

Elections Feature

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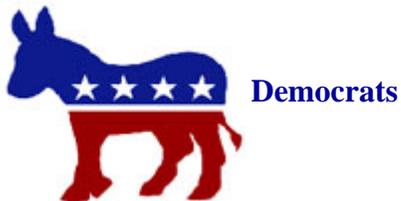
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Presidential Elections

Update 2008

January 2008 1

A look at the men and woman competing
for the Republican and Democratic nominations



Joe Biden*¹

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Chris Dodd*

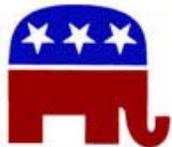
John Edwards*

Mike Gravel

Dennis Kucinich*

Barack Obama

Bill Richardson*



Republicans

Sam Brownback*

Rudy Giuliani*

Mike Huckabee

Duncan Hunter*

John McCain

Ron Paul

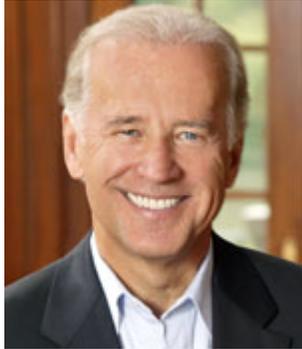
Mitt Romney

Tom Tancredo*

Fred Thompson*

¹ Candidates have withdrawn

Candidate Biographies



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Joe Biden — Withdrew 03 January 2008

Joe Biden is a U.S. senator representing Delaware. He first was elected to the Senate in 1972 at age 29, and currently is the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, which reviews foreign policy matters including treaties, national security initiatives and humanitarian assistance. An outspoken critic of the Iraq war, Biden has written a "Five-Point Plan for Iraq" that calls for unifying Iraq "by federalizing it and giving Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis breathing room in their own regions."

Biden was born November 20, 1942, in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He attended the University of Delaware and Syracuse University Law School in New York. Biden and his wife, Jill, have three children and five grandchildren.



•

Sam Brownback — Withdrew 19 October 2007

Sam Brownback is a senator from Kansas, and previously served in the House of Representatives. He was a sponsor of the Broadcast Decency Act of 2006, which increases substantially fines on television networks that air obscene material during the hours children are most likely to watch television, and he continues to push for limits on violent television and video programming. Brownback says border security is his top priority.

Brownback was born September 12, 1956, in Garnett, Kansas. He graduated from Kansas State University and received a law degree from the University of Kansas. Brownback and his wife, Mary, have five children.

Brownback withdrew from the presidential race October 19, after weak fundraising in the third quarter made it difficult to continue his campaign.



Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton is a senator representing New York. She also was U.S. first lady from 1993 to 2001 while her husband Bill Clinton served as president. Hillary Clinton, in 1993, headed a task force that developed proposed legislation to provide universal health care to all Americans. That legislation ultimately was not passed, but she continues to make universal health care one of her top political goals. Experts consider Clinton the first female presidential candidate with a realistic chance of winning the nomination and the election.

Clinton was born October 26, 1947, and grew up in Park Ridge, Illinois. She attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts and Yale Law School. The Clintons have a daughter.



Chris Dodd — Withdrew 03 January 2008

Chris Dodd is a senator from Connecticut. Dodd, whose father also represented Connecticut in the Senate, worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican

Republic and served in the Army National Guard. Dodd has opposed President Bush's troop surge strategy for Iraq, and has pledged that, if elected, he would not increase the troop level.

Dodd was born May 27, 1944, in Willimantic, Connecticut. He earned a law degree from the University of Louisville School of Law in Kentucky. Dodd and his wife, Jackie, have two daughters.

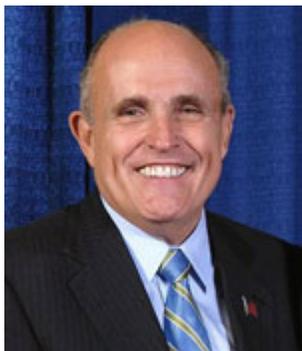


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John Edwards (Withdraw)

John Edwards is a former senator from North Carolina and was the Democratic candidate for vice president in 2004. The first in his family to attend college, Edwards was a practicing attorney until he was elected to the Senate. Edwards has said he would build a "new energy economy based on clean renewable energy and energy efficiency" if elected.

Edwards was born June 10, 1953, in Seneca, South Carolina. He attended North Carolina State University and received a law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Edwards and his wife, Elizabeth, have had four children, one of whom died in a car accident in 1996.



•

Rudy Giuliani (Withdraw)

Rudy Giuliani is the former mayor of New York City, where he served during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. He previously was U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and prosecuted several high-profile cases. As part of his campaign, Giuliani has made "12 commitments to the American people," including "I will keep America on offense in the terrorists' war on us" and "I will impose accountability on Washington."

Giuliani was born May 28, 1944. He attended Manhattan College and New York University Law School. His wife is Judith, and he has two children from a previous marriage.



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Mike Gravel

Mike Gravel represented Alaska in the U.S. Senate from 1969 to 1981. He also served in the U.S. Army and was once a New York City taxi driver. Gravel has proposed abolishing the income tax and replacing it with a progressive sales tax. He also advocates legislation capping U.S. greenhouse gas emissions.

Gravel was born May 13, 1930, to French Canadian immigrants in Springfield, Massachusetts. He attended Columbia University in New York City. Gravel and his wife, Whitney Stewart Gravel, have two children and four grandchildren.



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Mike Huckabee

Mike Huckabee is the former governor of Arkansas and a former Baptist preacher. Huckabee, who has diabetes, received national attention for losing 110 pounds and encouraging others to improve their diet and exercise. Huckabee says withdrawing American troops from Iraq "would have serious strategic consequences for us and horrific humanitarian consequences for the Iraqis."

Huckabee was born August 24, 1955, in Hope, Arkansas. He attended Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas. Huckabee and his wife have three children.



•

Duncan Hunter (Withdraw)

Duncan Hunter is a congressman from San Diego. He is also a Vietnam War veteran. Representing a border community, Hunter authored the Secure Fence Act, which would extend the border fence 1,375 kilometers across California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. Hunter says his experience on this issue in San Diego has shown that "building fences in strategic locations along our international borders is a proven method of keeping America safe."

Hunter was born May 31, 1948, in Riverside, California. He attended Western State University Law School in San Diego. Hunter and his wife, Lynne, have two sons.

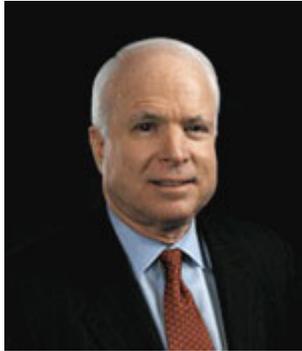


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Dennis Kucinich (Withdraw)

Dennis Kucinich is currently a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Ohio. Formerly the mayor of Cleveland, he was the youngest person elected to run a major U.S. city when he took office at the age of 31 in 1977. Kucinich wants to form a Department of Peace, which would "offer a new clear vision of people working out their differences without resort to primitive violence."

Kucinich was born October 8, 1946, in Cleveland. He attended Case Western Reserve University in the same city. He has a wife, Elizabeth, and a daughter from a previous marriage.



•

John McCain

John McCain is a senator representing Arizona. He served in Vietnam, where he was a prisoner of war for more than five years. McCain was also a presidential candidate in 2000. He has called for a "greater military commitment to Iraq," saying that more troops are necessary to rebuild the nation and prevent sectarian violence. McCain supports immigration reform legislation that would provide illegal immigrants a path to citizenship and establish a temporary guest worker program.

McCain was born August 29, 1936, in the Panama Canal Zone, where his father was serving in the U.S. Navy. He attended the U.S. Naval Academy. McCain has a wife, Cindy, seven children and four grandchildren.



•

Barack Obama

Barack Obama is a first-term senator from Illinois. Previously, he served in the Illinois state Legislature and worked as a civil rights attorney. Obama has proposed legislation that would create a new employment eligibility system for companies to verify if their employees are legal residents. Obama, whose father is from Kenya, is considered by experts to be the first African-American candidate with a reasonable chance of winning the presidency.

Obama was born August 4, 1961, in Hawaii and has lived in many places, including Indonesia. Obama attended Columbia University in New York and earned a law degree at Harvard University in Massachusetts. He and his wife, Michelle, have two daughters.



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Ron Paul

Ron Paul is a representative from Texas. He previously served as a flight surgeon in the U.S. Air Force and worked as a doctor, delivering more than 4,000 babies in his career. Paul says that he "never votes for legislation unless the proposed measure is expressly authorized by the Constitution." Paul has advocated withdrawing from several trade pacts, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, saying that they limit American independence.

Paul was born August 20, 1935, in Pittsburgh. He attended Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania and Duke University School of Medicine in North Carolina. He and his wife, Carol, have five children and 17 grandchildren.



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Bill Richardson — Withdrew 09 January 2008

Bill Richardson is the governor of New Mexico and a former congressman. He served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and secretary of energy during the Clinton administration. During his career, Richardson has negotiated with foreign leaders, including Saddam Hussein and Fidel Castro. Richardson says he has the experience "to bridge gaps" and "achieve political solutions" and has criticized the Bush administration for not engaging with difficult regimes.

Richardson was born November 15, 1947, in Pasadena, California, and lived in Mexico City for many years. He attended Tufts University in Massachusetts. Richardson and his wife, Barbara, have no children.



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Mitt Romney

Mitt Romney is the former governor of Massachusetts. He also oversaw the committee that organized the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. Romney supports President Bush's surge strategy for Iraq and has called on Americans to demonstrate a "surge of support" for its troops. If elected, Romney would be the first Mormon president.

Romney was born March 12, 1947, in Detroit, when his father was governor of Michigan. Romney attended Brigham Young University in Utah and Harvard University's business and law schools in Massachusetts. He and his wife, Ann, have five sons.



•

Tom Tancredo — Withdrew 20 December 2007

Tom Tancredo is a member of the House of Representatives from Colorado. He previously served in the Colorado Legislature and worked as a schoolteacher. He is vocal in his support of the right to bear arms and his opposition to amnesty for illegal immigrants. He vows to eliminate social benefits and job prospects for illegal immigrants.

Tancredo was born December 29, 1945, in Denver. He graduated from the University of Northern Colorado. He and his wife, Jackie, have two sons and five grandsons.



Fred Thompson (Withdrew)

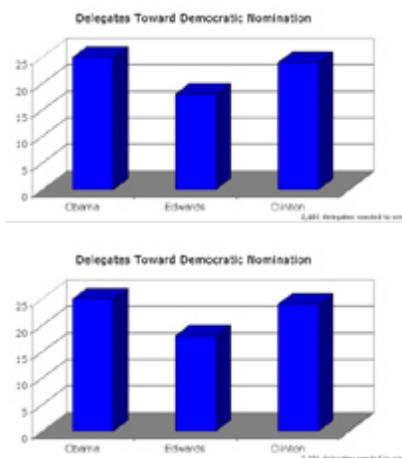
Fred Thompson is a former Tennessee senator. He is perhaps best known for playing the role of District Attorney Arthur Branch on the television show *Law & Order*. Thompson says he has "always cared deeply about the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms" and is a big proponent of federalism.

Thompson was born August 19, 1942 in Sheffield, Alabama and received a law degree from Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. He has a wife, Jeri, and four children.

THE ELECTION PROCESS

The Path to the 2008 Presidential Nomination

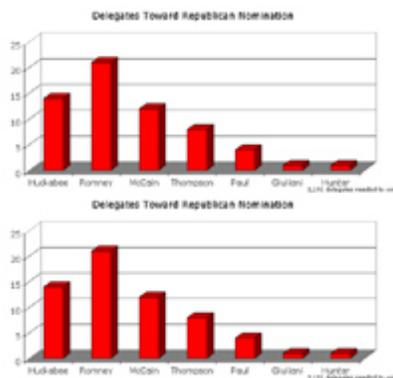
Candidates collect delegates toward their party nominations



To become a party's nominee for president, a candidate must win the support of a majority of delegates to the party's national convention in the summer of 2008. For whom those delegates' vote is determined by the outcomes of state caucuses and primaries. Convention delegates are divided among states proportionally.

Most of the delegates are "pledged" (or committed) to the candidate who wins the state's primary or caucus. Each party in each state has its own guidelines for awarding delegates. Some states divide their delegates proportionately, while others have a winner-take-all system. Some states' party leaders also select a few "unpledged" delegates and these delegates can vote for any candidate. A candidate must received a majority of convention votes to secure the party's nomination. If multiple rounds of voting are required to select a candidate -- something that has not occurred in recent election cycles -- most states allow delegates to change their votes after the first round of voting.

During the primaries and caucuses, Democrats are slated to select 4,364 delegates, which means a candidate would need to receive a majority of 2,183 votes to win the nomination. However, the Democratic Party has said it does not plan to count Michigan's 128 pledged delegates or Florida's 185 pledged delegates at its convention because those states violated party rules by holding their primaries prior to February 5. As a result of the party's ruling, Democratic candidates did not campaign in those states, and the names of many leading candidates will not appear on Michigan or Florida ballots.



Republicans will elect at least 2,380 delegates, although it is possible the number could be higher if the party revokes its punishment of Wyoming, New Hampshire, Michigan, Florida and South Carolina for scheduling their primaries before February 5. Currently, these states stand to lose half their delegations. As of January 2008, a Republican candidate would need 1,191 delegates to win the nomination.

RECENT RACES

At the Iowa caucuses January 3, Democrat Barack Obama defeated Hillary Clinton and John Edwards (among others), while Mike Huckabee beat several competitors to claim a victory on the Republican side.

Iowa awards delegates proportionately, rather than awarding all delegates to the winning candidates. Iowa delegates are not pledged officially until later in 2008 at a state convention. News media have estimated the number of delegates each candidate is likely to receive, based on the percentage of the vote they won at the caucuses.

According to The Green Papers, an online organization tracking the delegates' race, Obama likely will receive 17 delegates and Clinton and Edwards each are likely to receive 14. Huckabee is likely to receive at least 13 delegates, followed by Mitt Romney with nine. John McCain, Fred Thompson, Ron Paul and Rudy Giuliani also are likely to receive delegates.

Following a win in Wyoming January 5, Romney now leads the Republicans with 17 delegates. Thompson and Duncan Hunter won delegates as well from that state.

Political Parties in the United States

Two-party system dominating U.S. politics since the 1860s

Washington -- When America's founders wrote the U.S. Constitution in 1787, they did not envision political parties playing a role in the government. Rather, they expected constitutional provisions such as separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism and indirect election of the president by an electoral college would deter the formation of parties.

Despite these provisions, the United States in 1800 became the first nation to develop political parties organized on a national level and to transfer executive power from one party to another via an election. By the 1830s, political parties were an established part of the U.S. political environment.

Today, the Republican and Democratic parties are the two main political parties in the United States. Most elected officials serving as president, congressional representative, state governor or state legislator are members of one of these parties. The Republicans and Democrats have dominated American politics since the 1860s, and every president since 1852 has been either a Republican or Democrat.

In the 110th Congress, which convened January 4, the House of Representatives has 233 Democrats and 202 Republicans. The Senate has 49 Democrats, 49 Republicans and two independents, both of whom will meet to determine and implement policy (caucus) with the Democrats.

In a November 2006 Gallup Poll (a leading barometer of public opinion operated by the Gallop Organization), approximately 59 percent of Americans identified themselves as either Republicans or Democrats. Those who say they are independents normally have partisan leanings and often are more loyal to one of these two political parties than to the other.

The most common method for electing national and state legislators in the United States is the "single-member" district system. This means that whoever receives a plurality of the vote (that is, the greatest number of votes in any given voting district) is elected. Unlike proportional systems, the single-member district arrangement permits only one party to win in any given district. The single-member system thus creates incentives to form two broadly based parties with sufficient popular appeal to win legislative district pluralities.

Support for American parties is multiclass and broadly based. With the exception of African-American voters -- about 88 percent of whom voted for the Democratic candidate in the 2004 presidential election -- both the Republican and Democratic parties draw significant levels of support from virtually every major U.S. socioeconomic and ethnic group.

DIVERSITY WITHIN PARTY RANKS THE NORM IN U.S. SYSTEM

Compared to political parties in other democratic nations, political parties in the United States tend to have relatively low internal unity and lack strict adherence to an ideology or set of policy goals. Generally, Republicans have tended to support limiting federal powers and protecting the authority of state and local governments, to take a conservative approach to taxation and spending, and to oppose government interference with free enterprise. In contrast, Democrats have tended to take a more expansive view of the powers of the federal government, to support raising and spending money to address social ills on a national basis, and to favor federal regulation as a tool to improve business practices. But these are broad generalizations: In U.S. politics, “conservative” Democrats and “moderate” or even “liberal” Republicans are not unusual.

The major focus for both political parties is winning elections and controlling the personnel of government. Given their broad sources of support in the electorate and their need to operate within an ideologically moderate society, American parties tend to adopt centrist policy positions and demonstrate a high level of policy flexibility. This enables the Republicans and the Democrats to tolerate great diversity within their ranks.

U.S. presidents cannot assume that their party's members in Congress will be loyal supporters of presidential programs, nor can party leaders in Congress expect all member of their party to vote along party lines. In addition, national party organizations do not involve themselves routinely in party affairs at the state level.

Although American parties tend to be less ideologically cohesive and programmatic than parties in many democracies, they do play a major and often decisive role in shaping public policy.

ROLE OF “THIRD” PARTIES

Despite broad political influence of the Democratic and Republican parties, so-called “third” parties and independent candidates remain a feature of American politics. Most third parties have tended to flourish for a single election and then die, fade, or be absorbed into one of the major parties.

There is evidence that third parties can have a major impact on election outcomes. For example, a third-party candidate might draw votes more votes away from the candidate of the party more closely aligned with to the position of the third-party candidate, thus enabling the other party to win the election – often without receiving a majority of the vote.

Public opinion surveys since the 1990s consistently have shown a high level of popular support for the concept of a third party. But in spite of such support for a third party, these parties face many obstacles. The most significant is the fear among voters that if they vote for a third-party candidate, they, in effect, will be “wasting” their votes. Voters

have been shown to engage in strategic voting by casting ballots for their second choice when they sense that a third-party candidate has no chance of winning.

The preceding article was adapted from the publication article "Political Parties in the United States" by John F. Bibby in the electronic journal, United States Elections 2004.

Frequently Asked Questions

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=pubs-english&y=2007&m=October&x=20071009122854hmnietsua7.178903e-03>

TYPES OF ELECTIONS

What types of elections are held in the United States?

There are two basic types of elections – primary and general. In addition to the primaries and general elections held in even-numbered years, which include political races for the U.S. Congress, some states and local jurisdictions also hold “off-year” elections (both primary and general) in odd-numbered years for their elected officials.

A primary election is a nominating election in which the field of candidates who will run in the general election is chosen. Victory in a primary usually results in a candidate being nominated or endorsed by a political party for the general election.

A general election is an election held to choose among candidates nominated in a primary (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. 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.

In addition, many states provide for special elections, which can be called at any time, to serve a specific purpose, such as filling an unexpected vacancy in an elected office.

What are midterm elections?

The elections in which Americans vote for their congressional representatives but not for their president are known as midterm elections. Every two years Americans elect members of the U.S. House of Representatives to two-year terms and about one-third of their U.S. senators, who serve six-year terms. Voters also will select officials to state and local government posts.

What is a convention?

Conventions are meetings sponsored by political parties for members of the party to discuss issues, candidates and campaign strategies. These meetings can last several days.

In presidential elections, after state primaries are concluded, each party holds a national convention to formally select the presidential nominee – usually the candidate who secured the support of the most convention delegates, based on victories in primary elections. Typically, the presidential nominee then chooses a running mate to be the party’s candidate for vice president.

Political parties hold national conventions only in presidential election years. The parties usually hold smaller, state-level conventions in other years. The Democratic National Convention will be in Denver on August 25-28, 2008. The Republican National Convention will be in St. Paul, Minnesota, September 1-4, 2008.

What is a caucus?

A caucus is a meeting at the local level in which registered members of a political party in a city, town or county gather to express support for a candidate. For statewide or national offices, those recommendations are combined to determine the state party nominee. Caucuses, unlike conventions, involve many separate meetings held simultaneously at multiple locations. Both the Democratic and Republican parties have their own rules governing caucuses. Those rules vary from state to state.

REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTING, RUNNING FOR OFFICE

Who can vote?

American citizens ages 18 and older can register to vote. To register, voters must meet the residency requirements of their states, which vary, and comply with voter-registration deadlines.

What are the requirements for running for elected office in the United States?

Each federal elected office has different requirements, which are laid out in Articles I and II of the U.S. Constitution.

A candidate for president of the United States must be a natural-born citizen of the United States, be at least 35 years old, and have been a resident of the United States for at least 14 years. A vice president must meet the same qualifications. Under the 12th Amendment to the Constitution, the vice president cannot be from the same state as the president.

U.S. House of Representatives candidates must be at least 25 years old, have been U.S. citizens for seven years and be legal residents of the state in which they seek election.

U.S. Senate candidates must be at least 30 years old, have been a U.S. citizen for nine years, and be legal residents of the state in which they seek election.

Officials seeking state or local office must meet the requirements established by those jurisdictions

SCHEDULING ELECTIONS

When are general elections held?

They are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November. The 2008 general election will be held on November 4.

Why are general elections held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November?

For much of U.S. history, America was a predominantly agrarian society. Lawmakers considered their convenience when choosing a November date for elections – after harvest time but before winter weather made travel difficult – as the easiest month for farmers and rural workers to go to the polls.

Because many rural residents lived a significant distance from the polls, Tuesday, rather than Monday, was selected to allow those who attended Sunday church services to begin travel after worship and still reach their destinations in time to cast their votes.

Lawmakers wanted to prevent Election Day from falling on the first of November for two reasons. First, November 1 is All Saints Day, a day on which Roman Catholics are obligated to attend Mass. Also, merchants typically balanced the accounts from the preceding month on the first of each month.

When are primary elections held?

State and local governments determine the dates on which primary elections or caucuses are held. These dates, and the amount of time between a primary and general election, significantly influence how early candidates begin campaigning and the choices they make about how and when campaign funds are spent.

In the run-up to presidential elections, victories in primaries held very early in the election year, such as that in New Hampshire, can influence the outcome of later state primaries.

ELECTORAL COLLEGE

What is the Electoral College?

The Electoral College is the group of citizens designated by the states to cast votes for the president and vice president on behalf of state citizens. The process for selecting electors

varies from state to state, but usually the political parties nominate electors at state party conventions or by a vote of the party's central committee. The voters in each state, by casting votes for president and vice president, choose the electors on the day of the general election. The Electoral College, not the popular vote, elects the president, but the two votes are tied closely.

How does the Electoral College elect the president?

The Electoral College system gives each state the same number of electoral votes as it has members of Congress. The District of Columbia is allocated three electoral votes. There are a total of 538 votes in the Electoral College; a candidate for president must get 270 to win (a simple majority). All but two states have a winner-take-all system, in which the candidate who gets the most popular votes in the state is allocated all of the state's electoral votes.

The electors usually gather in their state capitals in December to cast their votes. The electoral votes are then sent to Washington, where they are counted in the presence of a joint session of Congress in January.

If no presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes, the 12th Amendment to the Constitution provides for the presidential election to be decided by the House of Representatives. In such situations, the House selects the president by majority vote, choosing from the three candidates who received the greatest number of electoral votes. Each state would cast one vote.

If no vice presidential candidate wins a majority of electoral votes, the Senate selects the vice president by majority vote, with each senator choosing from the two candidates who received the greatest number of electoral votes.

For which races is the Electoral College used?

The Electoral College is used only to select the president and vice president.

Has any president been elected without a majority of the popular vote? There have been 17 presidential elections in which the winner did not receive a majority of the popular vote cast. The first of these was John Quincy Adams in the election of 1824, and the most recent was George W. Bush in 2000.

The founders of the nation devised the Electoral College system as part of their plan to share power between the states and the national government. Under the federal system adopted in the U.S. Constitution, the nationwide popular vote has no legal significance. As a result, it is possible that the electoral votes awarded on the basis of state elections could produce a different result than the nationwide popular vote. Nevertheless, the individual citizen's vote is important to the outcome of each election.

OTHER QUESTIONS

Why is voter turnout sometimes low in the United States?

Several factors seem to influence voter turnout, which was approximately 41 percent of eligible voters in 2006 and 61 percent in 2004. Many observers believe that current registration laws hinder voter turnout. The demographic composition of the electorate, long periods of political or economic stability, predictable outcomes in many races and some candidates' lack of popular appeal are other factors affecting voter turnout. Turnout tends to be higher in general elections than in primary elections. Turnout also tends to be higher in years in which the president is elected than in midterm elections.

What are the symbols of the U.S. political parties?

The elephant represents the Republican Party, and the donkey represents the Democratic Party. Political cartoonist Thomas Nast created both images for the publication Harper's Weekly in 1874. Nast created a marauding elephant to represent the "Republican vote." Republicans quickly embraced the symbol as their party's own.

In a separate cartoon, Nast criticized the Democrats for posthumously maligning a Republican by picturing the Democratic Party as a donkey or mule (animals considered stubborn and stupid) kicking a lion (the dead Republican). The Democratic Party, demonstrating a sense of humor, accepted the animal as its symbol, observing that it has many fine qualities, such as not giving up easily.

Do organizations tell people how to vote? What does it mean when a union or newspaper "endorses" a candidate?

Voting in U.S. elections is conducted by secret ballot, and a voter's choice is private. The "endorsement" of a candidate by an organization means the organization publicly supports the candidate and approves the candidate's stand on issues. Although organizations can encourage members to join in that support, it is unlawful for to coerce a member to vote against his or her own judgment.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

What are primaries and caucuses?

A primary is a state-level election where voters affiliated with political parties choose candidates to represent their parties in the general election. A caucus is a local-level meeting of registered party members to determine support for a candidate. The results of these meetings are combined on a statewide basis to determine a state's party nominee.

Why are there two parties?

The Constitution makes no provision for political parties. They developed on their own as the country grew, and by the 1830s were an established part of the political environment. Today, the Republicans and Democrats are the two main political parties. They have dominated American politics since the 1860s, and every president since 1852 has been one or the other

What's new in voting technology?

Following problems with the 2000 elections, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), providing funds for states to modernize voting systems and calling for minimum standards in elections administration. This is important since all U.S. elections, even presidential elections, are administered locally. Many states have already implemented these new standards, and more changes are expected for 2008.

ELECTION NEWS

With Mitt Romney's Exit, John McCain Presumed Republican Nominee

<http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080208172255hmnietsua0.5877344.html>

Democratic Race Could Continue for Weeks or Months, Experts Say

<http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080208171334hmnietsua0.6845209.html>

No Presidential Nominees After 24 States Vote on Super Tuesday

[HTTP://WWW.AMERICA.GOV/ST/ELECTIONS08-ENGLISH/2008/FEBRUARY/20080206100711LIAMERUOY2.212161E-02.HTML](http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080206100711LIAMERUOY2.212161E-02.HTML)

Superdelegates" May Decide Democratic Nominee

[HTTP://WWW.AMERICA.GOV/ST/ELECTIONS08-ENGLISH/2008/FEBRUARY/20080204190330HMNIETSUA0.9187281.HTML](http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/20080204190330HMNIETSUA0.9187281.HTML)

Look Behind the Scenes in a Presidential Primary Election

[HTTP://WWW.AMERICA.GOV/ST/ELECTIONS08-ENGLISH/2008/FEBRUARY/2008020415291ONDYBLEHS0.725857.HTML](http://www.america.gov/st/elections08-english/2008/February/2008020415291ONDYBLEHS0.725857.HTML)

Hillary Clinton, John McCain Score Victories in New Hampshire

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2008&m=January&x=20080109091151amnietsua0.6954157>

Presidential Candidates Make Their Case to New Hampshire Voters

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2008&m=January&x=20080107101731amnietsua0.6077539>

Mike Huckabee, Barack Obama Win First 2008 Election Races

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2008&m=January&x=20080104101026hmnietsua0.9922144>

How Raucous Is the Caucus?

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=December&x=20071221110904mlenuhret5.692691e-02>

Voters, Candidates Shifting Their Attention to Economic Issues

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=December&x=20071220142655hmnietsua0.2413294>

Major Parties Work To Recruit Winning Candidates for Congress

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