

CHAPTER 18

POLITICAL PARTIES

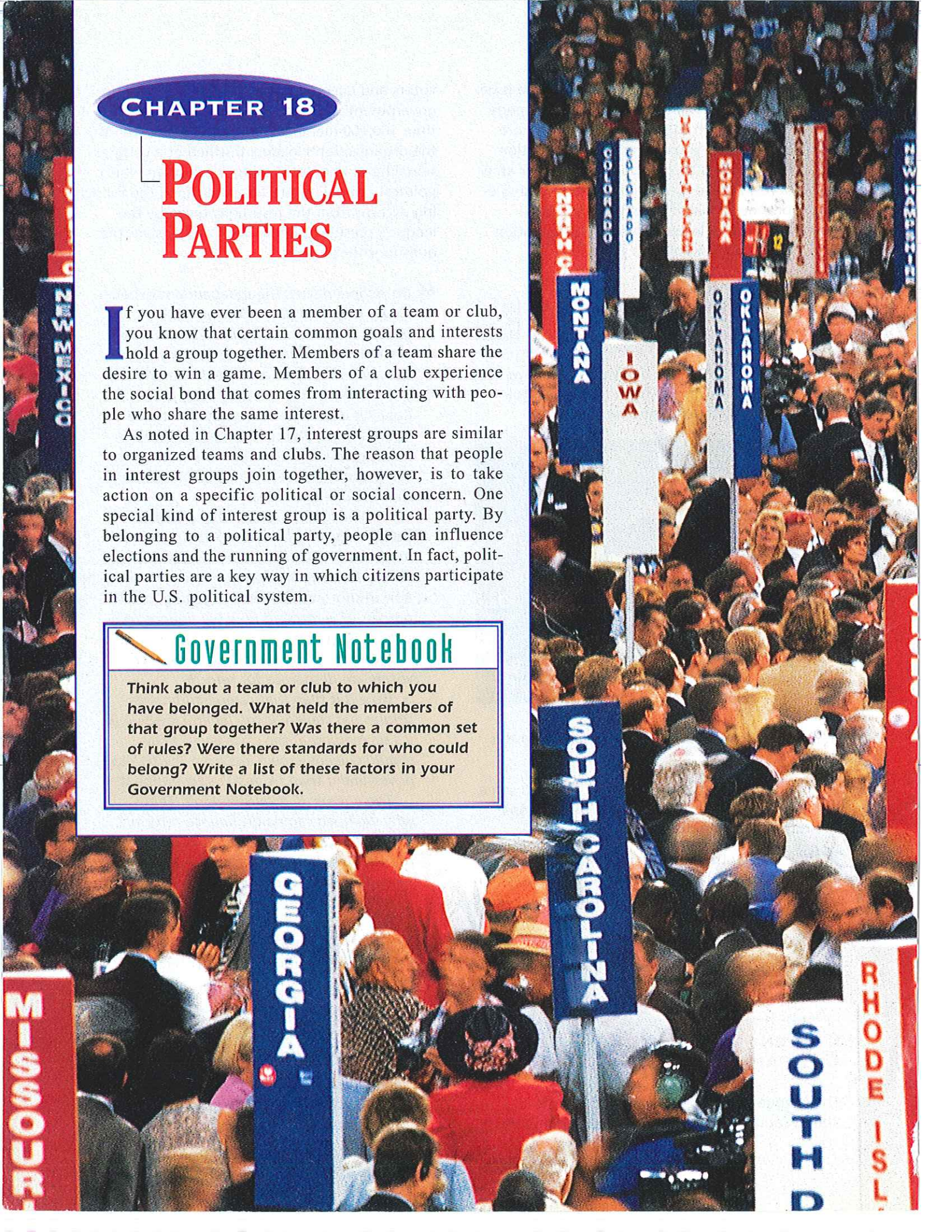
If you have ever been a member of a team or club, you know that certain common goals and interests hold a group together. Members of a team share the desire to win a game. Members of a club experience the social bond that comes from interacting with people who share the same interest.

As noted in Chapter 17, interest groups are similar to organized teams and clubs. The reason that people in interest groups join together, however, is to take action on a specific political or social concern. One special kind of interest group is a political party. By belonging to a political party, people can influence elections and the running of government. In fact, political parties are a key way in which citizens participate in the U.S. political system.



Government Notebook

Think about a team or club to which you have belonged. What held the members of that group together? Was there a common set of rules? Were there standards for who could belong? Write a list of these factors in your Government Notebook.



SECTION 1

ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

Political Dictionary

electorate
one-party system
two-party system
multiparty system



Objectives

- ★ What are political parties?
- ★ What functions do political parties serve?
- ★ What are the different kinds of party systems?

Imagine this scene. Crowds are roaring. Bands are playing. Banners are waving in the air. Is this the Super Bowl? It could easily be. Or, it might be an election-night bash held by a political party to celebrate its winning candidate. For supporters of a political party, as for fans of a football team, winning is a thrill.

As noted in Chapter 3, political parties are organized groups that seek influence over government power. These parties serve many functions. The way in which they fulfill those functions, however, depends in large part on the kind of party system their country has.

Functions of Political Parties

When the framers were drawing up the Constitution, they did not include information about the functions of political parties. In fact, some parts of the Constitution even suggest that the framers did not intend for this country to have political parties. Many of the framers, including George Washington, feared that political parties might divide the nation by pursuing selfish interests.

Political parties began to form, however, during Washington's administration. In his Farewell Address, he warned the nation against the

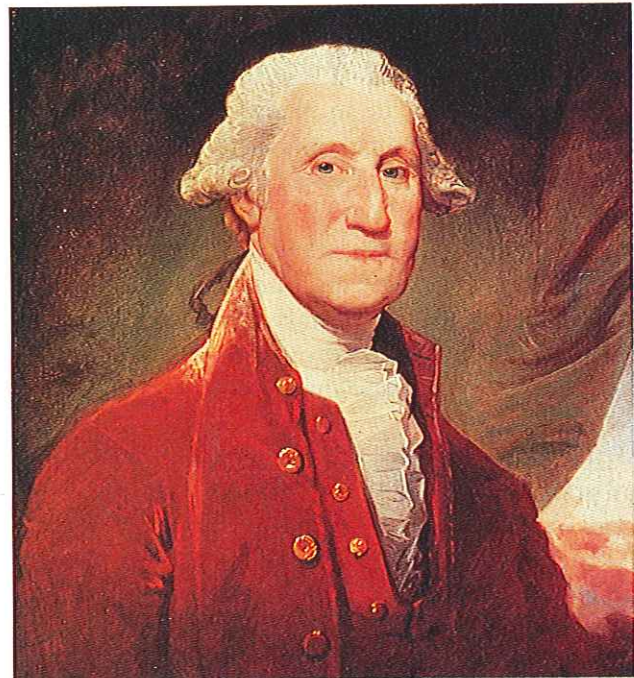
"baneful [harmful] effects of the spirit of party." He said that the spirit that motivates the formation of political parties creates in the community

"jealousies and false alarms, kindles the animosity [hatred] of one part against another, foment[s] [causes] occasionally riot and insurrection [revolt against government]."

Despite Washington's warning, the United States developed what is today one of the oldest systems of popularly based, organized political parties in the world. Why did political parties develop in this country? What role do they play in the U.S. political system? Political parties serve three main functions:

- ★ assisting the electoral process,
- ★ organizing the day-to-day running of government, and
- ★ nominating candidates.

Assisting the Electoral Process As the nation's **electorate**—the body of people entitled to vote—grew, the country needed a system of organization to assist with the electoral process.



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POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS *George Washington feared that political parties would divide the nation by pursuing selfish interests. What is the body of people who are entitled to vote called?*

How do political parties help provide the electorate with this organization?

First, political parties help citizens with the technical aspects of voting. Party workers encourage people to register to vote and to go to the polls on election day. They also raise money for political campaigns and go door to door distributing literature about their party's candidates.

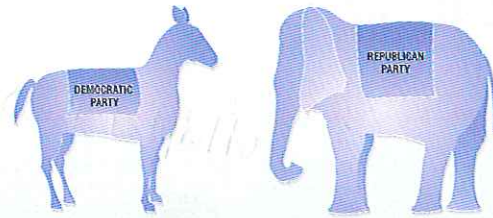
Second, political parties provide a broad stance on major issues. Thus, when a candidate identifies him- or herself as a member of a particular party, voters immediately know much about his or her general political philosophy. For example, some people say that voting for a member of the Democratic Party is shorthand for "I want a government that takes a more active role in society." Voting Republican sends the message that you want government to be less involved in people's lives.

In this way, political parties act as a sort of team leader for voters. Think about how one person often guides a sports team's efforts. If every player on a team made his or her own plans and did not listen to the team captain, it would be difficult for the team to develop a winning strategy. In the same way, political parties provide a basic direction for voters. In doing so, parties gather together individuals with many different concerns by appealing to their broad common goals. This in turn helps the electoral process by making sure that the country is not splintered into so many competing groups that governing becomes impossible.

Third, political parties assist with the electoral process by closely examining the policies pursued by elected officials. In other words, the party out of power watches for any missteps by the party in power and offers alternative policies to voters. By doing so, the party out of power hopes to swing votes to its side during the next election.

Organizing the Government Another function of political parties is to help in the daily operation of the government. How do they do this? Political parties determine leadership in several areas of government. For example, as noted in Chapter 6, congressional leaders and committee members are chosen based on their party affiliation. The membership of committees is based on the number of seats each party holds in the House or the Senate. Therefore, if the Republicans hold more seats in the Senate, they receive more seats on each senatorial committee.

Functions of Political Parties



Assist the Electoral Process

- Help citizens with technical aspects of the voting process
- Provide a broad political stance on major issues
- Act as a watchdog over policies made by elected officials

Organize the Government

- Organize the work of Congress and the executive branch of government

Nominate Candidates

- Support candidates who represent the broad stance of the party as a whole

Political parties help to organize the electoral process by bringing together people who have common political interests. What are the three main functions of political parties?

Party membership also is important when it comes to filling positions in the executive branch. A president generally appoints people whose political viewpoints reflect his or her own and those of their political party.

Because their members actually participate in the running of government, political parties take responsibility for government decision making. In this way, the parties are distinct from other interest groups, which pressure the political process only from the outside. These other interest groups simply support a single group of concerns without taking the concerns of others into consideration. Political parties are different. Some of the process of weighing conflicting interests and listening to different ideas occurs within the parties themselves.



POLITICAL PROCESSES *The government of China is controlled by one party—the Communists. Why are some countries dominated by only one party even though other parties are free to participate in elections?*

Nominating Candidates The third major function of political parties is to nominate candidates. When a political party nominates a candidate, it offers him or her its support. Although candidates have their own views about particular issues, they also represent both their party and its broad views, or ideology. The nomination process also reduces the number of candidates to a manageable size.

Types of Party Systems

The way in which a country's political parties fulfill these functions depends to a large degree on the type of party system the country has. There are three major types of party systems: one party, two party, and multiparty.

One-Party Systems A **one-party system** is one in which a single political party controls the government and clearly dominates political activity. In many cases, countries that have a one-party system are dictatorships. For example, the former Soviet Union had a one-party system. The Communist Party alone was allowed to participate in the government. Currently, China has a one-party system—the Communist Party is the only party permitted to take part in the government.

Some countries, such as Indonesia, have one-party systems not because other parties are banned, but because no major opposition has arisen successfully during elections. Opposition

does exist in these countries, but the party in power makes it difficult—through rules, and sometimes force—for the opposition to gain power. The party in power in these countries may continue to control the government for many years at a time.

Two-Party Systems Two major parties dominate the government in a **two-party system**. The United States, as you know, has a system dominated by two major parties—the Democrats and the Republicans. Other parties can exist, but two dominate the system.

In a two-party system each major party represents many diverse interests and opinions. Though a party's supporters may vary in their beliefs, they stand behind the overall party message. Voters in two-party systems tend to elect candidates with moderate political views.

As noted in Chapter 7, the United States has a plurality system, meaning that whoever receives the most votes in an election wins. A plurality electoral system generally promotes political moderation, for a party must appeal to a broad range of views to gain a plurality of the vote. To hold power in this system, a party must expand its base beyond the relatively small number of people who have very intense concerns about specific issues and move to satisfy the many people in the middle.

Multiparty Systems A third type of system is the **multiparty system**, in which several parties

Comparing

↑▶ Governments

Italy's Multiparty System

A strong two-party system has dominated U.S. politics since the early 1800s. Other democratic countries, however, have strong multiparty systems. Before and during World War II, Italy was dominated by dictator Benito Mussolini's Fascist Party. By the war's end, the Fascists had been thrown out. To prevent a return to totalitarianism, Italy adopted a multiparty system. Parties won seats in Parliament based on the percentage of votes they received in elections.

This electoral system encouraged the development of a number of smaller parties, making it difficult for stable coalitions, or combinations of parties, to control a majority of votes in Parliament. As a result, Italy has had more than 50 governments since World War II, even though most of those governments were dominated by the largest party, the Christian Democrats. In contrast, during the same time period the United States has had only 10 presidents, with majority control of the Senate having shifted only five times and majority control in the House only three times.

In 1993 three fourths of Italian voting districts adopted a new system for electing members of Parliament. Even so, Italy still has more than 20 political parties.

try to gain control of the government. In multiparty systems each party's representation in the legislature usually depends on the number of votes the party receives in an election. For example, a party that wins 15 percent of the vote receives roughly 15 percent of the seats in the legislature.

In a multiparty system each party tends to represent a specific region, concern, voter group, or ideology. A country's political landscape might include a Green Party, a Labor Party, or a Peasant Party, for example. By concentrating on a particular issue important to a portion of the population, these parties try to secure at least some representation in the legislature. For this reason, multiparty systems make it possible for a person to join and support a party that reflects his or her *specific* views. In fact, voters in multiparty systems often favor candidates with narrow views.

However, because so many parties share legislative power, multiparty systems sometimes cause government instability. The many parties form governing coalitions that can dissolve or change quickly because their interests are so varied. Think about the saying "Too many cooks spoil the broth." It implies that when too many people are involved in a task, such as making soup, competing visions may clash, resulting in a failed project. Similarly, the existence of many competing parties can make governing virtually impossible.

To reduce the number of parties in their legislatures, many countries with multiparty systems have passed laws requiring that a party receive a minimum percentage of votes before gaining representation. In Germany and some other countries, this minimum is set at 5 percent.

SECTION 1

REVIEW

1. Define the following terms: electorate, one-party system, two-party system, multiparty system.
2. What makes a political party different from other interest groups?
3. What role do political parties play in the United States?
4. Describe the three main types of party systems.

5. Thinking and Writing Critically

How might an election year in the United States be different if the country had a one-party system? a multiparty system? Explain your answer.

6. Applying **POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Which type of party system has the most advantages for a democracy? Explain your answer.

SECTION 2

THE U.S. TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Political Dictionary

realignment
independent
third party
splinter party
ideological party



Objectives

- ★ Why did political parties develop in the United States?
- ★ How do the main political parties in the United States today differ from each other?
- ★ What role do third parties play in the U.S. two-party system?

Have you ever heard of the Natural Law Party of the United States or the U.S. Taxpayers Party? Probably not. Although these parties' presidential candidates received more than 100,000 popular votes in 1996, they are insignificant players in the U.S. political system.

You, like most citizens, are probably more familiar with the Republicans and the Democrats, the two parties that dominate the U.S. political system today. These two parties are the heirs of a long-standing two-party system in this country. These parties do not date back to the country's origins, however.

The U.S. party system has had five distinct periods, with each being characterized by a struggle between two parties. The first three periods involved the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, the Democrats and Whigs, and the Republicans and Democrats. The two latest periods have been times when support has shifted decisively between Republicans and Democrats. Such periods of **realignment**—the

shifting of the parties' base of support among the electorate—generally are sparked by the development of issues of great public concern.

Early Political Parties

As noted in Section 1, the framers were concerned about the effect of self-interested groups on government. Despite such fears, however, political parties started to form not long after the new government began.

Unlike Congress, the presidency, and the Supreme Court, which were created by the Constitution, parties arose from the actual practice of political life. As the nation's first officials began to run the country and put the Constitution into effect, they differed about which policies the government should follow. The leaders of two major viewpoints organized their supporters into groups (political parties) to better pursue their goals. These groups soon became known as the Federalist and Democratic-Republican Parties.

Federalists and Democratic-Republicans

As noted in Chapter 2, the Federalists and Antifederalists were some of the first interest groups in the United States. Whereas the Federalists favored ratification of the Constitution, the Antifederalists opposed it. The Federalists



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POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS *Conflict between Hamilton and Jefferson, both members of Washington's cabinet, led to the formation of the nation's first political parties. What were the names of these parties?*

succeeded in the struggle and in 1789 received many of the positions in the new government under President George Washington.

Soon, however, disagreements arose among the nation's leaders, particularly between Alexander Hamilton, the secretary of the treasury, and Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of state. Jefferson even resigned from Washington's cabinet in 1793 as the tensions mounted.

After his resignation, Jefferson eventually joined with James Madison (a former Federalist) and some of the original Antifederalists in opposition to the policies of Alexander Hamilton and the emerging Federalist Party. Jefferson and his followers included the Antifederalists, who were called Republicans or Democratic-Republicans.

The Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans disagreed about a number of issues. Generally, Hamilton's Federalist Party represented manufacturing and trade interests. Hamilton hoped to use the national government to aid the growth of industry by placing a tariff on foreign manufactured

products. He also wished to provide government support for road and canal construction to lower transportation costs for manufactured goods.

In contrast, Madison, Jefferson, and the other Democratic-Republicans regarded farming, not manufacturing, as the backbone of the new nation. They disliked the industrialization and urbanization of the country. Thus, they also opposed government funding for policies and projects that furthered these developments.

Early on in the policy debate Hamilton began to organize congressional support for his programs. His activities were remarkably similar to those of political leaders today. Hamilton and his assistants helped allied congressmembers make their case in debates by providing them with arguments and statistics. He met in private with members, and quietly arranged informal conferences in which his followers could come together. Hamilton also tried to inform and organize nongovernment supporters of his programs.

Congressional opponents, led by Jefferson and Madison, quickly began similar efforts.

U.S. Political Parties

1787	Constitutional Convention takes place; Federalists back Constitution's ratification.
1800	Thomas Jefferson, a Democratic-Republican, defeats John Adams, the last Federalist president.
1828	Andrew Jackson becomes the first Democrat to win presidential election; Jackson's opponents become known as Whigs.
1850	Millard Fillmore succeeds the late Zachary Taylor, becoming the last Whig president.
1854	Republican Party formed as Whigs lose support.
1860	Abraham Lincoln becomes the first Republican to be elected president.
1884	Grover Cleveland becomes the first Democratic president to be elected since the Civil War.
1896	Republican William McKinley defeats Democrat William Jennings Bryan.
1932	Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt wins the first of four presidential elections; Democrats begin a long domination of Congress.
1952	Dwight Eisenhower becomes the first Republican to be elected president since Herbert Hoover in 1928.
1968	Republican Richard Nixon wins presidency; until the 1992 election, Republicans control White House for all but four years.
1992	Democrat Bill Clinton elected president.
1994	Republicans become the majority party in both the House and Senate for first time since the 1954 elections.
1996	President Clinton is re-elected.

The United States has a two-party political system, although the two parties in power have changed over time. In what year did Grover Cleveland become the first Democratic president to be elected since the Civil War?

Disagreements between the two young parties became so strong that by 1797 Jefferson wrote that “men who have been intimate [close friends] all their lives cross the street to avoid meeting, and turn their heads another way.”

Jefferson and Madison continued to build their party and to fight the Federalist policies. In 1796 Jefferson ran for president against Federalist John Adams and was barely defeated. In 1800 he ran again and this time defeated Adams. With that defeat, the Democratic-Republicans established political domination that would last until 1829.

The Democratic-Republicans’ control of the White House struck a tremendous blow to the Federalist Party. It suffered a gradual decline, with its original leaders dying and its policies representing an increasingly smaller portion of the population. By 1824 the Federalist Party had basically ceased to exist.

Democrats and Whigs By the 1824 election the Democratic-Republicans faced some of their own problems. The party had split into factions—those who supported candidate Andrew Jackson and those who supported candidates Henry Clay, John Quincy Adams, or William H. Crawford. Although Jackson won the most popular votes, Adams was chosen by the House of Representatives as president. A lack of popular support, however, plagued Adams’s administration, and Jackson remained popular. Four years later, Jackson, leader of the newly named Democratic Party, won a stunning landslide victory in the election of 1828.

Jackson’s win led to a new era of competing-party politics. Born in a remote area on the border of North Carolina and South Carolina, Jackson supported the interests of small-business owners, farmers, pioneers, and slaveholders. Opposition to Jackson’s policies took form in a new party—the Whigs. The Whigs desired an active role for government, and they supported policies such as protective tariffs and federal improvement programs.

The Democratic Party at that time thought “the government is best that governs least.” Party members believed that an active government would create inequality by taking actions that favored some people over others. For example, the Democrats attacked what they considered “special privileges” granted by government to some business interests at the expense of the population as a whole.



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POLITICAL PROCESSES *The 1858 debate between Democrat Stephen Douglas and Republican Abraham Lincoln helped Lincoln win the presidential election. What factors helped the Democrats hold power until the Civil War?*

Government aid to build canals and roads, they argued, came out of tax money paid by all, yet supported projects benefiting only business and industry. The Democrats also opposed tariffs, believing them discriminatory.

This Democratic philosophy appealed to immigrants and the many people developing the rapidly growing young nation’s frontier. As a result, Democrats dominated the government most of the time until the Civil War.

During the 1840s and 1850s, however, political unrest began to rise. Democrats and Whigs continued to disagree over tariffs. They also disagreed over slavery, particularly about whether it was to be allowed in the country’s newly settled areas. Slavery was in fact the main factor that led to the end of this period of competing-party politics. With southern and northern members present in both parties, tensions made it impossible for the old party system to continue.

After 1852 the Whig party collapsed, and a new party opposed to slavery—the Republicans—arose in 1854. Many northern Whigs, as well as anti-slavery Democrats, joined the new Republican Party. Though the Democrats won the election of 1856, tensions over slavery, as well as divisions within the party itself, brought an end to Democratic control in 1860 and signaled the rise of the Republicans as the dominant power.

Republicans and Democrats

The Republican Party elected its first president, Abraham Lincoln, in 1860. During Lincoln's term the brewing tensions between the North and South over slavery and other issues erupted into the Civil War in 1861. The changes brought by the election of 1860 signaled another realignment and began a long period of Republican domination that lasted until 1932. Only two Democrats were elected president during that period—Grover Cleveland in 1884 and 1892 and Woodrow Wilson in 1912 and 1916.

Party Support After the Civil War For many years after the war, support for the Republicans and Democrats remained divided according to region and racial and financial concerns. Much of the Republican Party's support stemmed from its stance on slavery during the war. In general, former Whigs, newly freed African Americans, and antislavery Democrats supported the Republicans. The party also embraced the concerns of businesspeople, who wanted government aid for roads and canals, and from pioneers, who hoped for cheap government land.

The Democrats' support, on the other hand, rested with workers in the growing U.S. cities,

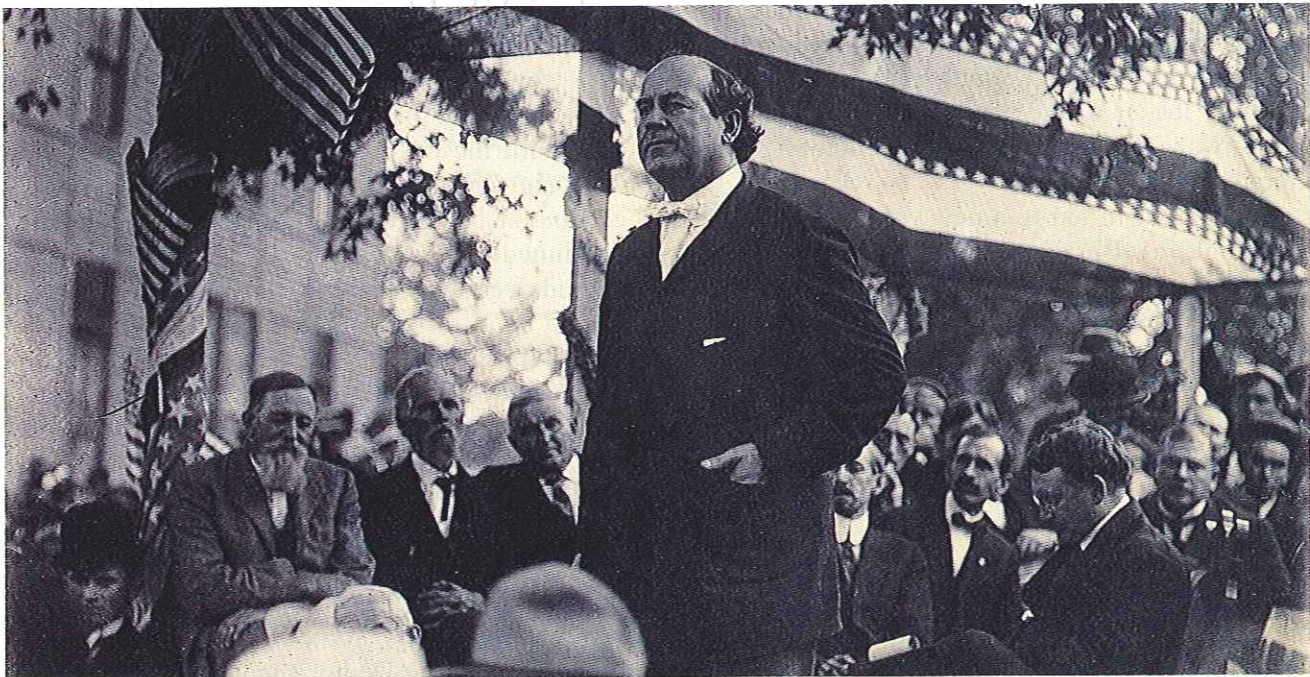
including the many new immigrants. The party also received support from southerners who, still recovering from the war, resented the Republican stronghold in the North.

During this period, people identified strongly with their party of choice and remained fiercely loyal to it. Indeed, few citizens switched parties, and elections were extremely close. The parties created enough loyalty to produce higher voting turnouts among eligible voters than in any other period of U.S. history.

Election of 1896 The period after the Civil War was one of rapid economic growth and change, with large corporations appearing for the first time. Many farmers, meanwhile, faced difficult economic times.

Although the Democrats lost the election of 1896 and Republican domination continued, the election was a turning point because it brought this new period's economic issues to the forefront. It generally pitted farmers and small-business owners against big business and industry. In doing so, the election served to define the future roles of the Republican and Democratic Parties.

William Jennings Bryan, a congressman from Nebraska, was nominated as the Democratic



POLITICAL PROCESSES *William Jennings Bryan was the Democratic nominee for the 1896 and 1900 presidential elections. Bryan's candidacy marked a turning point in Democratic Party policy. In what way was this period a political turning point?*

candidate for president after he dazzled his party's convention with an emotional endorsement of rural life. In his speech Bryan declared:

“Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic. But destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in this country. . . . You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold.”

The Democrats had long been a voice for the poor but had rarely endorsed government action on their behalf. This tradition began to change, however, as the party moved away from its “government is best that governs least” stance.

Republicans were changing as well, adopting policies intended to pave the way for economic prosperity. High tariffs to protect U.S. industry, Republicans argued, would give workers “a full dinner pail.”

Representing business and industry interests, Republican William McKinley won a big victory in 1896. Part of the reason for this, however, was a reaction against the economic depression of 1893, which had occurred during President Cleveland's Democratic administration.

The Great Depression With the exception of Democratic president Wilson's two terms, the Republican Party continued its domination of the presidency until the 1930s. The Great Depression, however, brought about another party realignment, which resulted in more than 30 years of Democratic presidents, with the exception of World War II hero General Dwight Eisenhower's presidency.

As the country sank further into the depression, the Democrats rose to power in an effort to help people deal with its painful effects. Franklin Roosevelt and other Democrats fostered their success by building up an electoral base of labor groups, southerners, farmers, and city political organizations.

In a series of bold moves, President Roosevelt sought a cure for the depression in increased governmental activism through a series of programs collectively called the New Deal. The government put millions of unemployed people to work building roads, bridges, and post offices. Roosevelt also sponsored legislation setting up Social Security (an old-age and disability pension system) as well as

legislation making it easier for workers to organize in labor unions. The New Deal programs inspired the new coalition of voters backing Roosevelt to give him even greater support. Republicans opposed Roosevelt's actions and accused him of overstepping the government's powers.

With the New Deal, the reversal of the two parties' traditional roles was complete. Whereas the Republicans (and the earlier Federalists and Whigs) had traditionally stood for big government and increased government expenditures, the Democrats (and the Democratic-Republicans) had always promoted minimal government. Democrats since Roosevelt have been supporters of an active government, and Republicans have favored smaller government.

Political Parties Today The Democrats, with the exception of President Eisenhower's two terms, controlled the presidency until 1968, when Republican Richard Nixon was elected. Though Democrats dominated the Congress until 1994, party control of the presidency has shifted a great deal since 1968. Republicans have won the White House in three out of the first six presidential elections since Nixon left office.

Since the 1960s many political scientists have been predicting a new period of party politics. Evidence up to now, however, does not reveal a major realignment. The major distinction between the parties—with the Democrats supporting “more government” on behalf of disadvantaged groups and the Republicans supporting “less government”—has remained largely unchanged since the New Deal.

Third Parties and Independents

Despite the Republicans' and Democrats' control over the political system since the 1850s, voters in some elections have opted to give significant backing to independent and third-party candidates. An **independent** candidate is not associated with any party. In a two-party system a **third party** is any political party, besides the two dominant ones, seeking to directly participate in government.

Although independent and third-party candidates have enjoyed little success in U.S. political history, there have been times when they have had

Significant Third-Party Presidential Candidates Since the Civil War

Party	Candidate	Year	Issues
Greenback	Peter Cooper	1876	currency reform, labor rights
Greenback	James B. Weaver	1880	currency reforms, labor rights
Prohibitionist	John P. St. John	1884	antiliquor
Populist	James B. Weaver	1892	currency reform, farm interests
Socialist	Eugene V. Debs	1900–12; 1920	public ownership of property
Progressive (Bull Moose)	Theodore Roosevelt	1912	political and business reform
Progressive	Robert M. La Follette	1924	farm interests, labor interests
Socialist	Norman Thomas	1928–48	public ownership of property
Union	William Lemke	1936	opposition to the New Deal
States' Rights (Dixiecrats)	Strom Thurmond	1948	segregation, states' rights
Progressive	Henry A. Wallace	1948	social reform, opposition to Cold War
American Independent	George Wallace	1968	states' rights
American	John Schmitz	1972	states' rights, crime
Libertarian	Various	1972–96	limited government
Reform	Ross Perot	1996	political and budget reform

Sources: 1997 World Almanac and Book of Facts; Dynamics of the Party System, James L. Sundquist, copyright 1983, The Brookings Institution

Third-party candidates have run in presidential elections since 1872 but have never won an election. In what year did Theodore Roosevelt run as the Progressive Party presidential candidate?

a decisive influence on the outcome of elections. In 1912, when Theodore Roosevelt failed to gain the Republican Party's presidential nomination, he formed a third party called the Progressives to back his bid for the presidency. He did not win the election, but he took so many votes away from Republican candidate William Taft that Democrat Woodrow Wilson won.

In 1992 independent candidate Ross Perot rallied disenchanted voters and campaigned against Republican George Bush and Democrat Bill Clinton. Perot won 19 percent of the vote, more than any independent or third-party candidate had won since Roosevelt's bid for the presidency in 1912. Many people said that Perot's success contributed to Bush's loss in the election, as many Republicans voted for Perot. Perot ran again in 1996 as the Reform Party's candidate, but that time received only 8 percent of the vote. Of the third parties appearing during periods of realignment, the only one ever to replace one of the existing parties was the Republican Party, which replaced the Whigs before the Civil War.

C A S E S T U D Y

The Reform Party

POLITICAL PROCESSES Ross Perot's independent campaign for president in 1992 and the organization he created to aid his bid were the motivations behind the founding of the Reform Party prior to the 1996 election. Although the party did not nominate candidates for congressional seats, it succeeded in getting its nominee for president—Perot—added to ballots across the country, a difficult task for any third party.

Among other things, the Reform Party called for balancing the federal budget, reforming the way political campaigns are funded, and establishing term limits for members of Congress. The party also pressed for a new tax system and restrictions on lobbying government officials. In his 1992 campaign, Perot had run on the same issues.

Because Perot won 19 percent of the vote in 1992 and was the 1996 nominee of a national party, the Federal Election Commission declared his 1996 campaign eligible to receive federal election funds. As a result, Perot's campaign received \$29 million in federal money. The campaigns for Democrat Bill Clinton and Republican nominee Bob Dole each received about \$62 million from the federal election fund.

In his first bid for the presidency, Perot spent more than \$60 million of his own money. Much of that money went to pay for so-called campaign infomercials. During those half-hour television programs, Perot used charts and other props to explain his concerns about federal spending and the need for various reforms.

Although his 1996 presidential campaign spent less money, Perot continued to use television infomercials. In the end, however, his percentage of the vote fell from its 1992 level. Nevertheless, because he won more than 5 percent of the vote, the Reform Party will be eligible to receive federal presidential election funds for the next campaign in 2000.

Third parties arise because of support for political stances that differ from those held by either major party. People have even formed parties over a single issue. For example, the Prohibition Party formed in 1869 and has nominated a presidential candidate in every election since then. Third parties usually form as a splinter party or as an ideological party.

Splinter Parties People who feel that their party has failed to address their concerns sometimes break off to form a **splinter party**. Examples include not only Roosevelt's Progressive Party but also the American Independent Party, founded by former Democrat George Wallace. Each man ran for president under the banner of his new party.

Ideological Parties The other type of third party is an **ideological party**—a group whose basic political views differ from those of the majority of the population. The Socialists became the only ideological party to gain more than 5 percent of the vote in a presidential election in 1912. The Socialists, who favor government takeover of industry, have run candidates in most presidential elections since then. The ideological Libertarian Party has fielded presidential candidates since 1972. The party promotes individual rights and less government interference in private lives and opposes taxes and U.S. involvement abroad.

SECTION 2

REVIEW

1. Define the following terms: realignment, independent, third party, splinter party, ideological party.
2. What were the first political parties in the U.S. two-party system? Why did they form?
3. In what ways do the two major U.S. political parties today—the Republicans and the Democrats—differ from each other?
4. What are third parties, and why do people join them?

5. Thinking and Writing Critically

What issues are of concern to you in your life? Considering what you have learned about the

Republicans and the Democrats, do you believe that either of these parties addresses your concerns? If not, would you join a third party to represent your interests? What kind of a third party would it be?

6. Applying **POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Make a list of the events or changes in ideas that caused periods of political party realignment. In your opinion, are there any current issues that might have long-term effects on support for U.S. political parties? What kind of success might future third parties, such as the Reform Party, have in the U.S. political system? Explain your answers.

SECTION 3

PARTY ORGANIZATION

Political Dictionary



party machine
patronage
straight ticket
split ticket
primary election
general election
precinct
ward

Objectives

- ★ How were early political parties structured, and how did this structure change in the late 1800s?
- ★ How did state parties change after the decline of local parties?
- ★ How did national party organization change in the 1900s?

Political parties are set up in tiers—national, state, and local organizations exist for each party. National and state party organizations are strongest today, while local parties are the weakest. This has not always been true, however. In earlier days of party politics, local parties were much stronger than those at the national or state level.

Local Parties

During the mid- to late 1800s, political parties were highly organized at the local level. In large cities, particularly in the North and Midwest, strong local political structures developed as immigration increased and municipal populations grew. By the end of the 1800s, however, many local party structures began to weaken.

Party Machines Local governments during the mid- and late 1800s were dominated by political

structures called party machines. A **party machine** is an organized group of individuals who dominate a political party within a geographic area, usually a big city. These people typically use the party's resources to further their own power and control over the political system. Local party headquarters, such as the Democratic Party's Tammany Hall in New York City, have been located in municipal centers of power.

To gain support, party machines assigned small armies of workers to become familiar with residents of a neighborhood well in advance of an election. On election day these workers would urge supporters to go to the polls. Party machines recruited their workers by promising them government jobs as a reward if the party won the election. This system of awarding political favors in exchange for political support is called **patronage**, also referred to as the spoils system.

Big-city party machines also made a point of recruiting newly arrived immigrants. The machines hoped to gain these people's loyalty by helping them deal with unfamiliar bureaucracies and look for work and housing in their new city. The local parties also sought to stoke the pride of these new Americans by giving them leadership positions in the party or in the city.



PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY The caption to this 1871 cartoon criticizing local party machines reads, "As long as I count the votes what are you going to do?" During what period were local governments dominated by party machines?

The Granger Collection, New York

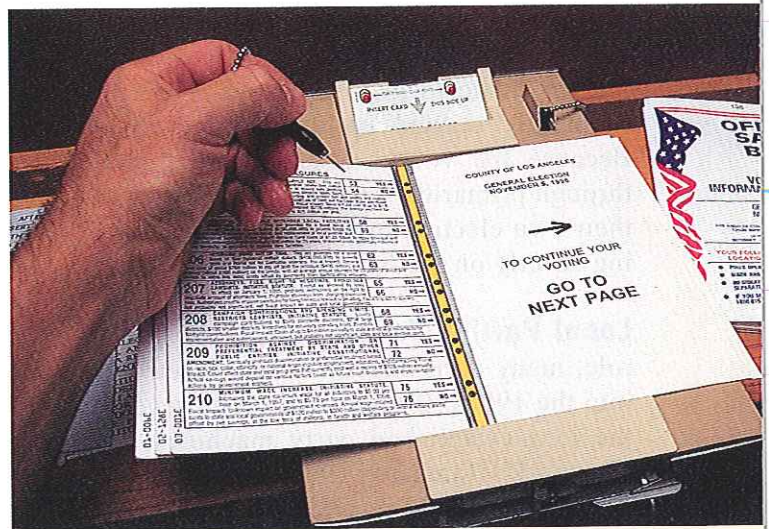
Local Party Corruption Part of the reason that the party machines were able to maintain their mastery over the political system was through their control of the electoral process. For example, before 1888 the government did not provide a ballot with the names of all parties and candidates. Instead, a local party would print ballots with a list of only its own candidates. A person voted by placing one of these party-produced ballots in a voting box. Because the ballots listed only one party's candidates, the voter was forced to cast a **straight ticket**, or to vote only for candidates from a single party.

Party machines also engaged in illegal voting practices to maintain control over the system. For example, because there was no system of voter registration, party machines could pay supporters to vote several times. A common expression of the time was "Vote early and vote often." Such crooked practices almost guaranteed that a party's candidates would win office.

Elected officials' support and loyalty also helped strengthen early local political parties. In addition, local party organizations were in charge of nominating candidates and of providing the campaign workers to help candidates become elected. Indeed, during the 1800s many people thought it improper for candidates to campaign for themselves, so they relied on local parties to do so on their behalf. If the party machine helped a candidate become elected, he or she would more than likely support the party machine's members.

Party machines frequently financed their operations through crooked deals. In return for offering certain businesses government contracts, the machines would receive financial payments, often called kickbacks. For example, a city government might offer a contract for garbage removal to one business over another. The selected company would receive all of the city's garbage removal business in exchange for money given to the machine or its leaders.

Local Party Reform At the end of the 1800s, an attack on party machines weakened local parties for good. From about 1900 to 1920, a period known as the Progressive Era, reformers led an attack on powerful, self-interested organizations. Many saw big-city party machines as examples of such monster organizations. The reform spirit led to state legislation that severely cut back the power of local party organizations.



POLITICAL PROCESSES During the early 1900s, state government officials replaced party-printed ballots with a government-printed ballot. What other reforms occurred during the Progressive Era?

First, state laws introduced a new ballot system. Party-printed ballots were replaced with a government-printed ballot that listed all the parties and candidates. This made it possible for citizens to vote a **split ticket**, or to vote for candidates of different parties for different offices. By reducing the ability of local parties to support individual candidates, split-ticket voting helped to lessen the candidates' loyalty to the local party.

Second, voter registration was introduced. By requiring voters to register, election officials could exercise greater control over who voted—and how many times. This system was designed to make it difficult for party machines to engage in fraudulent election practices.

Third, reforms lowered the number of patronage jobs controlled by mayors and other local officials. This helped ensure that party machines could no longer gather support by securing jobs for their workers.

Last, states passed laws determining how a party could select its candidates. Previously, local party leaders had nominated party candidates for office. The new laws, however, required that party candidates be chosen in primary elections. **Primary elections**, often called primaries, are elections for nominating a party's candidate for office. The primary is held before the **general election**, in which voters actually choose their elected officials. (Types of elections are more fully explained in Chapter 19.)

A party organization whose leadership could choose its candidates had a major tool for assuring candidate loyalty to the machine. Primaries eventually opened up the nominating process. Because the voters now nominated candidates through primaries, candidates were able to create their own election organizations, instead of relying strictly on the local party organization.

Local Parties Today In spite of their limited role, many party machines continued to operate into the 1900s. By midcentury, however, most of the long-established party machines, including New York's Tammany Hall, had ceased to exist.

Although party machines frequently operated at the municipal level, they were less common at the state level and rarely operated at the national level. Today, for the most part, local party organizations have been replaced by strong state and national party organizations and by candidates' personal election organizations.

Where they do survive, local party structures usually are broken up into precinct, ward, city, and county levels. **Precincts** are voting districts into which cities, towns, and counties are divided. In many cities, several precincts may make up a **ward**, a territorial division of city government. These divisions are helpful in organizing the administration of local services, which also may serve as legislative districts for city government elections. Each precinct, ward, city, or county has a distinct party organization or committee. These local political party divisions or committees are subject to the rules and regulations of the state party that oversees them.

State Parties

During the time when local party organization was strongest, national and state party organizations were weak. State parties, however, began to grow in power during the 1900s as the power of local party organizations slowly lost force.

Early State Parties Early state parties were weak and not as well organized as local parties. Instead of having a permanent building as a center of authority, as local parties often had, a state party's headquarters often were located in the home or office of its chief officer. The state party did not receive much funding or support because most citizens participated in politics at the local

level. As a result, state parties had little authority compared to local parties.

State Parties Today The growth of state parties during the 1900s coincided with, and in large part was created by, growth at the national party level. Stronger national parties have been able to provide funds and other support to state parties to help finance their operations.

For example, starting in the 1988 presidential campaign, national parties began channeling millions of dollars to state parties without violating any federal campaign finance laws limiting the amount a party could spend on an individual candidate's campaign. The laws allow state party organizations to spend unlimited amounts on "party-building activities." These activities include running voter registration drives, encouraging citizens to vote, and renting or buying facilities for party operations. Campaign finance laws allowed national parties to spend additional money for a presidential campaign by sending money raised at the national level to state party organizations for



State parties have recently progressed from weak, unorganized groups to powerful, well-funded political weapons. Why have state parties received more funding from national parties since 1988?

Careers in Government



Party Activist

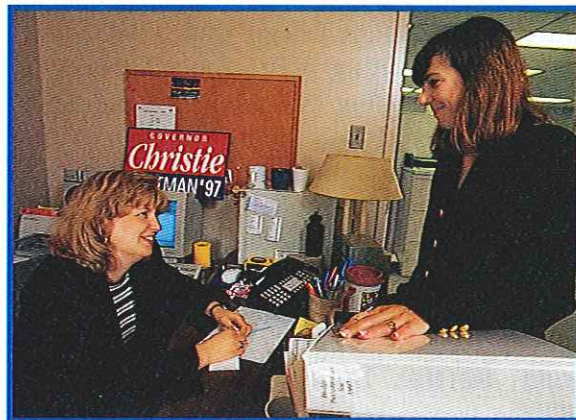
Working in politics does not always mean running for public office. For Tammy Miller and others who find politics fun and interesting, working for a political party is an attractive alternative.

In 1997 twenty-one-year-old Miller worked as a regional field coordinator for the Republican National Committee (RNC) in Washington, D.C. She served as the national party's contact person for voters, party candidates, and elected officials in her region, the northeastern United States.

Miller answered voter questions about the party and its position on various issues. She also helped Republican candidates and elected officials by researching and providing information about such things as key issues and available campaign resources. "I'm responsible for all the Republican elected officials in my region," Miller says.

Many staff members at the RNC and its counterpart, the Democratic National Committee, prepared for their jobs with internships at local, state, or national government levels. Miller, for example, worked as an intern for the Nevada County government in California. Working as a budget analyst, she studied such things as how to make government more efficient and how state and federal requirements affect local government.

A few months after joining the RNC as an intern, Miller was hired as a regular staff member during the



Twenty-one year old Tammy Miller works in Washington, D.C., as a party activist for the Republican National Committee.

1996 election campaign. She says that preparing for her job meant "just jumping in and absorbing everything around me and being open-minded and ready to learn."

Some political party activists have earned college and postgraduate degrees in political science, public policy, and other applicable fields. In 1997, while working for the Republican Party, Miller pursued a bachelor's degree through night classes at the University of Maryland.

Miller hopes one day to work as a campaign manager helping talented and intelligent people run for office and pursue worthwhile policies. "I like the idea of organizing and helping people who are qualified get into office," Miller says.

such activities. Like national parties, however, state parties could not spend unlimited amounts on the campaign of any specific candidate.

As state parties grew, they began to raise funds through other means as well. Today, state-level political action committees (PACs) provide much of the money that state parties spend on their operations and on candidates. As noted in Chapter 17, a PAC is an organized group that gives funds to parties and candidates who support its interests.

As a result of greater financial strength, state party organization is much more powerful than it once was. Almost every state party has a permanent headquarters and a full-time chairperson, who is

chosen by a central committee of representatives from each county in the state.

Despite increased power, state party organizations have grown more dependent on national party committees. Because they receive funds from national parties, state parties are subject to national parties' rules and requests. Also, national party leaders sometimes try to persuade state parties to help fund important campaigns in other states.

National Parties

Like state parties, national parties lacked strong organization during the 1800s and early 1900s.

However, during the mid- to late 1900s they transformed into the powerful organizations they are today.

Early National Parties Early national parties did little more than their basic duties—negotiating with the competing party over controversial issues and nominating presidential candidates. Until the early 1960s the Democrats and Republicans had no buildings to serve as permanent national headquarters. Instead, each party rented temporary office space in a building in Washington, D.C. In addition, national parties maintained much smaller staffs than they do today.

National Parties Today The Democratic and Republican Parties today have not only their own headquarters buildings but also television studios in which to record campaign commercials for party candidates and schools in which to teach candidates how to run for office. Each party is run by a national committee with a chairperson and a large staff.

Each party also has two congressional campaign committees, one for the House and one for the Senate, to channel funds to its congressional candidates. These committees are led by members of Congress, rather than by the party's national chair. The congressional committees have great freedom in deciding which candidates to support and how much money to give them. This makes the committees a possible source of party influence within Congress.

Larger national parties with bigger staffs have been able to raise millions of dollars for their



POLITICAL PROCESSES Both the Republican and Democratic Parties own television studios in which they record campaign commercials. Until when, approximately, did both parties lack permanent headquarters buildings?

candidates. In 1979–80 the national, state, and local Republican Party committees raised about \$170 million for the party's candidates, beginning an era in which national political parties began raising a large portion of candidates' campaign funds. For the 1996 election, Democratic Party committees raised \$221.6 million, while the Republican Party committees raised \$416.5 million.

More money also has meant that national political party organizations have expanded the services they provide. National parties are able to provide candidates with assistance in polling and advertising, for instance. Through polling, parties can find out what voters think about the issues. Through media advertising, parties can make contact with and influence voters on candidates' behalf.

SECTION 3

REVIEW

1. Define the following terms: party machine, patronage, straight ticket, split ticket, primary election, general election, precinct, ward.
2. Which level of party organization was strongest during the 1800s? What caused this to change?
3. Why did state parties grow stronger in the 1900s?
4. In what ways has the national party organization changed in recent decades?

5. Thinking and Writing Critically

How might advances in technology and communication, such as television and the Internet, help national party organizations become stronger?

6. Applying **POLITICAL PROCESSES**



Conduct an Internet search for information on the political party of your choice. Record the kind of information you find. Do Internet sites provide information about candidates?

SECTION 4

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

Objectives

- ★ What are the common criticisms of the U.S. two-party system?
- ★ What are the benefits of the U.S. two-party system?

Imagine that you are a registered voter in an election year but are undecided about how to cast your ballot. You have seen several commercials for the candidates on television, but the commercials are brief and do not provide enough information. To whom do you turn?

One place to start is by examining which party each candidate represents. By researching the programs a party supports and its politicians' voting records, you can determine much about the basic political beliefs of its candidates. Although the parties are much criticized, they do help promote the public good in several ways, such as by making it easier to figure out how to cast your ballot.

Criticisms of Political Parties

As noted in Chapter 17, several concerns exist about the effect of interest groups on the public good. Because of their visibility and size, political parties come under even closer scrutiny. The most common criticisms of political parties are that they too often represent special interests, that they are filled with selfish office seekers, and that they are too concerned with “politicking.” On the other hand, some political scientists argue that U.S. political parties are too weak.

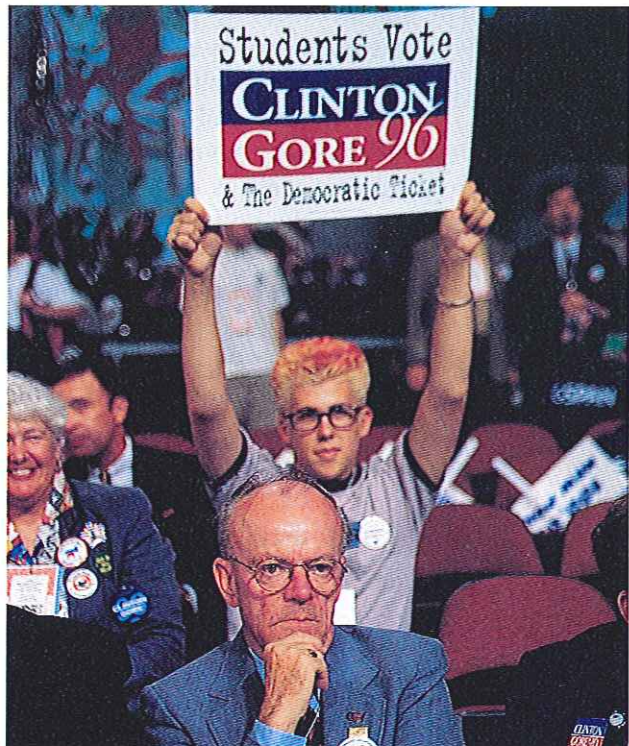
Special Interests Many people think that parties are influenced too much by special-interest groups. They believe that because these groups

provide money for political campaigns and other party activities, politicians and their parties will make decisions that benefit only the groups rather than promote the public good.

Self-Serving Office Seekers Critics of party politics also have charged that political parties are full of self-serving office seekers, or people interested in personal gain rather than sincerely working on issues. Many have said that politicians and their parties support certain policies only because doing so helps them get elected.

Politicking Many people feel that the frequent bickering between the two major parties is just “politics as usual.” Some critics charge that congressional politicking—the posturing between the parties—is often less concerned with real issues and more about which party is winning the public relations race.

Weakness of U.S. Political Parties Finally, some political scientists criticize U.S. political



PUBLIC GOOD Political parties are criticized for being strongly influenced by special interests rather than working to promote the public good. Why are political parties more closely scrutinized today than in years past?

parties for being what they perceive as too weak. Although the United States has the oldest political parties in the world, it also has about the weakest of any democratic country. Parties in the United States lack strength in several important ways. The two major parties have weak organizations and low voter allegiance, and their elected officials often do not stick together on issues, giving voters the impression that the party lacks unity.

American political parties generally have few organized activities, and the activities they do offer involve a relatively small proportion of the population. By contrast, to join most interest groups, people must fill in application forms, pay dues, and receive a membership card. Only members of the organization may participate in the organization's governance. Even interest groups whose members do not help govern and who do not fill out membership applications or cards usually solicit members by mail.

Similarly, political parties such as the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan and the Christian Democratic Party of Germany have card-carrying, dues-paying members as well as ordinary voters who support the party at the polls. Members provide a core of party workers and loyal supporters who take the party's message to their neighbors or fellow workers. The two major U.S. parties, however, lack such a membership structure.

Furthermore, U.S. legislators of the same party stick together less often than those in most other countries. In many countries there is party discipline in the legislature, with all of a party's representatives voting together on important issues. This does not typically occur in the United States.

Why do political scientists think stronger political parties are important? One answer is voter turnout. A lower percentage of people vote in the United States than in countries with stronger political parties. The reason for this difference, theorize some political scientists, is that citizens with relatively low interest in politics are more apt to vote if exposed to strong parties. Strong parties thus promote high voter participation, whereas weak political parties do not.



PUBLIC GOOD Youth organizations, such as the College Republicans, provide political information to young people. How can knowing the broad philosophy of a political party be helpful to voters?

Benefits of the U.S. Two-Party System

Political parties do help promote the public good in four ways. They provide ready information about politics, help to balance the political system by taking into account varied opinions, discourage sudden shifts in political trends, and encourage political participation.

Providing Information Political parties help bring order to the political world. They present political information in a convenient form so that voters do not need to start over every time they encounter a political leader or a political proposal.

Parties provide a political “brand name,” in much the same way a soft drink company does for its products. Knowing the broad political philosophy of a party helps you understand where it will stand on certain issues. One reason you may vote for a candidate is that, overall, you support his or her party's views.

Accommodating Varied Opinions Parties help the political system do a better job of allowing for the expression of a wide range of opinions and interests, which is necessary if political decisions are to promote the public good. Each party is made up of both individual voters and organized groups. Therefore, each party must try to consider

Citizenship in

Action

Young Politicians

“The most important thing we could do is to make people care,” says David Wade, who as a 21-year-old Brown University student served in 1997 as national president of the College Democrats of America. As a leader in this organization, Wade worked to further the Democratic Party’s goals and elect its nominees to political office.

Other such organizations also focus on youth involvement in politics. Teen Republicans and Teen Democrats, for example, organize the efforts of teens who identify themselves as supporters of either the Republican or Democratic Party. The most well-known youth organizations, however, are the College Republicans National Committee, Young Republicans, Young Democrats of America, and College Democrats of America.

Although the College Republicans and the College Democrats limit membership to university students in the United States, the Young Democrats and Young Republicans include any partisans under the age of 35 (for the Democrats) and between the ages of 18 and 40 (for the Republicans). Each of the four organizations boasts tens of thousands of members who are working in thousands of chapters across the country.

The work of these youth organizations focuses on getting young people involved in the democratic process. Doing so helps address some people’s concern that young people today care little about politics and the important issues of their time. For example, College Democrats and other youth-oriented political groups keep tabs on issues important to students, such as government policies on college financial aid, tuition rates, and access to education. Members then communicate that information—and the applicable



David Wade, former president of the College Democrats of America, worked to help inform college students about political issues and candidates.

positions of their parties—to other young people. At the same time, they encourage young voters to express their opinions and lobby government officials to support particular policies. “What we’ve found is that young people really respond to each other,” Wade says.

The work of these youth organizations includes more than just keeping young people informed on important issues of the day, however. The organizations also work to register voters, get young people out to the polls on election day, raise money for party efforts, recruit volunteers for party work and campaigns, and provide a variety of community services.

In addition to their work in individual chapters around the country, members of some of these youth organizations also meet in national conventions. These gatherings give members the opportunity to debate issues, propose policies, and share ideas and experiences.

All of these efforts, Wade says, help educate students “so that they can cast a vote on election day or make a call to their congressperson that’s reasoned, enlightened, and intelligent.” In doing that, these young party members are setting a standard that all voters should follow.

What Do You Think?



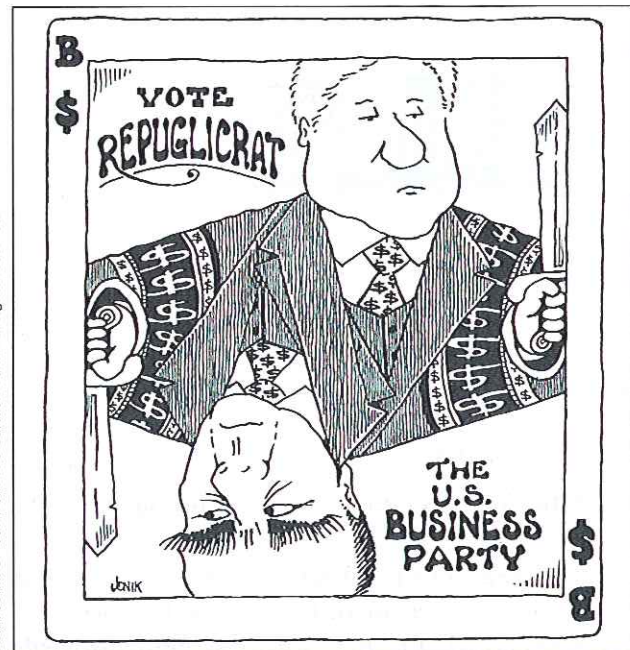
1. How can Republican and Democratic youth organizations work together to promote participation in politics?
2. In what other ways can political parties reach out to young citizens and help them take part in the democratic process?

all of its supporters' interests if it is going to continue to receive their support. Including as many interests as possible is important because it means that more citizens are involved in the political system.

Discouraging Sudden Shifts Another benefit of political parties is that they serve as an anchor, making sudden political shifts in response to short-term trends more difficult. Think back to what you learned about multiparty systems in Section 1. By allowing many political parties, multiparty systems enable short-term trends to threaten government stability.

In the United States the two major political parties represent many issues, thus discouraging voters from giving up support for the party and elected officials just because of current trends on *one* political issue. Voters know that even if they disagree with a certain candidate on one issue, he or she represents the broader issues of his or her party. The resulting stability gives elected officials and parties more room to focus on the big picture. This is vital for wise public policies that take a long time to show they are working.

Encouraging Political Participation Many people think of competing political parties as a key part of democracy. In the nondemocratic Soviet Union, for example, only Communist Party members could participate in government. Indeed, the United States would cease to be a democracy if national leaders prevented people with opinions



John Jonik © 1997 from The Cartoon Bank. All rights reserved.

PUBLIC GOOD Although the two major U.S. parties each have a strong base of support, they are often criticized for holding similar views to each other on many issues. How do parties provide political stability in a two-party system?

different from their own from organizing groups to try to affect government actions.

Participation in political parties is one way for U.S. citizens to take part in the political system—and in their own governing. The United States is a diverse country and political parties provide a way for this diversity to be expressed in the political system.

SECTION 4

REVIEW

1. What are some of the criticisms of political parties in the United States?
2. Why do some political scientists think that political parties are too weak?
3. How does the U.S. two-party system promote the public good?

4. Thinking and Writing Critically

Why does politicking cause some people to be skeptical about political parties? List at least one important present-day issue that has

caused great disagreement between the Democrats and Republicans.

5. Applying PUBLIC GOOD

Imagine that you live in a country with a multiparty system that has seen government control change hands many times in the past 10 years. You have been asked for your opinion on how the political system should change. Would you recommend a system like the U.S. two-party system, or would you keep the multiparty system? Why?

SECTION 1

Political parties are organized groups that seek to gain power in the political system. They can serve several functions, including assisting the electoral process, organizing the day-to-day running of the government, and nominating candidates.

These functions vary with the type of party system a country has. There are three major types of party systems: one party, two party, and multiparty. In a one-party system, one political party controls the government and clearly dominates political activity. Many countries with one-party systems are dictatorships. In a two-party system, two major parties dominate the government. The Democrats and Republicans dominate the two-party system in the United States. In a multiparty system, several parties compete for control of the government. Each party's representation in the legislature usually depends on the number of votes the party receives in an election.

SECTION 2

Although the Constitution does not mention political parties, they formed in the United States out of the actual practice of political life. The U.S. two-party system has had five distinct periods, each of which can be characterized according to the parties that were competing for power at the time. These periods involved the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, the Democrats and Whigs, the Republicans and Democrats, and two major realignments of power between Democrats and Republicans.

Since the 1960s many political scientists have been predicting a new period of party politics. Evidence up to now, however, does not reveal a major realignment. The major distinctions between the parties have remained largely unchanged since the New Deal.

Despite control over the political system by Republicans and Democrats since the 1850s, voters have opted occasionally to give backing to independent and third-party candidates. In a two-party system a third party

is any political party, besides the two dominant ones, seeking to directly participate in the government. An independent candidate is not associated with any party.

SECTION 3

There are three levels of party organization in the United States: national, state, and local. Local party organization was originally strongest. Local governments during the mid- to late 1800s were dominated by political structures called party machines, which were often corrupt. Changes in the electoral process, including a new ballot system, voter registration, and the elimination of a large number of patronage jobs, helped end local party domination. State and national party organization grew stronger during the 1900s. Both state and national party organizations today have large staffs and are able to provide more money and better services to candidates.

SECTION 4

U.S. political parties are sometimes criticized for representing special interests, for being filled with self-serving office seekers, and for politicking. Political parties, however, do promote the public good in four ways: by providing readily understandable information, weighing varied interests and opinions to provide a stable balance, making shifts in political trends more difficult, and encouraging political participation.



Government Notebook

Review the list of factors that you wrote in your Government Notebook at the beginning of the chapter. Now that you have studied the chapter, consider which factors on your list might apply to political parties. Explain the reason for your choices in your Notebook.

REVIEW

REVIEWING CONCEPTS

1. What are political parties, and why are they important to political systems?
2. List and briefly explain the historical periods of the U.S. party system.
3. What are the functions of political parties in the United States?
4. How do political parties promote the public good?
5. What are some criticisms of political parties?
6. Was the sphere of party influence strongest during the 1800s at the national, state, or local level? How did this change?

THINKING AND WRITING CRITICALLY



1. **POLITICAL PROCESSES** Do you think that the United States should continue as a two-party system or that it would benefit from switching to a multiparty system? Explain your answer.
2. **PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY** Many people believe that the party system encourages political participation. Do you agree with this opinion? Why or why not?
3. **POLITICAL PROCESSES** One function of political parties is to nominate presidential candidates. George Washington, however, was nominated before political parties developed. How do you think a presidential candidate might be nominated if political parties did not exist? Write a paragraph explaining your theory.
4. **PUBLIC GOOD** What reforms were made in the 1800s to stop corruption in local party machines? How have these reforms improved the voting process and helped voters today?

CITIZENSHIP IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Locate information about the mayor of your city. Is he or she a Democrat or a Republican? What issues were important and what viewpoint did he or she support when campaigning for office? Did he or she make any campaign promises? If so, have they been kept? The Internet often is a good source for finding information about local government, including how to contact your mayor's office. With the information you find, create a poster and display it in your classroom.

COOPERATIVE PORTFOLIO PROJECT



Organize students into two groups to research the Republican and Democratic Parties. Develop brochures that explain the two parties' general views and stances on important issues. Make enough copies to hand out to the 18-year-old students in your school to encourage them to register to vote and to help them become informed voters.

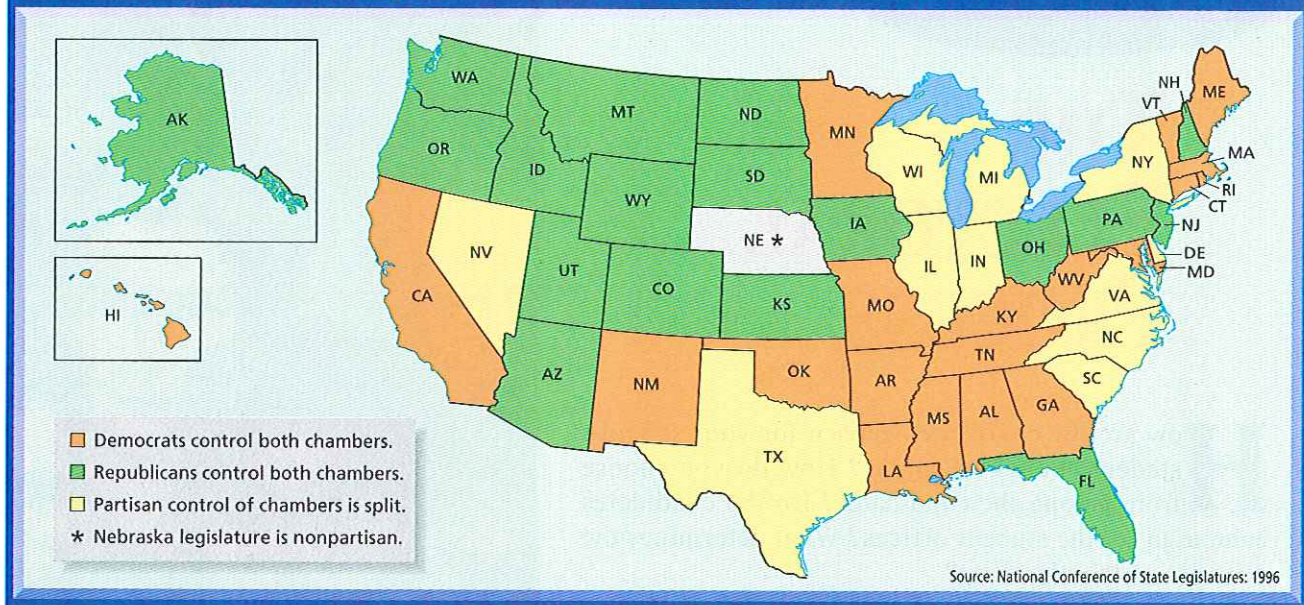
PRACTICING SKILLS: READING MAPS



The map on the next page identifies political party control of state legislatures. Study the map and answer the questions that follow.

1. What percentage of the states have split control of their legislatures?
2. Do Democrats or Republicans control a larger portion of state legislatures?
3. Identify a part of the country in which one party controls several of the state legislatures.

Party Control of State Legislatures, 1997



THE INTERNET: LEARNING ONLINE



Conduct an Internet search for information about the Reform Party. You might start with search words such as *Reform Party*, *third party*, *Ross Perot*, and *Pat Choate*. Make a chart comparing the principles of the Reform Party with the basic beliefs and views of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. Be sure to include a list of the Web sites you use to gather the information.

ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES



THE BUSH-FERRARO DEBATE

In 1984 Geraldine Ferraro became the first female to be nominated for vice president by a major political party. A Democrat, she ran alongside presidential candidate Walter Mondale. At one point during the campaign, Ferraro debated then vice president George Bush. Below is an excerpt from that debate, in which Ferraro identifies some of the major issues of the Democratic campaign. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

“Being the candidate for vice-president of my party is the greatest honor I have ever

had. . . I wouldn't be standing here if Fritz [Walter] Mondale didn't have the courage and my party didn't stand for the values that it does, the values of fairness and equal opportunity. . . Do you know when we find jobs for the eight and a half million people who are unemployed in this country and that will be a patriotic act. We'll make our economy stronger. . . When we reduce the deficits and we cut interest rates, . . . we cut those interest rates [so] young people can buy houses, that's pro-family and that will be a patriotic act. When we educate our children . . . they're going to be able to compete in a world economy and that makes us stronger and that's a patriotic act. When we stop the arms race, we make this a safer, saner world. . . Those are the keys to the future.”

1. What key issues does Ferraro address?
2. What do you think Ferraro wants to show voters that the Democratic Party values?
3. Are today's candidates and political parties discussing the same issues that Ferraro mentions in this excerpt from her speech? What are some of the major issues discussed by politicians today?