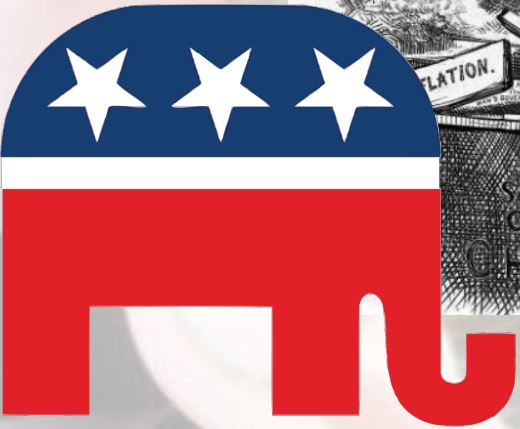


# What is a Political Party?

- **Political Party**- A group of people, joined together on the basis of common principles, who seek to control government in order to affect certain public policies and programs.
- What are the two major political parties in our government today?
  1. Democratic Party
  2. Republican Party
- \*Since our nation's beginnings, the two party system has been influential in American politics.\*

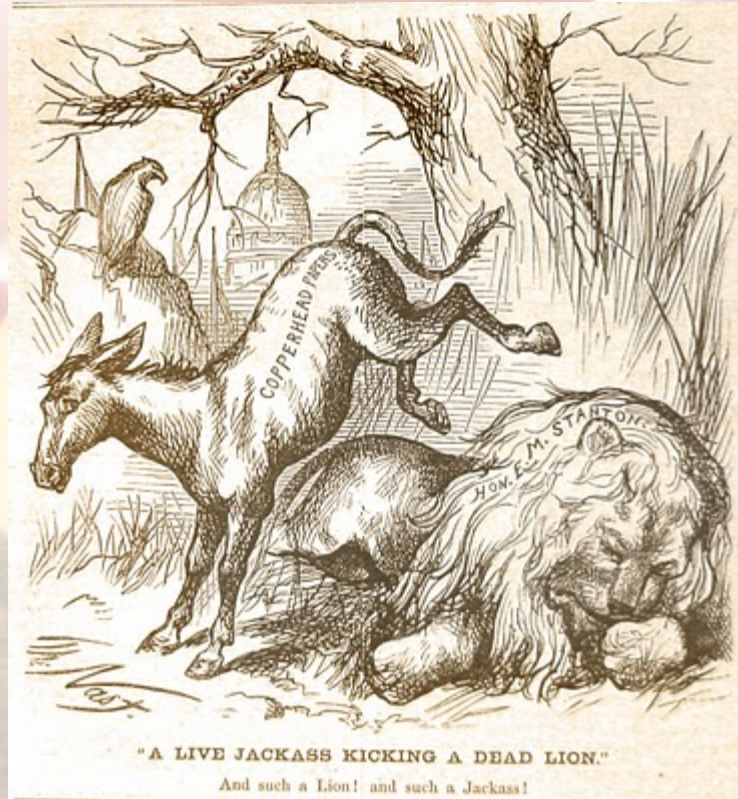


← An ass in sheep's clothing (from Aesop's Fables)

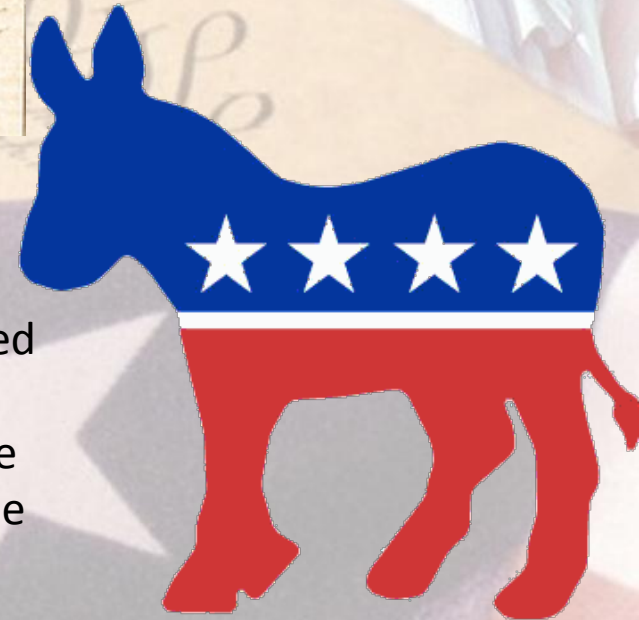


Ulysses Grant (a Republican) was serving his second term. During the midterm elections in 1874, Grant was accused of “Caesarism” due to a rumor that he was planning on running for a third term. *Harper's Weekly* published this cartoon by Thomas Nast. The elephant became the symbol for the Republican party.

Democrats are  
jackasses



Stanton is "lionized"



On January 15, 1870, in *Harper's Weekly*, Thomas Nast introduced the donkey as the symbol of the Democratic party. Nast was lambasting a northern faction of the party that had opposed the Civil War and those Democratic papers that continued to criticize Lincoln's recently deceased Secretary of War.

# Political Parties

The background of the slide is a composite image. At the top right, the head and crown of the Statue of Liberty are visible. In the center, a large, yellowed page of the US Constitution is shown, with the words 'We the People' clearly legible in cursive. At the bottom, the stars and stripes of the American flag are partially visible.

- What do they do?

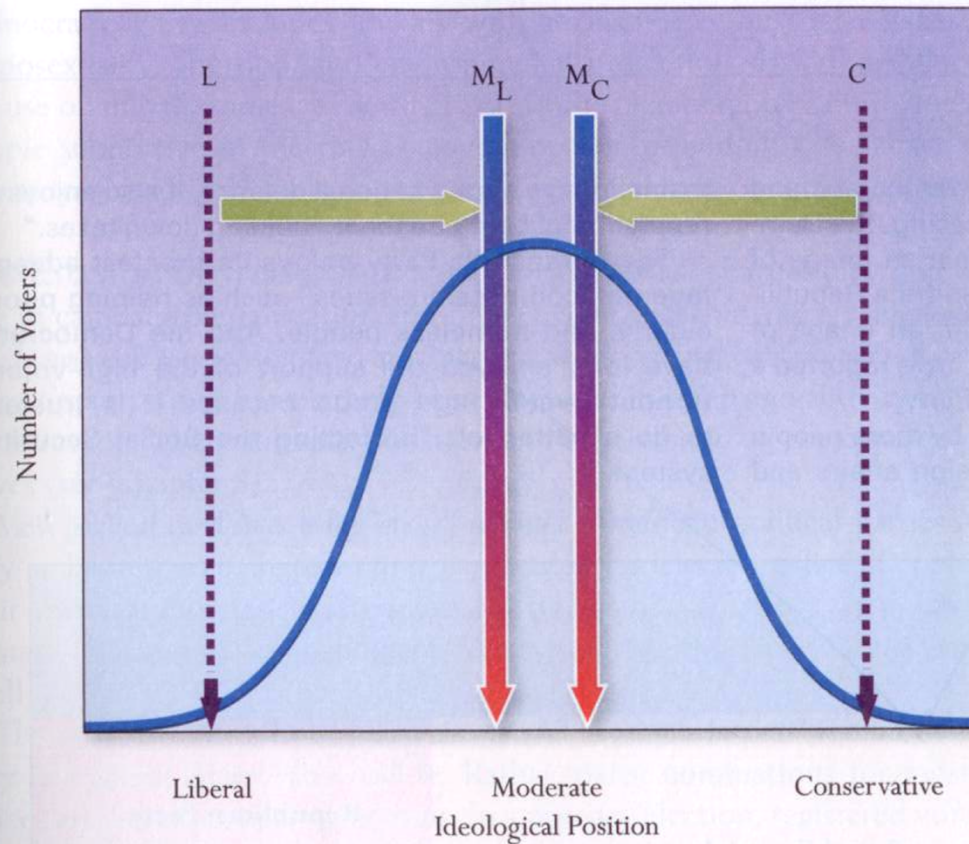
- Political Parties serve as a vital link between the people and their government (the governed and those who govern.)

- Political Parties serve the will of the people they represent.

- Political Parties bring conflicting groups together.

- They soften the impact of extremists at both ends.

# American Political Parties are Broad Based Coalitions



# Political Parties

## Functions of Political Parties:

- The main function of a political party is to nominate candidates for public office.
  - Parties find candidates for office and then gather support for them amongst the people.
  - People, in turn, vote for the candidates that the Party has selected.
- Parties try to inform and inspire the people.
  - Each party tries to inform the people as it thinks they should be informed- they choose and take stands on certain issues to gain as much support as possible. (i.e abortion, greenhouse, medicare).
  - They inform the people through pamphlets, signs, debates, bumper stickers.

# Political Parties

## Functions of Political Parties:

- **Governing**
  - Governing based on Partisanship - conducting decisions based on the strong support of their party and its policy stands.
  - Most executive offices (the cabinet for example) is based on party considerations.
  - However, political parties must work together to make bipartisan decisions in order for our government to function.
- **Acting as a Watchdog (Where was Hillary yesterday?)**
  - The *party out of power* consistently acts as a watchdog by criticizing the policies and behaviors of the *party in power*.
  - In American Politics, the *party in power* is the party that controls the Executive Branch. (president- national, governor- state).

# The Two-Party System

- What were the original two-parties that existed in the beginning of our nation?
  - The fact that our nation began with a two-party system is a leading reason for the retention of the two party system.
- HOW does the The Electoral System helps promote the Two-Party System?
  - The Electoral System is deliberately shaped by Republicans and Democrats to preserve and defend the two-party system.
    - In most states, it is difficult for minor parties and independents to get their candidates even listed on the ballot.



# Minor Parties

- Although minor parties rarely have a chance of winning the presidency, they still play a vital role in American Politics.
- There are 4 main types of minor parties:
  1. Ideological Parties
  2. Single Issue Parties
  3. Economic Protest Parties
  4. Splinter Parties

# Minor Parties

## **Why Minor Parties are Important:**

- They developed the national convention method of electing presidential candidates.
  - They can often play the “spoiler role”.
  - Minor Parties bring up issues that major parties want to avoid.
- This forces them to eventually address the issue.

# Three Components of a Party

- Political parties can be examined from a social standpoint through the roles that are played by the party's members.
- The two major parties are composed of three basic and closely interrelated components:
  1. *Party Organization*- Party leaders and activists who give time, money, and their skills to the party.
  2. *Party in the electorate*- party loyalists who vote the straight party ticket.
  3. *Party in the government*- party officeholders, those who have been elected to office in one of the 3 branches.

**NATIONAL**

National chair

National committee

National convention

**STATE**

State central committees and state conventions

Congressional district committees

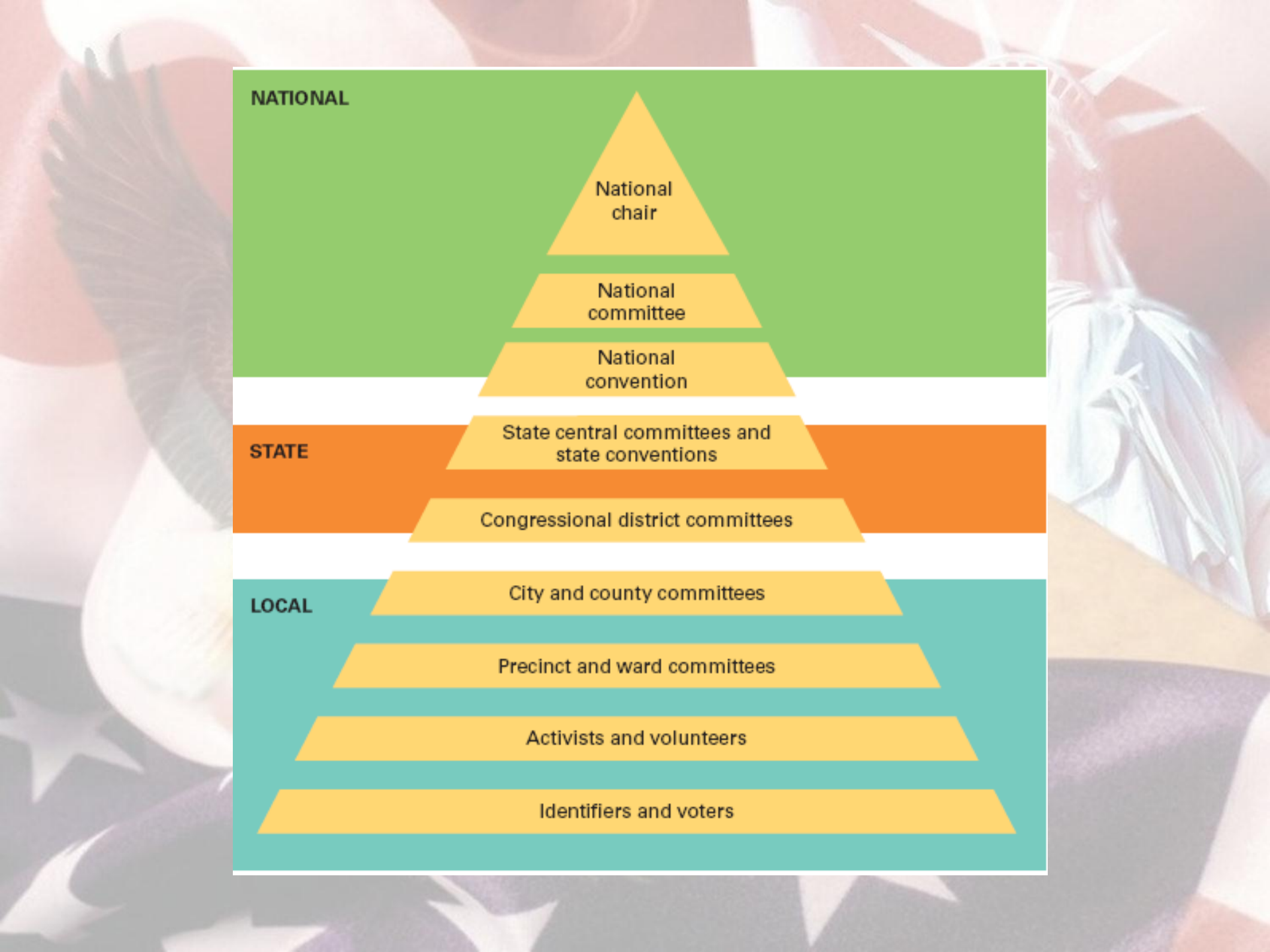
**LOCAL**

City and county committees

Precinct and ward committees

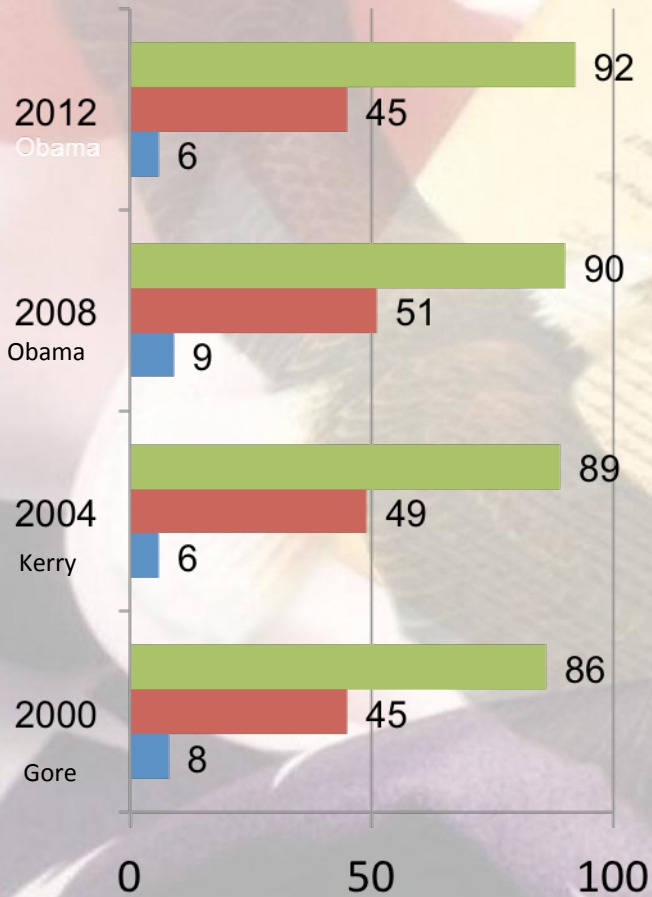
Activists and volunteers

Identifiers and voters

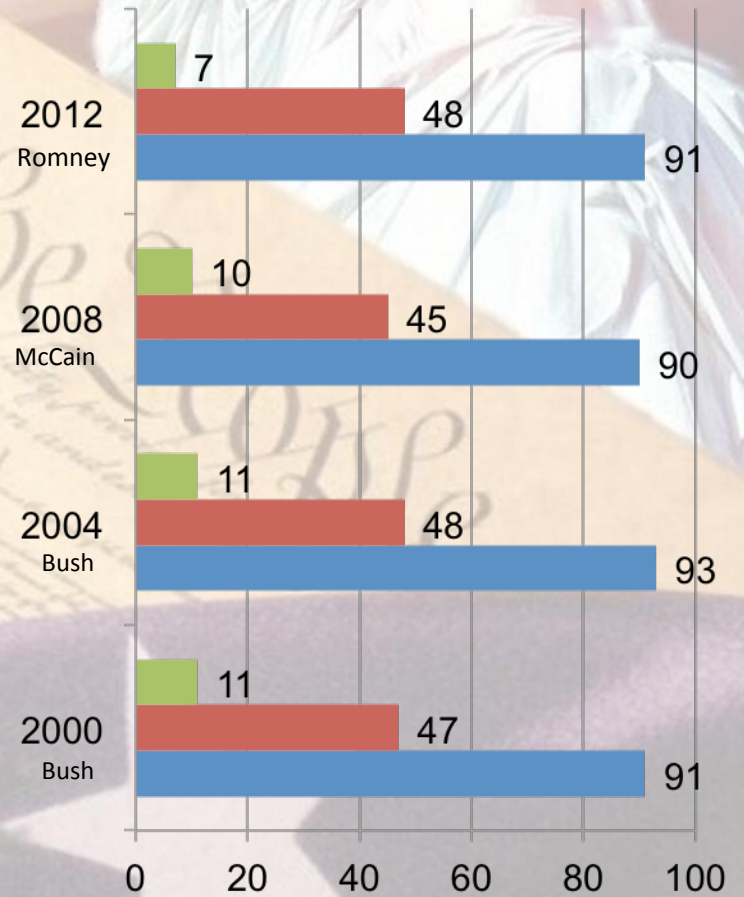


# Party Loyalty

## Democratic Candidate



## Republican Candidate



# % saying that there is a difference in what the Republicans and Democratic Parties stand for

