

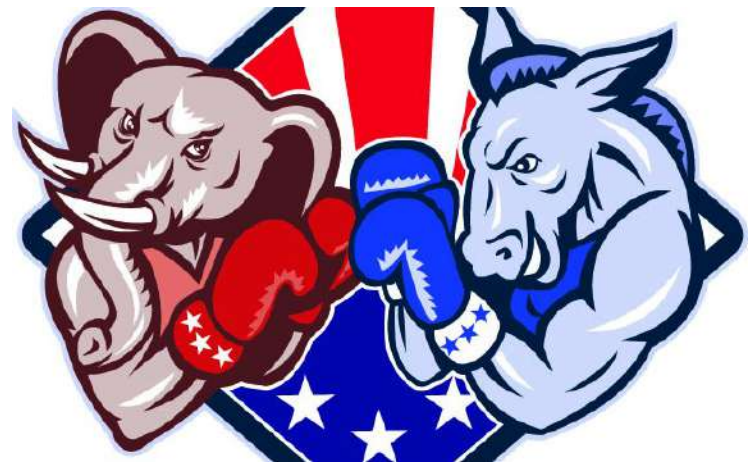


Party Organization

Ch 16 sec 2

I. Membership and Organization

- Both Republicans and Democrats are organized into 50 state parties and thousands of local parties, as well as a national party.
- Voters may become members of a party when they register to vote, usually joining the party whose ideas and candidates, in general, they support.



I. Membership and Organization

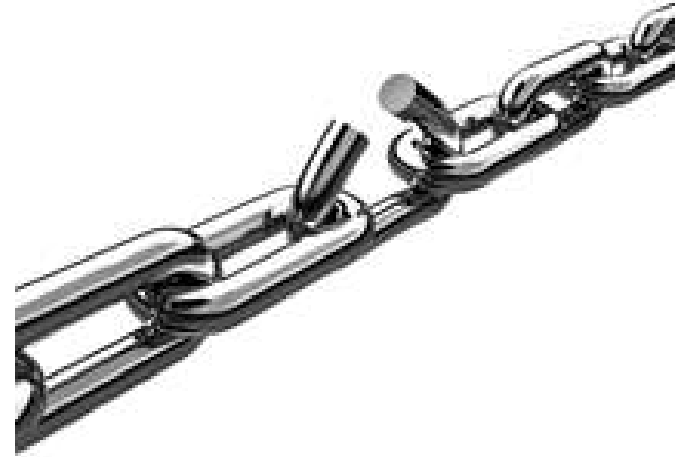
C. Party membership involves no duties or obligations beyond voting; however, some members contribute money or do volunteer work.

D. The basic local unit in the party's organization is the precinct, or voting district, and wards made up of several adjoining precincts.



I. Membership and Organization

E. The county level is the one in which the party is most united, and the county chairperson usually exercises a good deal of political power in the county; yet counties are the weakest link in the party's organizational chain because they are largely run by volunteers.



I. Membership and Organization

F. The state central committee, composed of members from the party's county organizations, is the most important part of the party in each state; its main function is to help elect the party's candidates for state office.



I. Membership and Organization

- G. The national convention and the national committee are the two main parts of the party's national organization.
- H. The national party chairperson, elected by the national committee, manages the daily operations of the national party.
- I. Both parties have independent campaign committees for Congress.



II. Political Party Functions

- Political parties recruit candidates to run for office; both parties are candidate-oriented rather than issue-oriented.
- Political parties bring important issues to the attention of the public, publish the party's position on these issues, and help form public opinion.



II. Political Party Functions

- C. Personal attacks against the other party's candidates sometimes obscure issues; since many Americans are not well informed on issues or the candidates, political party membership simplifies their choices.
- D. Political parties play a key role in running the government; Congress and state legislatures carry on their work on the basis of party affiliation.



II. Political Party Functions

- E. Political parties also dispense patronage, including jobs, contracts, and appointments to government positions.
- F. The party out of power assumes the role of “watchdog” over government.



II. Political Party Functions

G. Because parties need to draw support from many different and sometimes conflicting groups, parties encourage compromise and adopt moderate policies with mass appeal.





Question

What could political parties do to reach and inform more potential voters about the issues in the U.S.