

Chapter 13: The Presidency

Section 1

Lecture Notes

AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

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► Introduction

- The President's roles include:



- chief of state

- chief executive

- chief legislator

- commander in chief - chief citizen

- chief diplomat

- chief administrator

▶ Presidential Roles

- The President acts as **chief of state**, the ceremonial head of the U.S. government and the symbol of the American people.
- The President is the **chief executive**, holding the nation's executive power in domestic and foreign affairs.
- The President is the **chief administrator**, directing the more than 2.7 million civilian employees of the executive branch.

► Presidential Roles, cont.

- The President is the nation's **chief diplomat**, the main architect of American foreign policy and the nation's chief spokesman to the rest of the world.



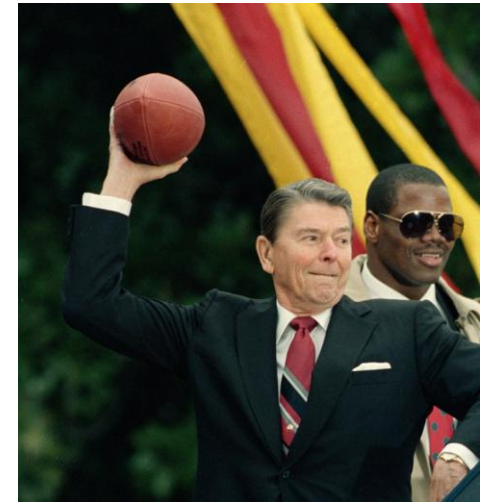
► Presidential Roles, cont.

- The President is the **commander in chief** of the 1.4 million men and women of the nation's armed forces.



► Presidential Roles, cont.

- The President is the **chief legislator**, proposing laws that set the congressional legislative agenda.
- The President is the unofficial **head of the political party** that controls the executive branch.
- The President is the unofficial **chief citizen**, expected to champion the public interest and be the representative of all the people.



► Formal Qualifications

- The President must be a **natural born citizen** of the United States.
- The President must be at least **35 years of age**.
- The President must have been a U.S. **resident for at least 14 years**.
- **Informal qualifications**, such as intelligence and character, are also important considerations.

► Presidential Image

Flattering...



Unflattering...

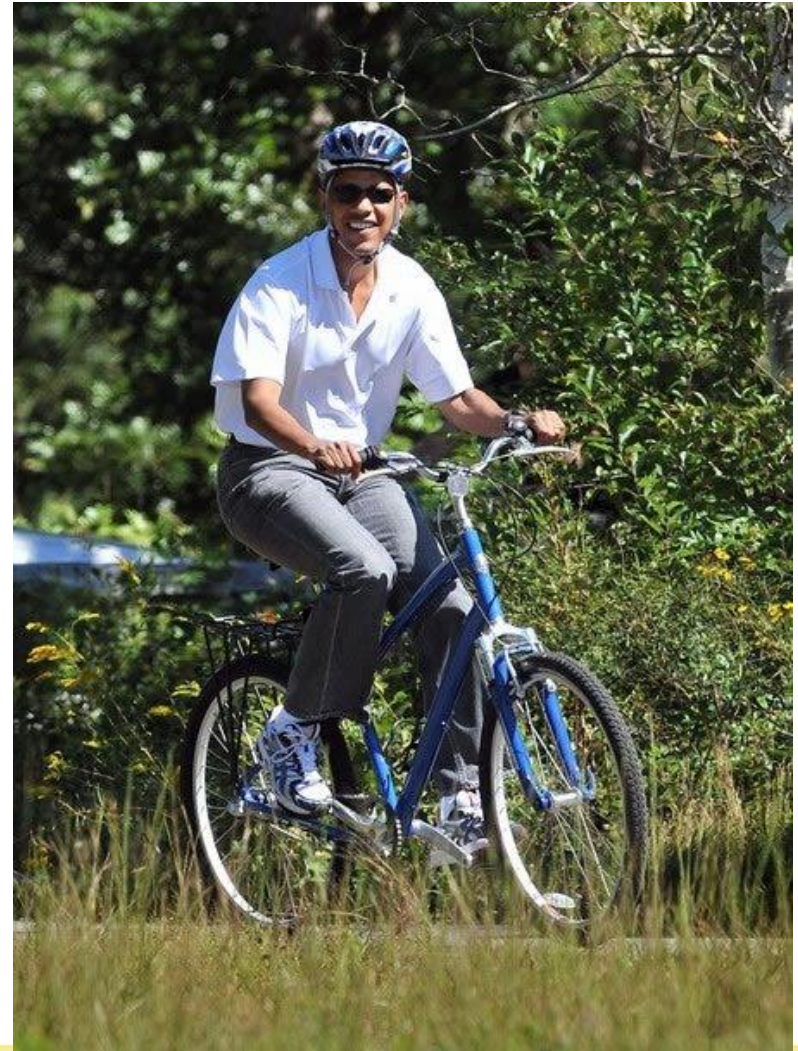




Flattering. . .



Unflattering. . .

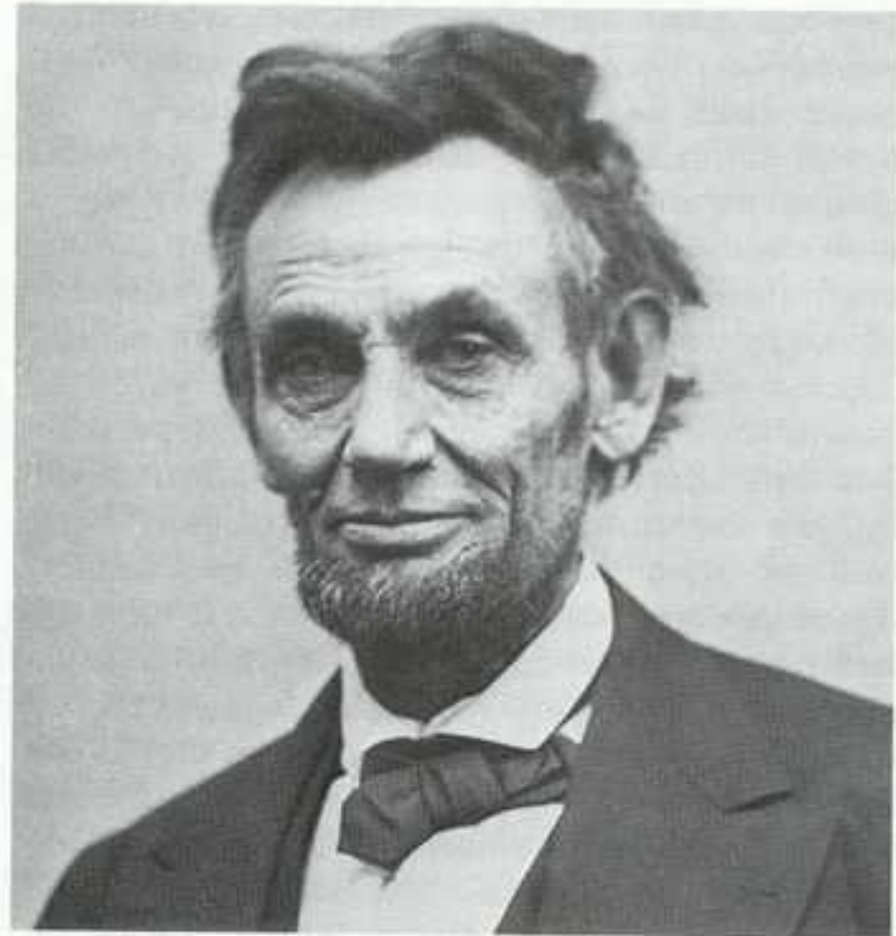
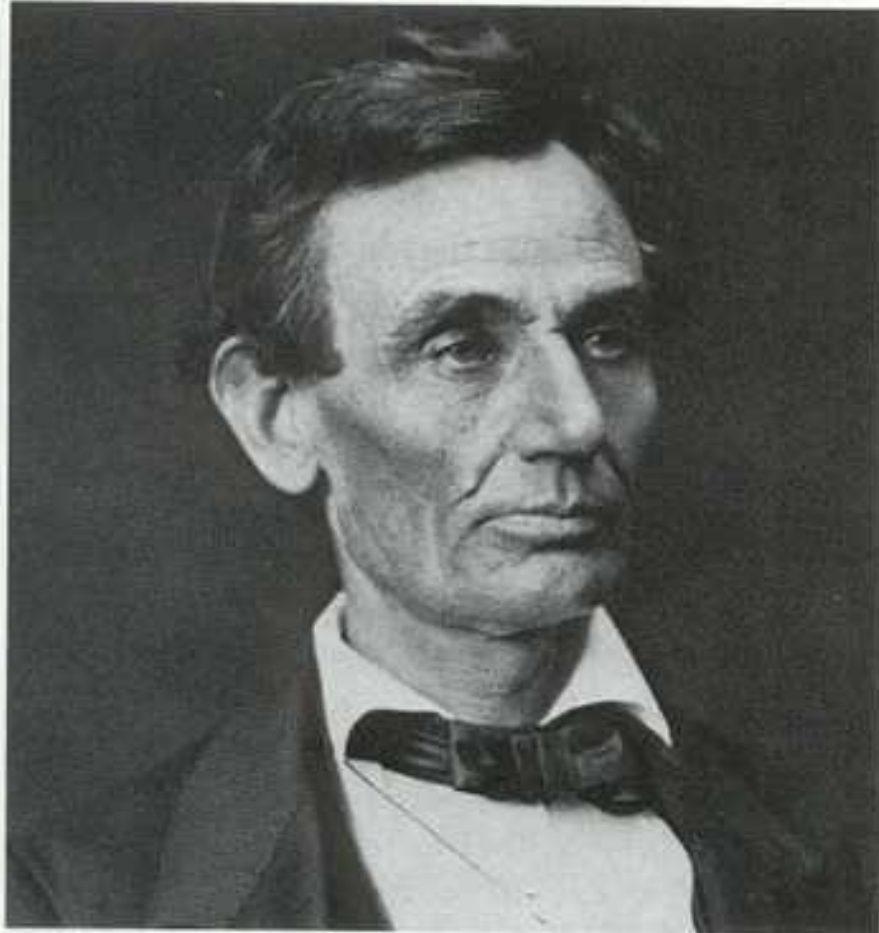


► Terms in Office

- Until 1951, the Constitution placed no limit on Presidential terms.
- George Washington set the custom of serving two terms.
- Franklin Roosevelt broke this custom by being elected to four terms from 1932 to 1944.
- The **22nd Amendment** limits Presidents to no more than two full elected terms in office.



► Presidential Stress



How Lincoln aged during his term of office is evident when one compares Alexander Hesler's portrait, taken on June 3, 1860, with one by an unnamed photographer taken on April 10, 1865.

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▶ 12 Years as President



▶ 1993

2001

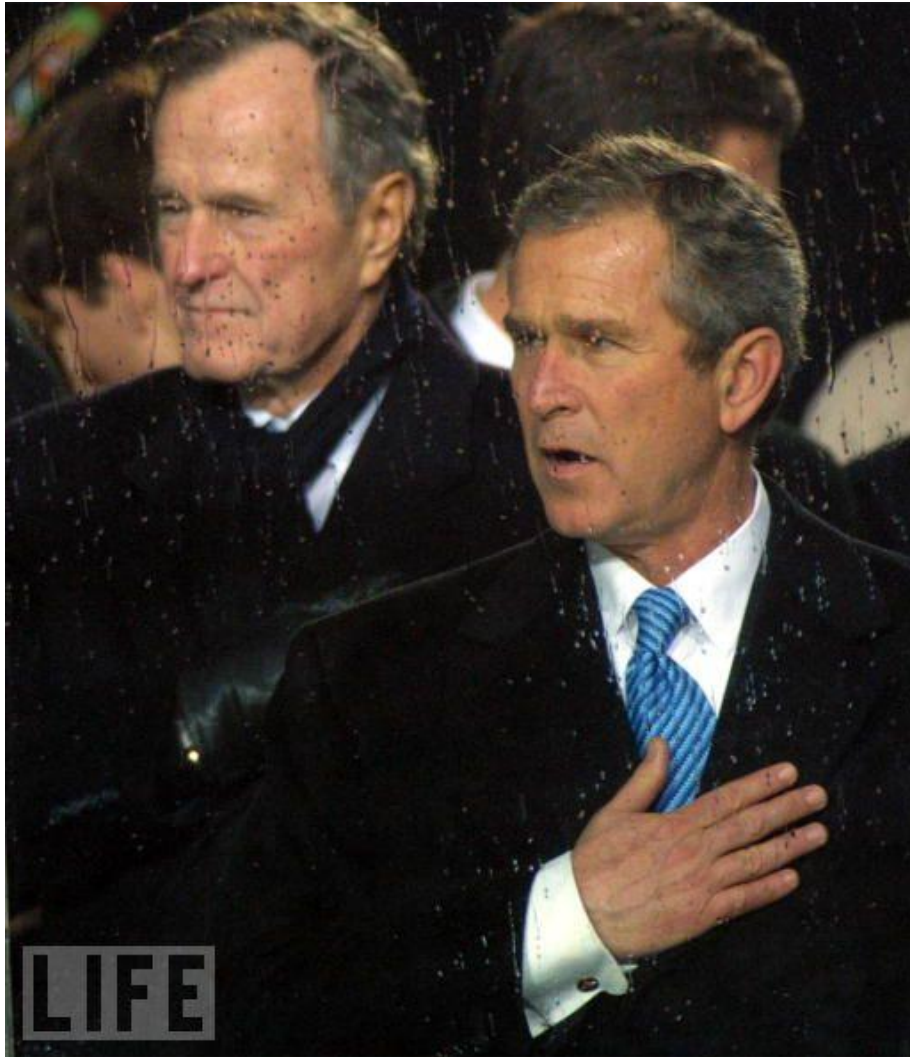
AMERICAN
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George W.
2001

2009

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2008



2011



2012





Pay and Benefits

Congress determines the President's salary, and this salary cannot be changed during a presidential term.

- The President is paid \$400,000 a year. (\$25,000 in 1789)
- Congress has approved a \$50,000 a year expense account.
- The President gets to live in the 132-room mansion that we call the White House.
- The President is also granted other benefits, including a large suite of offices, a staff, the use of Air Force One, and many other fringe benefits.



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► Order of Succession

- **Presidential succession** is the plan by which a presidential vacancy is filled.
- Under the **25th Amendment**, adopted in 1967, the Vice President now formally assumes the office of President.
- The **Presidential Succession Act of 1947** sets the order of succession after the Vice President.

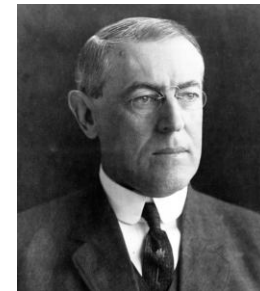
The List of Succession

1. Vice President
2. Speaker of the House
3. President pro tempore of the Senate
4. Secretary of State
5. Secretary of the Treasury
6. Secretary of Defense
7. Attorney General
8. Secretary of the Interior
9. Secretary of Agriculture
10. Secretary of Commerce
11. Secretary of Labor
12. Secretary of Health and Human Services
13. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
14. Secretary of Transportation
15. Secretary of Energy
16. Secretary of Education
17. Secretary of Veterans Affairs
18. Secretary of Homeland Security

► Presidential Disability

- For many years, there were no provisions for deciding if a President was too disabled to continue in office.

- Woodrow Wilson suffered a stroke in 1919 and his wife passed all messages and decisions to his cabinet for seven months.



- President Eisenhower had three serious but temporary illnesses while in office.
- The office of Vice President has been left vacant nine times

► Presidential Disability, cont.

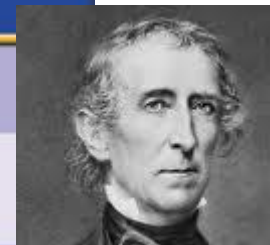
- The 25th Amendment provides procedures to follow when the President is disabled.
- The Vice President becomes Acting President if:
 - (1) The President informs Congress, in writing, that he or she cannot carry out the powers and duties of the office,
 - OR
 - (2) The Vice President and a majority of the members of the Cabinet inform Congress, in writing, that the President is incapacitated.



Into the Oval Office

Vice Presidents Who Succeeded to the Presidency

Successor	Reason for Succession
John Tyler	Death (pneumonia) of William Henry Harrison, April 4, 1841
Millard Fillmore	Death (gastroenteritis) of Zachary Taylor, July 9, 1850
Andrew Johnson	Death (assassination) of Abraham Lincoln, April 15, 1865
Chester A. Arthur	Death (assassination) of James A. Garfield, September 19, 1881
Theodore Roosevelt	Death (assassination) of William McKinley, September 14, 1901
Calvin Coolidge	Death (undisclosed illness) of Warren G. Harding, August 2, 1923
Harry S Truman	Death (cerebral hemorrhage) of Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 12, 1945
Lyndon B. Johnson	Death (assassination) of John F. Kennedy, November 22, 1963
Gerald R. Ford	Resignation of Richard M. Nixon, August 9, 1974



► The Vice Presidency, cont.

- Historically, the office of Vice President has had low status.
- Often the vice presidential candidate is chosen to **balance the ticket** –

- helping the president get elected due to personal characteristics such as ideology, experience, or geographic background.



- This puts little emphasis on the presidential qualities possessed by a vice presidential candidate.

► The Vice Presidency Today

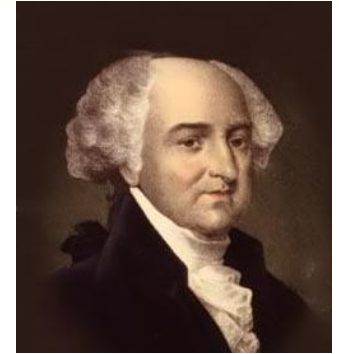
- Recent Vice Presidents have had more political experience and influence.
- Dick Cheney is widely viewed as the most influential vice president in history.
- Joe Biden, right, brought years of foreign policy experience to his office.



▶...about the Vice Presidency

“the most insignificant office that ever the invention of man contrived or his imagination conceived.”

--John Adams



“I would a great deal rather be anything, say professor of history, than vice president.”

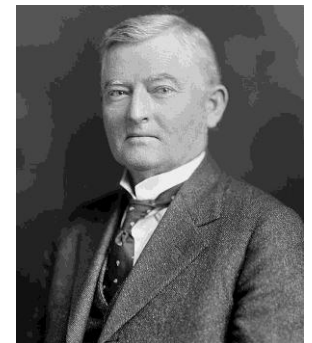
-- Theodore Roosevelt



“not worth a bucket of warm piss.”

-- John Nance Garner

FDR'S VP 1933-1941



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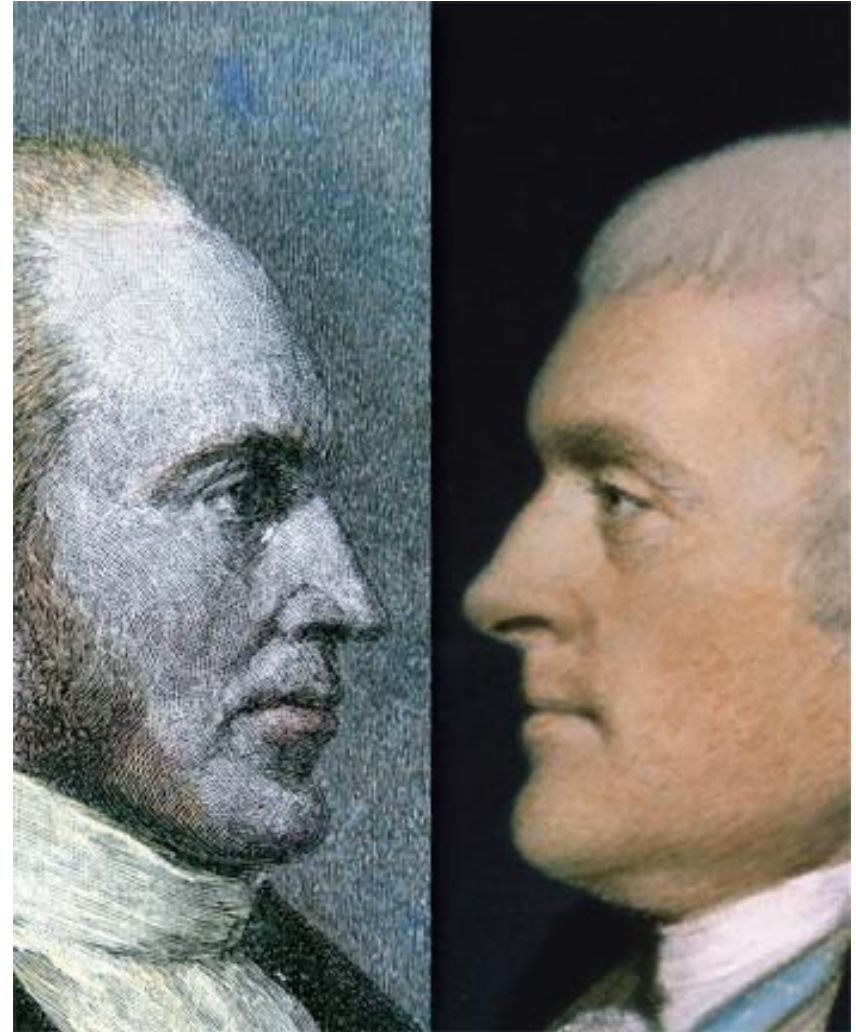


Original Provisions

- The President and Vice President are chosen by the **electoral college**.
- Originally, these electors each cast two **electoral votes**, each for a different candidate.
- The candidate with the most votes would become President
- The candidate with the second highest total would become Vice President.
- If there is a tie, the President will be chosen by the **House of Representatives**. The Senate will elect the Vice President.

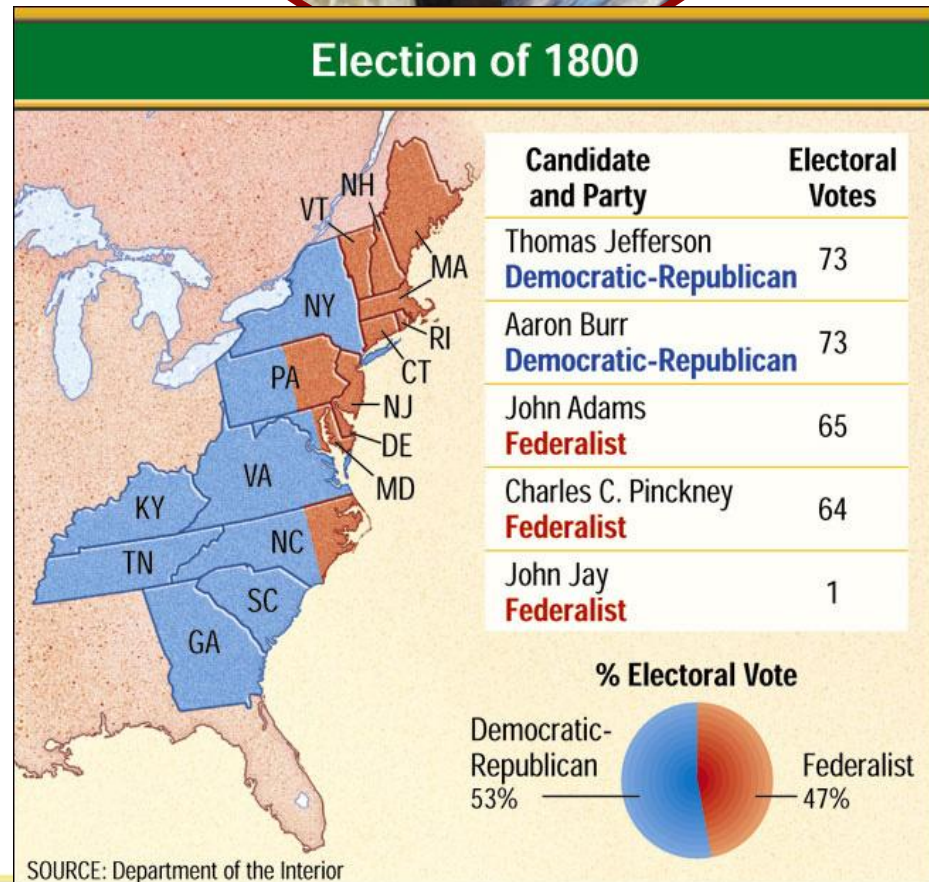
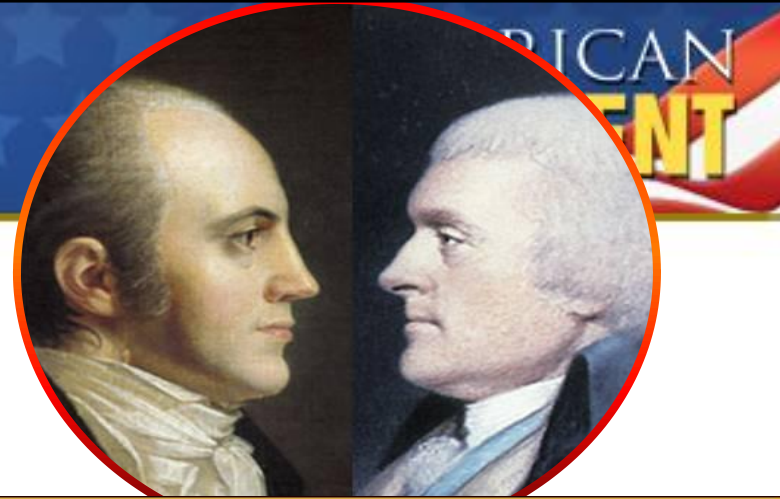
► The Election of 1796

- In 1796, the Democratic-Republican candidate Thomas Jefferson finished a close second to Federalist John Adams.
- Jefferson then became Adams's Vice President, even though they were political rivals.



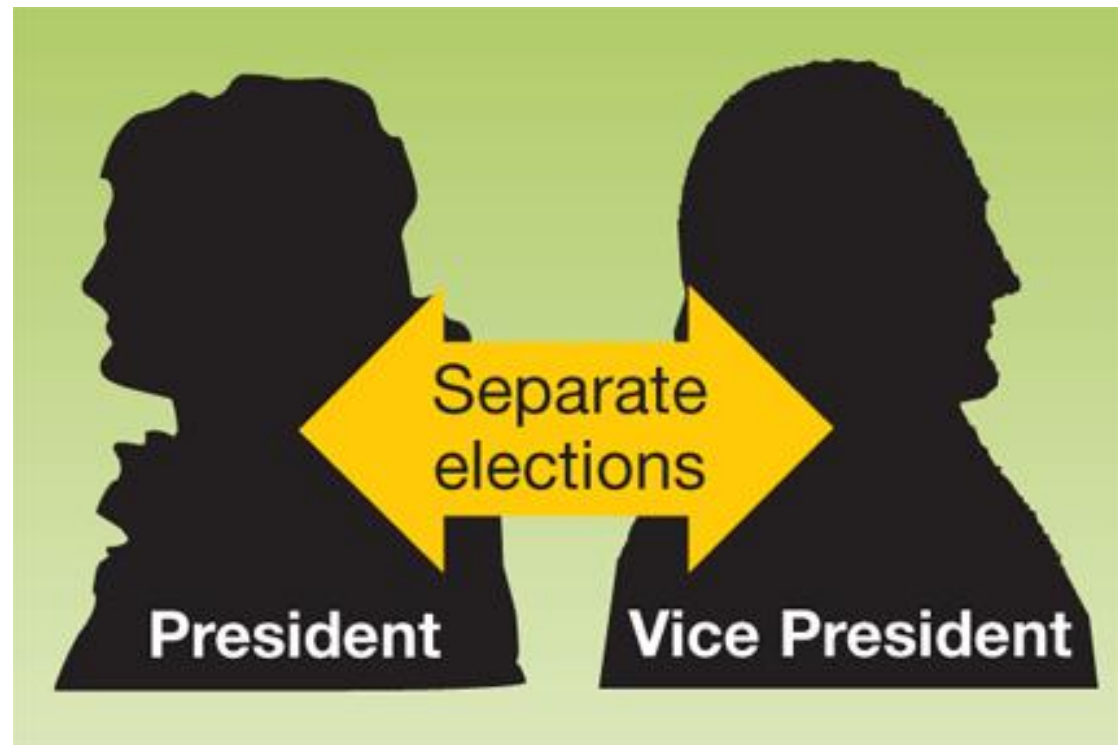
▶ Election of 1800

- In 1800, Democrat electors cast one vote each for Thomas Jefferson and his running mate, VP choice Aaron Burr. As a result they tied.
- It took the House of Representatives 36 separate votes to break the tie and elect Jefferson as President, making Burr the Vice President.



► The Election of 1800, cont.

- The 12th Amendment, ratified in 1804, separates the vice presidential and presidential elections.
- Each presidential elector now casts one vote for President and one vote for Vice President.



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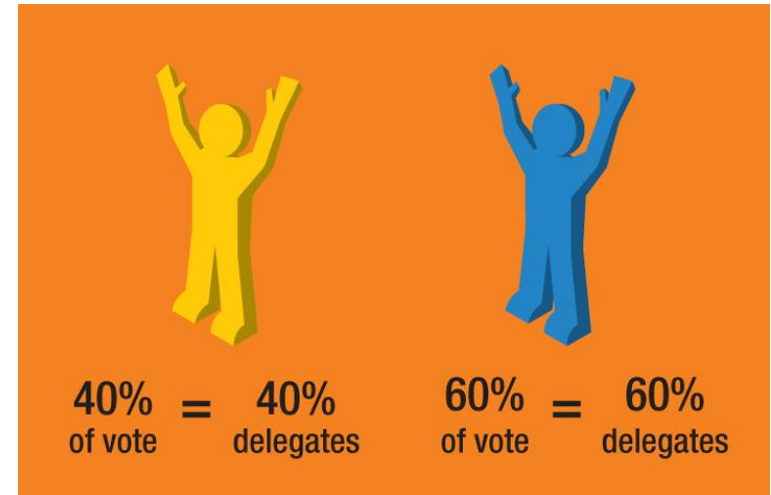
► Presidential Primaries

- A **presidential primary** is an election in which a **party's voters** cast votes for various contenders for their party's presidential nomination.
 - **Closed primary** – only party members may participate
 - **Open primary** – any registered voter can vote, but the voter can only participate in one primary (either Republican or Democrat)



► Primaries and Caucuses

- Most state **primaries** use a **proportional representation** –
 - delegates for each candidate are chosen in proportion to the % of votes received by their candidate.



- The delegates attend a national convention to choose their party's nominee for president.

- Some states hold a **caucus** where like-minded voters gather to choose delegates to represent them at the state, then national convention.

► The National Conventions

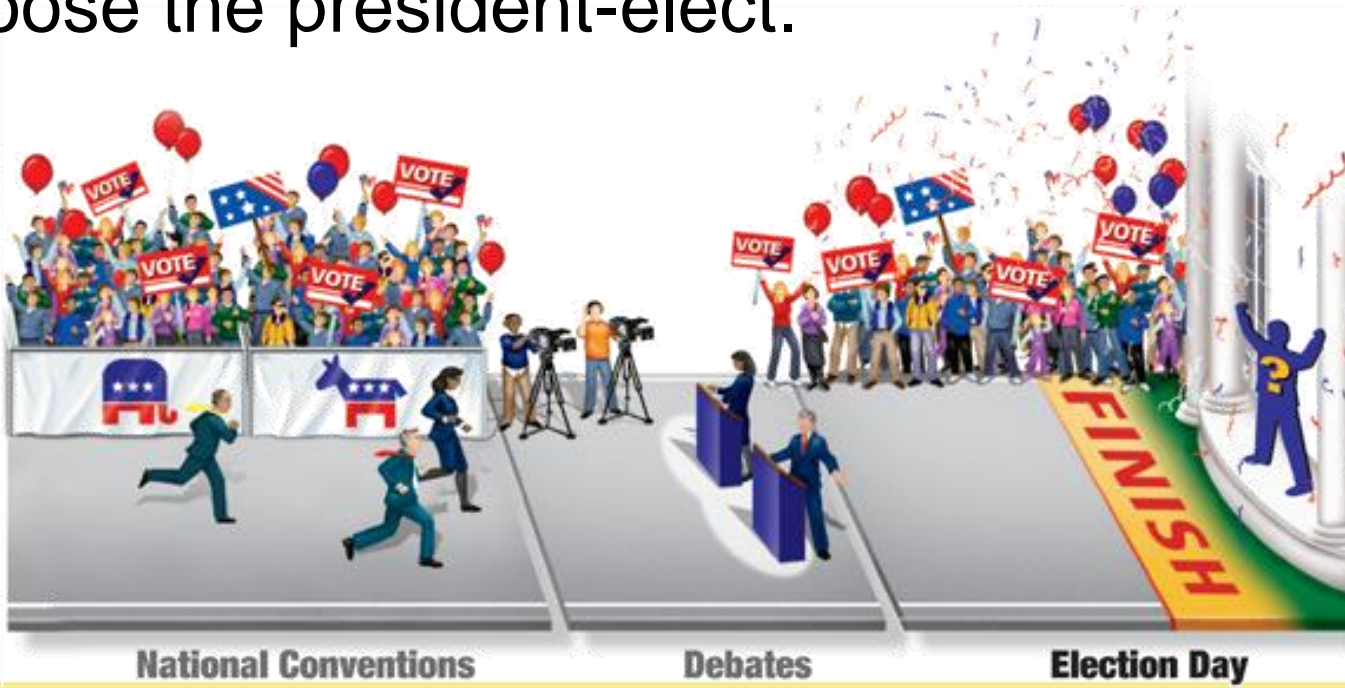
Each political party holds a **national convention** where delegates:

1. officially name the party's presidential and vice-presidential candidates,
2. adopt the **party's platform**—its formal statement of basic principles, stands on major policy matters, and objectives for the campaign and beyond.



▶ Race for the Presidency

- From September to November, the presidential candidates hold debates and give speeches.
- On the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, the voters cast their ballots and choose the president-elect.



► Who is Nominated?

- **Incumbent** presidents eligible for another term are usually nominated.
- Nominees have almost always held elected office, with governors being the most common nominees.
- A long public record is common but not a necessity.



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▶ Your 2012 Presidential Candidates!

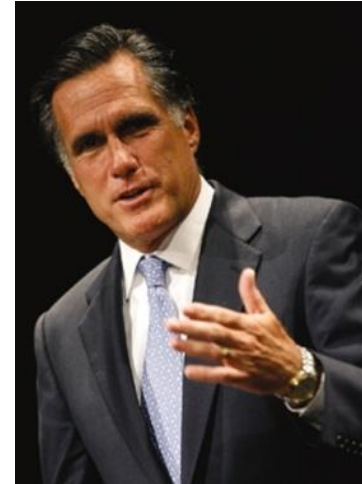
Democrats

- **Barack Obama**



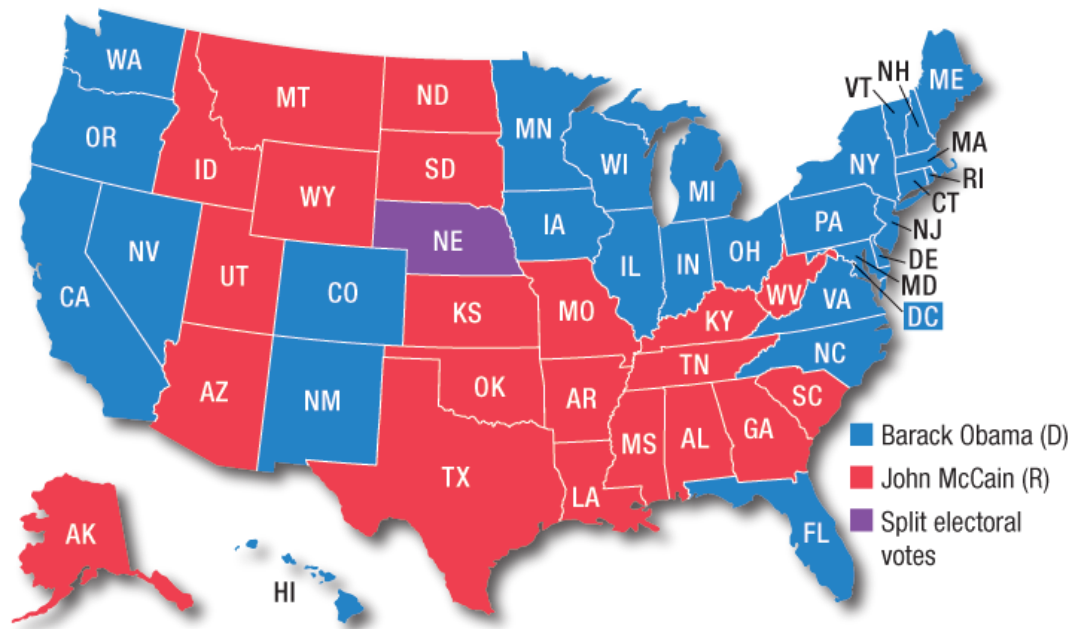
Republicans

- **Mitt Romney**



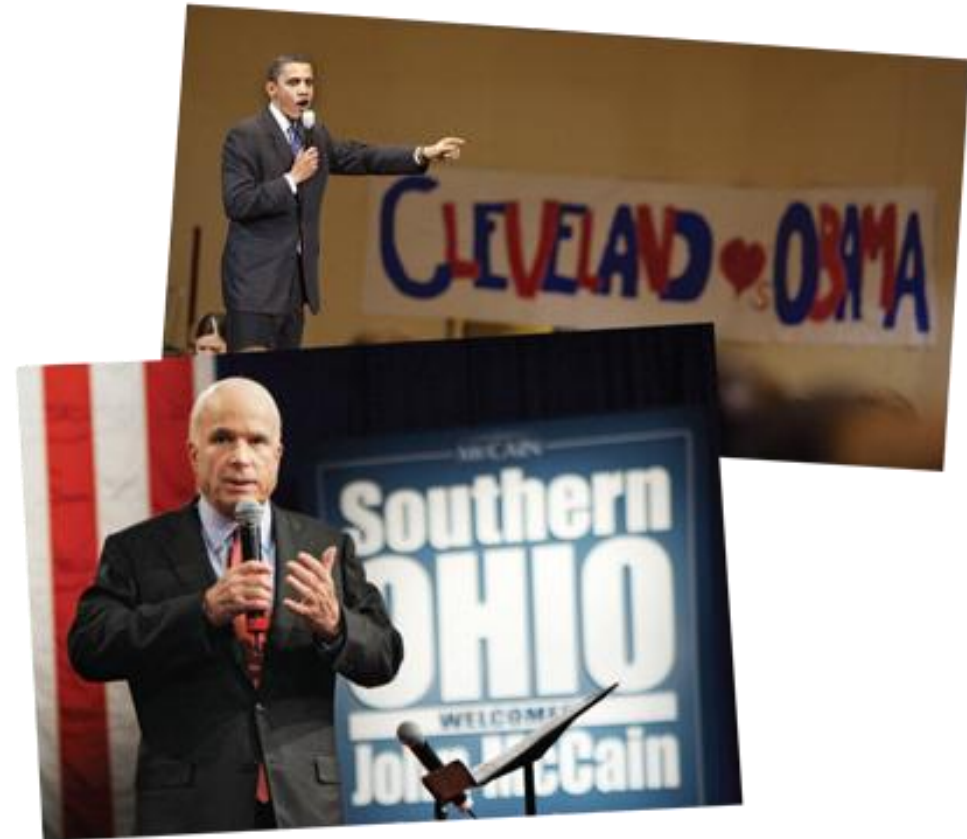
► Presidential Campaigns

- Presidential campaigns now begin long before the party conventions.
- Candidates focus their time and money on **battleground states** and **swing voters**, trying to persuade uncommitted voters to support vote for them.



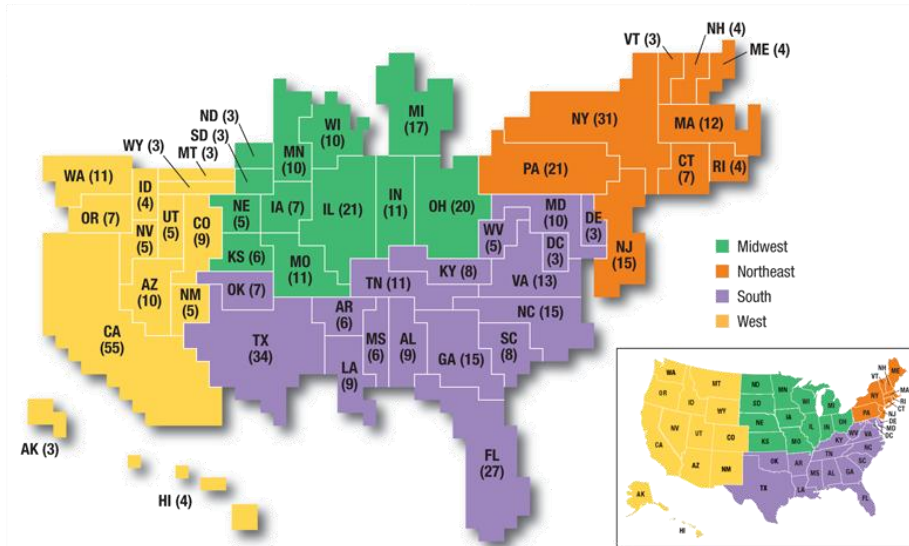
► Presidential Campaigns, cont.

- Voters are bombarded with ads, interviews, speeches, and press releases.
- Since the 1960s, candidates also routinely debate each other in nationally televised events.



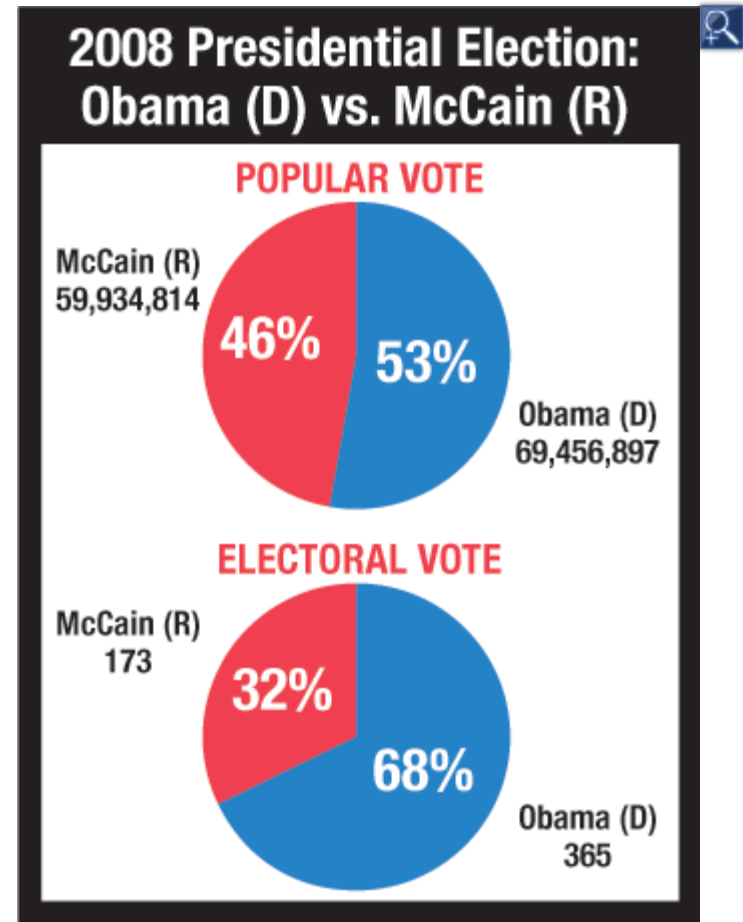
► Electoral College

- The Electoral College is made up of 538 electors who cast the actual votes for President and Vice President.
- A majority of electoral college votes (270) is required to win the election.
- Each State has as many electors as it has members of Congress.
- Each State receives at least three electors, two for its Senate seats and one for the House.



▶ Counting Electoral Votes

- The people vote for presidential electors, rather than directly for a candidate.
- The **winner-take-all system** gives *all* of a State's electoral votes to the candidate who wins the State popular vote.



Source: Federal Election Commission

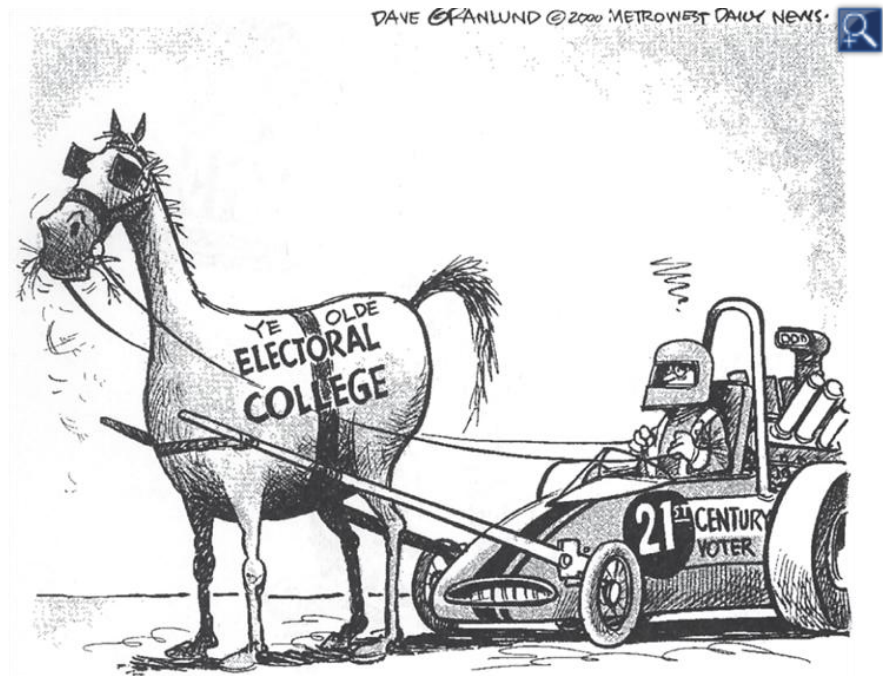
▶ Defects in the Electoral College

There are three major defects in the electoral college:

- (1) It is possible to win the popular vote in the presidential election, but lose the electoral college vote. (1824, 1876, 1888, and 2000).
- (2) Nothing in the Constitution, nor federal law, requires the electors to vote for the candidate favored by the popular vote in their State.
- (3) If no candidate gains a majority in the electoral college, the election is thrown into the House. (1800 and 1824).

► If the House Votes

- Each state is given one vote.
- States with smaller populations wield the same power as those with larger populations.
- The House vote requires a majority of 26 States.



▶ Proposed Reforms

- The *district plan* lets every State congressional district select its own electors by popular vote.
- The *proportional plan* gives each candidate a share of the State electoral vote equal to their share of the State popular vote.
- The *direct popular election* plan abolishes the electoral college. Voters would vote directly for President and Vice President. This plan has popular support but faces several obstacles:
 - It would take a constitutional amendment to get rid of the electoral college.
 - It would make individual States less important.
 - It would force candidates to campaign everywhere, at great expense.

▶ Defending the Electoral College

- Checkpoint: What are the arguments for keeping the electoral college system?
 - It is a known process. Reforms may have unknown flaws.
 - The present system usually identifies the president-elect quickly and clearly.
 - The electoral college promotes the nation's two-party system.
 - Only two presidential elections have ever gone to the House of Representatives.