

# **6. Voting and Elections**

# 1. Definition

- Decision-making process after discussion or election campaign
- The public chooses candidates for public offices.
- Mechanism for representative democracy
- Voting  $\doteq$  elections in democracies

## 2. Purposes Served by Elections

- Elections guarantee mass political **participation**.
  - : “ enable citizens to influence gov.
  - : “ make it sure that gov is accountable to citizens
  - : “ give gov legitimacy.
  - : “ is means to fill public offices + staff gov.

- **Mandate**
  - : Citizens give elected candidate/gov a command to carry out platform.
- **Retrospective judgment (Prospective judgment)**
  - : Voters making judgments on **performance** of ruling party.
  - : Voters can evaluate record of office holders much better than they can predict future actions of opposition challengers.

## 3. Major Presidential Elections

### ex1) 1960 Presidential Election

- John F. Kennedy (Dem) v. Richard Lincoln (Rep)
- First TV presidential debate
- Kennedy got more points in debates
- Nixon got more points in radio debates (a smaller audience)

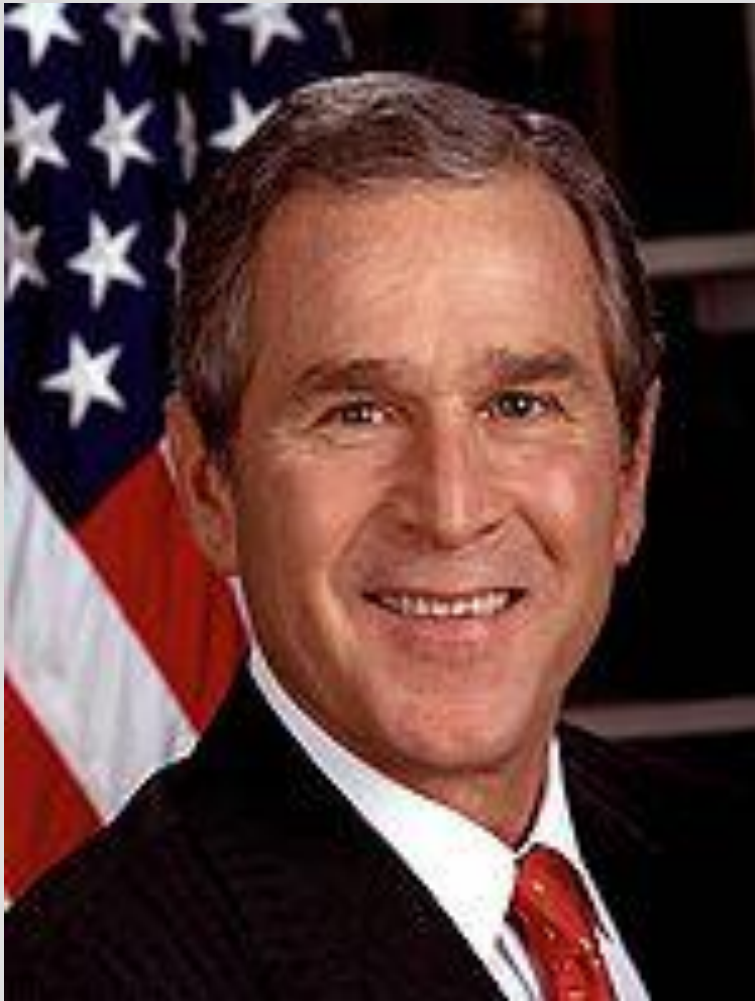
## ex2) 2000 Presidential Election

### - George W. Bush (Rep) v. Al Gore (Dem)

- Bush won but received **fewer popular votes** than Gore (4<sup>th</sup> time when candidate wins popular vote, but loses final election,)  
One of closest elections in history)
- Bill Clinton's impeachment over sex scandal was a negative factor on Gore
- Bush promised to restore "honor and dignity" to White House

## ex3) 2008 Presidential Election

- Barack Obama (Dem) v. John McCain (Rep)
- First African American President
- Women power
- : Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton & Vice President Candidate Sarah Palin
- Highest turnout rate (61.6%)



**George W. Bush**

Electoral vote (271)

Popular Vote (47.9%)

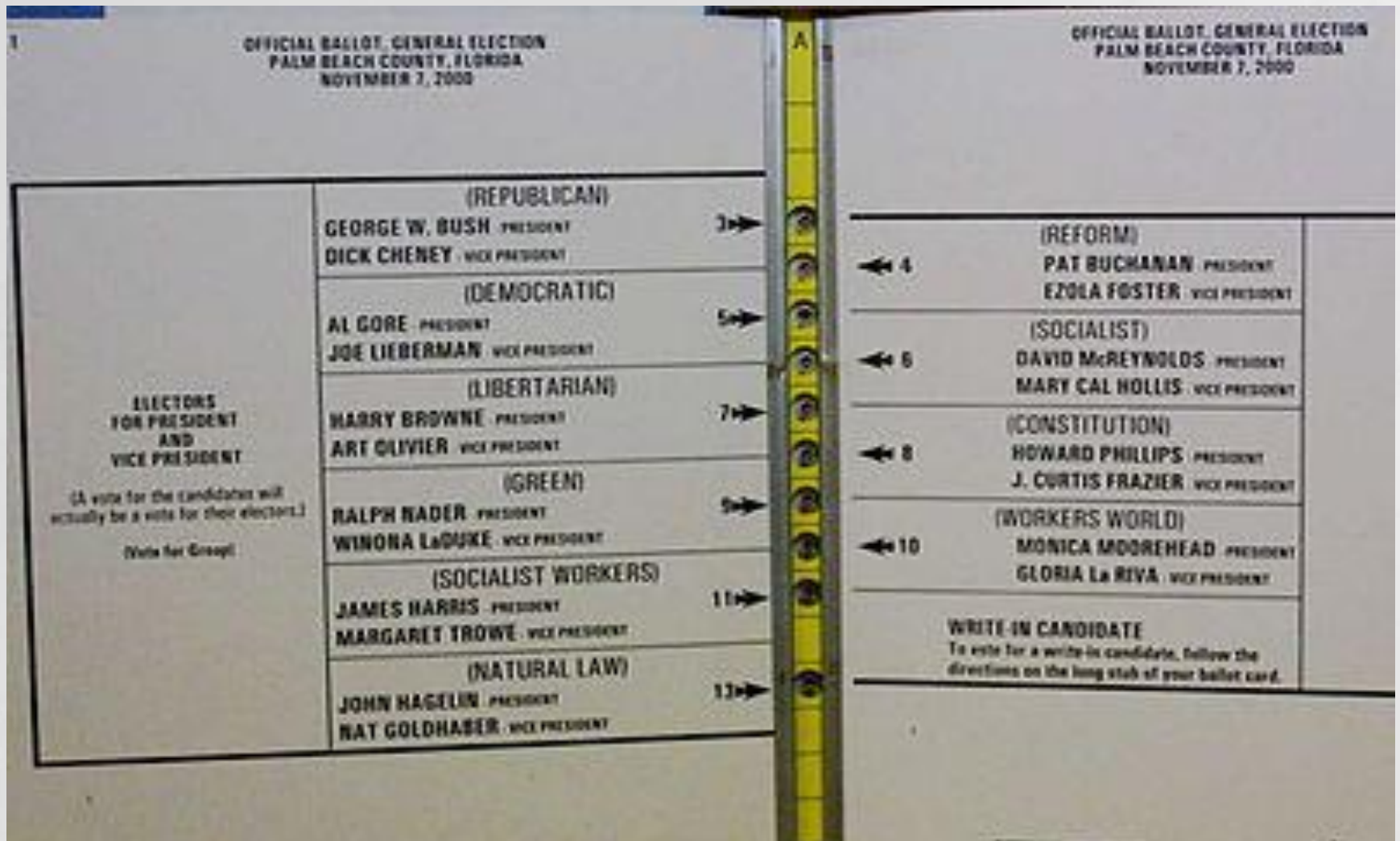
([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_presidential\\_election,\\_2000](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_2000))



**Al Gore**

Electoral vote (266)

Popular Vote (48.4%)



## Butterfly ballot

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_presidential\\_election\\_in\\_Florida,\\_2000](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election_in_Florida,_2000))

## 4. Different Kinds of Elections

### 1) Primary Elections

- Voters decide which of candidates within party will represent party's ticket in general elections.

- **Closed primary**

- : Only registered voters of party cast ballot

- **Open primary**

- : Independents & sometimes members of other party participate.

- : Voters choose candidates for each office from single party

- **Blanket primary**

- : Independents & sometimes members of other party participate.

- : Voters choose candidates for each office from more than one party

## 2) General Elections

- Once party candidates for various offices are chosen,  
→ general elections held.
- : General elections are contests between candidates of opposing parties.
- : In sizing up presidential candidates, voters look for **leadership + character**.
- : Many voters base their judgments partly on **foreign policy + defense issues** that do not happen in state + local elections.
- : **Major issues** (economies + tax + abortion + environments)
- : When voters usually do not know much about candidates, they depend on **party identification + visibility**.



# 5. Presidential Elections

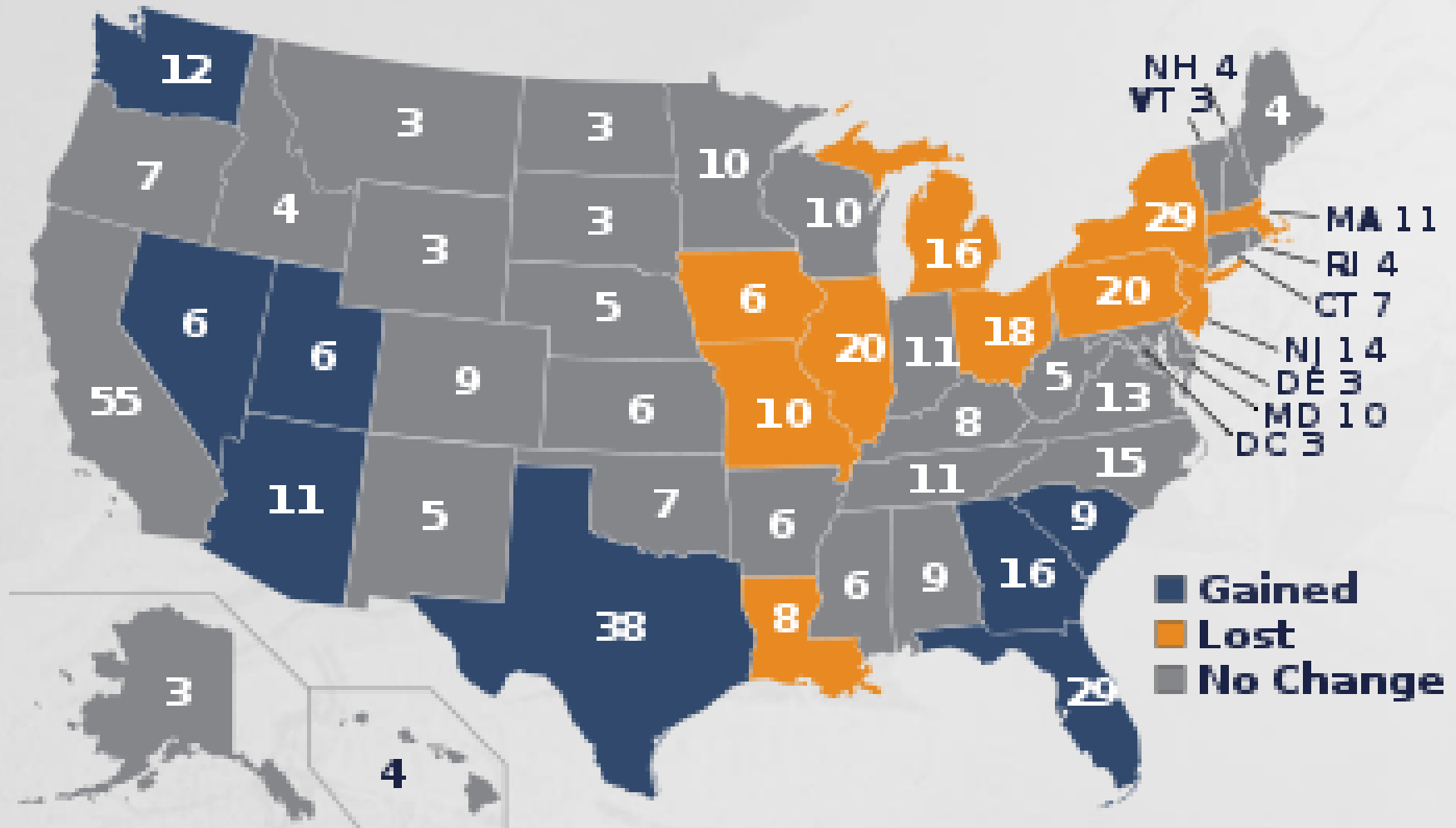
## 1) Winner-Take-All

- Candidates who win most votes in state take all of the state's delegates.
- : It is easy to amass a majority of delegates more quickly.
- : [Electoral college](#); 270 electors needed to win)
- : CA(55), TX(38), NY(29), FL(29), AL(3), D.C.(3)
- ex) US elections, Republic P Primary

## 2) Proportional representation

- Candidates who secure 15% of votes are awarded delegates.
- : Difficult and takes time to amass and calculate delegates.
- ex) Democratic P Primary





## State Electors

Electoral votes by state/federal district, for the elections of **2012, 2016 & 2020**, with apportionment changes between the 2000 and 2010 Censuses

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral\\_College\\_\(United\\_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electoral_College_(United_States)))

### **3) Caucus**

- Oldest, most party-oriented method of choosing delegates
- : Closed meeting of party members in states
- : Select party's choice for presidential candidate.
- : Elitist & anti-democratic
- Being replaced with direct primaries
- : While caucus is still used in a few states (Iowa; Jan 3, 2012), becoming more open.

### **4) Primaries & Caucuses**

- In past caucuses were more popular than primaries.
- : Currently More than 2/3 states hold primaries

## - **Supporters of primaries**

- : Primaries more democratic & larger in participating number
- : Not only party activists, but also anyone can participate.
- : Primaries **rigorous test** for the candidates to be a successful president.

## - **Critics of primaries**

- : Although more people at primaries, **quality** guaranteed at caucus.
- : Caucus attendees spend hours learning about politics + party.
- : “ listen to speeches by candidates.
- : “ take cues from party leaders.
- : Scheduling of primaries **unfairly** affects their outcomes.

ex) Earliest primary is in the small, atypical, heavily white + conservative state (= New Hampshire; Jan 10, 1012).

: Qualities tested by primaries not enough for president to be successful.

ex) Skill at playing media game is by itself no guarantee of effective presidency.

## 5) Party Convention

- Nomination battle ends at convention held in summer
- Consists of delegations from all states
- Drafting party **platform**

## 6. Electoral College: How Presidents Are Elected

- Campaign process
  - : People choose electors of Electoral College (538) on election day
  - : Electoral college consists of representatives of each state.  
(**Tuesday** between Nov 2 & 8; Nov 6, 2012)
  - : Electors finally choose president  
(**1<sup>st</sup> Monday** after 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of December; Dec 17, 2012)
  - : Inauguration on Jan 20, 2013
  - : Running mate becoming Vice President (12<sup>th</sup> Amendment; 1804)

## 1) Why indirect election was adopted?

### (a) No mass media

- : **Unlikely** that common citizens, even reasonably informed ones, would know much about candidate from another state.
- : Electors would be men with full knowledge of national politics

### (b) No political parties

- : Founding Founders aimed to have politics without political parties.
- : “ “ produce a nonpartisan president.

## 2) Composition of Electoral College

- Each state electors equal in number to the sum of its representation in the House + Senate.
- : 538 electors = 100 Senators + 435 Representatives + 3 in D.C.)
- ex) Florida (29 = 2 Senators + 27 Representatives)

## 7. Patterns of Presidential Elections

### 1) Party Realignmentments

- Major political earthquake **swiftly & dramatically** alters landscape.
- : Many voters may change parties.
- : Youngest age group of voters may permanently adopt label of newly dominant party.
- : Major realignment is precipitated by critical elections.



## - **Critical Elections**

: More than one elections in which political alignments change **fundamentally** (coined by V. O. Key)

: Presidential election in 1928 & 1932

: Urban ethnics & blacks switched from Republican P to Democratic P and stayed.

ex) During period leading up to the Civil War,

**Whig Party** gradually dissolved + Republican Party developed and won presidency.

: WP did not resolve slavery

## 2) **Secular Realignment**

- More **gradual** rearrangement of party coalitions

: Almost barely discernable demographic shifts

- : shrinking of one party's base of support + enlargement of other's
- : simple generational replacement
- : These days in era of weaker party attachments, dramatic + full-scale realignment not be possible
- : After Ronald Reagan's decisive presidential victory in 1980, secure realignment toward GOP was found.

## **8. Congressional Elections**

- Senate elections
- Representative (House) elections

## 1) Incumbency Advantage

- Advantages of incumbency enhanced.
- : Those people in office tend to remain in office.
- : Reelection rates for sitting House members range well above 90%.
- : “ Senate “ 70%.
- : Most incumbents highly visible in districts.
- : Easy access to local media.

## 2) Off-year Elections

- Elections in middle of presidential terms
- : Incumbents of presidential party usually gains seats in presidential election years
- : But it is incumbents of presidential party most in jeopardy.
- : Voters tend to punish president's party much more severely in 6<sup>th</sup> year of 8-year presidency

- : After only 2 years, voters willing to give the guy a chance.
- : But after 6 years, voters ready to change.

### - **Senate elections**

- : less inclined to follow these rules than House elections.
  - : Well-funded celebrity candidates sometimes swim against whatever political tide is rising.
- 1/3 of total 100 seats in Senate (6-year term)  
come up for election every 2 years.