

32-Political Parties

Political parties-a group of people with similar beliefs and ideas about the role government should play in our lives

Types of Political Systems

One party system-usually a dictatorship or oligarchy, elections are mostly rigged

Two party system-a winner take all system for elections as used in the United States

Multi-party system-has a large variety of political parties that are given proportional power and coalitions must be formed to rule

Advantages of Two Party System

- Stability in government (usually only subtle changes are made by either party)
- Leaders gain experience as they work their way up the party ladder
- Governor → Senator → President
- Provides voters a choice between one "liberal" party and one "conservative" party

Washington's Farewell Address

"However [political parties] may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion."

Disadvantages of Two Party System

- Factions can divide the nation (ex. Civil War)
- Minority can be ignored by majority
- Change can be very slow due to parties having to appeal mostly to the middle in a winner take all system

Two Party System-Best?

Most races come down to Democrat vs. Republican with no other real choice

51% of vote-gets office/power

49% of vote-gets nothing

Political machine-when a political party controls a certain area and works to make sure the other party can't compete

Third Parties in United States

- Rarely have any chance to win
- Usually formed around a single issue or candidate
- Can bring up important issues or ideas that might later be taken up by Democrats or Republicans
- Ex. Progressive Party-Theodore Roosevelt; Reform Party-Ross Perot