ELECTION CAMPAIGNS TODAY spend millions of dollars on advertising designed to sway voters. Groups such as Project Vote Smart try to offset this advertising by distributing unbiased, non-partisan information. Students in the National Internship Program of Project Vote Smart learn to research candidates and issues, write press releases, track legislation, and maintain the group’s Web site. Interns also do the day-to-day work of political organizing, from answering phones to stuffing envelopes. They work at the project’s headquarters in Montana or its office at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts.

SECTION 1

The Nominating Process (pp.178–186)

★ The nominating process is critically important to democratic government.
★ Five major nominating methods are used in American politics.
★ The most widely used nominating method today is the direct primary.

SECTION 2

Elections (pp.198–194)

★ The election process is regulated mostly by State law.
★ Most ballots are cast at polling places in thousands of precincts around the country. However, absentee voting, early voting, and vote-by-mail are becoming increasingly common.
★ Every State now uses the Australian ballot, which is of either the party-column or the office-group type.
★ Various types of electronic voting and/or vote-counting devices are rapidly replacing both lever-operated voting machines and punch-card ballot devices in most States today.

SECTION 3

Money and Elections (pp.196–202)

★ Money plays a key role in politics but presents serious problems to democratic government.
★ Most campaign money comes from private sources, including political action committees (PACs).
★ Federal campaign laws are administered by the Federal Election Commission (FEC).
★ Loopholes in campaign finance laws allow candidates and contributors to evade some regulations.

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For: Close Up Foundation debates
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