


## Chapter 17

# Elections and Voting

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## Why It's Important

**Every Vote Counts** A successful democracy is built on an informed electorate that is influenced by many factors. You are—or soon will be—part of that electorate.

 To find out more about how to cast your vote and to learn about its impact, view the *Democracy in Action* Chapter 17 video lesson:

### Elections and Voting

#### GOVERNMENT

#### Online

**Chapter Overview** Visit the *United States Government: Democracy in Action* Web site at [gov.glencoe.com](http://gov.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 17—Overview** to preview chapter information.

# Election Campaigns

## Reader's Guide

### Key Terms

campaign manager, image, political action committee, soft money

### Find Out

- What are the basic elements of a presidential campaign?
- Why were the Federal Election Campaign Acts passed?

### Understanding Concepts

**Political Processes** What strategic decisions must political parties and candidates make during each campaign?

## COVER STORY

### Election Controversy

WASHINGTON, D.C., DECEMBER 14, 2000

The presidential election of 2000 was finally concluded last night, 36 days after its scheduled ending date. Vice President Al Gore conceded victory to Texas governor George W. Bush after the Supreme Court halted a Florida statewide manual vote recount. The ruling allowed Florida's electoral votes to be counted for Bush, thus making him the 43rd president of the United States. The election hinged on Florida's final tally, which was contested by Gore. He had petitioned for a recount, which focused on individual punch cards and absentee ballots. The Court's decision allowed Bush to become only the fourth president to win the election while losing the popular vote.



TIME Cover

**R**unning for political office is expensive. National elections to select all representatives and one-third of the senators are held every two years. Senators and representatives spend considerable time and effort raising campaign funds. Presidential elections are held every four years. Candidates for the highest office must have access to hundreds of millions of dollars to run their campaigns. The presidential campaign is not only expensive, but also is a lengthy and complex process. The reward for the winner, however, is the most powerful position in government.

## Electing the President



Candidates for president begin organizing their campaigns almost one year before the election. Primary races in the spring help to narrow the field of candidates. Following the national conventions in late summer, the presidential campaigns become intense by early September. They end on Election Day—the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November. During the final eight weeks of the campaign, the candidates spend long, frenzied hours traveling from state to state. Taping television messages, shaking hands, making speeches, giving interviews, and many other campaign activities are exhausting. Candidates may forget where they are and greet the people of Denver with a “Hello, Dallas.” The slipup will be on the nightly news.


**Electoral Votes and the States** To be elected president, a candidate must win at least 270 of the 538 available electoral votes. The total electoral vote is equal to the number of representatives and senators from all the states, plus 3 votes from Washington, D.C. Each state's electoral vote is the total number of its senators and representatives in Congress.

The candidate who wins the greatest number of popular votes in any state usually receives all of that state's electoral votes. To win the

# TIME

## For the Record

**Every Vote Counts** A single vote sometimes makes the difference in an election. In 1997 Sydney Nixon, a Vermont state representative, won his seat by a vote of 570 to 569. After a recount showed he actually lost 572 to 571, Nixon was forced to give up his seat to his opponent. In 1999, in Bering Strait, Alaska, an election for a school board seat ended in a tie. Later, a flip of a coin gave candidate Wayne Morgan the seat.



presidency, a candidate must pay special attention to those states with large populations, such as California, Texas, New York, and Florida. The larger a state's population, the more electoral votes it has. A presidential candidate who won the electoral votes of the 11 largest states would obtain the 270 votes necessary to win the presidency.

Because a candidate needs to win as many states as possible, he or she must appeal to a broad range of voters across the nation. A candidate who runs on a single issue or only appeals to a certain region of the country will find it much harder to win the necessary number of electoral votes. This need for broad appeal works against third-party candidates, who usually do not have the level of national organization or the amount of money that is available to Democrats and Republicans.

**Campaign Strategy** Planning how to capture key states is only one of many decisions a presidential candidate must make. For example, should the candidate wage an aggressive, all-out attack on an opponent, or would a more low-key campaign be a better strategy? What should be the theme or slogan of the campaign? What issues should be stressed? How much money should be spent on television commercials, radio advertising, and newspaper ads?

**Campaign Organization** A strong organization is essential to running a presidential campaign. Heading the organization is a campaign manager, who is responsible for overall strategy and planning. In the national office, individuals handle relations with television, radio, and the print media and manage finances, advertising, opinion polls, and campaign materials.

On the state and local levels, the state party chairperson usually coordinates a campaign. Local party officials and field workers contact voters, hold local rallies, and distribute campaign literature. The field workers, who are usually volunteers, ring doorbells, canvass voters by telephone, and do whatever they can do to make sure voters turn out to vote on Election Day.

**Using Television** The most important communication tool for a presidential candidate is television. Television coverage is the main way many citizens find out how a campaign is progressing. The image, or mental picture, that voters have of a candidate is extremely important. A candidate's organization spends a great deal of time "packaging" him or her for television appearances.

Political commercials provide an effective means of shaping a candidate's image. Appearances on television news programs are equally important. Television is now the single most commonly used source of news for most Americans. Candidates also use television by participating in debates. Televised debates usually come late in a campaign and can have a big impact on voters who are undecided. Political parties know that these voters may determine the winner of the election.

**Using the Internet** Candidates running for nearly every office from president of the United States to county clerk are making increasing use of the Internet. The World Wide Web is become a key tool for raising the money all candidates need to compete effectively for office. In addition, every candidate for higher office will have a campaign Web site. Voters and reporters can visit these sites to learn about the candidate's background, schedule of appearances, positions on issues, voting record, recent speeches, and more; some sites also include a list of campaign contributors. Many sites also offer an electronic newsletter that provides e-mail updates on a candidate's activities.

## Financing Campaigns



Running for political office is very expensive. In the 2004 elections, presidential and congressional candidates spent a combined total of \$3.9 billion dollars. Candidates need money for such things as office space, staff salaries, consultants, pollsters, travel, campaign literature, and advertising in the mass media, especially television.

Money can contribute to open political debate by giving candidates the chance to broadcast their views to voters. However, the possibility arises that candidates will need to give special favors to contributors rather than represent all voters.

**Regulating Campaign Financing** Today campaign financing is heavily regulated. The Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) of 1971 and its amendments in 1974, 1976, and 1979 provide the framework governing campaign financing. This law and its amendments require public disclosure of each candidate's spending, provide federal funding for presidential elections, prohibit labor unions and business organizations from making

direct contributions, and limit how much individuals and groups can contribute. At first the regulations also tried to limit how much candidates could spend in a campaign.

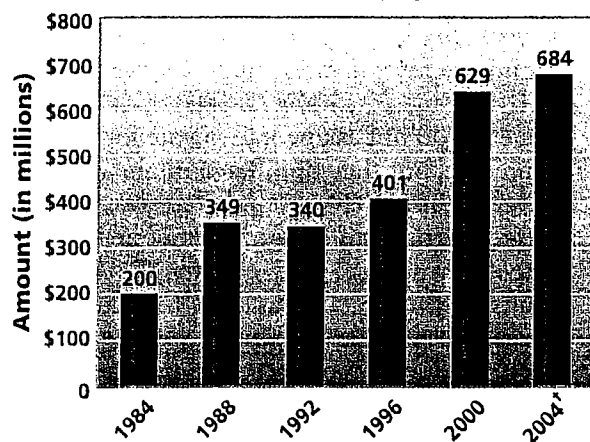
The 1974 amendment to the law created the **Federal Election Commission (FEC)** as an independent agency in the executive branch to administer federal election laws. Records of campaign contributions must be kept, and all contributions over \$100 must be reported to the FEC. The FEC's records are open to public inspection.

In 1976 the Supreme Court ruled that even though limiting individual contributions to candidates did not violate the First Amendment, an overall limit on the total cost of a campaign was unconstitutional. As a result, some candidates have spent huge sums. In 2000, for example, Democrat Jon S. Corzine used \$65 million of his own money in winning a New Jersey Senate seat.

**Public Funding** The 1974 campaign finance law also established public funding for presidential campaigns. Presidential candidates may accept federal funding from the Presidential Election

## Campaign Spending\*

**Presidential Campaign Spending  
1984–2004**

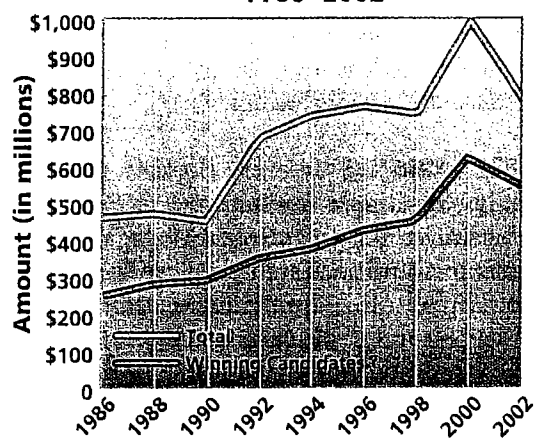


Source: Federal Election Commission, Annual Reports.

\* Numbers include primary and general election figures.

† Preliminary figure

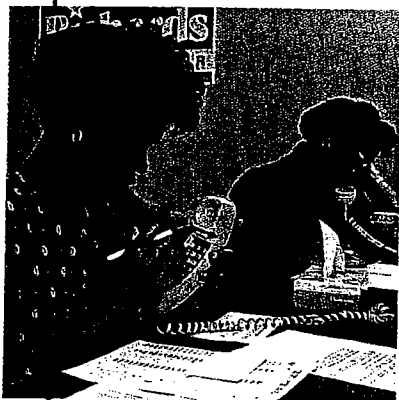
**Spending for Congressional Candidates  
1986–2002**



**Critical Thinking** There has been a growing concern in recent years over the amount of campaign spending in presidential and congressional elections. *How much more was spent on congressional campaigns than on presidential campaigns in 1992?*

# Participating IN GOVERNMENT

## Working in a Campaign



Campaign workers

**E**ven if you are not eligible to vote, you can still support the candidate of your choice by becoming a volunteer in his or her campaign. A phone call or a visit to the candidate's local headquarters will sign you up as a campaign worker.

Volunteers perform many routine campaign activities. On one occasion you might stuff envelopes with campaign literature. On another, you may go door to door in a neighborhood to distribute brochures and talk to people about the candidate. You could help staff a phone bank that is calling voters with a prepared message about

the candidate. On Election Day, your job might be to call selected voters to remind them to vote or to ask if they need a ride to the polls.

Volunteering in a campaign helps the candidate you favor, as well as gives you a good look at election politics from the inside.

## Activity

1. Contact your local branch of the Democratic Party, Republican Party, or favorite third party to obtain more information on volunteering. Share this information with the class.
2. Find the candidate of your choice in an upcoming election. Focus on a race and gather information on the candidates involved. Then create a summary of each candidate's position on issues. Which candidate do you support? Why?

Campaign Fund for the primary campaigns and the general election but must agree to limit their total campaign spending. From 1976 to 2004, all major party candidates accepted these funds for the general election. Third-party presidential candidates can also receive federal funds if their party received at least five percent of the vote in the previous presidential election.

**Private Funding** In every election, the bulk of campaign funding comes from private sources, such as individual citizens, party organizations, corporations, and special interest groups. The passage of FECA in 1974 limited direct donations to a candidate by an individual to \$1,000.

Direct donations to candidates or political parties may also come from **political action committees**, or PACs. These organizations are established by interest groups to collect money and provide financial support to favored candidates or political parties. Like individuals, PACs are limited by FECA in how much they may donate directly to any single candidate in one election cycle (which includes the primary and general election).

Political parties have found loopholes in FECA regulations and used them to maximize the impact of campaign contributions and to get an edge during election campaigns. One method used to bypass limits on campaign spending is **issue advocacy advertising**. Such advertising, paid for by interest groups, urges voters to support a particular position on issues such as gun control or health care. Issue ads do not ask people to vote for or against a candidate, but they do often contain a candidate's name or image. They can be a powerful way for interest groups to support someone they like or target a candidate they dislike. FECA placed no limits on this practice, and the top ten advertisers for issues spent approximately \$2.39 million on such ads during the 2000 election.

In 2002 Senators John McCain and Russ Feingold sponsored a bill that would place new controls on campaign spending. The **Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BRCA)** targeted the use of issue advocacy advertising and the use of soft-money donations to national political parties. **Soft-money** donations were contributions given directly to a political party by PACs or individuals for general

purposes, such as voter registration drives, party mailings, and political advertisements. In past elections this money was spent by political parties to benefit the campaigns of their presidential and congressional candidates without ever giving the money directly to the candidates. FECA placed no limits on these contributions, and in the 2000 election each party raised over \$250 million in soft-money contributions. The BRCA banned all soft-money donations to national political parties, but it did raise the limit for individual direct donations to \$2,000. It also prohibited unions, corporations, and nonprofit groups from running issue ads aimed at a candidate within 30 days of a primary election and 60 days of a general election. This law was challenged as an unconstitutional restriction on free speech, but it was largely upheld by the Supreme Court in December 2003.

**Campaign Law and the Internet** Most campaign finance regulations were written before the Internet became an electioneering tool. The FEC has issued rulings on how federal election laws apply to the Internet. The FEC has ruled, for example, that election Web site operators must identify themselves online, even if they are acting as individual citizens. Web sites operating independently of official campaigns must be registered with the FEC if they spend \$250 or more

## Money and Ethics



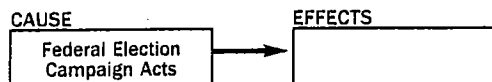
**Campaign Reform** Questionable campaign funding has dominated partisan battles on Capitol Hill. *According to the cartoonist, how has the high cost of running for public office affected the ethics of campaign fund-raising?*

on the site, including the cost of the computer used to build the site and the software and Internet connection used to keep it live. Official candidate and party Web sites may receive contributions electronically, but they must follow established reporting procedures.

## Section 1 Assessment

### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Main Idea** Use a graphic organizer like the one below to show the effects the Federal Election Campaign Acts had on campaign financing.



- 2. Define** campaign manager, image, political action committee, soft money.
- 3. Identify** Federal Election Commission.
- 4.** How can third-party candidates qualify for federal funds for a presidential campaign?

### Critical Thinking

- 5. Synthesizing Information** PACs can contribute to as many political candidates as they wish. Why might they contribute to all major candidates in a presidential campaign?

## Concepts IN ACTION

**Political Processes** Imagine that you are running for political office. Prepare a campaign strategy for your election. Explain what campaign tools you would use and how you would finance your campaign. Create an illustrated poster outlining your strategy.

# Skills

## Critical Thinking

### Synthesizing Information

**S**ynthesizing information involves integrating information from two or more sources. The ability to synthesize, or combine, information is important because information gained from one source often sheds new light upon other information. If you can synthesize information, you will get more out of everything you read.

#### Learning the Skill

To synthesize information, follow these steps:

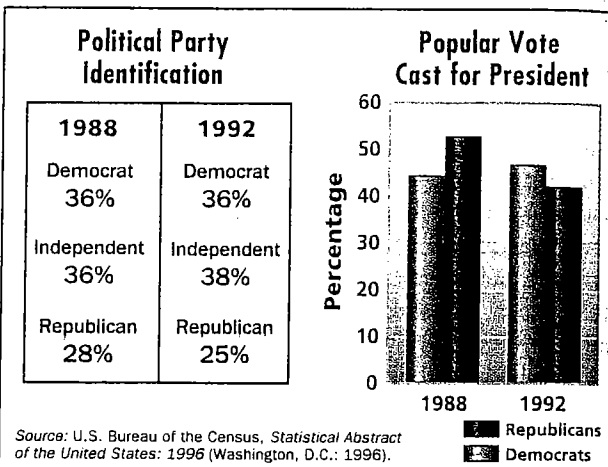
- Decide whether the two sources are comparable. Ask: Can Source A give me new information or new ways of thinking about Source B?
- If you decide that the two are comparable, put into your own words what you can learn or what new hypotheses you can make.

Following are a chart and a bar graph giving information on votes by major political parties and political party identification of the adult population. The first step in synthesizing information is to examine each source separately. The bar graph shows the votes cast for president in 1988 and 1992. The chart details what political party adults claimed to support.

The next step is to ask whether the information given in the two sources is comparable. The answer is yes. Finally, we ask: what can the chart tell us about the bar graph? The bar graph indicates whether adults voted in 1988 and 1992 according to the political party they claimed to support.

#### Practicing the Skill

Use what you have learned to examine the graph and the chart, and answer the questions that follow.



1. What percentage of Americans identified themselves as Independent in 1988? How did this change in 1992? How did this change affect the presidential election of 1992?
2. Did more Americans identify themselves as Democrats or Republicans in 1992? Did this match the way people voted? Explain.
3. What conclusions can you draw from the graph and chart together?

#### Application Activity

Find two sources of information on a topic dealing with political parties and write a short report. In your report, answer these questions: What are the main ideas in the sources? How does each source add to your understanding of the topic? Do the sources support or contradict each other?



The **Glencoe Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 2** provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.

# Expanding Voting Rights

## Reader's Guide

### Key Terms

suffrage, grandfather clause, poll tax

### Find Out

- Why did it take so long for African Americans and for women to win voting rights?
- What did each of the voting rights acts achieve?

### Understanding Concepts

**Growth of Democracy** What were the steps in the process of extending the right to vote to all adult citizens?

## COVER STORY

### Videotaping of Polls OK?

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, OCTOBER 1994

The U.S. Department of Justice has advised state officials in Mississippi and Alabama that to allow private videotaping at polling places on Election Day may be a violation of federal law. Some largely white citizens' groups in these states have formed so-called "ballot security" forces to police certain polling places. These groups claim that their videotaping helps to combat voting fraud. However, Justice Department attorneys worry that the taping makes some African Americans uncomfortable and may prevent them from voting. "We will not countenance any thinly veiled attempts to intimidate black voters at the polls," warned Assistant Attorney General Deval Patrick.



Not intimidated by "security"

Voting is not a privilege; it is a right. Voting is absolutely vital to the success of American democracy. After all, democracy means rule by the people. Through their votes, Americans have the power to select more than 500,000 government officials at all levels of government.

The right to vote, or **suffrage**, is the foundation of American democracy. Today almost all United States citizens 18 years old or older may exercise this right. Like other rights, however, the right to vote is not absolute. It is subject to regulations and restrictions. Unlike today, the right to vote for all citizens over the age of 18 did not always exist. During various periods in the history of the United States, law, custom, and sometimes even violence prevented certain groups of people from voting.

### Early Limitations on Voting

★ Before the American Revolution, the colonies placed many restrictions on the right to vote. Women and most African Americans were not allowed to vote; neither were white males who did not own property or pay taxes. Also excluded in some colonies were people who were not members of the dominant religious group. As a result, only about 5 or 6 percent of the adult population was eligible to vote.

Why did these restrictions exist? Educated men of the time did not believe in mass democracy in which every adult could vote. Many believed voting was best left to wealthy, white, property-owning males. As John Jay, first chief justice of the United States, put it: "The people who own the country ought to govern it."

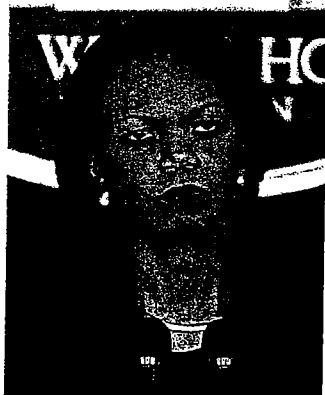
During the first half of the 1800s, state legislatures gradually abolished property requirements and religious restrictions for voting. By the mid-1800s the country had achieved universal white adult male suffrage. The issue of woman suffrage, however, had not been addressed.



## *We the People*

### **Making a Difference**

#### **Condoleezza Rice**



**D**id you know that Condoleezza Rice once intended to study music in college? Did you know that she has had an oil tanker named after her? Rice has led an interesting life.

She grew up in Birmingham, Alabama, during the early years of the civil rights movement. Her parents, both teachers, taught her that education was the best defense against the segregationist policies and prejudices common during her youth. "I can remember my parents taking me to watch the [civil rights] marchers," Rice once noted. "[T]hey wanted [me] to know the history and to know what was happening."

Rice, George W. Bush's national security adviser during his first term, was appointed sec-

retary of state in 2004. Rice has intensely studied international relations and the Soviet Union. One of her college courses was taught by Josef Korbel, the father of the first female secretary of state, Madeleine Albright.

Rice also served in the George H.W. Bush administration as special assistant to the president for national security affairs. She joined the faculty of Stanford University in 1981 and has served in the classroom as a professor of political science and as the university provost. She has also served as a member of the board of directors of many corporations.

Rice is also a devoted fan of football and has said that she wants to become commissioner of the National Football League someday.

## **Woman Suffrage**

**★** The fight for woman suffrage dates from the mid-1800s. Woman suffrage groups grew in number and effectiveness in the last half of the century, and by 1914 they had won the right to vote in 11 states, all of them west of the Mississippi. Not until after World War I, when the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified, was woman suffrage put into effect nationwide. The Nineteenth Amendment states:

*“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”*

—Nineteenth Amendment, 1920

## **African American Suffrage**

**★** When the Constitution went into effect in 1789, African Americans, both enslaved and free, made up about 20 percent of the United States population. Yet nowhere were enslaved persons

permitted to vote, and free African Americans who were allowed to vote could do so in only a few states.

**The Fifteenth Amendment** The first effort to extend suffrage to African Americans nationwide came shortly after the Civil War, when the Fifteenth Amendment<sup>1</sup> was ratified in 1870. The amendment provided that no state can deprive any citizen of the right to vote “on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” This amendment was also important because for the first time the national government set rules for voting, a power that only the states had previously exercised.

**Grandfather Clause** Although the Fifteenth Amendment was an important milestone on the road to full suffrage, it did not result in complete voting rights for African Americans. Southern states set up a number of roadblocks to limit and discourage the participation of African American voters.

**See the following footnoted materials in the Reference Handbook:**  
1. *The Constitution*, pages 774–799.

One such roadblock was the so-called grandfather clause incorporated in the constitutions of some Southern states. The **grandfather clause** provided that only voters whose grandfathers had voted before 1867 were eligible to vote without paying a poll tax or passing a literacy test. Because the grandfathers of most African American Southerners had been enslaved and had not been permitted to vote, this clause prevented most of them from voting. The Supreme Court declared the grandfather clause unconstitutional in 1915.

**Literacy Test** Until recent years many states required citizens to pass a literacy test to qualify to vote. Some Southern states used the literacy tests to keep African Americans from the polls. While in many cases white voters were judged literate if they could write their names, African American voters were often required to do much more. For example, they were frequently asked to explain a complicated part of the state or national constitution. The Voting Rights Acts of 1965 and 1970 and later additions to these laws outlawed literacy tests.

**Poll Tax** Another device designed to discourage African American suffrage was the poll tax. A poll

tax was an amount of money—usually one or two dollars—that a citizen had to pay before he or she could vote. Because the poll tax had to be paid not only for the current year, but also for previous unpaid years as well, it was a financial burden for poor citizens of all ethnic backgrounds. In addition, the tax had to be paid well in advance of Election Day, and the poll-tax payer had to present a receipt showing payment before being permitted to enter the voting booth. Voters who lost their receipts were barred from voting. Thousands of African Americans in the states with poll taxes were excluded from the polls.

In 1964, the Twenty-fourth Amendment outlawed the poll tax in national elections. The use of the poll tax in state elections, however, was not eliminated until a 1966 Supreme Court decision.

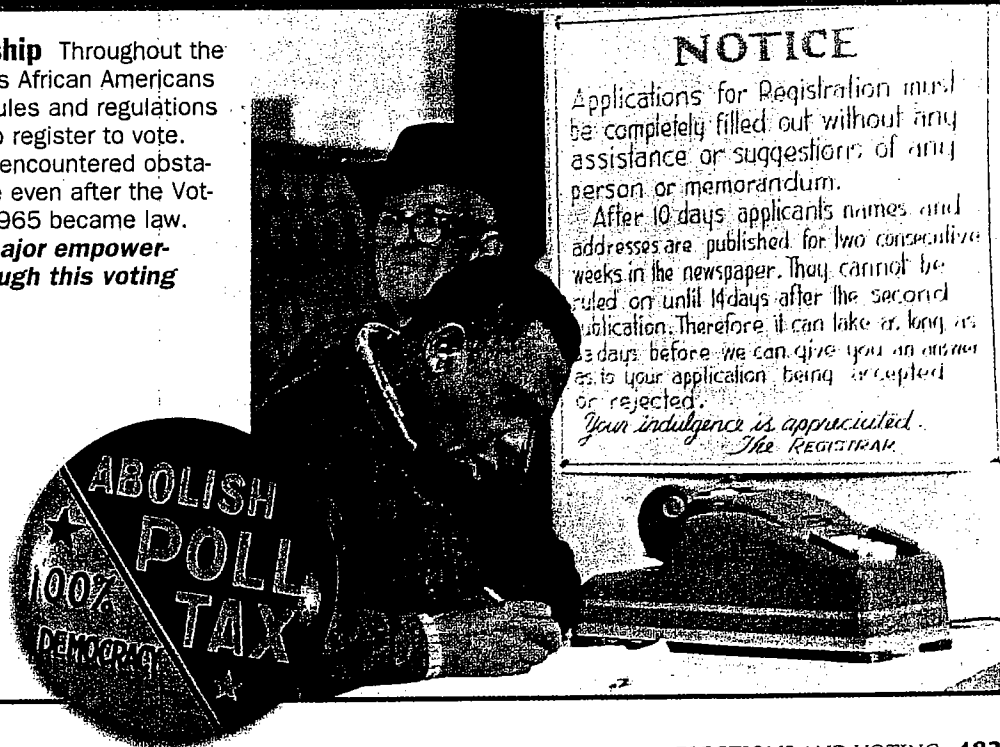
**The Voting Rights Acts** Despite the elimination of many discriminatory practices by the early 1960s, African American participation in elections, particularly in the South, was still limited. The civil rights movement of the 1960s resulted in national legislation that enabled larger numbers of African Americans to participate in the electoral process. The 1965 **Voting Rights Act** was one of the most effective suffrage laws ever passed in this country.

## Overcoming Obstacles

**Tools of Citizenship** Throughout the South in the 1960s African Americans faced formidable rules and regulations while attempting to register to vote. African Americans encountered obstacles such as these even after the Voting Rights Act of 1965 became law.

**What were the major empowerments given through this voting rights act?**

Button supporting voting rights



The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and later voting rights laws of 1970, 1975, and 1982 brought the federal government directly into the electoral process in the states. The 1965 law empowered the federal government to register voters in any district where less than 50 percent of African American adults were on the voting lists. The government could also register voters in districts where it appeared that local officials were discriminating against African Americans.


The voting rights laws also forbade the unfair division of election districts in order to diminish the influence of minority groups. The laws provided for the appointment of poll watchers to ensure that the votes of all qualified voters were properly counted. Literacy tests were abolished. The laws also required that ballots be printed in Spanish for Spanish-speaking communities. Other minority language groups—Native Americans, Asian Americans, Aleuts—were given the same right.

The Voting Rights Acts resulted in a dramatic increase in African American voter registration. In 1960 only 29 percent of all African Americans in the South were registered. By 2000, however, the figure had risen to more than 64 percent.

The increased opportunity to vote meant that African American Southerners could now play a more important role in political life in the South. More than 1,000 African Americans were elected to political office within a few years of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In the North the election of African American mayors in large cities could be traced to the Voting Rights Acts as well.

Recent efforts at voting reform include the Help America Vote Act of 2002. Under this act, states must meet new federal requirements to reform the voting process and make it as consistent and inclusive as possible.

## Twenty-sixth Amendment

 For many years the minimum voting age in most states was 21. In the 1960s, when many young Americans were fighting in Vietnam, a movement to lower the voting age to 18 began. The basic argument was that if individuals were old enough to be drafted and fight for their country, they were old enough to vote. The Twenty-sixth Amendment ended this debate, stating that:

*“The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.”*

—Twenty-sixth Amendment, 1971

Thus more than 10 million citizens between the ages of 18 and 21 gained the right to vote.

### GOVERNMENT



### Online

**Student Web Activity** Visit the United States Government: Democracy in Action Web site at [gov.glencoe.com](http://gov.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 17—Student Web Activities** for an activity about voting rights.

## Section 2 Assessment

### Checking for Understanding

- Main Idea** Use a chart to explain the changes brought about by the Fifteenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-sixth Amendments.

15th	19th	26th

- Define** suffrage, grandfather clause, poll tax.
- Identify** Voting Rights Act.
- What did the Twenty-fourth Amendment outlaw?
- Why were the provisions of the Voting Rights Acts important?

### Critical Thinking

- Making Inferences** John Jay said, “The people who own the country ought to govern it.” Analyze the impact of the extension of voting rights on the meaning of Jay’s statement.

### Concepts IN ACTION

**Growth of Democracy** Create an illustrated time line that focuses on major events in the extension of voting rights in the United States. Include events between 1791 and the present.



## Supreme Court CASES TO DEBATE

### *Oregon v. Mitchell, 1970*

*Before the Twenty-sixth  
Amendment gave  
18-year-olds the right*

*to vote, many people questioned whether Congress had the power to  
set the voting age in state and local elections. The issue came to the  
Supreme Court in the case of Oregon v. Mitchell.*



**A new voter**

#### *Background of the Case*

In 1970 Congress passed the Voting Rights Act Amendments (not amendments to the Constitution). These laws changed residency and literacy test requirements and lowered the voting age for federal, state, and local elections to 18 years. President Richard Nixon signed the bill into law, but strongly objected to the provision on the voting age. Nixon stated that he approved lowering the voting age, but believed "along with most of the nation's leading constitutional scholars—that Congress has no power to enact it by simple statute, but rather it requires a constitutional amendment." The states of Oregon, Arizona, Texas, and Idaho also opposed the law. Both the Nixon administration and the states filed suits against the law. Since the presidential election of 1972 was rapidly approaching, the Supreme Court quickly accepted the cases. The Supreme Court wanted to hear the case and render a decision since it would impact the national election.

#### *The Constitutional Issue*

The major question was whether Congress had the authority to lower the voting age in state and local elections. Congress argued that Article I, Section 4, and Article II, Section 1, clearly gave it the authority to set conditions in the states for electing the president, vice president, and members of Congress. Further, Congress claimed the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments allowed Congress to forbid states from excluding citizens 18 to 21 years of age from voting, just as they had allowed Congress to eliminate other restrictions on voting in the states.

The states raised the issue of federalism. Article I, Section 2, of the Constitution reserved to the states the power to set qualifications to vote in elections for their own officials such as governors, state lawmakers, and so on. Further, the Tenth Amendment reserved to the states all powers not expressly given to the national government.

### **Debating the Case**

#### **Questions to Consider**

1. Did the Constitution intend for the states or Congress to have the authority to regulate age limits for voting in national elections?
2. Did the Constitution intend for the states or Congress to have the authority to regulate state and local elections?
3. How should the two levels of government—national versus state and local—relate to each other under the Constitution?

#### **You Be the Judge**

Review the parts of the Constitution cited by each side. Based on your interpretation of the Constitution, which side's reading of the Constitution do you agree with? What could be the consequences of letting Congress set the voting age for state and local elections? In your opinion, did the Constitution give Congress the power to lower the voting age to 18 in national elections and in state and local elections as well?

# Voter's Handbook

## Reader's Guide

Voting is a basic political right of all citizens in a democracy who meet certain qualifications set by law. Voting allows citizens to take positive actions to influence or control government.

### Key Terms

canvass, register, polling place, precinct, office-group ballot, ticket-splitting, party-column ballot, canvassing board, absentee ballot

### Find Out

- How does a person register to vote?
- What are the procedures for voting?

### Understanding Concepts

**Civic Participation** How can a person prepare to vote?



## Qualifications to Vote

**T**oday you are qualified to vote if you are (1) a citizen of the United States, (2) at least 18 years old, and (3) not a convicted felon or legally insane. Most states also require that you be a resident of the state for a specified period and that you register or enroll with the appropriate local government.

### Who Sets the Qualifications to Vote?

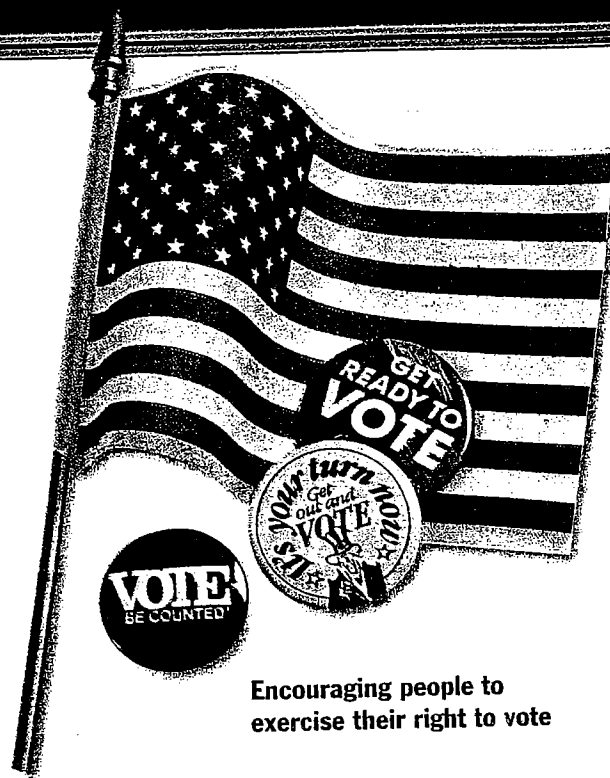
Originally, under Article I, Section 2, the Constitution left voting qualifications entirely to the states. The Constitution gave to Congress only the power to pick the day on which presidential electors would gather and to fix "the Times, Places, and Manner of holding elections" of members of Congress.

Since the end of the Civil War, Congress and the federal courts have imposed national standards on state-run elections. A series of constitutional amendments, federal laws, and Supreme Court decisions forced the states to conduct elections without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or gender. Even with such federal requirements, however, the registration of voters and regulation of elections are primarily state powers.

### Will My Vote Count?

Each person's vote counts. If you doubt it, think about the times when a few votes have decided elections. In the 2000 election, over 5.8 million votes were cast in the state Florida. When the vote tally was completed, George W. Bush won the state's 25 electoral votes, and therefore the presidency, by a margin of only 537 votes!

When Milton R. Young, a Republican, ran for the Senate in North Dakota, he led his challenger by fewer than 200 votes out of more than 236,000 cast. The official canvass, the vote count by the official body that tabulates election returns and certifies the winner, finally confirmed Young's victory. Sometimes victory hinges on a single vote. In a Cincinnati, Ohio, suburb a candidate for the town council was suddenly hospitalized and unable to vote. When the votes were counted, he had lost by 1 vote.



Encouraging people to exercise their right to vote

## Registering to Vote

**A**mericans must take the initiative if they want to vote. Unlike in many countries, in the United States you must **register**, or enroll with the appropriate local government.

### Why Do You Have to Register to Vote?

Registration became common in the late 1800s as a way to stop voting fraud. In those days the slogan "Vote Early and Often" was not a joke. In Denver in 1900, for example, one man confessed to having voted 125 times on Election Day! Reformers saw registration as a way to stop such abuses and clean up elections by giving officials a list of who could legally vote. In the South, registration laws came to be used to stop African Americans and poor whites from voting.

### How Can I Register to Vote?

Registration requirements are set by state law and differ from state to state. Telephone your local board of elections or county or city government to check on your state's requirements.

Registration forms typically ask for your name, address, place and date of birth, gender, Social Security number, and party. You must also sign your name so your signature can be checked at the time you vote.

Usually, you must register to vote by 15 to 30 days before an election. Only three states (Maine, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) allow you to register on Election Day.

The **National Voter Registration Act** that took effect in 1995 requires states to make registration forms available not only at motor vehicle departments but also at numerous state offices, welfare offices, and agencies that serve the disabled. It also requires states to allow mail-in registration. It permits, but does not require, states to use information from change-of-address forms filed with the U. S. Postal Service to update voter lists. Driver's license applicants are required to fill out a separate form for registering to vote. Public agencies must make it clear to beneficiaries that registering to vote is optional and that not registering will not affect the amount of assistance they receive.

Supporters of the National Voter Registration law believed that it would add 50 million citizens to the voting rolls when the changes went into effect. Many more citizens did regis-

ter. However, the ease of registration did not help voter turnout in the 1996 election. Less than half the voting age population participated, one of the lowest turnouts in history.

## Voting Procedures

**Y**ou vote at a polling place in your home precinct. A precinct is a voting district. Each city or county is usually divided into precincts containing from 200 to 1,000 voters.

### What Happens at the Polling Place?

Generally, before the date of the election you will receive notification of where you are to vote. Procedures will vary slightly at different polling places. Look over the sample ballot posted on a wall near the entryway. Then: (1) Go to the clerk or election judge's table and sign in by writing your name and address on an application form. (2) The clerk will read your name aloud and pass the application to a challenger, a local election official representing a political party. (3) The challenger compares your signature with your voter registration form. If they match, the challenger initials your form and returns it to you. (4) Give your form to one of the judges and enter the booth to vote.

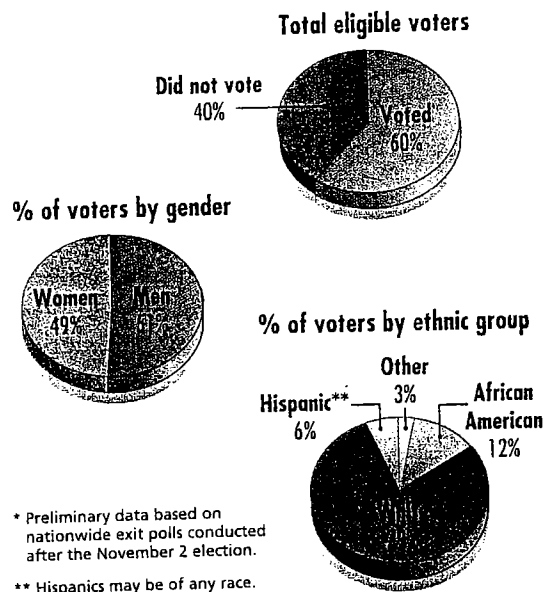
## Impact of the National Voter Registration Act

	1994*	1996	1998*	2000	2002*
Total Voting Age Population	193,650,000	196,511,000	200,929,000	205,815,000	215,400,000
Total Registered	130,292,822	146,211,960	141,850,558	156,421,311	168,440,000
Turnout	75,105,860	96,456,345	73,117,022	105,586,274	79,830,000
% Turnout	38.8%	49.1%	36.4%	51.3%	37.0%

\*1994, 1998, and 2002 were not presidential election years.  
Source: Federal Election Commission, "Executive Summary of the Federal Election Commission's Report to the Congress on the Impact of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 on the Administration of Federal Elections" (Washington, D.C.:2003).  
Federal Election Commission Website: [www.fec.gov](http://www.fec.gov)

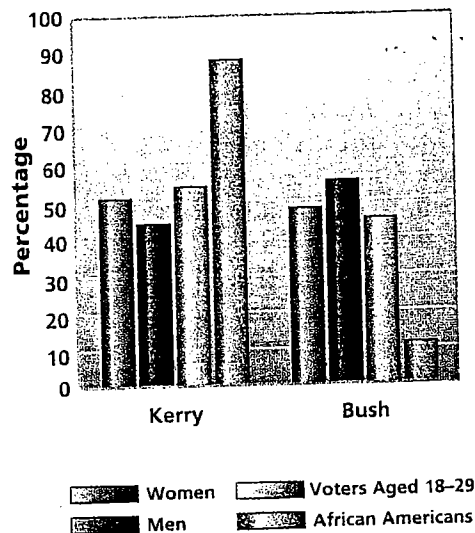
**Critical Thinking** During the first two years of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), registration increased significantly. Why was voter turnout so much higher in 2000 than in 2002?

## Voter Characteristics in 2004 Presidential Election\*



Source: The New York Times, November 7, 2004.

## 2004 Voter Distribution by Candidate



### Can My Right to Vote Be Challenged?

You cannot be stopped from voting because of your race, gender, religion, income, or political beliefs. You can be challenged, however, if your registration or identification is in question.

### What Will the Ballot Look Like?

Two forms of ballots are generally used. An **office-group ballot** lists the candidates of all parties together by the office for which they are running. Their political party affiliation is listed beside their name. Many believe this form of ballot encourages **ticket-splitting**, voting for candidates from different parties for different offices.

The **party-column ballot** lists each party's candidates in a column under the party's name. There is usually a square or circle at the top of each party's column. By putting one mark in the square or circle, you can vote a straight ticket for all the party's candidates. You may also vote for each office individually by marking one box in each column. You may also write in the name of someone not listed on the ballot for any office.

### How Do I Use the Voting Machine?

As a result of incorrectly marked ballots during the 2000 presidential election, many states are modernizing their voting machines. Besides newer touch-screen systems, the most common voting systems are the punch-card machine and the lever machine.

If you are given a punch-card ballot, insert it in the voting machine and line up the ballot with the names of the candidates. Punch holes in the appropriate places on the ballot with the provided stylus. Put your card in its envelope and give it to the election judge.

To use the lever machine, pull the large lever to one side to close the booth's curtain. The ballot is part of the machine facing you. Vote by pulling down the small levers beside the names of the candidates you are choosing. Then pull the large lever again to record your vote and reset the machine.

Touch-screen systems use a ballot displayed on a computer screen. You vote by touching the box beside the appropriate name. These systems also allow voters to review their choices before electronically storing their vote.



## Will My Vote Be a Secret?

The law entitles you to a secret ballot. Borrowed from a procedure developed in Australia in 1856, the Australian ballot was printed at government expense. The ballot listed all candidates, was given out only at the polls on Election Day, was marked in secret, and was counted by government officials. By 1900, nearly all states had adopted this system.

## Who Actually Counts the Votes and Certifies a Winner?

A canvassing board, or official body that is usually bipartisan, counts votes. As soon as the polls close, the ballots from each precinct are forwarded to city or county canvassing boards. These boards put all the returns together and send them on to the state canvassing authority. Within a few days of the election, the state canvassing authority certifies the election of the winner. Each winner gets a certificate of election from the county or state canvassing board.

Through television and radio, people usually know the winners before canvassing boards certify them. In close elections the result may depend upon the official vote count and certification.

## How Can I Prepare to Vote?

The best way to prepare to vote is to stay informed about candidates and public issues. As Election Day nears, newspapers, TV, radio, and newsmagazines will carry useful information. You might also try the following: (1) The local League of Women Voters may publish a *Voters' Information Bulletin*, a fact-filled, nonpartisan rundown on candidates and issues. (2) Each



A delegate to the national convention proclaims her support for Democratic candidates.

political party has literature and other information about their candidates and will be eager to share it with you. (3) Many interest groups such as the American Conservative Union or the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education rate members of Congress on their support for the group's programs. If you agree with the views of an interest group, check its ratings of candidates.

## How Can I Choose a Candidate?

Everyone has different reasons for supporting one candidate over another. Asking these

questions may help you decide: (1) Does the candidate stand for things I think are important? (2) Is the candidate reliable and honest? (3) Does the candidate have relevant past experience? (4) Will the candidate be effective in office? Look for the resources the person will bring to the job. Does the candidate have good political connections? (5) Does the candidate have a real chance of winning? You have a tough choice to make if it appears that your favorite candidate has a slim chance of winning. You may want to vote for a losing candidate to show support for a certain point of view. You may also want to vote for someone having the greatest chance of beating the candidate you like the least.

## Special Circumstances

With more than 190 million potential voters, special circumstances always affect some voters. Over the years, special procedures and protections have been developed to help ensure that despite such circumstances all eligible Americans may vote.

## What Is an Absentee Ballot?

An absentee ballot allows you to vote without going to the polls on Election Day. You must obtain an absentee ballot within a specified time before an election, fill it out, and return it (usually by mail) to the proper election official. The deadlines to apply for and return absentee ballots vary by state. Check with local election officials for details.

## When Can I Use an Absentee Ballot?

Rules vary from state to state. Generally you may vote by absentee ballot if: (1) you will be out of town on Election Day; (2) you will be hospitalized on Election Day; (3) you have a physical disability or special illness that makes it difficult to get to the polling place (in such cases a doctor's certificate may be needed); (4) you cannot vote on Election Day because of religious observances; or (5) you will be in jail for a misdemeanor or are awaiting trial.

In an effort to increase voter turnout, some states have relaxed rules on absentee ballots. Texas, for example, allows anyone who wishes to do so to cast an absentee ballot. The voter must simply request one.

## How Do I Apply for an Absentee Ballot?

Request an absentee ballot (in person or by mail) from your local board of elections or

other appropriate office. In order to receive your ballot, you will need to give your name, voting residence, and reason for being absent from the polls on Election Day.

## Can Disabled Voters Receive Special Assistance?

Any voter who needs help in voting because of a disability is entitled to receive it. Some states allow you to pick the person to assist you. Other states require that only officials at the polling place can help. To protect disabled voters from pressure, some states require that two election officials from opposite parties be present during voting. Election officials may not disclose any information about how you voted.

## Do Non-English-Speaking Voters Receive Special Help?

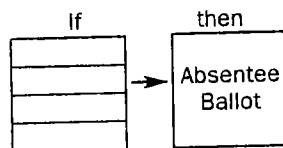
Under the Voting Rights Act of 1975, ballots and related election materials must be printed in the language of voting minorities as well as in English. This provision applies only in areas where illiteracy in English is high or recent voting turnout was unusually low.

Election materials, for example, are available in Spanish and English in many parts of Florida, Texas, California, and other states. In Hawaii, election materials have been put into Cantonese, Ilocano, and Japanese as well as English.

## Handbook Assessment

### Checking for Understanding

- 1. Main Idea** Use a graphic organizer like the one to the right to show the circumstances under which a voter can use an absentee ballot.
- 2. Define** canvass, register, polling place, precinct, office-group ballot, ticket-splitting, party-column ballot, canvassing board, absentee ballot.
- 3. Identify** Australian ballot.
- 4.** What are two requirements to vote in the United States?



### Critical Thinking

- 5. Making Inferences** Why do you think the secret ballot was adopted?

## Concepts IN ACTION

**Civic Participation** Citizens must prepare to vote. Walking into a voting booth without preparation makes voting a meaningless activity. What should a person know in order to vote meaningfully? Create a pamphlet describing the kinds of things voters should know in order to make their vote count.

# Influences on Voters

## Reader's Guide

### Key Terms

cross-pressured voter, straight party ticket, propaganda

### Find Out

- What personal background factors do you believe will influence your decision as a voter?
- What outside influences affect how a person votes?

### Understanding Concepts

**Civic Participation** How does a citizen overcome obstacles to voting and voter apathy?

## COVER STORY

### Motor Voter Law Works

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, JULY 12, 1995

Nearly three times more Georgians registered to vote in the six months since the National Voter Registration Act took effect than registered in all of 1994. The new law has been labeled "Motor Voter" because it requires states to offer voter registration with driver's license applications, renewals, or address changes. Thanks in part to the "Motor Voter" law, 72.77 percent of the voting age population was registered, the highest level since 1960, when reliable records were first analyzed. The United States, however, currently has the lowest voter participation of any Western democracy.



A registered voter

**F**ive major factors influence voter decisions: (1) personal background of the voter; (2) degree of voter loyalty to one of the political parties; (3) issues of the campaign; (4) voters' image of the candidates; and (5) propaganda. Perhaps the biggest decision, however, is whether to vote on Election Day.

## Personal Background of Voters

**I** Voters' personal backgrounds affect their decisions. A person's background includes such things as upbringing, family, age, occupation, income level, and even general outlook on life.

**Age** Consider, for example, how an individual's age might affect a voting decision. A 68-year-old senior citizen would probably favor a candidate who promised an increase in Social Security payments, provided, of course, that positions the candidate took on other issues did not offend that voter. On the other hand, a 23-year-old voter might resent the prospect of having more money deducted from her paycheck to pay for increased Social Security payments. This young voter might then decide to vote against the candidate.

**Other Background Influences** Voters' education, religion, and racial or ethnic background also affect their attitudes toward the candidates. For example, an African American might favor a candidate who supports strong antidiscrimination measures in education and employment. A Jewish voter might not vote for a candidate who has expressed strong reservations about American support of Israel.


It is important to understand that people's backgrounds tend to influence them in particular ways. However, individuals do not always vote the way their backgrounds might lead one to believe. Will labor union members always

vote for the Democratic presidential candidate, as they historically have? The large number of union members who voted for Republican Ronald Reagan in 1980 confirms that they do not. Will college-educated voters, most of whom usually vote Republican, always give their votes to the Republican candidate? The landslide vote by which Lyndon Johnson, a Democrat, defeated Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964 indicates that this has not always been the case.

**The Cross-Pressured Voter** One reason why voters' backgrounds do not always forecast how they will vote is that many voters are cross-pressured. A cross-pressured voter is one who is caught between conflicting elements in his or her own life such as religion, income level, and peer group. For example, Catholics are generally more inclined to vote Democratic than Republican. Yet, suppose an individual Catholic voter is also a wealthy business executive. Well-to-do businesspeople are usually Republicans. Furthermore, many of this voter's close friends are Democrats. They will no doubt have some influence on this voter's thinking.

How will this person vote? Such a voter's personal background, like that of millions of other voters, has conflicting elements. For this voter, other areas important to voter decision making—such as campaign issues and the personalities of the candidates—will probably play an equally influential role in determining how he or she will vote.

## Loyalty to Political Parties

 Another influence on voters' decisions is their loyalty (or lack of it) to one of the political parties. Because the majority of American voters consider themselves either Republicans or Democrats, most vote for their party's candidates.

**Strong Versus Weak Party Voters** Not all voters who consider themselves Republicans or Democrats support their party's candidates with the same degree of consistency. Strong party voters are those who select their party's candidates in election after election. Strong party voters tend to see party as more important than the issues or the candidates. In the voting booth, they usually vote a straight-party ticket—they select the candidates of their party only.

## Loyal Voters



**Traditions of Voting** A person's affiliations with family, coworkers, and friends is just one of the factors that influences how and how often that person votes. *What practice of regular voters does this cartoon illustrate?*

Unlike strong party voters, weak party voters are more likely to switch their votes to the rival party's candidates from time to time. In 1980, as an example, 27 percent fewer Democrats voted for Carter than had voted for him in 1976. Weak party voters are more influenced by issues and the candidates than they are by party loyalty.

**Independent Voters** Another important group of voters is the independent voters, who think of themselves as neither Republicans nor Democrats. Even when independents tend to lean toward one party, their party loyalty is weak.

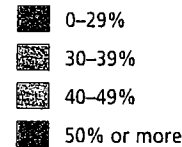
The number of independent voters has increased over the years. Because of this increase, independent voters have become an important element in presidential elections. Along with weak party voters, independent voters may help determine who wins the right to occupy the White House every four years. In 1992 Ross Perot, an independent candidate, won many of these votes.

## Electing the President

Kerry's Percentage of Popular Vote, 2004



Bush's Percentage of Popular Vote, 2004



Presidential Elections

Year	% Turnout
1964	61.9%
1968	60.7%
1972	55.2%
1976	53.5%
1980	52.6%
1984	53.1%
1988	50.1%
1992	55.1%
1996	49.1%
2000	51.2%
2004	59.6%

Sources: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2002; USA Today, Nov. 4, 2004; The New York Times, Nov. 5, 2004.

**Critical Thinking** More than 115 million people voted for president in 2004, the highest voter turnout in U.S. history. In which areas of the country did Bush receive the strongest support?

Both President Bill Clinton and Republican Bob Dole adjusted their message and strategy to appeal to these voters in 1996. Eventually, Perot's support declined to less than half its 1992 level.

Experts believe that the number of weak party voters and independent voters will increase in the future. Presidential candidates will no longer be able to rely on party loyalty for victory. Analysts predict that the issues of a campaign and the candidates' images will influence more and more voters.

### Issues in Election Campaigns

**I** Many voters are not well-informed about all the issues discussed in election campaigns. Still, today's voters are better informed than the voters of earlier years. Several reasons account for this shift.

First, television has brought the issues into almost every home in the country. Second, voters


today are better educated than were voters of the past. A third reason is that current issues seem to have a greater impact on the personal lives of many more voters than at any time since the Great Depression of the 1930s. These issues include Social Security, health care, taxes, education, affirmative action, abortion, gun rights, and the environment.

A presidential election that demonstrated the importance of issues was the election of 1980. For example, many Americans blamed President Jimmy Carter for the high cost of living, the high rate of inflation, and the high rate of unemployment. In his four years in office the economy had worsened, and Carter seemed unable to turn it around. Carter's opponent, Republican Ronald Reagan, used the economic issue to attack the president's administration.

At the end of the televised debate between the two candidates, Reagan asked the millions of Americans watching, "Are you better off than you were four years ago? Is it easier for you to go and buy things in the stores than it was four years ago?"

For most Americans the answer to these questions was "No." Because Reagan made such a strong issue of the economy, millions of voters who had voted for Carter four years earlier switched to the Republican challenger.

## The Candidate's Image

 Just as important as the issues themselves is the way the voters perceive the issues. If, for example, they believe that an administration is dealing effectively with the economy, they may reward the president with their votes. Conversely, if they believe an administration's measures are ineffective, voters may punish the president by voting for the other candidate.

Certainly, most Americans want a president who appears to be someone they can trust as a national leader. All candidates try to convey this image to the public, but not all are successful in doing so. Gerald Ford, running for president in 1976, struck many voters as well-meaning but dull. Adlai Stevenson, who lost to Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1952 and 1956, was perceived by many voters as too intellectual to be president.

Many voters select candidates on image alone—for the personal qualities they perceive them to have. In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson had the image of a peacemaker, while his oppo-


nent, Barry Goldwater, was viewed as more willing to lead the nation into war. At the very least, a candidate must be viewed as competent to handle the problems of the day. Many voters rejected Michael Dukakis in 1988 because they believed he was unqualified to deal with the nation's problems. President Harry S Truman cited the danger of getting this image when he said:

**"Being a president is like riding a tiger. A man has to keep riding it or be swallowed. . . . A president is either constantly on top of events or, if he hesitates, events will soon be on top of him."**

—Harry S Truman

A candidate, then, must convey the impression of having the qualities voters expect in a president.

## Propaganda

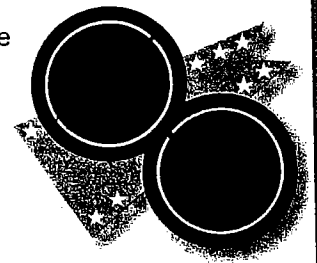
 Political parties, interest groups, and businesses need to convince people of the value of their candidates, ideas, goods, or services. Americans are used to hearing hundreds of such messages every day. Many of these messages could be classified as "propaganda." Propaganda involves using ideas, information, or rumors to influence opinion. Propaganda is not necessarily lying or

## POLITICS and You

### Knowing Your Political ID

**P**erhaps you have not thought much about whether you are a liberal (left), conservative (right), or moderate (center); a Democrat, a Republican, or an Independent. You can measure your "political ID" by how you feel about certain issues. Democrats are generally more liberal and Republicans generally more conservative. Independents may fall in between on some issues and lean left or right on others. Liberals tend to be "loose constructionists" and conservatives "strict constructionists" of the Constitution. A liberal generally believes that government has more social responsibility for providing education, health, welfare, and

civil rights. A conservative generally believes that individuals and voluntary associations should be given more responsibility to make choices in these areas.



### —Participating IN GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY

**Check Some Issues** Research some recent controversial political issues. With which side do you agree? Place yourself on a chart of the political spectrum between the far left and far right side.

## Propaganda Techniques

Technique	How to Recognize It
Labeling	Name calling; identifying a candidate with a term such as "un-American"
Spin	Interpreting a political event or statement from a particular point of view
Card Stacking	Giving only one side of the facts to support a candidate's position
Transfer	Associating a patriotic symbol with a candidate
Plain Folks	Identifying the candidate as "just one of the common people"
Testimonial	A celebrity endorses a candidate
The Bandwagon	Urging voters to support a candidate because everyone else is

**Critical Thinking** Campaigns use different techniques to promote the best interests of their candidates. Which techniques would an incumbent candidate more likely use? Why?

deception; however, neither is it objective. Propaganda uses information in any way that supports a predetermined objective.

Propaganda techniques were initially used on a mass scale by commercial advertisers. As political campaigns adapted to television, campaign managers developed sophisticated messages using seven propaganda techniques.

"Plain folks" has been a popular technique since Andrew Jackson won the White House in 1828. The technique that asks a person to "jump on the bandwagon" followed close behind. When a party's convention is all decked out in patriotic symbols, it is using "transfer" to influence viewers. A Hollywood actor or popular musician who speaks for a candidate is giving a "testimonial," or endorsement. Republicans used the term "liberal" as a negative label for Democrats beginning in the 1980s. Democrats often refer to conservative Republican candidates as "right-wing" politicians. A debate is a good place to identify "card stacking," as each candidate quotes only those statistics that support his or her position.

When political propaganda becomes obviously misleading, people become skeptical of politicians. Name calling can override the important issues of a campaign. Voters say they do not appreciate that approach, and some analysts believe the result can be reduced voter participation.

## Profile of Regular Voters



Citizens who vote regularly have certain positive attitudes toward government and citizenship.

Investigators have found that education, age, and income are important factors in predicting which citizens will vote. The more education a citizen has, the more likely it is that he or she will be a regular voter. Middle-aged citizens have the highest voting turnout of all age groups. Voter regularity also increases with income—the higher a person's income, the more regularly that person votes.

## Profile of Nonvoters



The struggles over the extension of suffrage have resulted in more Americans having the right to vote than ever before. Nevertheless, for several reasons many Americans do not vote.

Some citizens do not vote because they do not meet state voting requirements. Almost all states have three basic requirements—United States citizenship, residency, and registration. A voter who does not fulfill all of these requirements is not permitted to vote.

All states limit the voting right to American citizens. Even people who have lived in this country for many years but who have not formally

become United States citizens cannot vote in American elections.

Most states require voters to be residents of the state for a certain period before they are allowed to vote. When a voter moves to a new state, he or she needs time to become informed about local and state issues and candidates. Before 1970 the period of required residence ranged from 3 months to 2 years. The Voting Rights Act of 1970, however, along with two Supreme Court decisions, created a residence period of 30 days in all elections. Some states have no required residence period at all.

All states, with the exception of North Dakota, require voters to register or record their names officially with local election boards. On Election Day an election official must check voters' names. Voters whose names are on the list sign in by writing their names on a form. Registration is a way to prevent voter fraud or dishonest elections. All voter registration is permanent if a voter, once registered, remains on the list unless he or she dies, moves, or fails to vote within a certain number of years.

One problem in meeting residency and registration standards is that American society is highly mobile. Experts estimate that almost one-fifth of Americans move to a new location every five years. A new resident may forget to register or find that the registration offices are open at inconvenient times. Also, complicated registration procedures and residency requirements affect voter participation. In recent years, these requirements have been

made less burdensome, but voter turnout is still relatively low.

**Voter Participation** The percentage of Americans voting in presidential elections declined from about 62 percent in 1960 to just over 50 percent in 2000. Even fewer Americans voted in congressional, state, and local elections.

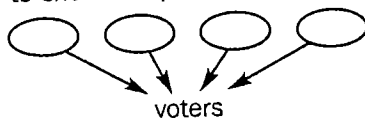
In 2004, however, voter participation jumped to almost 60 percent in the hotly contested race between incumbent George W. Bush and Massachusetts senator John Kerry. The election ended in Bush's victory over Kerry. Some voters in key battleground states waited in line for hours to cast their ballots. Each candidate received more votes than any presidential candidate had ever received before. However, even with this voting surge, there were still millions of eligible voters who did not participate in the election.

**Ways of Increasing Voter Turnout** Political experts who are concerned about the high rate of nonvoting in the United States have suggested a number of ways to get more citizens to the polls on Election Day. For example, shift Election Day from Tuesday to Sunday, so that citizens are free to vote without having to take time off from work. Another idea would be to allow voters to register on Election Day. Some favor a national registration system, so that voters' registration follows them to a new state when they move. Making it easier to vote, however, has not been effective in getting more people to the polls in recent years.

### Section 3 Assessment

#### Checking for Understanding

1. **Main Idea** Use a graphic organizer like the one below to show how parties try to influence voters.



2. **Define** cross-pressured voter, straight party ticket, propaganda.  
3. **Identify** independent voter.  
4. **Identify** factors in a voter's personal background that influence that individual's vote.

#### Critical Thinking

5. **Demonstrating Reasoned Judgment** What qualities of competence and leadership would you think are important for a presidential candidate to have?

#### Concepts IN ACTION

**Civic Participation** Voter apathy is an issue in the United States today. Draw a political cartoon that depicts a reason people give for not voting.





AP PHOTO/MARTIN LOWMYER

Florida poll workers recount votes and study ballots.

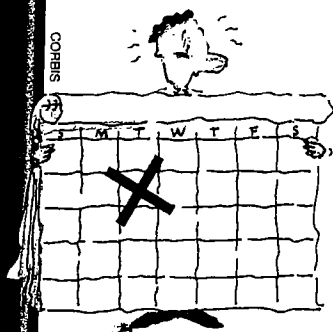
HEUTERS/CORBIS

## DECISION 2000

THE 2000 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION was probably the most controversial one ever. A voting card known as a **BUTTERFLY BALLOT** caused a lot of controversy that still lingers in the minds of many Americans. Some people in Florida found the butterfly ballot confusing and felt that they may have accidentally voted for the wrong person. Adding to the mix-up, some ballots had incomplete perforations (known as "hanging chads") or just slight indentations. In these cases, counting machines might not have counted the votes.

## DATE WITH DESTINY

In 1845 Congress went through a process of elimination in order to set **ELECTION DAY**. It settled on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November in even-numbered years. Why did the members choose a Tuesday? Why not just November 1? Here's what they were thinking:



CORBIS

**NO** to Monday (first day of the work week)

**NO** to Friday (last day of the week)

**NO** to Saturday (shopping/religious day)

**NO** to Sunday (shopping/religious day)

**NO** to Thursday (British election day)

**MAYBE** Wednesday (no major conflicts)

**MAYBE** Tuesday (no major conflicts)

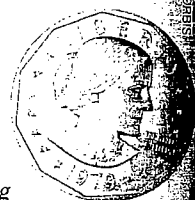
Congress didn't want to set Election Day as November 1. Why? It might disrupt the business of shopkeepers and accountants who had to take care of October books. So, it finally chose the Tuesday after the first Monday. (Whew!)

## VERBATIM

### WHAT PEOPLE SAID

"I will never pay a dollar for your unjust fine."

SUSAN B. ANTHONY, referring to the \$100 fine she received for voting in the 1872 presidential election. At that time, it was illegal for women to vote.



"During the last presidential race, I had the privilege of traveling the country and meeting vast numbers of young people. I cannot express how impressed I was. With energy and passion as contagious as it was inspiring, these young Americans confided their dreams and shared their aspirations, not for themselves alone, but for their country."

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN, who ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 2000

"A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage."

HERBERT HOOVER, making a promise during his 1928 presidential campaign

# U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

## PARTY ANIMALS



THE GRANGER COLLECTION

During Andrew Jackson's 1828 presidential campaign, opponents portrayed him as stubborn, not very bright, and similar to a **DONKEY**. Rather than get upset, Jackson thought it would be a good idea to put the strong-willed animal on his campaign posters. Later, a cartoonist named Thomas Nast made the symbol famous by using it in newspaper cartoons.

In 1877, after the Republicans lost the White House to the Democrats, Nast drew a cartoon of a trap set by a donkey with an **ELEPHANT** walking right into it—and the Republican Party symbol was born! Nast chose the elephant because elephants are intelligent but easily controlled. Today, Democrats use the words "smart" and "brave" to describe the donkey, and Republicans say the elephant is "strong" and "brave."

## NUMBERS

**1** The number of people to serve as both vice president and president without actually being elected to do so. Gerald Ford was appointed vice president by President Nixon after Spiro Agnew stepped down in 1973. Ford then became president when Nixon resigned in 1974.



BETTMANN/CONRIS

**1** The number of vice presidents to win a presidential election since Martin Van Buren in 1836. Former vice president George H.W. Bush was elected president in 1988.

**5** The number of votes in the Electoral College that made up George W. Bush's margin of victory in the 2000 election.

**17** The number of people to become president after governing a state. George W. Bush is the 17th, after serving as governor of Texas.

**1st** Geraldine Ferraro, a congressional representative from New York, was the first woman to run for vice president on a major party ticket. She and running mate Walter Mondale lost the race in 1984.



ROGER FESSMEYER/CONRIS

## MILESTONES



THE GRANGER COLLECTION

**BUTTONED UP, 1896.** **CAMPAIGN BUTTONS**

were first used in the presidential race between William McKinley and William Jennings Bryan. There were no catchy slogans—just photos of the candidates, their names, and a few words, such as "For President."

**NAMED, LATE 1700s.** "His highness the President of the United States of America and Protector of their Liberties." This mouthful is how a Senate committee wanted to address **PRESIDENT WASHINGTON** and all future presidents. The House thought this title was too royal and reduced it to merely "the President of the United States." The Senate agreed, and the name has stuck ever since.



COMSTOCK

## Chapter 17

# Assessment and Activities

### GOVERNMENT

Online



**Self-Check Quiz** Visit the *United States Government: Democracy in Action* Web site at [gov.glencoe.com](http://gov.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 17-Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the chapter test.

## Reviewing Key Terms

Write the term that best completes each sentence.

political action committees  
soft money  
straight-party ticket  
cross-pressured voter  
suffrage  
grandfather clause

## Chapter Summary

### Expanding Voting Rights

- Fifteenth Amendment grants African American males right to vote
- Nineteenth Amendment grants women right to vote
- Twenty-fourth Amendment outlaws poll taxes
- Twenty-sixth Amendment lowers voting age to 18

### Financing Campaigns

- The Federal Election Commission (FEC) administers federal election laws.
- The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 set up a new system for financing federal elections.
- New laws led to growth of political action committees (PACs) and the raising of huge amounts of soft money.
- Efforts to reform campaign finance have met with only limited success.

### Influences on Voters

Personal background (age, religion, education, ethnicity)  
Loyalty to political parties (strong, weak, or independent)  
Knowledge of campaign issues  
Candidate's image  
Propaganda

1. Political candidates often receive campaign contributions and support from \_\_\_\_.
2. Women in the United States gained \_\_\_\_ in 1920.
3. Most independent voters do not vote a \_\_\_\_.
4. Political parties can raise unlimited amounts of money for general purposes, not designated to particular candidates, through \_\_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_\_ was a roadblock to voting for most African American Southerners.
6. One cannot be sure how a \_\_\_\_ will vote because that person has conflicting interests.

## Recalling Facts

1. How does the number of electoral votes of a state affect presidential campaigning?
2. What were the three devices used after 1870 to prevent African Americans from voting?
3. Which group of Americans gained the right to vote under the Twenty-sixth Amendment?
4. What effects has television had on presidential elections?
5. Describe the current voter registration system.

## Understanding Concepts

1. **Political Processes** Individuals have suggested extending public financing of election campaigns to include congressional campaigns. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of this idea.
2. **Growth of Democracy** Why were the Voting Rights Acts necessary?
3. **Civic Participation** The right to vote belongs to every United States citizen. In your opinion, what do citizens forfeit if they do not exercise their right to vote?

## Critical Thinking

1. **Predicting Consequences** Identify at least three consequences that could result from limiting the amount of money any individual could give to a political campaign.

# Chapter 17

**2. Making Inferences** In terms of percentage, far fewer members of the 18–21 age bracket actually exercise their right to vote than is the case with any other age group. How might you explain this?

**3. Making Inferences** Use a graphic organizer like the one below to list three ways of increasing voter turnout.

1.
2.
3.

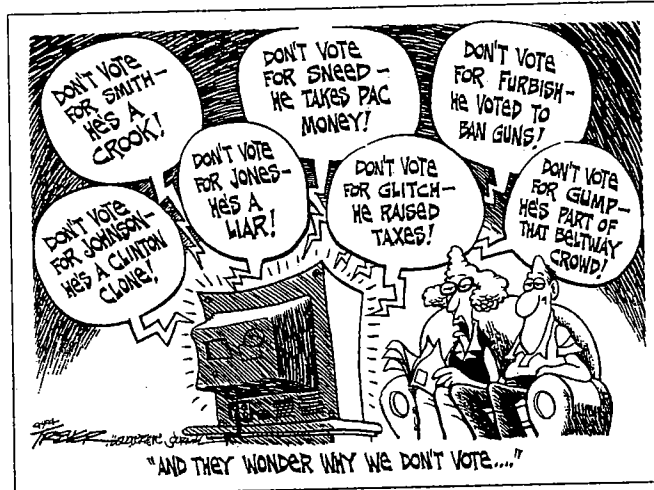
## Analyzing Primary Sources

Civil rights activist Anne Moody participated in massive drives in Southern states to register African American voters in what was called the “Freedom Summer” of 1964. The registration drives were violent, and immensely successful, registering millions of voters, some of whom had never before been able to vote because of strict voting laws in Southern states. Read the excerpt from Moody’s autobiography and answer the questions that follow.

“Suddenly we began to get quite a lot of support from the local Negroes. . . . Every day now we managed to send a few Negroes to the courthouse. . . . But the registrar was flunking them going and coming. Sometimes out of twenty or twenty-five Negroes who went to register, only one or two would pass the test. Some of them were flunked because they used a title (Mr. or Mrs.) on the application blank; others because they didn’t. And most failed to interpret a section of the Mississippi constitution to the satisfaction of Foote Campbell, the Madison County circuit clerk.”

1. What kinds of voting restrictions were being placed on the voters Anne Moody was trying to register?
2. Why would the restrictions make it difficult for African Americans in the South in the early 1960s to register to vote? What types of laws make this illegal today?

## Interpreting Political Cartoons Activity



1. According to the cartoonist, why don't some people vote?
2. How does the cartoonist exaggerate campaign advertising?
3. Should Americans rely on television advertisements to gather information on candidates? Why or why not?

## Applying Technology Skills

**Using a Word Processor** Find out the percentage of registered voters who voted in the most recent presidential election. Organize the eligible voters into specific age groups. Use the table option of your word processor to design a table illustrating this information.

## Participating in Local Government

Find out what the voter registration laws are in your community. Contact your local election board for this information. Present the information on an illustrated poster. Include information about local residency requirements, the procedure for registering, the time and location in which people can register, and the types of identification needed to register.

