

Political Party Functions:

Recruiting Candidates – major function – select people based on

1. personal qualities
2. background – often lawyers.
- 3 overall ability – What else should be considered?

Educating the Public

Party Platform - Each party publishes its position on various issues

Since most voters tend to be uneducated about the issues, they often use **party identification** to vote. Vote because someone is a Republican or Democrat.

Operating the Government

Party leader organize their members within the government Thus members can vote as a group on legislation.

When one party controls the executive and legislative branch they are very powerful. However, this is rare.

Dispensing Patronage

Patronage – favors given to members of their party or groups loyal to the party. Once in office, people receive jobs and loyal constituents- like unions or companies – receive a sympathetic ear.

Loyal Opposition

The party not in power acts as a “watchdog” – observing and criticizing the government.

How Candidates are Selected

Caucuses – private meetings of party leaders – used to be undemocratic but are now more open, people are chosen from the neighborhood level. Used in 12 states today.

Primary elections –

Direct primary – party members select people to run in the general election

Closed primary – only party members can vote in the primary

Open Primary - anyone can vote in the primary

Presidential Primaries -

Criticisms

1. start way early – February for a November election
2. focus too much on image of candidate, not issues
3. early winners get media attention
4. candidates who do not do well early or at the “Super Tuesday” (early March) elections are out.,

Name: _____

What are the functions of political parties?
How do they nominate candidates?

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