTIONS

EFFORTS TO REFORM

- *Independent expenditures*
 - Current finance laws do not constrain independent expenditures by groups or individuals who are separate from political candidates due to free speech
 - Issue Ads have replaced independent expenditures recently, since disclosure not necessary

MONEY IN U.S. ELECTIONS

CONSEQUENCES OF CURRENT CAMPAIGN FINANCING

- **Rising costs of campaigns**
 - Since the FECA became law in 1972, total expenditures by candidates for the House have more than doubled after controlling for inflation, and they have risen even more in Senate elections
- **Declining competition**
 - The high cost of campaigns dampens competition by discouraging individuals from running for office (challengers in both parties are underfunded)
- **Increasing dependence on PACs and wealthy donors**
 - PACs do not want to offend politicians in power, and politicians in power want to stay in office
 - Politicians turn to individual donors who can contribute \$500 or \$1,000 to their campaigns
 - Donors want access and politicians to respond to their concerns and/or pass certain policies,
 - PAC defenders argue there is no proven link between contributions and roll-call votes