

Elections 101 Part I



To be robbed and betrayed by a fiendish underground conspiracy or by the earthly agents of Satan is at least a romantic sort of plight.

It suggests at least a grand Hollywood-ready confrontation between good and evil.

But to be coldly ripped off over and over again by a bunch of bloodless, second-rate schmoes, schmoes you *chose*, you *elected*, is not something anyone will take much pleasure in bragging about.

Matt Taibbi

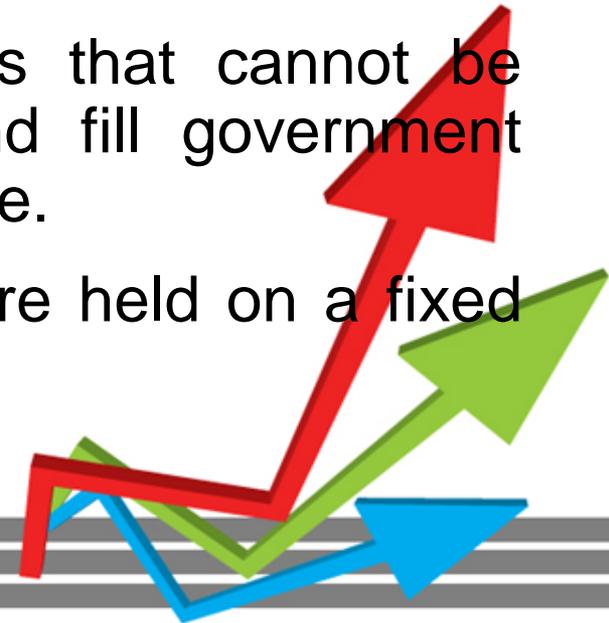




American Elections

- Elections are essential for democratic politics.
- The US has more elections than any other democratic nation.
- Elections in the US are separate and independent from one another.
- Elections are held at fixed intervals that cannot be changed by the party in power and fill government positions that have fixed terms of office.
- National (and state-wide) elections are held on a fixed date.

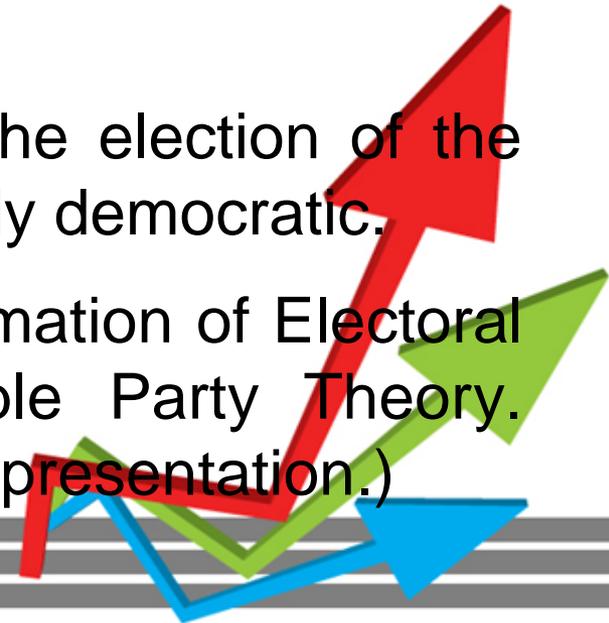
election





American Elections

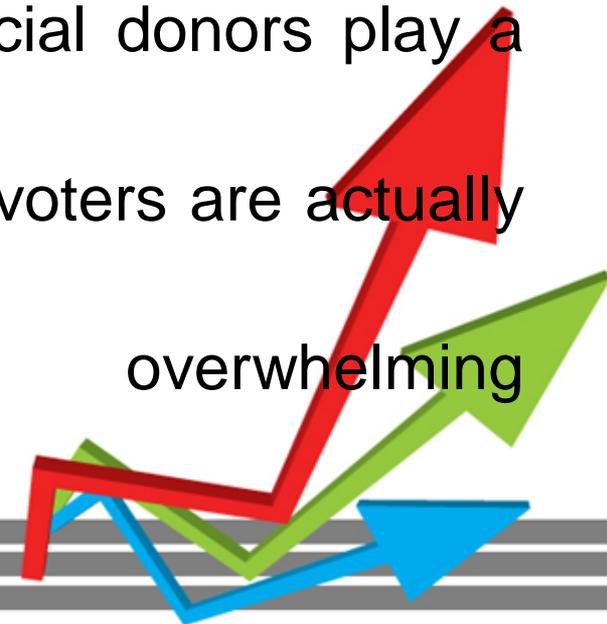
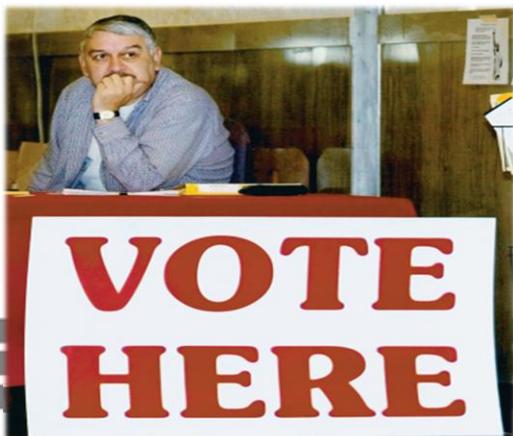
- Old indirect methods of electing officials have been replaced by more **direct** methods.
- In 1913, the **Senate** became directly elected rather than being chosen by state legislatures.
- With **primary elections**, voters directly choose candidates for election.
- Even with the electoral college, the election of the **president** has become more directly democratic.
- American elections offer some confirmation of Electoral Competition Theory and Responsible Party Theory. (See Voting: Right and Responsibility presentation.)





American Elections

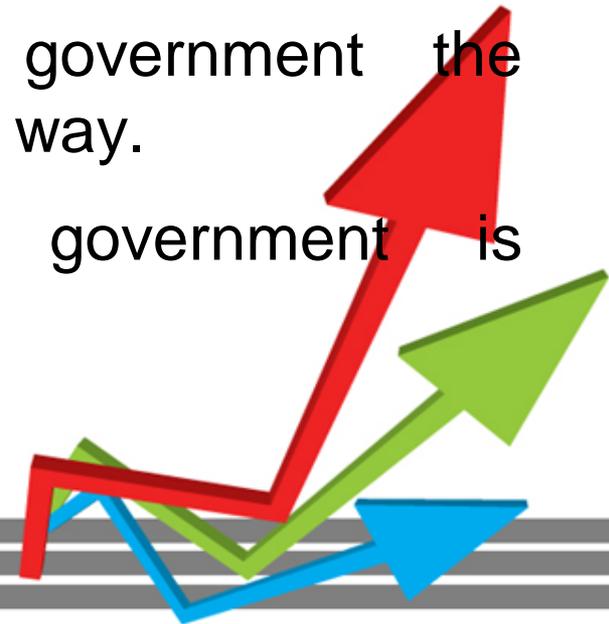
- None of our processes work well enough to guarantee perfectly democratic outcomes.
- Require **more unified political parties** than we have.
- Financial donors, activists and leaders of organized groups have **more influence** than do ordinary citizens. Party activists and financial donors play a crucial role.
- Not all **ballots** cast by voters are actually counted.
- **Incumbents** have overwhelming advantages.





Purposes of Elections

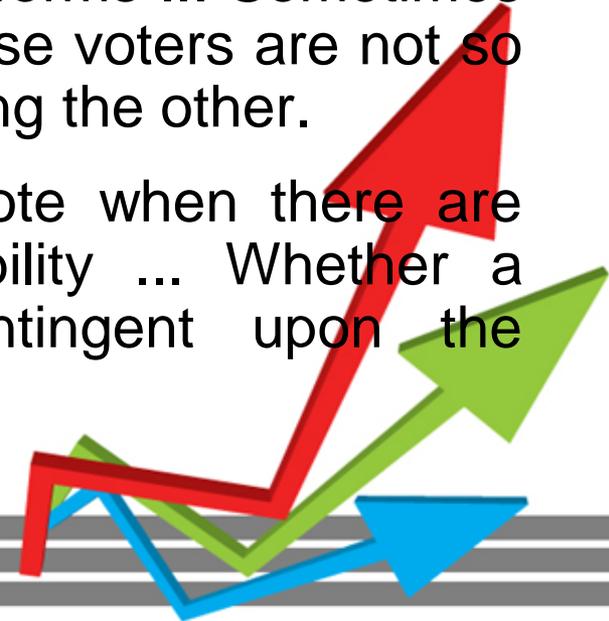
- Regular free elections
 - guarantee mass political action
 - enable citizens to influence the actions of their government
- Popular election confers on a government the legitimacy that it can achieve no other way.
- Regular elections ensure that government is accountable to the people it serves.





Electoral Terminology

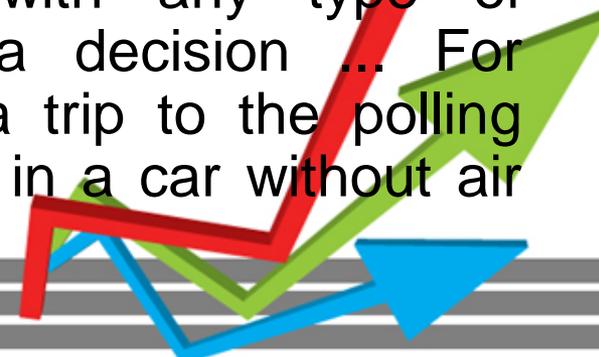
- **electorate**: citizens eligible to vote
- **incumbent**: person currently holding a political office, opposed in an election by a challenger ... A race without an incumbent is referred to as an **open seat**.
- **mandate**: a command, indicated by an electorate's voters, for the elected officials to carry out their platforms ... Sometimes the claim of a mandate is suspect because voters are not so much endorsing one candidate as rejecting the other.
- **provisional ballots**: used to record a vote when there are questions about a given voter's eligibility ... Whether a provisional ballot is counted is contingent upon the verification of that voter's eligibility.





Electoral Terminology

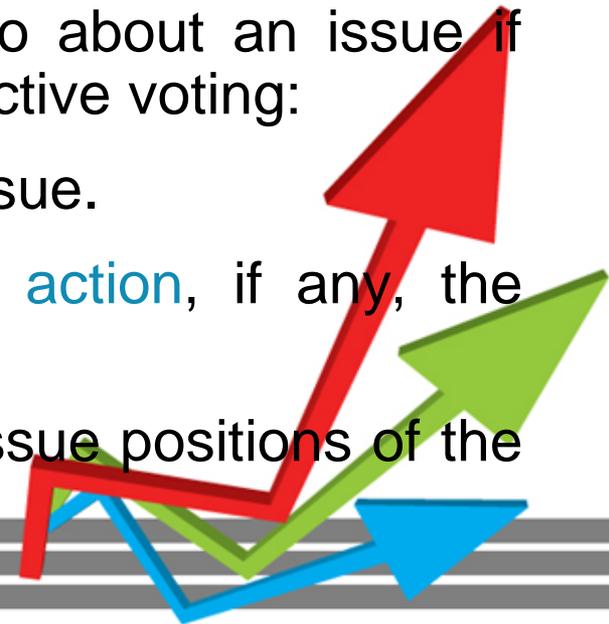
- **first past the post (FPTP): winner-take-all election**, one that is won by the candidate receiving the most votes ... It is a common, but not universal, feature of electoral systems with **single-member legislative districts** (districts that have one officeholder in a body with multiple members such as a legislature).
 - effects:
 - reinforcement of **moderate and centrist candidates**,
 - **wasted-vote syndrome**
 - difficult for **minor parties** to get elected
- **transaction costs**: costs associated with any type of exchange or the implementation of a decision ... For example, the decision to vote entails a trip to the polling place, perhaps through rush-hour traffic in a car without air conditioning that is nearly out of gas.





Electoral Terminology

- **information costs**: costs of acquiring, processing and using information, part of the costs associated with any type of decision, including a decision on how to vote
- **retrospective judgment**: a voter's evaluation of the past performance of the party in power
- **prospective judgment**: a voter's evaluation of a candidate based on what he or she pledges to do about an issue if elected ... Three requirements for prospective voting:
 - Voters must have an **opinion** on an issue.
 - Voters must have an idea of what **action**, if any, the government is taking on the issue.
 - Voters must see a **difference** in the issue positions of the two parties.





The Structure of a Campaign

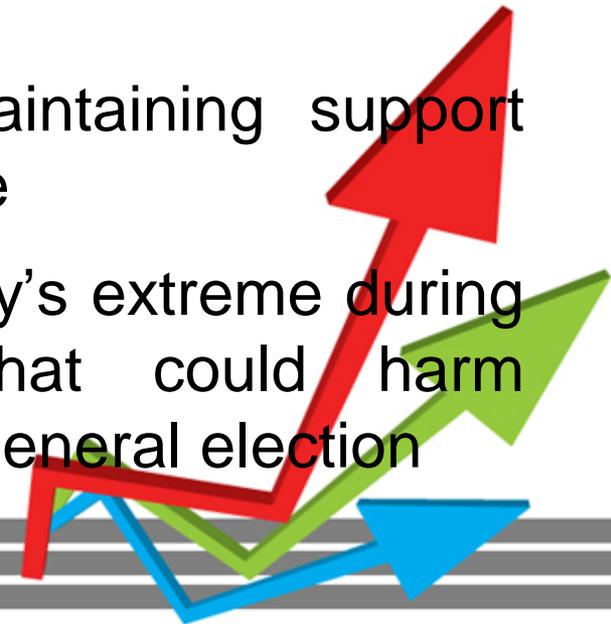
- All campaigns have common characteristics.
 - Each election campaign consists of several **smaller campaigns** that balance one another.
 - nomination campaign
 - general election campaign
 - personal campaign
 - organizational campaign
 - media campaign
 - Smaller / local campaigns won't have all of these elements but will be tailored to the needs of the campaign.



The Structure of a Campaign: Nomination Campaign



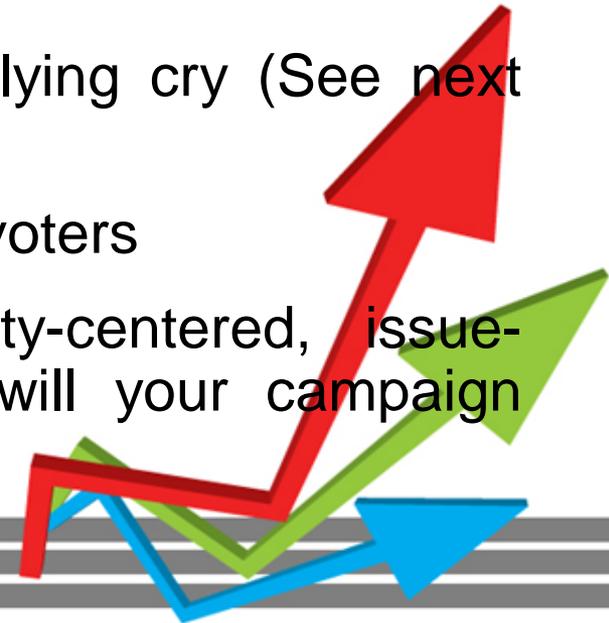
- ...that part of the political campaign aimed at winning a primary election
 - adjust to spotlight
 - seek support of party leaders and interest groups
 - test themes and slogans
 - critical time for gaining and maintaining support within party and broader electorate
 - careful not to move too far to party's extreme during nomination campaign since that could harm candidate with moderates during general election





The Structure of a Campaign: General Election Campaign

- ...that part of the political campaign aimed at winning the general election
 - occurs after candidate has won party's nomination
 - focus on gaining support from groups and voters
 - decide on issues to emphasize
 - adopt a brief theme to serve as rallying cry (See next slide for examples.)
 - define stance on topics of interest to voters
 - **campaign strategies:** can be party-centered, issue-centered or image-centered (How will your campaign focus on your opponent ?)



The Structure of a Campaign: General Election Campaign Themes



Yes We Can – 2008 Obama/Biden

A Stronger America – 2004 Kerry/Edwards

It's Morning Again in America – 1984 Reagan/GHW Bush

In Your Heart, You Know He's Right & AuH₂O – 1964 Goldwater/Miller

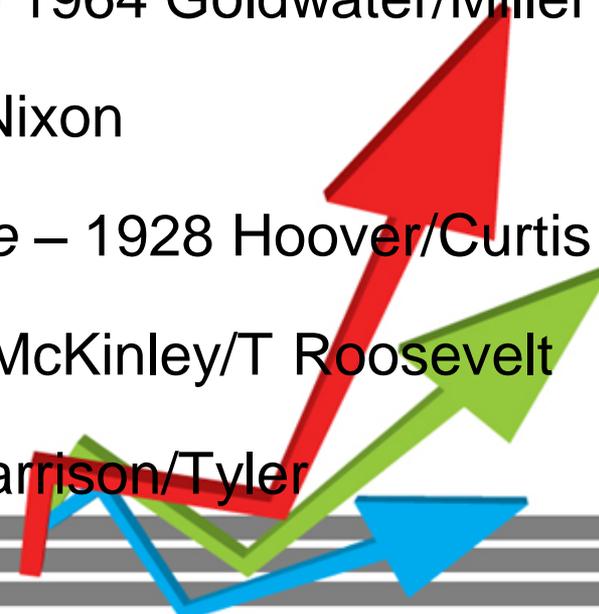
Au H₂O
1 9 6 4

I like Ike – 1952 Eisenhower/Nixon

A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage – 1928 Hoover/Curtis

Four more years of the full dinner pail – 1900 McKinley/T Roosevelt

Tippecanoe and Tyler Too – 1840 Harrison/Tyler





The Structure of a Campaign: General Election Campaign Strategies

Select a theme

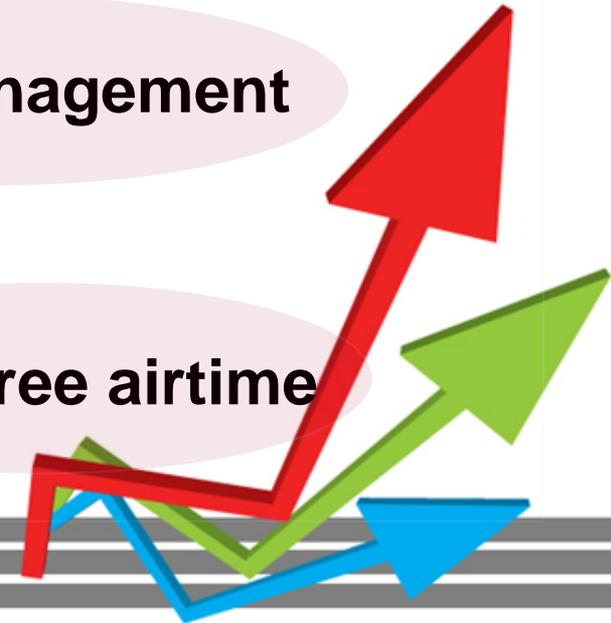
Negative Campaigning

Use focus groups and polling

News management

Paid advertising

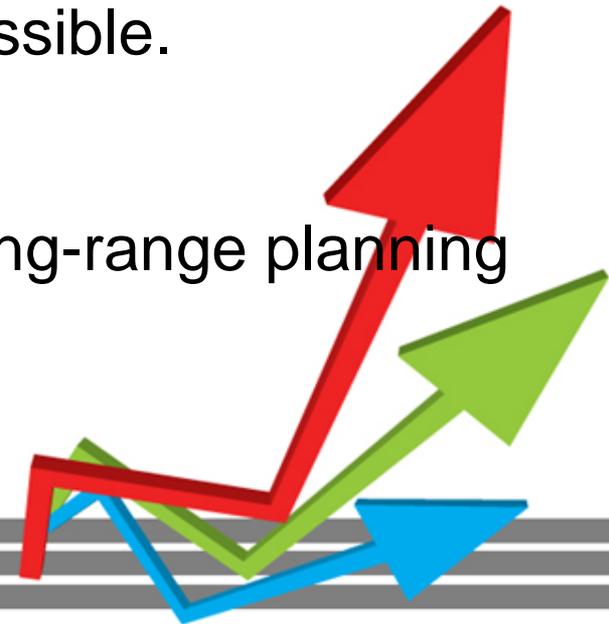
Seek free airtime



The Structure of a Campaign: Personal Campaign



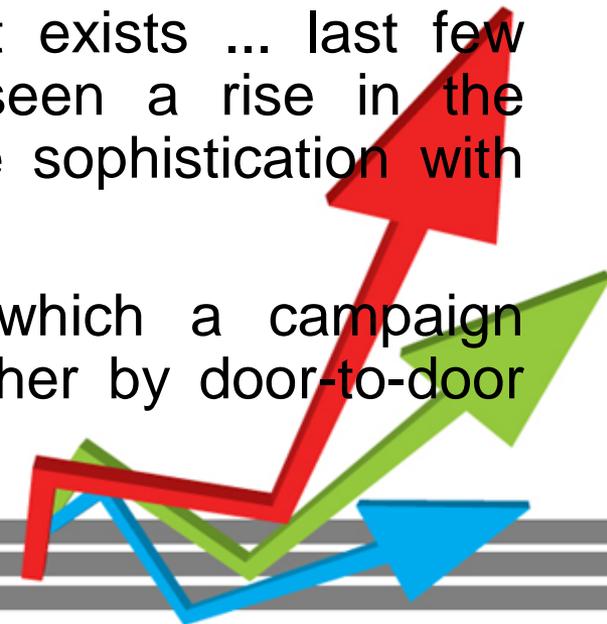
- ...that part of the political campaign concerned with presenting the candidate's public image
 - *Everyone sees what you appear to be, few experience what you really are.* ~Machiavelli
 - Try to meet as many people as possible.
 - exhausting schedule
 - little time for family, reflection or long-range planning



The Structure of a Campaign: Organizational Campaign



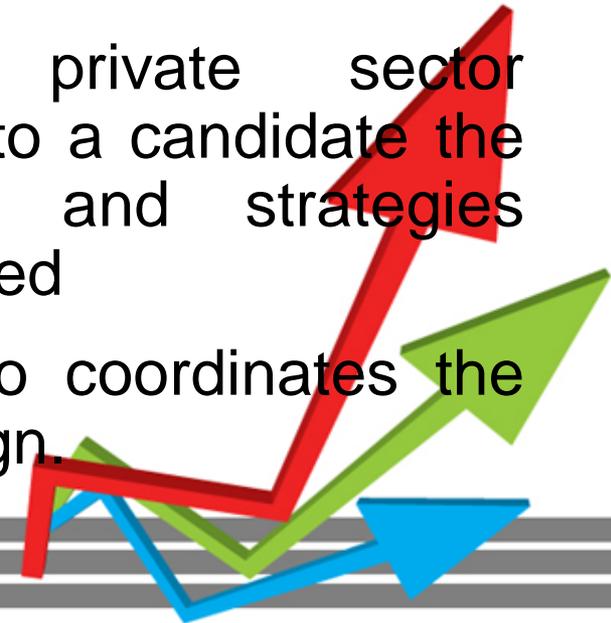
- ...that part of the political campaign involved in fund-raising, literature distribution and all other activities not directly involving the candidate
- organizational activity that funds and supports the campaign
- **volunteers**: door-to-door canvassing is one of the most effective forms of campaigning that exists ... last few presidential election cycles have seen a rise in the recruitment of volunteers and in the sophistication with which they're deployed
- **voter canvas**: process by which a campaign reaches individual voters, either by door-to-door solicitation or by telephone



The Structure of a Campaign: Organizational Campaign



- **GOTV** (get out the vote): a push at the end of a political campaign to encourage supporters to go to the polls
- **campaign manager**: the individual who travels with the candidate and coordinates the many different aspects of the campaign
- **campaign consultants**: the private sector professionals and firms who sell to a candidate the technologies, services, advice and strategies required to get the candidate elected
- **finance chair**: a professional who coordinates the fund-raising efforts for the campaign.

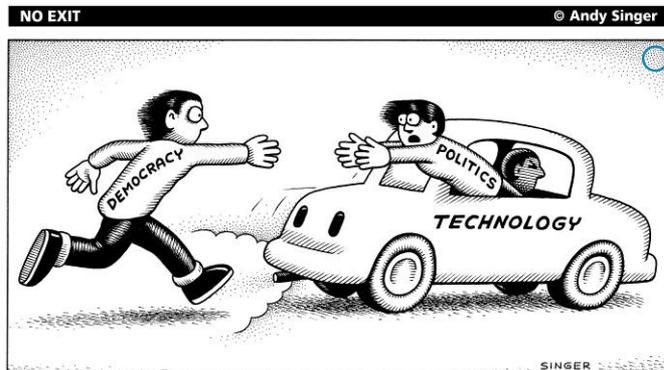
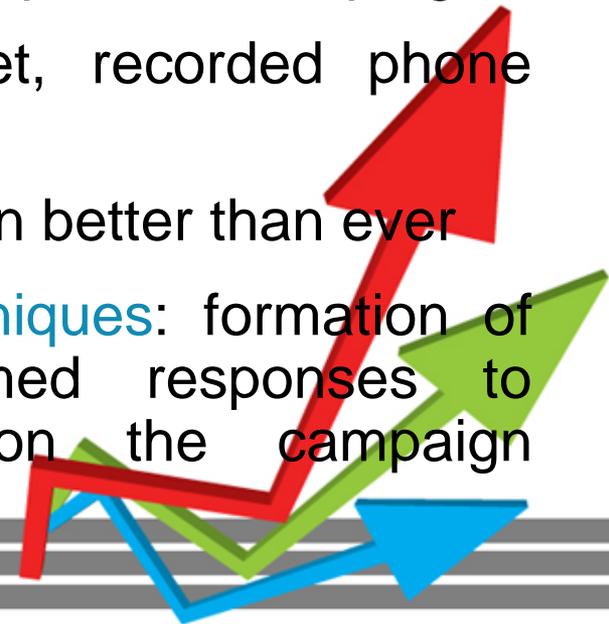




The Structure of a Campaign: Organizational Campaign

- **pollster**: a professional who conducts the public opinion surveys that guide political campaigns
- **direct mailer**: a professional who supervises a political campaign's direct-mail fund-raising and advocacy activities
- **technology**: has had a large impact on political campaigns
 - direct access to voters: internet, recorded phone messages
 - gather and disseminate information better than ever

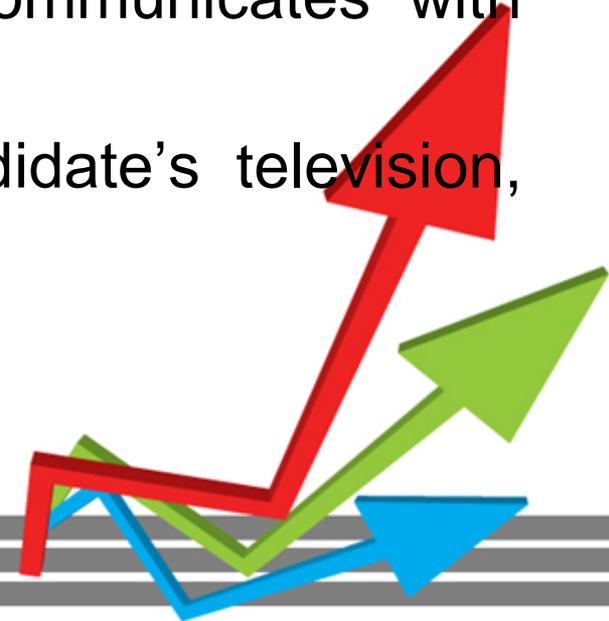
rapid-response techniques: formation of prompt and informed responses to changing events on the campaign battlefield



The Structure of a Campaign: Media Campaign



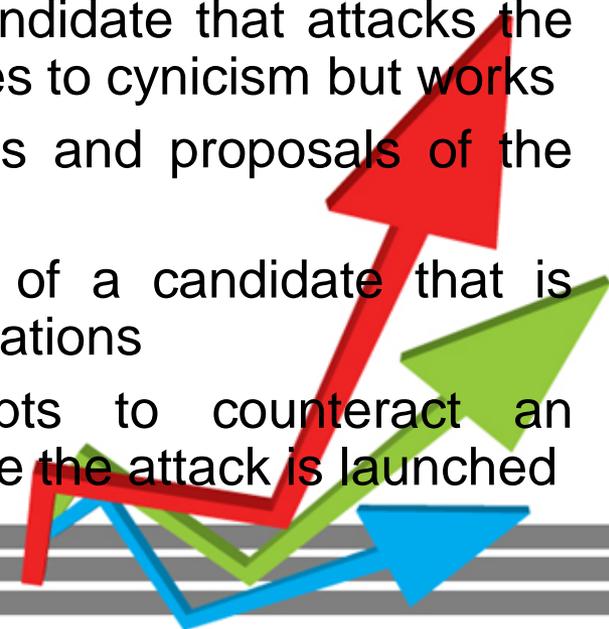
- ...that part of the political campaign in which the candidate reaches out to the voters, in person or via the media, to create a positive impression and gain votes
 - **communication director**: develops the overall media strategy
 - **press secretary**: interacts and communicates with journalists
 - **media consultant**: produces candidate's television, radio and print ads



The Structure of a Campaign: Media Campaign



- What voters hear and see of the candidate is primarily determined by paid media and free media.
- The amount, form and content of **paid media** are dictated by the campaign.
 - **positive ad**: advertising on behalf of a candidate that stresses the candidate's qualifications, family and issue positions, without reference to the opponent
 - **negative ad**: advertising on behalf of a candidate that attacks the opponent's platform or character, contributes to cynicism but works
 - **contrast ad**: ad that compares the records and proposals of the candidates, with a bias toward the sponsor
 - **spot ad**: television advertising on behalf of a candidate that is broadcast in sixty-, thirty- or ten-second durations
 - **inoculation ad**: advertising that attempts to counteract an anticipated attack from the opposition before the attack is launched



The Structure of a Campaign: Media Campaign

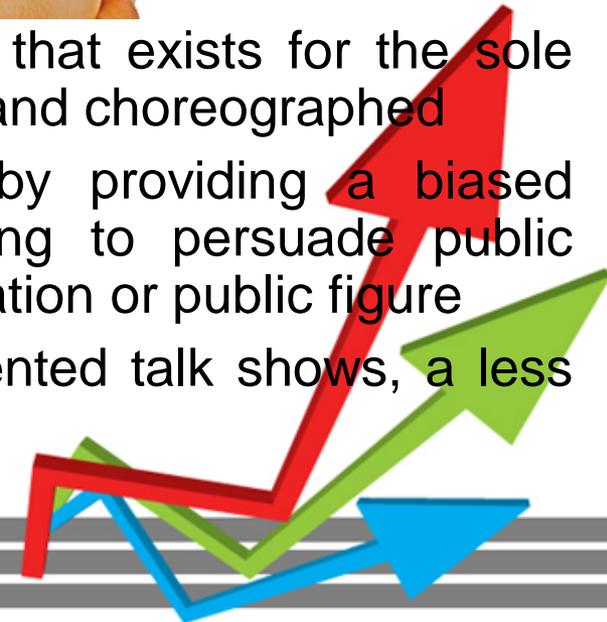


- **Free media** consist of independent press coverage of the campaign.

- newsworthy
- view candidates with suspicion
- obsessed with **horserace** view
- expectations and predictions

- **campaign media strategies**

- isolate candidate from the press
- **campaign media events**: event or activity that exists for the sole purpose of media publicity, highly scripted and choreographed
- **spin**: a form of propaganda achieved by providing a biased interpretation of an event or campaigning to persuade public opinion in favor of or against some organization or public figure
- **circumvent press**: using entertainment-oriented talk shows, a less critical forum
- take great care with **debates**





The Structure of a Campaign

Do consultants strip campaigns of substance? Reduce them to a clever bag of tricks for sale?

If all campaigns are professionally packaged, can voters tell the difference between good candidates and bad candidates?

Your text here

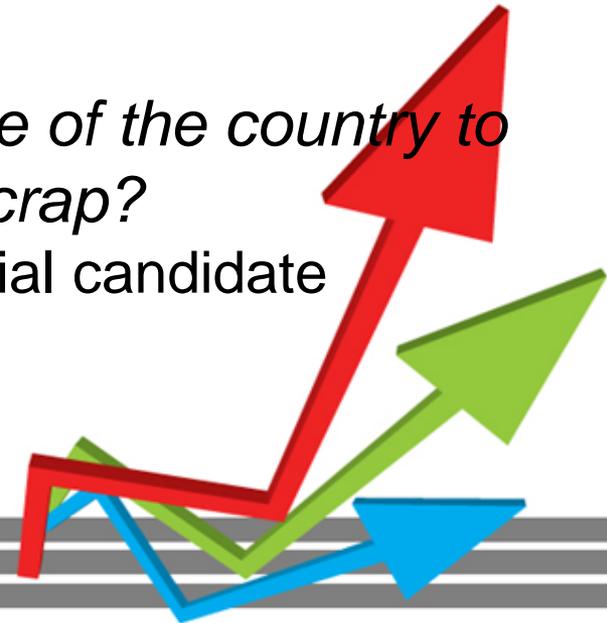
Your campaign message and information here

Your campaign message and information here

www.electjohndoesmith.com

How stupid are the people of the country to believe this crap?

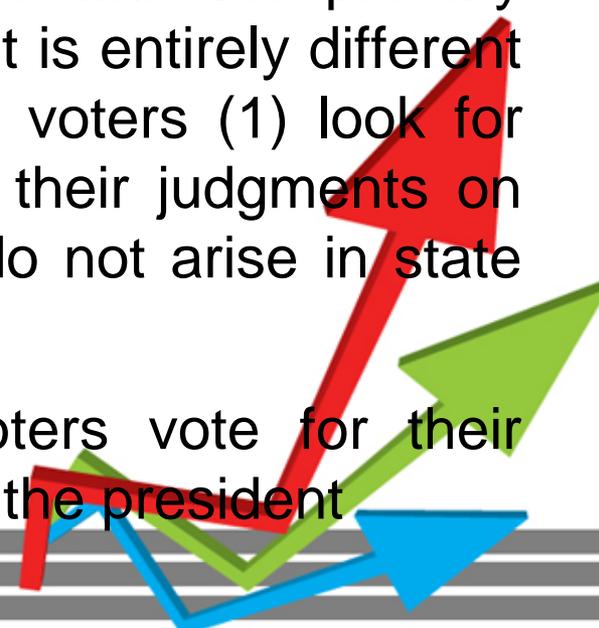
~unnamed presidential candidate





Kinds of Elections

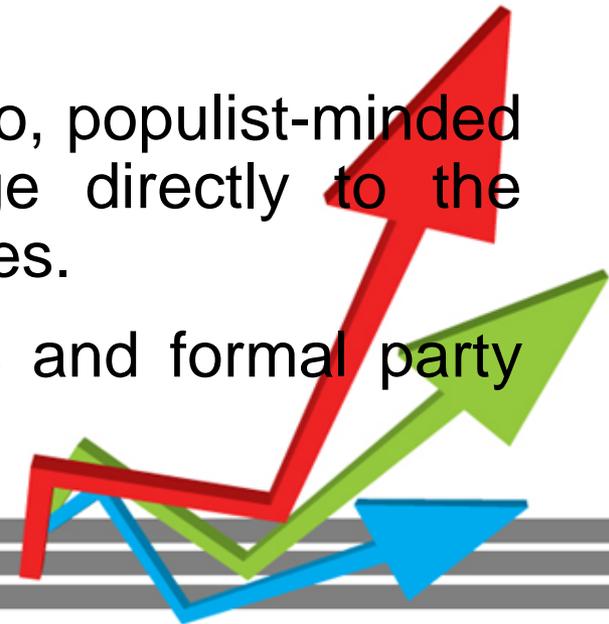
- **primary election**: election in which voters decide which of the candidates within a party will represent the party for each office in the general election
- **general election**: election in which voters decide which party's candidates will actually fill elected public offices
- **presidential election**: occurs side-by-side with the primary and general elections for other offices but is entirely different process ... When choosing a president, voters (1) look for leadership and character, and (2) base their judgments on foreign policy and defense issues that do not arise in state and local elections.
- **midterm election**: election in which voters vote for their congressional representatives but not for the president





Primary Election

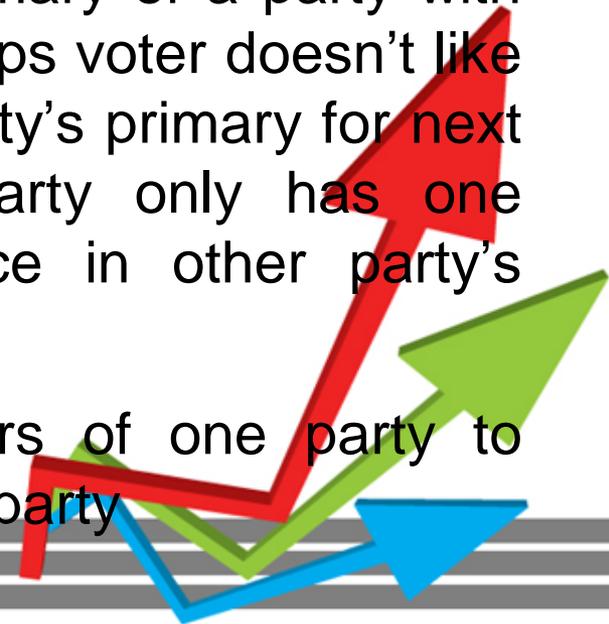
- ...election in which voters decide which of the candidates within a party will represent the party in the general election ... Largely controlled by state legislatures.
- During the Progressive era (roughly 1890-1920), the people's desire for reform in the political process led to the establishment of the primaries.
- With the advent of television and radio, populist-minded candidates could get their message directly to the voters and circumnavigate party bosses.
- Gave ordinary party voters and formal party organizations a voice.





Primary Elections

- **closed primary**: a primary election in which only a party's registered voters are eligible to vote
- **open primary**: a primary in which party members, independents and sometimes members of the other party are allowed to vote
- **crossover voting**: participation in the primary of a party with which the voter is not affiliated, (1) perhaps voter doesn't like choices in his party so votes in other party's primary for next best option or (2) perhaps voter's party only has one candidate so votes for weakest choice in other party's primary
- **raiding**: an organized attempt by voters of one party to influence the primary results of the other party



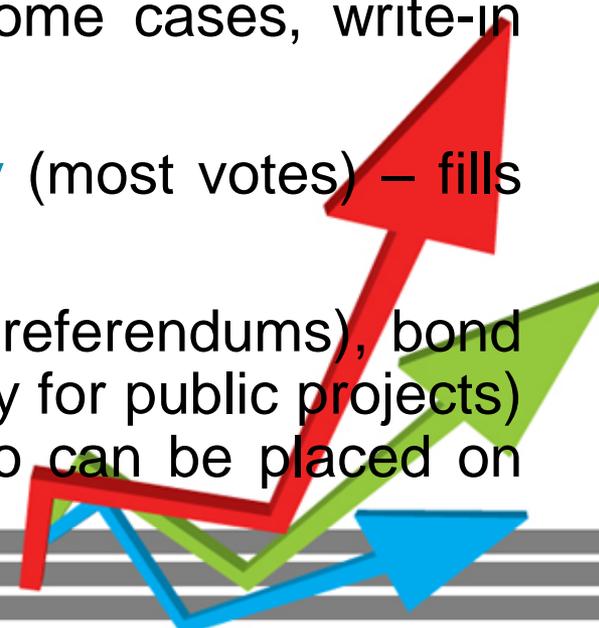


General Elections

- ...an election held to choose among candidates nominated in a primary election (or by convention, caucus or petition) for federal, state and/or local office

- The **purpose** of a general election is to make a final choice among the various candidates who have been nominated by parties or who are running as independents (not affiliated with a major political party) or, in some cases, write-in candidates.

- The winner – usually chosen by **plurality** (most votes) – fills the office.
- **Measures** such as proposed legislation (referendums), bond issues (approving the borrowing of money for public projects) and other mandates on government also can be placed on the ballot.

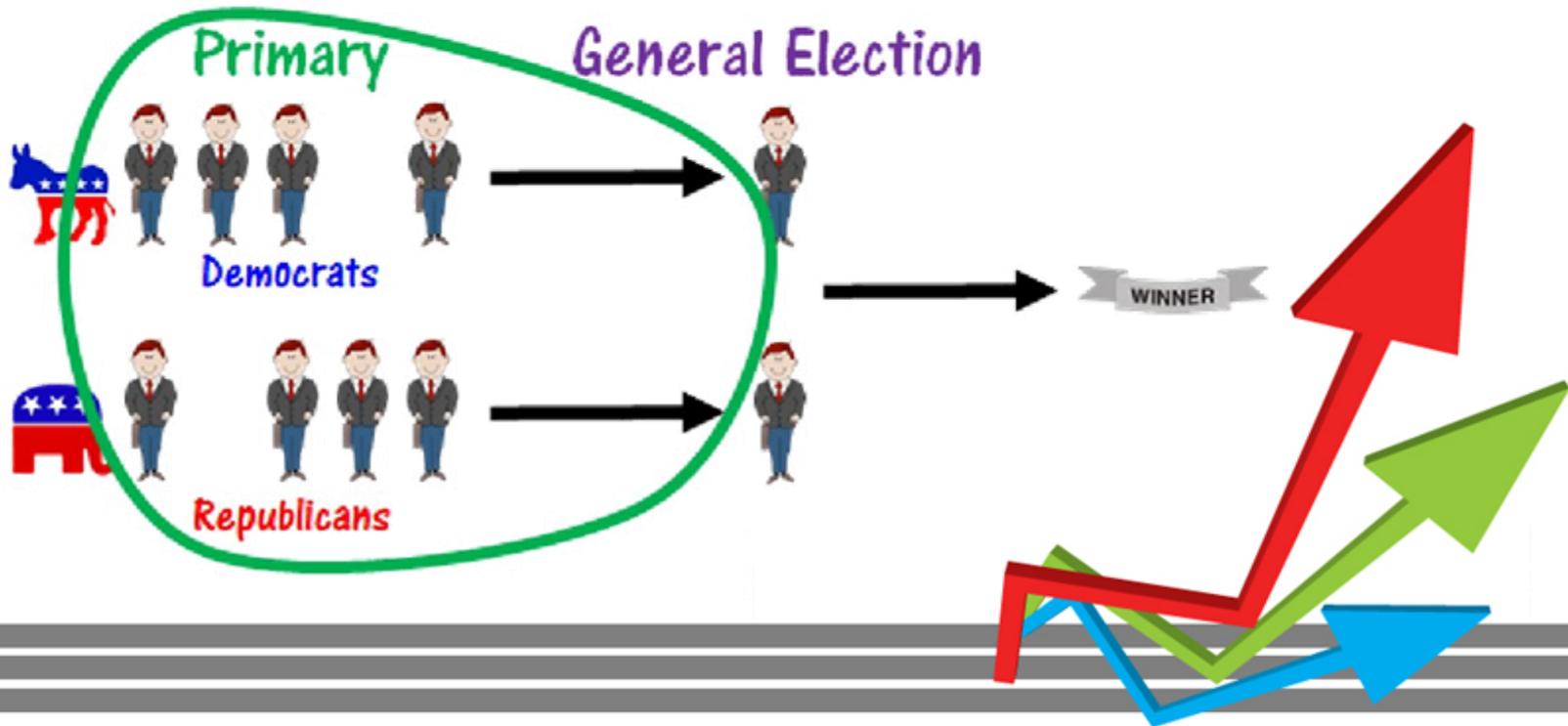




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

The Nomination Process for Presidential Candidates

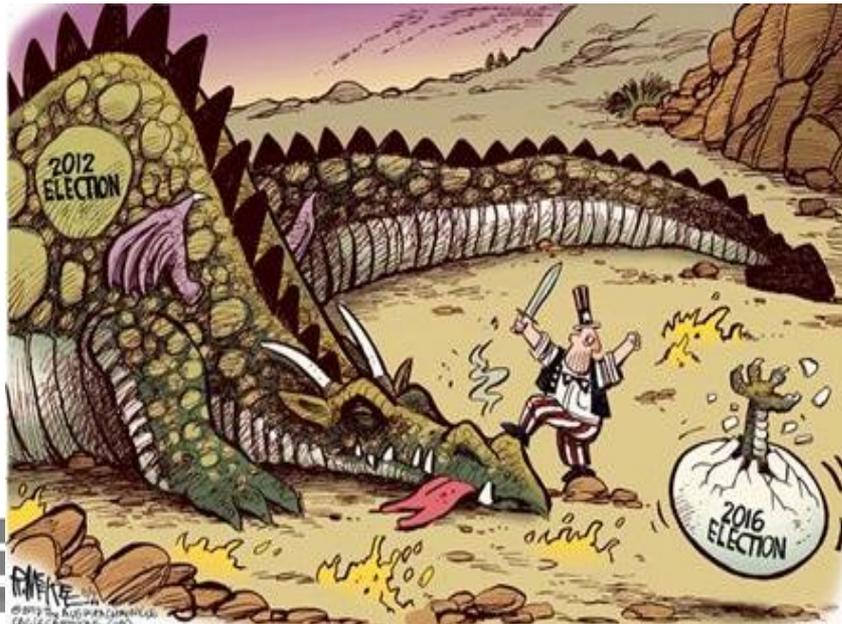




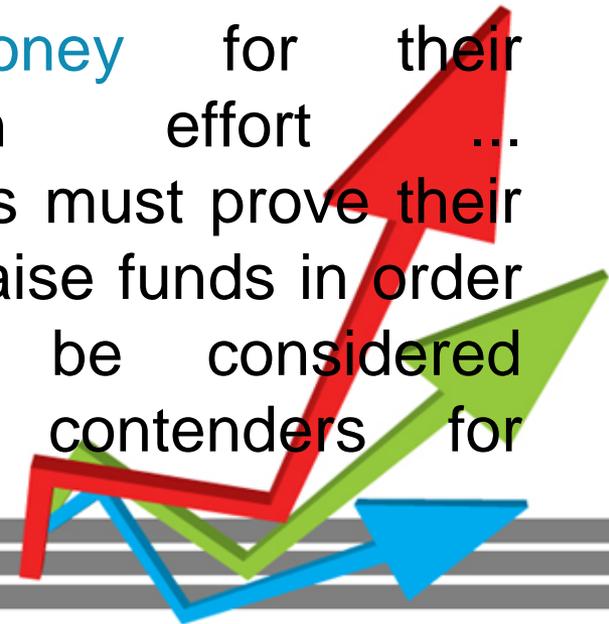
Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

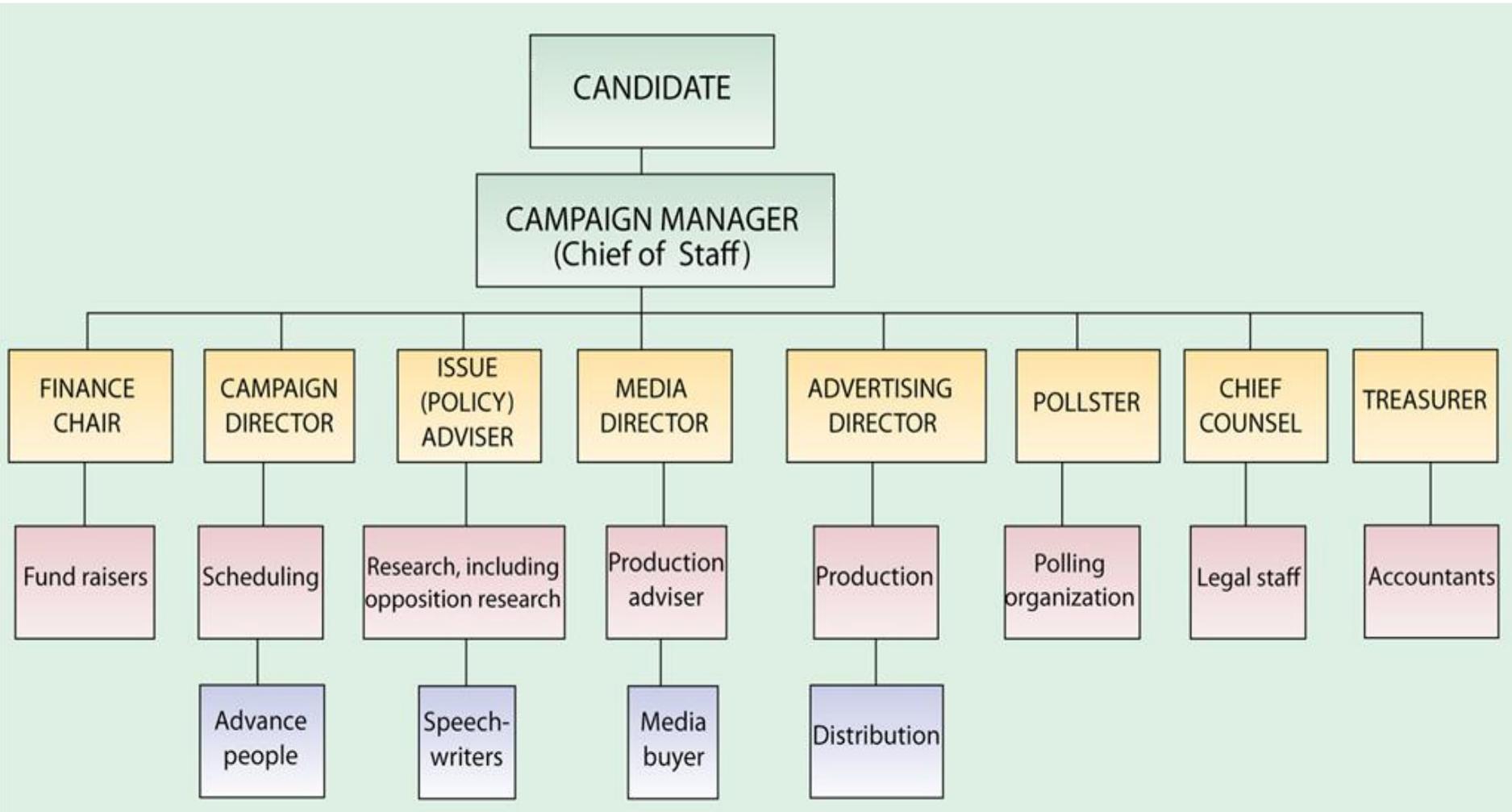
- Campaigning begins long before any declaration of candidacy, as candidates try to:
 - line up **supporters** to win caucuses or primaries in key states



- **raise money** for their nomination effort ... Candidates must prove their ability to raise funds in order to even be considered legitimate contenders for office.



The Presidential Campaign: Typical Campaign Organization

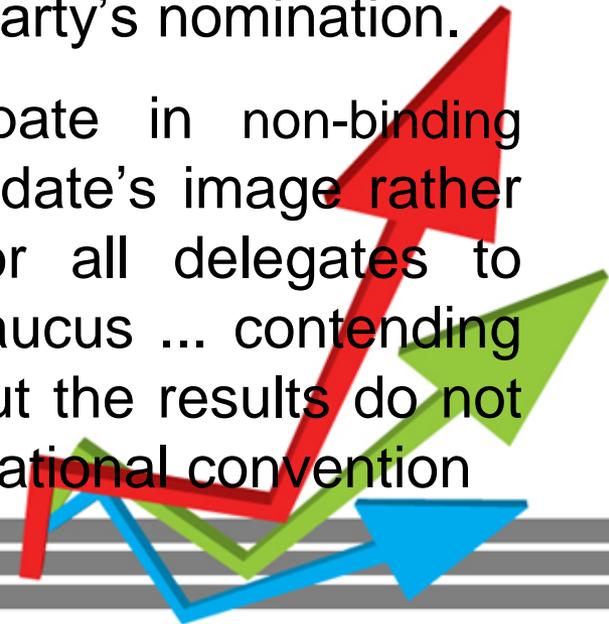




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- **invisible primary:** also known as the money primary, the period between when the first credible presidential candidate shows interest in running for president and when the actual primaries take place ... battle for the resources, attention and credibility necessary to win a presidential nomination ... A candidate who locks up a majority of potential support in the invisible primary almost never loses the party's nomination.
- **beauty contest:** party's voters participate in non-binding primary election (based mainly on candidate's image rather than substantive factors) but some or all delegates to convention are chosen by activists in caucus ... contending candidates compete for popular votes but the results do not control the selection of delegates to the national convention

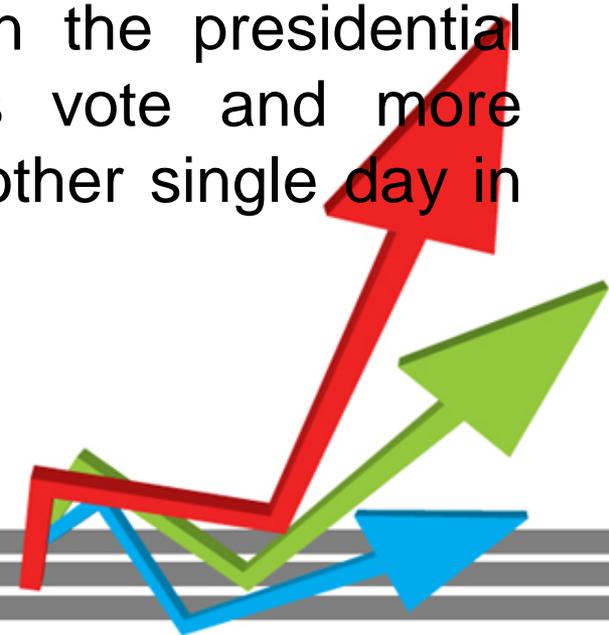




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- **frontloading**: tendency of a state to choose an early date on the primary schedule in order to capitalize on media attention ... Gives some primary states an advantage.
- **Super Tuesday**: a Tuesday early in the presidential primary season when more states vote and more delegates are at stake than on any other single day in the presidential primary campaign

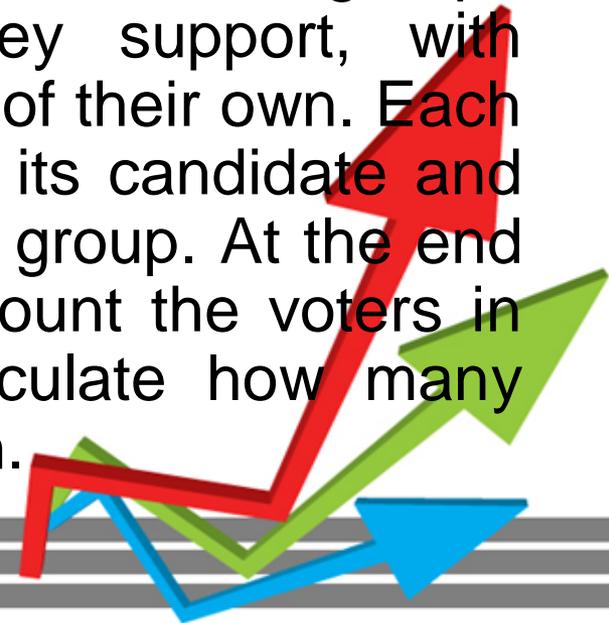




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- Either primary elections or caucuses are used to elect delegates to the national nominating conventions. (Each state chooses its method.) National nominating **convention delegates will choose the party's nominee.**
- **caucus:** private meetings run by parties ... Participants usually divide themselves into groups according to the candidate they support, with undecided voters forming a group of their own. Each group gives speeches supporting its candidate and tries to persuade others to join its group. At the end of the caucus, party organizers count the voters in each candidate's group and calculate how many delegates each candidate has won.

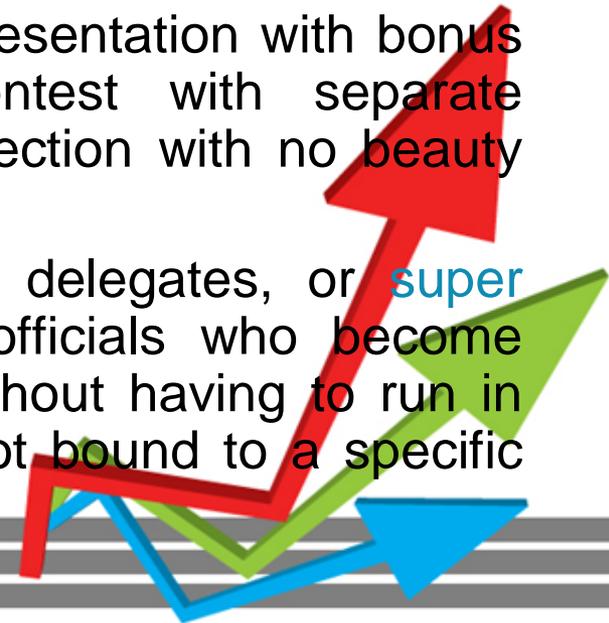




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- **presidential primary election:** run by state and local governments ... Voting occurs through secret ballot.
 - **winner-take-all primary:** the party candidate with the most primary votes wins all of the delegates
 - **proportional representation primary:** each party candidate is given a percentage of the delegates based on the percentage of primary votes each wins
 - **other methods:** proportional representation with bonus delegates primary, beauty contest with separate delegate selection, delegate selection with no beauty contest
- Each party also has some unpledged delegates, or **super delegates**, party leaders and elected officials who become delegates to the national convention without having to run in primaries or caucuses, and who are not bound to a specific candidate.

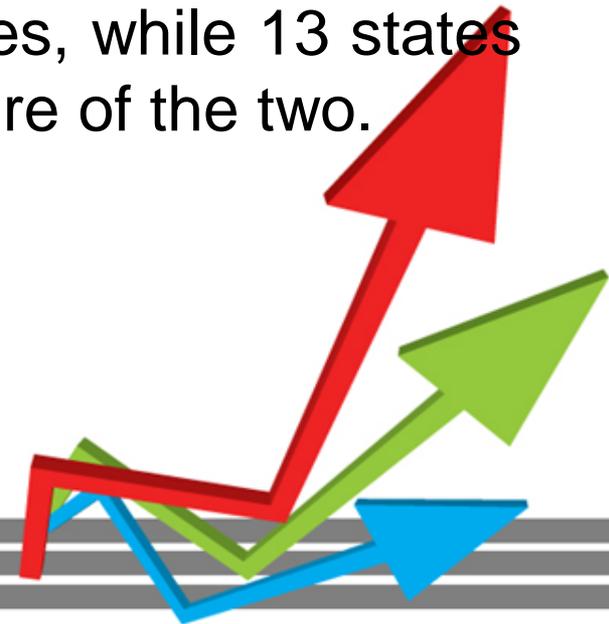




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- The caucus is the oldest, most party-oriented method of choosing delegates to the national conventions, and was once the most common method.
- Over the years, the trend has been toward primary elections rather than caucuses to choose delegates. In 2012, 34 states and DC used primaries, while 13 states used caucuses. The rest used a mixture of the two.

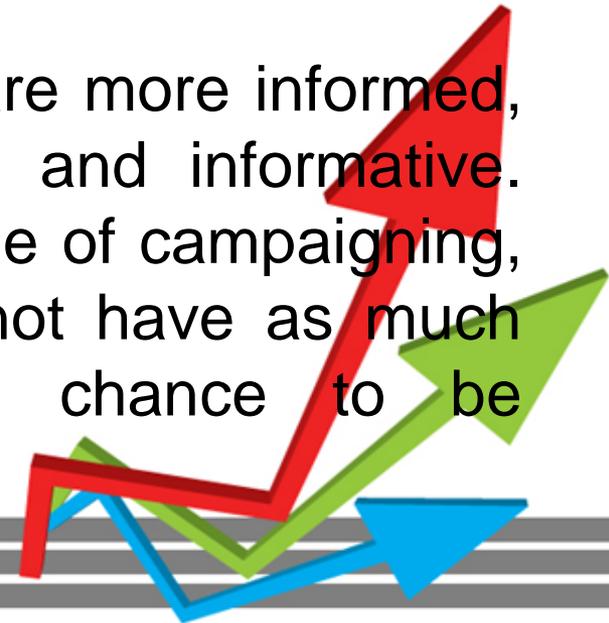


Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination



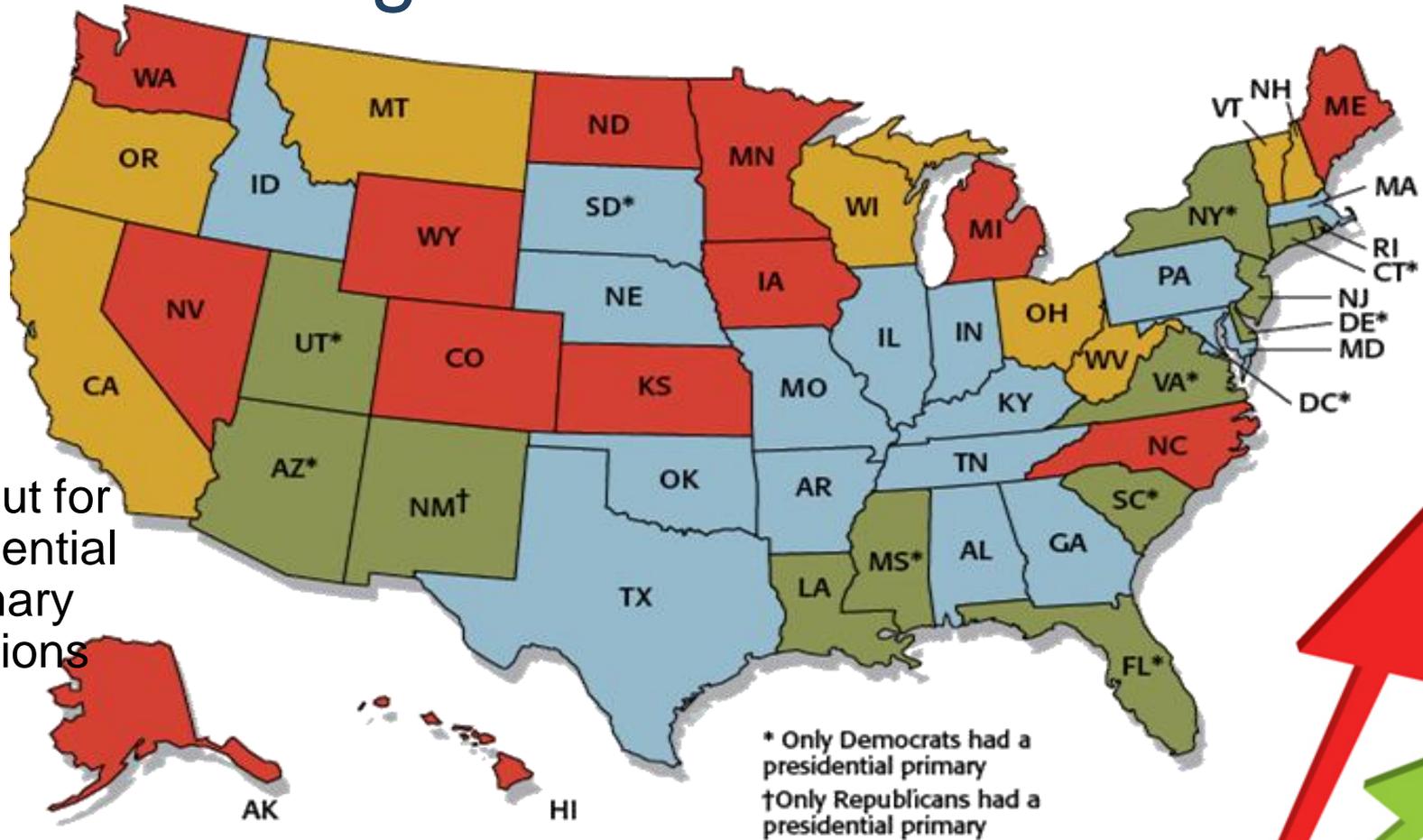
- Supporters say **primary elections** are more democratic, more representative and a more rigorous test for the candidates. Primaries have larger turnouts and their results may better reflect the will of all party members. They can also remove an element of party control over the nominating process.
- **Caucus** supporters say participants are more informed, and caucuses are more interactive and informative. They allow for a more grassroots style of campaigning, giving candidates who perhaps do not have as much money or name recognition the chance to be competitive.



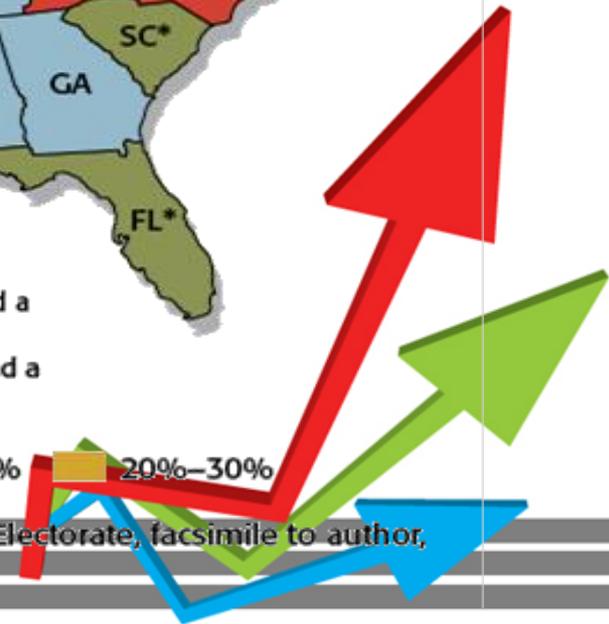


Presidential Elections Stage 1: The Nomination

Turnout for
presidential
primary
elections



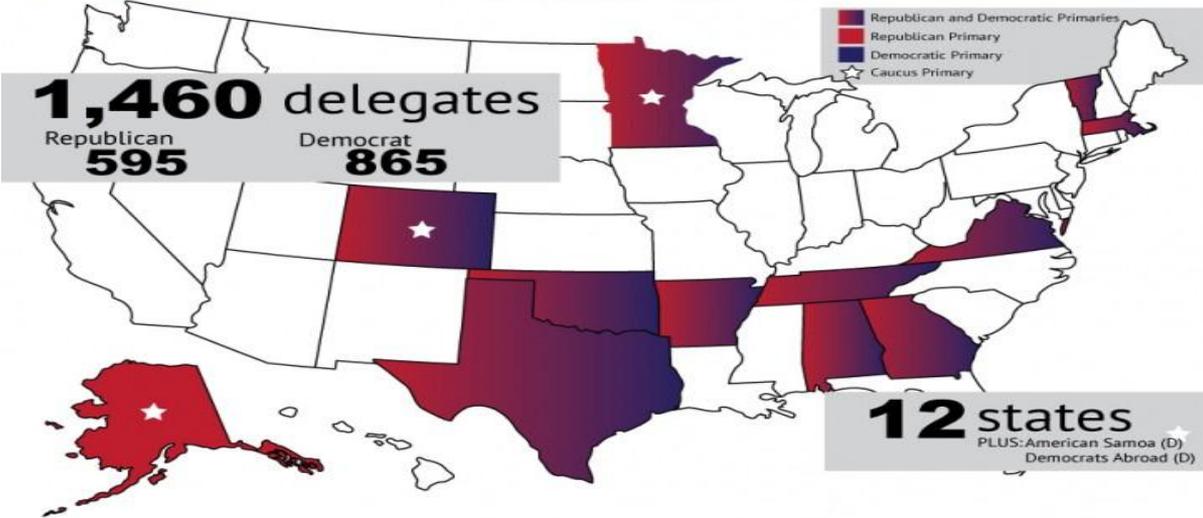
SOURCE: Curtis B. Gans, Director, Committee for the study of the American Electorate, facsimile to author, September 22, 2004.





Presidential Elections Stage 1: The Nomination

Super Tuesday Educate your vote. March 1, 2016



Super Tuesday is a primary voting day that allocates about 20 percent of delegates to presidential candidates. Delegates are representatives that vote for the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates at their respective national conventions. The delegates are generally assigned to represent the proportion of votes each candidate receives in the state primary. Below are the state primaries on Super Tuesday that award the most delegates. The graphs reflect the most recent polls in each state for Republican and Democratic candidates.

TEXAS 155 DELEGATES



GEORGIA 76 DELEGATES



TENNESSEE 58 DELEGATES



ALABAMA 50 DELEGATES



VIRGINIA 49 DELEGATES



TEXAS 251 DELEGATES



GEORGIA 117 DELEGATES



MASS. 116 DELEGATES



VIRGINIA 109 DELEGATES



MINNESOTA* 93 DELEGATES

NO POLL RESULTS HAVE BEEN RELEASED SINCE JANUARY

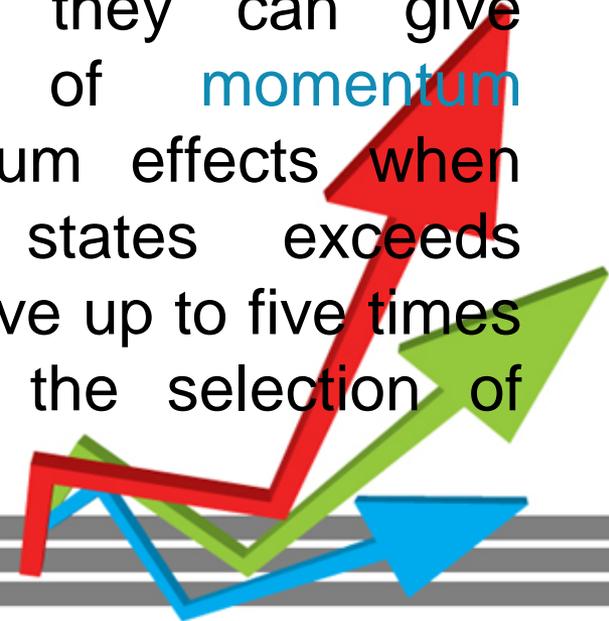
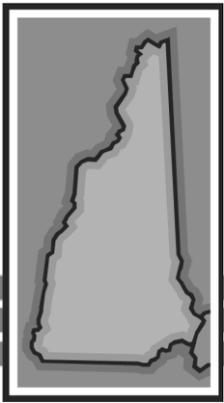




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- How does the process work in practice?
 - The process is **long**, especially when you include the invisible primary.
 - **Early states**, such as IA and NH (frontloading), take on more importance because they can give candidates the appearance of **momentum** (candidates experience momentum effects when their performance in early states exceeds expectations). **Early voters** can have up to five times the influence of late voters in the selection of candidates.

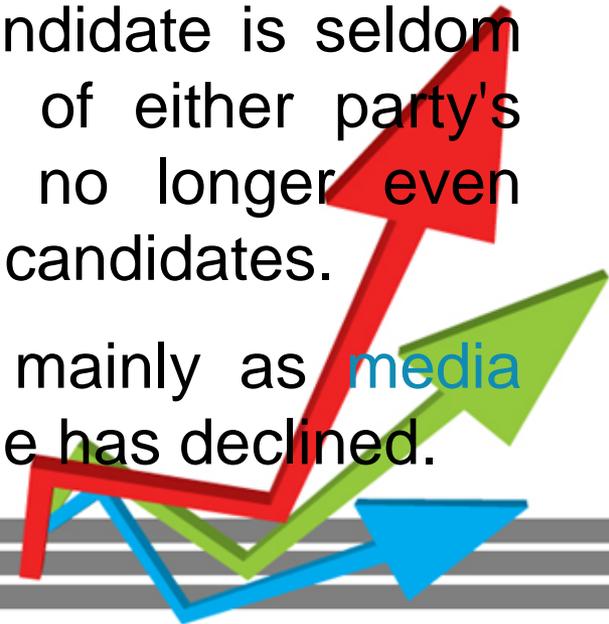




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- How does the process work in practice?
 - Although the process is for the purpose of choosing convention delegates, **conventions** are much less important now than in the past.
 - They **confirm rather than choose** the party's candidate. The presidential candidate is seldom in any doubt at the opening of either party's convention. The conventions no longer even announce the vice-presidential candidates.
 - Conventions today are seen mainly as **media events**, even as media coverage has declined.





Presidential Elections

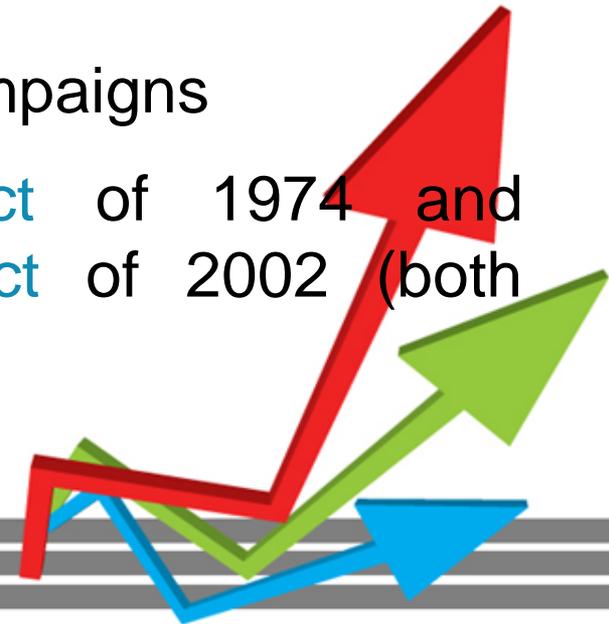
Stage 1: The Nomination

- The 1972 Watergate scandal led to the discovery that large amounts of money from corporations and individuals were “laundered” in secret bank accounts outside the country and used by Nixon’s campaign for political and campaign uses.
- Financing presidential nomination campaigns
 - **Federal Election Campaign Act** of 1974 and **Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act** of 2002 (both explained in more detail below)

NEWS 9



And now for
a thinly-veiled
political ad designed
to evade the Bipartisan
Campaign Reform Act

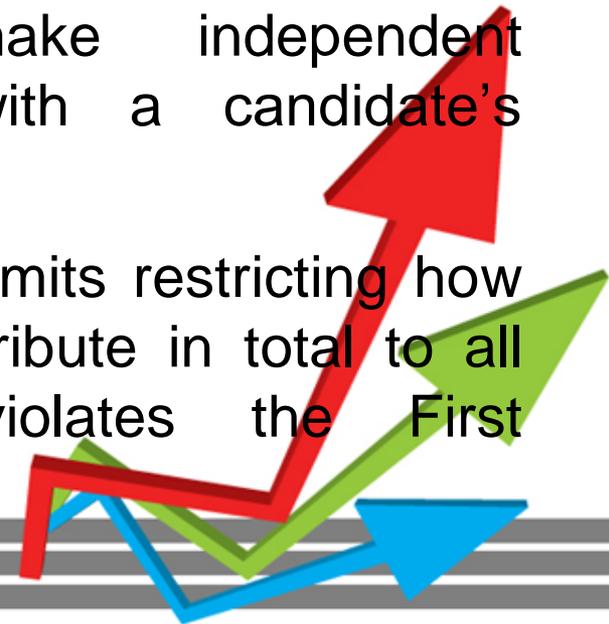




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- SCOTUS cases
 - *Citizens United* (2010): prohibiting independent expenditures by corporations and unions violates the First Amendment's protection of free speech
 - *Speech Now* (2010): cannot limit donations to organizations that only make independent expenditures (uncoordinated with a candidate's campaign)
 - *McCutcheon* (2014): aggregate limits restricting how much money a donor may contribute in total to all candidates or committees violates the First Amendment

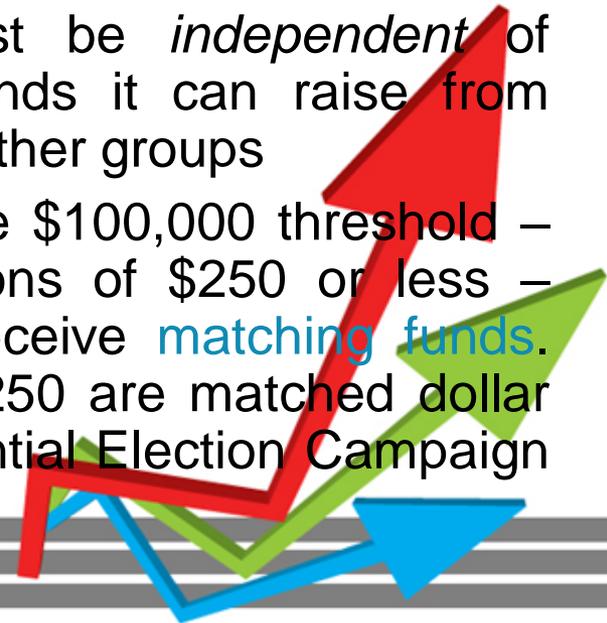




Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- Financing presidential nomination campaigns
 - Contributions from individuals may not exceed \$2,700. There is no limit to how much a candidate can spend of his/her own money.
 - bundlers: people who gather contributions to a candidate from many individuals in an organization or community
 - Super PAC: may not make contributions to candidates or parties, any political spending must be *independent* of campaigns, no legal limit to the funds it can raise from individuals, corporations, unions and other groups
- After a candidate qualifies by meeting the \$100,000 threshold – raising \$5000 in 20 states in contributions of \$250 or less – his/her campaign becomes eligible to receive matching funds. Contributions from individuals of up to \$250 are matched dollar for dollar with payments from the Presidential Election Campaign Fund.





Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- Financing presidential nomination campaigns
 - Candidates must comply with **spending limits**, based on the 1974 figure of \$10 million, adjusted for inflation.
 - Leading primary candidates, not wishing to be constrained by limits, are **opting not to take primary matching funds**.
 - Candidates, parties and PACs must **file periodic reports disclosing the money raised and spent**.



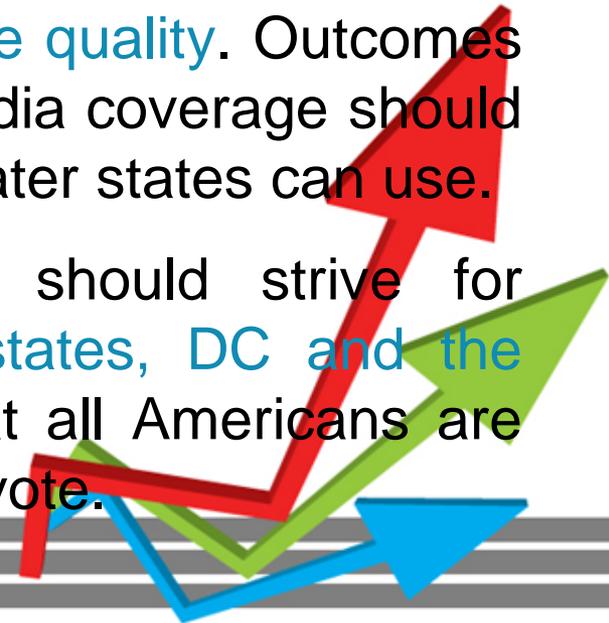


Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- Reforming the Nominating Process
 - A presidential nomination process should **elect quality candidates**, not simply those who are the most well known or the best financed.
 - The process for selecting presidential candidates should **maximize information about candidate quality**. Outcomes from early nominating states and media coverage should generate information that citizens in later states can use.
 - The nomination system should strive for **equality among the 50 states, DC and the territories** by ensuring that all Americans are able to cast a meaningful vote.

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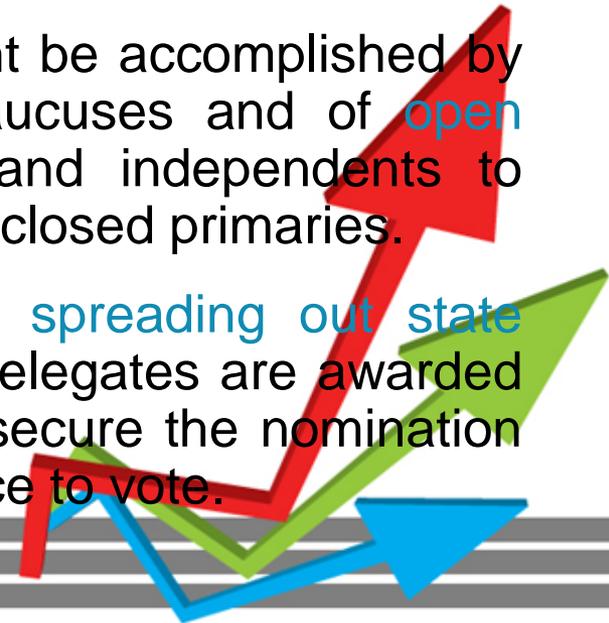


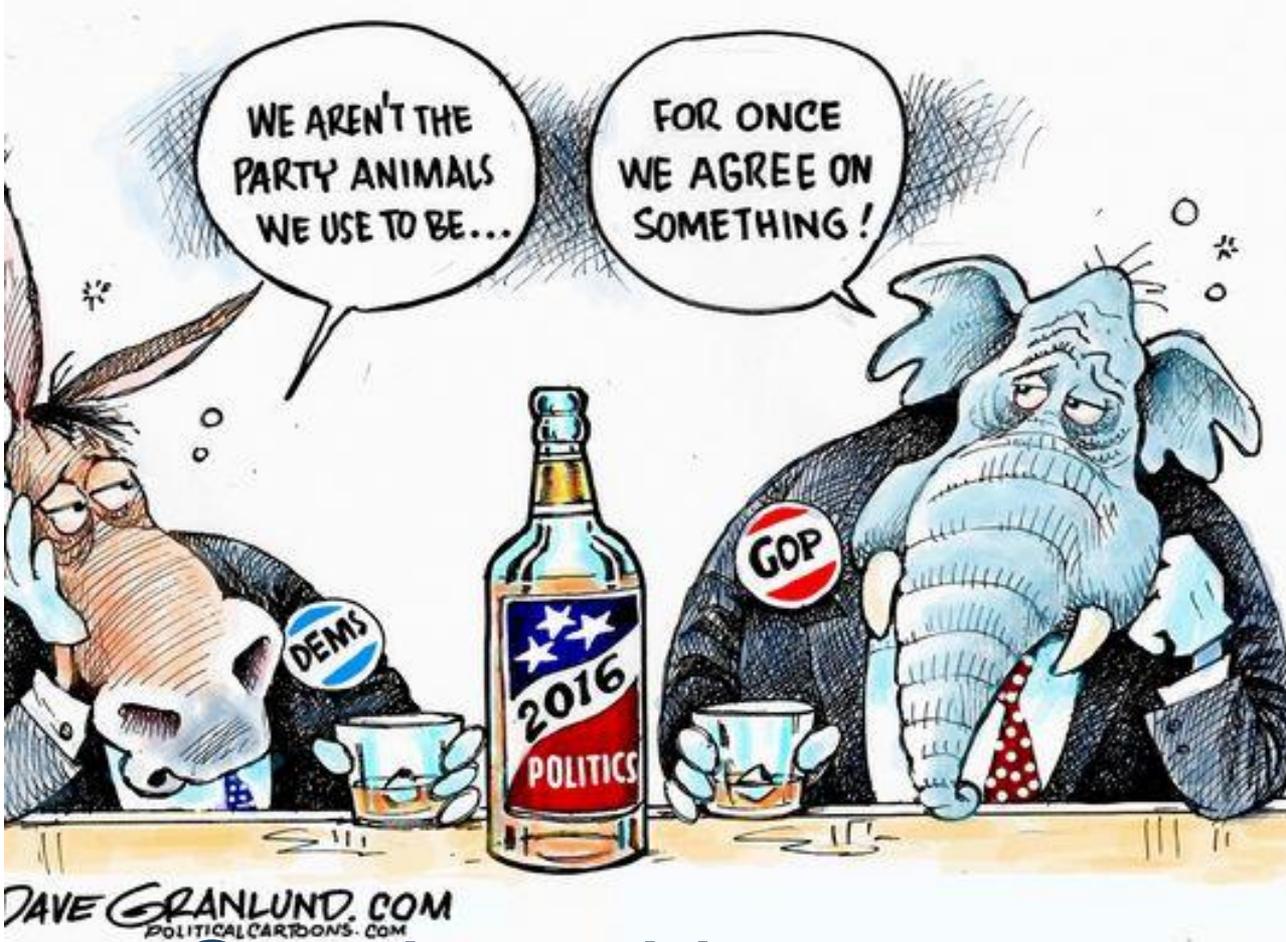
Presidential Elections

Stage 1: The Nomination

- Reforming the Nominating Process

- The nomination system should encourage **increased participation** so that the electorate is representative of the voting eligible population.
- Primaries and caucuses should be highly **competitive** throughout the nomination season.
- Increased turnout is a goal that might be accomplished by the use of primaries instead of caucuses and of **open primaries** that allow nonpartisans and independents to participate, instead of closed or semi-closed primaries.
- Participation may also increase by **spreading out state voting** on Super Tuesday so fewer delegates are awarded on one day and candidates cannot secure the nomination before many states have had a chance to vote.





Continued in Elections 101 Part II

