

Logic of Elections

- Gives citizens a say in the governing process
- Holds elected officials accountable
- Promotes faithful representation

How Presidential & Congressional Elections Differ

- I. Presidential races more competitive
 - Congressional seats less competitive due to the power of Incumbency
 - 90% of incumbents win reelection
- II. Less people vote in Congressional races
 - Presidential elections; 55% turnout
 - Congressional elections; 35% turnout

How Presidential & Congressional Elections Differ

- III. Congresspersons have closer relationship with constituents
 - More contact
 - More case work
- IV. Congresspersons can distance themselves from Washington politics
 - Because there are so many Congresspersons a single one cannot be held accountable for national problems like the president.

Money in Campaigns

- House Races - \$700,000
- Senate Races - \$1.5 million
- Where the money comes from:
 - Candidates personal wealth
 - Political parties
 - Contributions
 - Interest groups
 - Political Action Committees (PACs)

Political Action Committees (PACs)

- **PACs** – A committee set up by & representing a corporation, labor union, or other special-interest group that can give money to candidates or causes.
 - Began in early 1970s in response to Watergate scandal
 - Can donate up to \$5000 to a candidate

Campaign Finance Reform After Watergate

- Federal Election Campaign Act
 - Limited political advertising
 - Required campaign funds disclosure
 - Required PACs to register with gov't
 - Introduced tax payer check-off
 - Campaign matching funds

Types of Contributions

- **Hard Money** – Money donated directly to the candidate.
 - Individuals - \$1000
 - PACs - \$5000
- **Soft Money** - Money given directly to state and local parties, and not the candidate.
 - Used for party building
 - Voter registration
 - Party mailing
 - Issue advertising
 - No limits on soft money contributions

Example: Issue Ad

“Who is Bill Yellowtail?”

“He preaches family values, but he took a swing at his wife.”

“And Yellowtail’s explanation? He only slapped her.”

“But her nose was broken.”

Consequences of Existing Campaign Financing

- I. Rising Cost of Campaigns
 - Caused by soft money
- II. Declining Competition
 - People cannot afford to run for office
- III. Dependency on PACs & Wealthy Donors

Suggested Campaign Finance Reforms

- Limit Contributions
 - Infringes on freedom of speech
 - Money would go to incumbents
- Allow Free Advertising
- Ban Soft Money
 - Violates free speech
- Government Funded Elections
- Prevent PACs From Donating Money

Types of Elections

- **General Election** – Election used to fill an elective office.
- **Primary Election** – An election held before the general election in which voters decide which of a party's candidates will be the party's nominee for the general election.
 - **Closed Primary** – You can only vote in the party primary to which you are registered.
 - **Open Primary** – Any registered voter can vote in any of the party primaries.

Campaigns

- Designing Campaign Strategies
 - Polling
 - Focus groups
 - Common man appeal
- Negative Campaigning
 - Issue differences
 - Personal attacks
