

Political Parties and What they Do

Topic 11 p500-517

Key Terms

Political Party

**Political
Spectrum**

Partisanship

**Single-Member
Districts**

Plurality

Bipartisan

Consensus

Coalition

Ideological

**Single-Issue
Parties**

Economic

Splinter

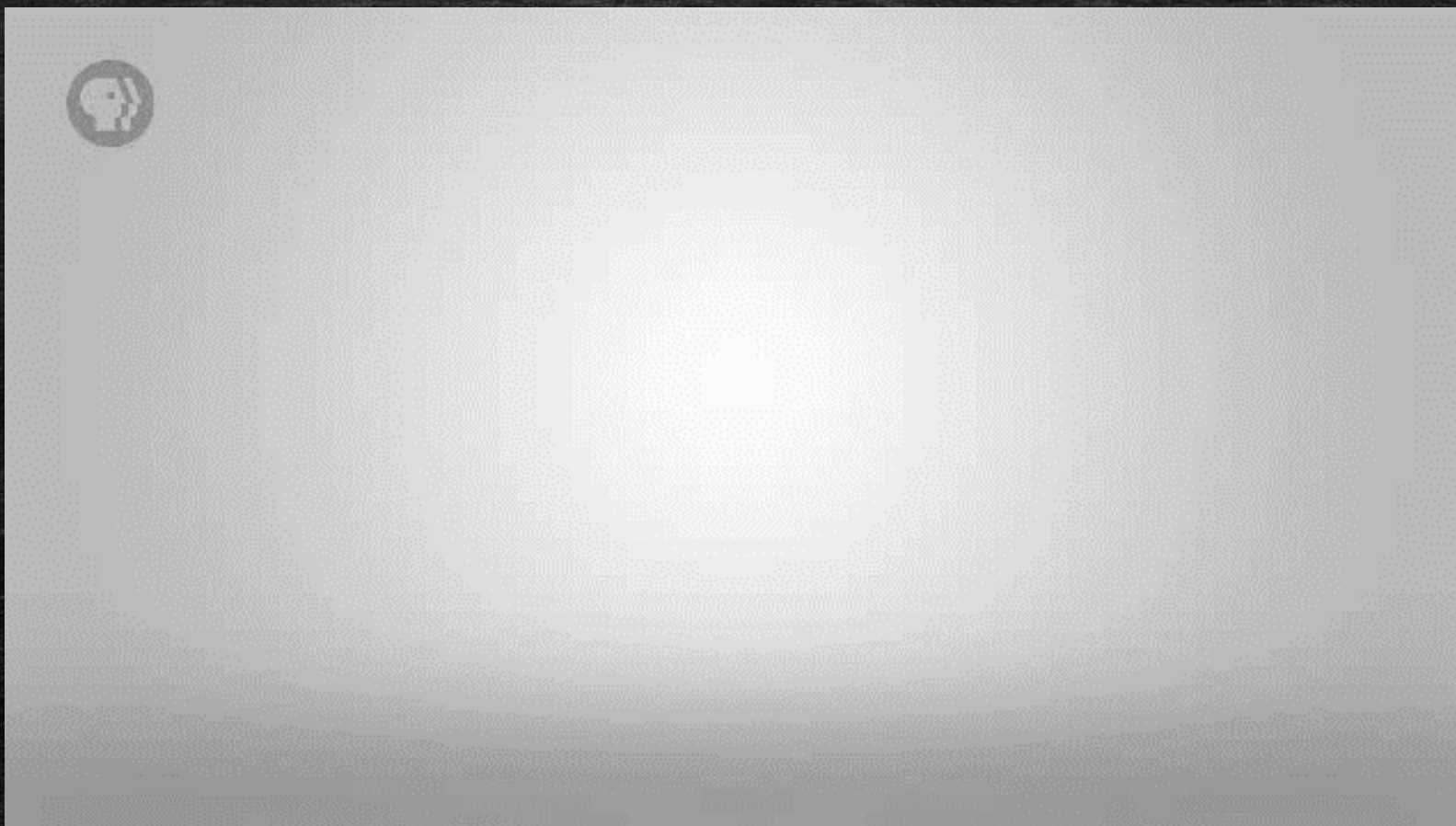
Protest Parties

Parties

Political Ideology

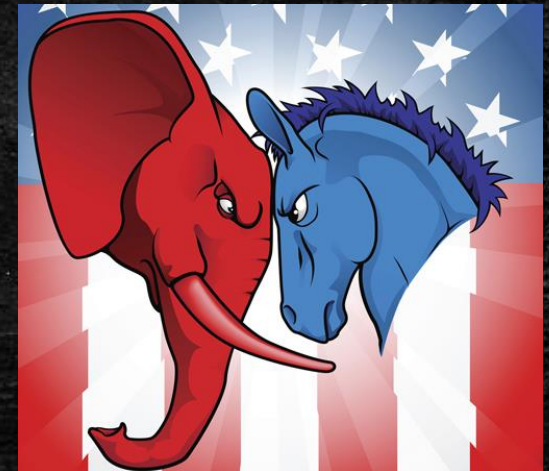


Political Parties



What is a Political Party?

- **A political party is persons, joined together on the basis of certain common principles, who seek to control government in order to secure the adoption of certain public policies and programs**
- **The Republican and Democratic parties are considered election oriented instead of principle or issue oriented**



Elements of a Political Party

- **1. Party Organization: leaders, activists, and “hangers-on”**
- **2. Party in Government: Party’s candidates and officeholders in all 3 branches**
- **3. Party in the electorate: The people that vote**

Roles of Political Parties

- **1. Nominating Candidates**
- **2. Informing and Activating Supporters**
- **3. Bonding Agent Function**
- **5. Governing**
- **6. Watchdog Function**
- **7. Help Democracy Work**

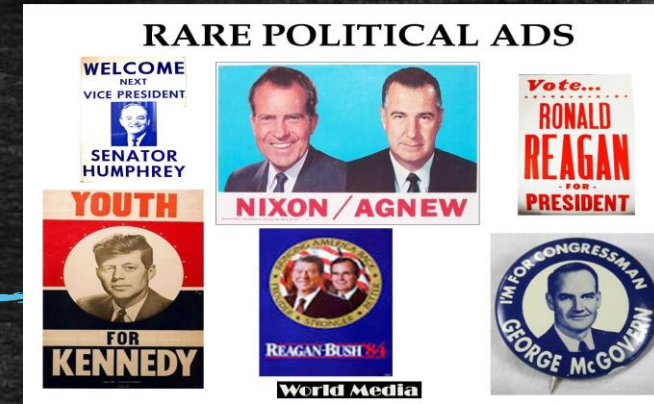
Roles of Political Parties

Nominating Candidates

- **Nomination of candidates for political office is the major function of a political party**

Informing and Activating Supporters

- **News, media, interest groups will help**
- **Political positions are identified and broadcast to the American people**



Roles of Political Parties

Bonding Agent

- **The party makes sure that the candidates selected are qualified and of good character**
- **Political parties can suffer greatly if an individual candidate is lacking**



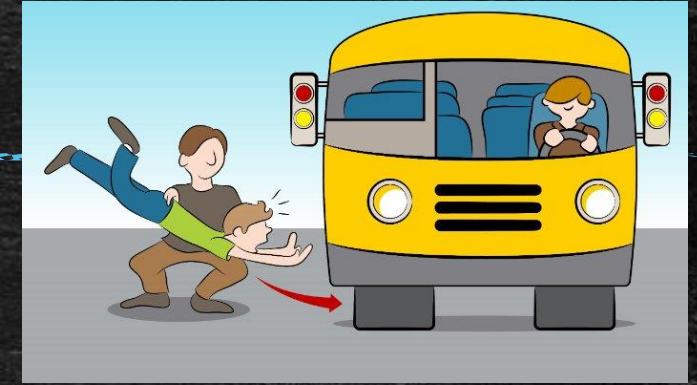
Roles of Political Parties

Governing

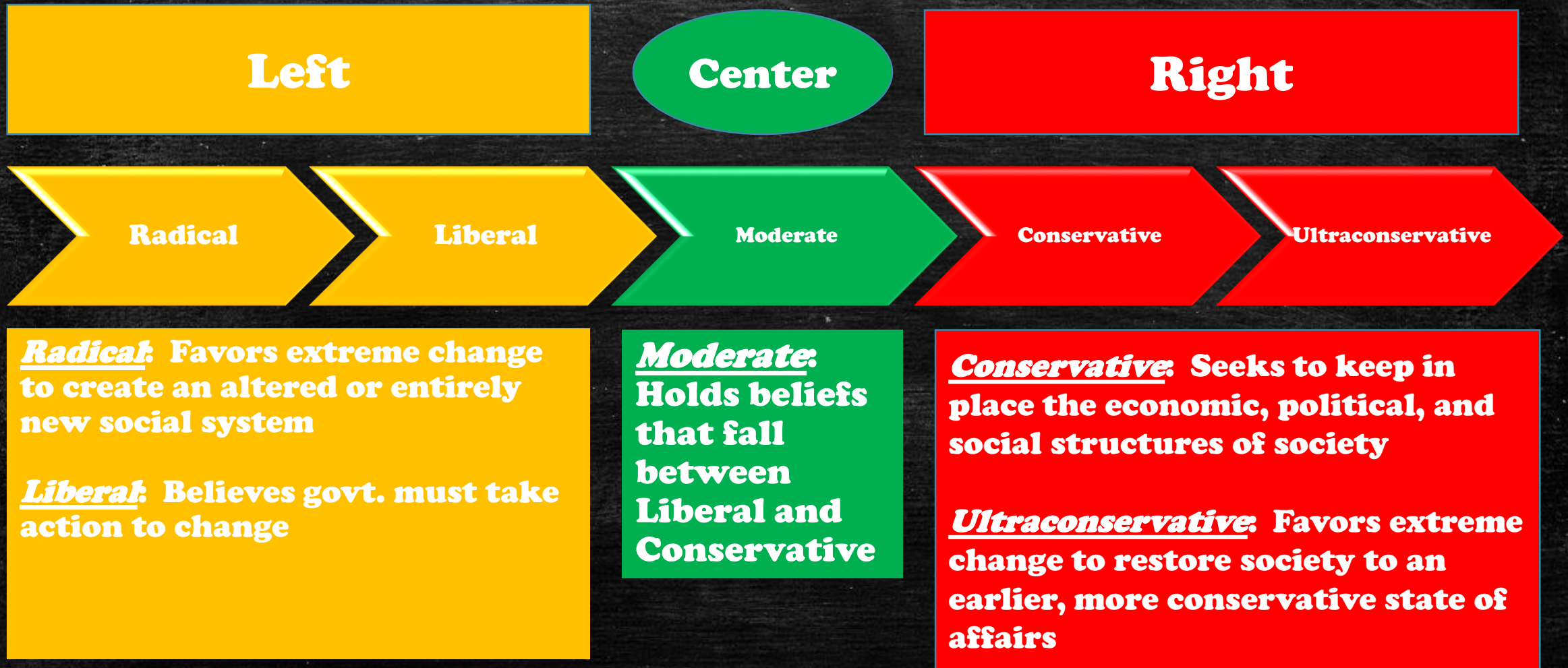
- **Elected officials are expected to following the ideology and beliefs of their political party once elected**

Watchdog

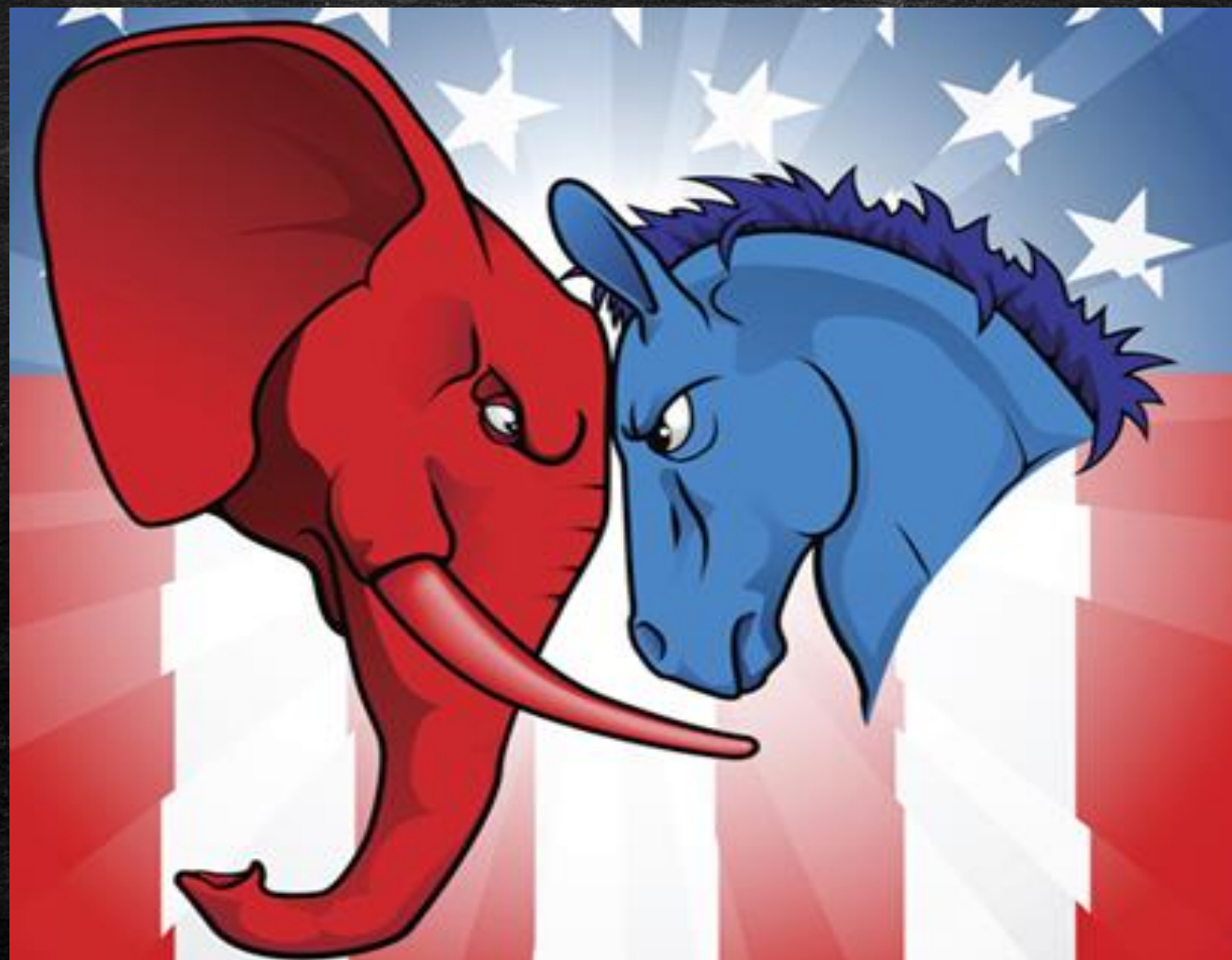
- **Parties out of power typically are quick to identify the mistakes or problems of the party in power**



Political Spectrum



The Two-Party System



Origins of Political Parties



Why Only 2 Parties?

- **Idea of 2 opposing forces started with Federalists and Anti-Federalists**
- **It has become an accepted tradition that we have a 2 party system**

Why Only 2 Parties? Single Member Districts

- **Winner take all elections**
- **The candidate who receives a plurality (largest number of votes) wins**
- **3rd Parties and minor parties rarely win because people don't want to waste a vote for a guaranteed loser**

Multiparty and One-Party Politics

- **European democracies have featured this system for years. In their legislatures, seats are held in a proportional manner so all views are represented**

Multiparty and One-Party Politics

- **Strengths: Broader representation and more diversity**
- **Weakness: Instability in government; one party finds it difficult to win a majority; coalitions are formed**
- **A coalition is a temporary alliance among several groups to control govt.**

Multiparty and One-Party Politics

- **Typically a dictatorship**
- **Really amounts to a 'no-party' system**
- **Some states almost fall into this category based on voting in the state.**
- **Internationally, countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, China, and North Korea fall into this category**

Types of 3rd Parties

- **Ideological Parties: Parties based on a particular set of beliefs (Socialist, Labor, Communist Party)**
- **Single-Issue Parties: Focus on one question**
- **Economic Protest Parties: Develop during harsh economic times**
- **Splinter Parties: Strong Personality from major party leaves to form new party**

National Party Functions

- **1. National Convention: The national voice of the party, creates party rules, and establishes party platform**
- **2. National Committee: Chosen from the state and national ranks, they make up the body of the party**

National Party Functions

- **3. National Chairperson: leader of the party in terms of organization and focus of the party**
- **4. Duties: Raise money and strengthen base of party**
- **5. Congressional Campaigns: Support the election of Congressmen at the federal and state level**