

# CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

- 📌 Congressional elections are regularly scheduled (every two years) – unlike the Brits, where elections are called by the government at the time of its choosing
- 📌 Members of Congress have (HOR:      years; Senate:      )
- 📌 State-imposed term limits overturned in      on grounds they would effectively add another      for members of Congress, which would require
- 📌 U.S. uses      system (not Euro proportional rep/multi member)

## PRIMARY ELECTIONS

- 📌      reform from early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- 📌 Designed to weaken

## TYPES OF PRIMARIES:

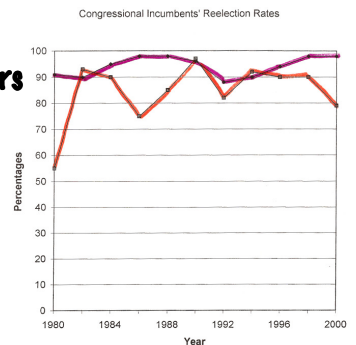
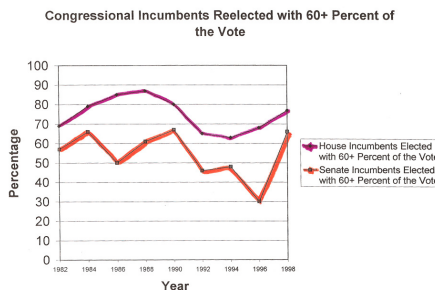
- 📌
  - 📌 Used in most states
  - 📌 Only      can vote for partisan office
  - 📌 No crossing of
- 📌
  - 📌      may vote
  - 📌 Voters get ballot of any
  - 📌 Danger of "raiding"/"pirating," damage to parties
- 📌 ("Free Love")
  - 📌 Independents may vote
  - 📌 Can      votes – all candidates listed, may choose different parties for different offices
  - 📌 Danger of raiding/pirating, damage to parties
  - 📌 Used in WA, AK, in CA 98-00 (overturned by SC)

## WHAT MAKES WHO WIN?

- 📌
  - 📌 Greatest influence on      election outcomes
  - 📌 ~      % of representatives ("Congressmen") who run are reelected; ~      % of Senators
  - 📌 Lack of competitiveness leads to charges of "Permanent Congress," call for

## Advantages of Incumbency

- 📌      privilege
- 📌      staff already in place
- 📌      service to
- 📌      done for constituents
- 📌      for districts – explosion of



- 📌      " in recent years
- 📌      : in recent House elections, incumbents outspent challengers      – build "war chest" to discourage challengers from even entering race

## Type of Campaign

- 📌      : (obviously) least competitive; often in districts with "safe seats"
- 📌 Weak      : next least competitive
- 📌 Strong challenger: more competitive

MIDTERM ELECTION PARTY LOSSES IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1938-2002

Year	Gain/Loss of Seats of President's Party
1938	-71
1942	-55
1946	-55
1950	-29
1954	-18
1958	-48
1962	-4
1966	-47
1970	-12
1974	-48
1978	-15
1982	-26
1986	-5
1990	-8
1994	-52
1998	+5
2002	+8

GAIN/LOSS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S PARTY IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Year	House Gain/Loss in Presidential Election Years	House Gain/Loss in Midterm Election Years	House Gain/Loss in Presidential Election Years	House Gain/Loss in Midterm Election Years
1952	+22			
1954				
1956	-2			
1958				
1960				
1962				
1964				
1966				
1968				
1970				
1972				
1974				
1976				
1978				
1980				
1982				
1984				
1986				
1988				
1990				
1992				
1994				
1996				
1998				
2000				
2002				

- ☛ : most competitive
- ☛ Senate vs. House: more competitive
- ☛ Midterm: loss of Cong. seats for
- ☛ In HOR every year
- ☛ In 2006, lost seats & actual control of
- ☛ Effect
- ☛ , especially in elections
- ☛ affiliation
- ☛ - increasingly important (
- ☛ decreasingly important) – The Roove Effect

**CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES**

- ☛ Campaign activities are directed at 2 basic goals:
  - ☛ : convincing people who YOU to go and vote (party members; your
  - ☛ : convincing people who to support you ( members of another party)
- ☛ There are four different elements of campaigns:
  - ☛ : contact, usually conducted by "average citizen" volunteers
    - ☛ Includes: precinct walks, phone banks, yard signs, coffees, friend-to-friend contact, rallies, bumper stickers
  - ☛ : activities done by " " (celebrities, elected officials, business & community leaders, etc.)
    - ☛ Includes: letters, fundraisers, endorsements, appearances
  - ☛ : voter contact
    - ☛ Includes: TV & radio commercials, direct mail, polling
  - ☛ : activities done on designed to
    - ☛ Includes: sign-waving, poll watching, rides to the polls, phone banks
    - ☛ Many voters make up their mind at the last minute, so GOTV efforts can make a critical difference in an election

**THE EXPECTATIONS GAME**

- ☛ Successful campaigns are often those that effectively play the "expectations game"
  - ☛ The goal of the expectations game is to MINIMIZE expectations in (debates, primary elections, etc.) in order to MAXIMIZE after the event

**VOTER VOCABULARY**

- ☛ **PRECINCT:** a ; the smallest geographic unit of an election – approx. 300-1000 voters per precinct
- ☛ **POLLING PLACE/THE POLLS:** where you (usually one per precinct)
- ☛ **AUSTRALIAN BALLOT:** ballot is printed at , lists one-man-

**TYPES OF BALLOTS**

- ☛ : groups candidate by office (all parties' nominees for President, then all parties' nominees for U.S. Senate, etc.) – used in CA
- ☛ : candidates are listed in columns by party; voters can choose all candidates from that party with one vote at top of column