

Political Parties & Elections

LECTURE #1: THE OREGON SYSTEM OF ELECTIONS

OBJECTIVES

- Explain the Oregon System of Elections.
- Describe the basics of voting.
- Explain how and why it is important to become an informed voter.

Oregon's Election System Timeline

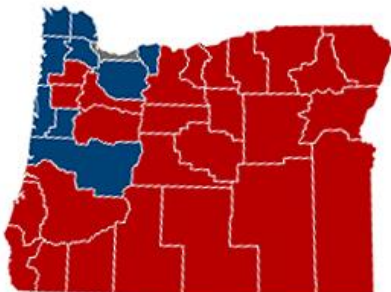
- Elections take place in four specific months:
 - November
 - March
 - May
 - September
- These months are extremely important for voting in Oregon.

Vote By Mail

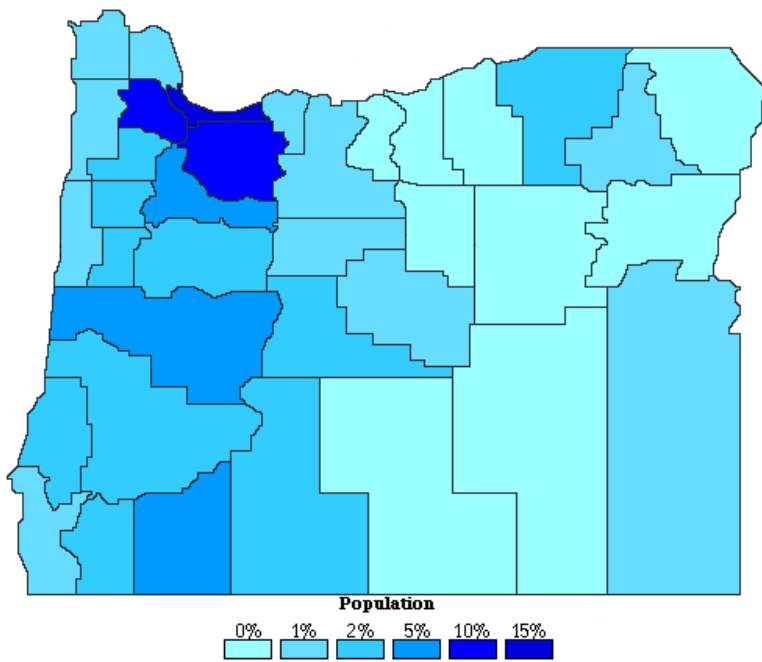
- The majority of Oregon Voters vote by mail.
- Vote passed in 1998 to use the vote by mail concept.
- Vote by mail increases participation, decreases cost, and increases voter integrity.

Oregon Elections (County Breakdown)

*Oregon County Breakdown
(2012 Elections)*



*Blue – Democrat Dominated County
Red – Republican Dominated County*



Percentage of Total Oregon Population (By County)

Reference Map: Oregon Counties and Location of Cities

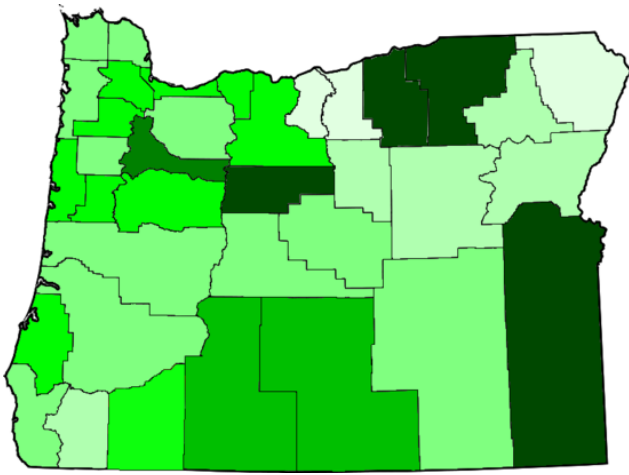


Prepared by: Population Research Center, PSU, 2008.
 Source: Geographic Information Services Unit, Oregon Department of Transportation, 2005;
 U.S. Census Bureau, 2000;
 Population Research Center, PSU, 2008.

City (242 cities)
 County (36 counties)



Shaded areas are locations of Oregon cities (urban).



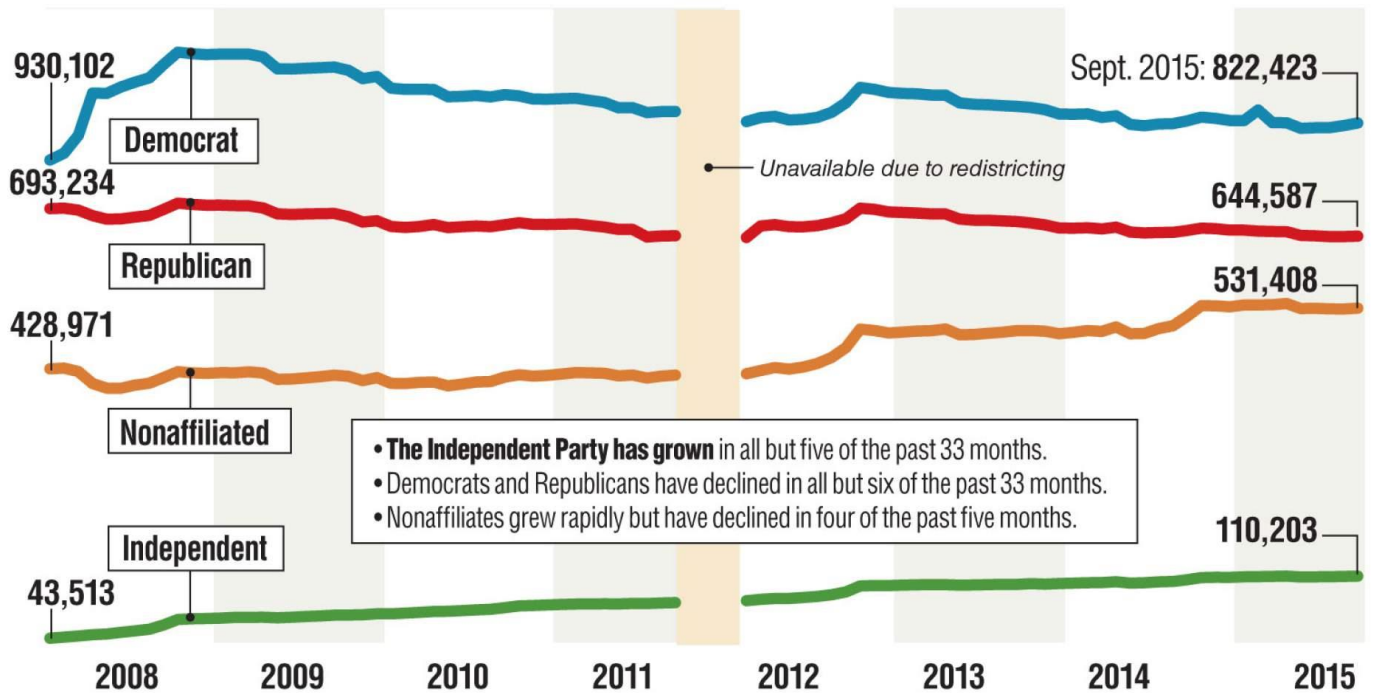
Oregon Voter Turnout by County (2012)
 Dark Green – High Voter Turnout
 Light Green – Low Voter Turnout

Primary Elections

- Democrats, Republicans, and Independent Party members nominate candidates in primaries and caucuses
 - These candidates accept nominations and run in the general election.
 - Note: In non-partisan competitions where people are running for offices of a “non-political” nature, anyone registered to vote have the opportunity to vote for those positions.
- 2015 Oregon Registered Voters:
 - Independent Party: 5% of voters
 - Democrat Party: 38% of voters
 - Republican Party: 30% of voters



Growth and decline of major parties in Oregon



• The Independent Party has grown in all but five of the past 33 months.
 • Democrats and Republicans have declined in all but six of the past 33 months.
 • Nonaffiliates grew rapidly but have declined in four of the past five months.

Registering to Vote in Oregon

- Registering to vote was invented to prevent voting fraud.
- To register to vote in Oregon, you must be:
 - At least 17 years old (you cannot vote until you are 18 years old).
 - A citizen of the United States as of at least 21 days prior to the voter registration deadline.
 - If you become a United States citizen less than 21 days before the voter registration deadline, you may not be able to register in time to vote in the election.
 - An Oregon resident.
- Note: In most other states, prison inmates and people who are “mentally incompetent” are not allowed to vote.
Is this fair? Why, or why not?



ARE YOU REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Registering to Vote

- Automatic Voter Registration (“Motor Voter” law)
 - Oregon’s new state law is the first in the U.S. to register voters automatically
 - This new law uses the DMV to automatically register citizens to vote
 - In theory, it makes the process more convenient, more accessible, and less partisan.

Where You Can Register

- “Motor Voter” law - DMV
- Online
- County Election Offices
- Some Banking Institutions
- Other public offices
- Note: Once you are registered to vote you are required to keep your address current, as well as keeping your voters card as proof that you registered to vote.

Voter Eligibility in Oregon

Eligibility Requirements:

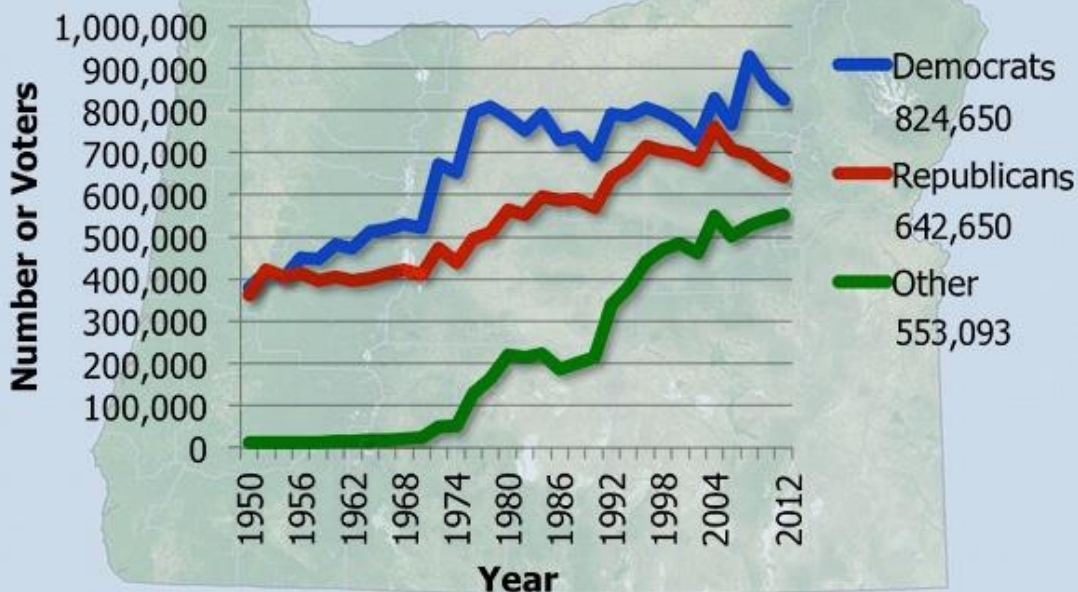
- An Oregon resident.
- At least 17 years old (you cannot vote until you are 18 years old).
- A citizen of the United States as of at least 21 days prior to the voter registration deadline.
- If you become a United States citizen less than 21 days before the voter registration deadline, you may not be able to register in time to vote in the election.

Proof of Eligibility:

- Valid Photo ID
- Paycheck Stub
- Government Document
- Bank Statements
- Utility/Mortgage Bills



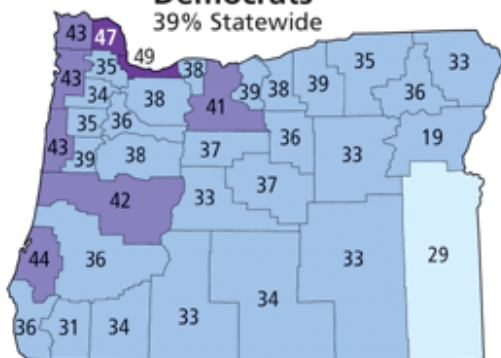
Voter Registration in Oregon



Sources: Oregon Blue Book, Oregon Votes. Data as of 3/6/2012
 Registration for the May primary ends 4/24/2012

Democrats

39% Statewide

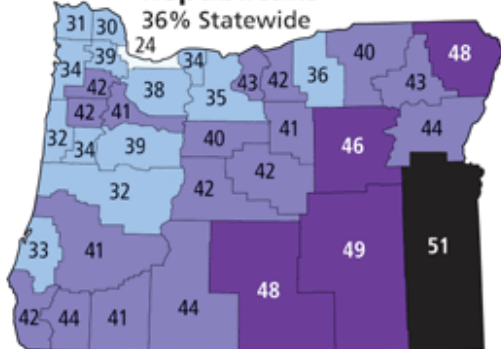


Percentage of Registered Voters



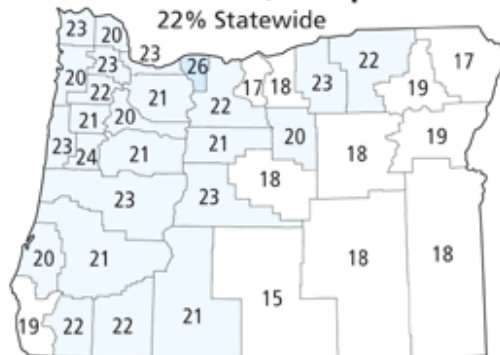
Republicans

36% Statewide



Non-Affiliated, Independents

22% Statewide



The “Oregon System”

- 1902: Oregon voters created Oregon’s initiative and referendum process.
- 1904: Oregon voters enacted the direct primary
- 1908: Oregon’s Constitution was amended to allow for recall of public officials.
 - This system of empowering the people to propose new laws or change the Constitution of Oregon through a general election ballot measure became nationally known as “the Oregon System.”
- There are 3 major types of voting categories within the Oregon Election System. These include:
 - Initiatives
 - Referendum
 - Recalls

Initiatives

- *Initiatives*: Registered voters may place on the ballot any issue that amends the Oregon Constitution or changes the Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS).
 - Established in 1902.
 - Voters petition to have a “measure” added to the ballot.
 - The measure is then voted on by the state.
 - If it passes, it becomes a law.

Referendum

- *Referendum*: Registered voters may attempt to reject any bill passed by the Legislature by placing a referendum on the ballot.
- Established in 1902.
- The Legislature from the state refer a measure to the public.
- Statewide vote taken on ballot measure
- If the referendum passes it becomes a law.

Recall Voting

- Established in 1908.
- Allows voters the ability to “recall” elected officials.
- People recall elected officials when they are “unresponsive” or out of touch with the people who elected them.

Recall Voting Process:

- Concerned voters collect signatures from other voters in the same districts, the recall is then put on the ballot, and then voted on.

What is an “Informed Voter?”

- Numerous recent polls and surveys have found that there is “widespread ignorance” among U.S. citizens when it comes to politics.
 - Ignorance – “to ignore” “to be uninformed, uneducated”



Informed Voter

- 2012 Pew Research Survey:
 - Less than half of those surveyed knew where the upcoming primary would be held.
 - Only 53 % knew that former presidential candidate Mitt Romney served as the governor of Massachusetts.
- 2014 Kaiser Family Foundation survey:
 - 44% did not realize “Obamacare” was a law.
- An informed voter - is knowledgeable about the issues and positions of candidates when voting.
- Knowledge is power!
 - It is VERY important for the general public to understand how our government works as well as to be informed about candidates and specific issues
- How to be an informed voter:
 - Register to vote!
 - Know how the state (county and city) election process works!
 - Get a state Voter’s Guide!
 - Pay attention! (watch the news, talk to others about the issues, find out where you stand)

Why is it important to be an “informed voter?”



LECTURE #2: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES



OBJECTIVES

- Explain how political parties help government.
- Describe how political parties help citizens.

What is a Political Party?

- *Political Party* – An organization of citizens who wish to influence and control government by getting their party members elected to public office.
 - Political parties bring together people who share similar political ideas.
 - Political parties select candidates, provide leadership, and set goals for political action.

Roles of Political Parties

1. Select qualified candidates to run for office.
2. Set goals for government
3. Provide leadership for government
4. They act as watchdogs.

Note: Not all political offices require party affiliation.

- *Partisan*: Belonging to a political party.
- *Non-Partisan*: Not belonging to a political party. (ex. School board, town board)

Candidate Selection

- Parties *nominate* (or select) qualified representatives for positions in office. These include:
 - President
 - Senate
 - Congress
 - State Legislature
- There are about 500,000 elected positions in the United States (Local, State, National)

Setting Goals

- Parties establish positions on issues through “*planks*” and “*platforms*”.
- Plank* – A position statement on each issue within a party’s platform.
 - Also defined as individual beliefs within a party.
 - Many *planks* make up a party *platform*.
- Platform* – A statement of the party’s official stand on major issues. Also defined as the overall party belief system.
- Party members who are elected to office often turn these *planks* into government programs.

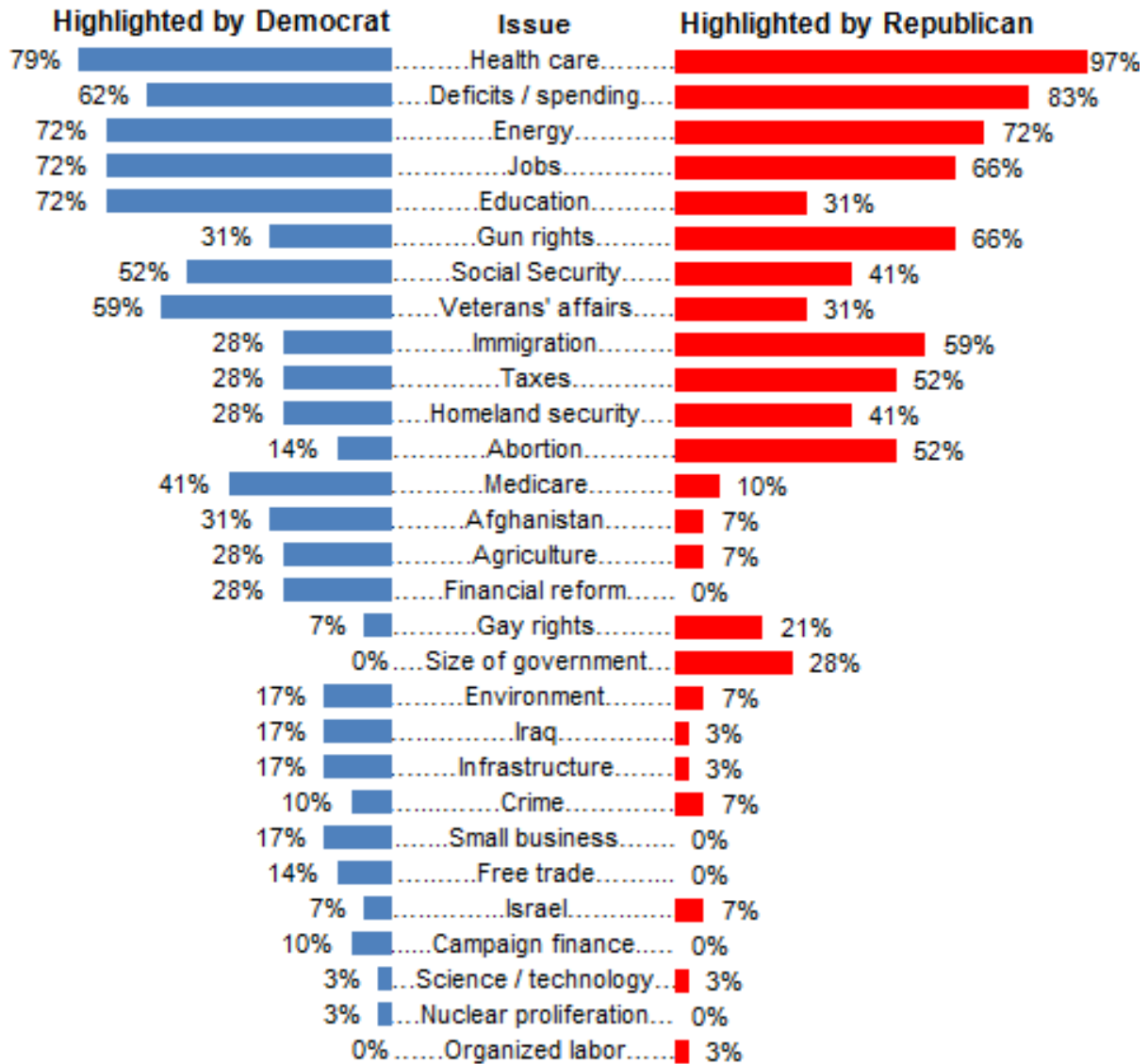
The infographic is a 2x2 grid. The top row compares Democrats (left) and Republicans (right). The bottom row compares Independents (left) and Libertarians (right). Each quadrant has a vertical title on the left and four issue-based sections: Healthcare, Economy, Immigration, and Environment. Each section contains a list of policy positions and a small icon representing the issue.

Party	Healthcare	Economy	Immigration	Environment
DEMOCRATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone should have some basic security in health care. Support and want to preserve Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow an economy that strengthens the country and middle-class families in the long run. Commit to spurring job creation, rebuilding America's infrastructure, investing in clean-energy technologies and small businesses, and restoring fairness and opportunity to the economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill centered around the principles that the federal government has a responsibility to secure our borders and undocumented workers who are in good standing must admit that they broke the law, pay taxes and a penalty, learn English, and comply with the law before they can get in line to earn their citizenship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in clean-energy to protect the ecosystems in order to pave the way to a more sustainable America. Commit to curbing effects of climate change and protecting America's natural resources. Want sustainable solutions to protect the environment and want to ensure the quality of air, water, and land for future generations.
REPUBLICANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe we need a fresh start. Oppose government-run health care. Believe patients and their doctors, not Washington, should make health care decisions. Support health care reforms that will lower costs, ensure care, and end lawsuit abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe we need to grow local jobs instead of Washington's jobs. Less government control of American industries. Use pro-growth policies and regulation to help private companies innovate and create jobs. Believe the best anti-poverty program is a job, so the focus should be on creating opportunity, not dependency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel the current system is broken. Seek policies that secure the border and boost the economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe responsible production of America's natural resources is necessary to achieve energy independence from foreign suppliers. Support domestic energy production of clean coal and hydropower, as well as solar, wind, geothermal, and nuclear power. Support drilling for oil and natural gas in an environmentally responsible way. Support the Keystone Pipeline.
INDEPENDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favor a gradual phasing out of Social Security, health care, and welfare. Favor free enterprise and competition between practitioners and health care providers. Support the people's right to choose any modality of health care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taxation should be limited to those methods provided for in the traditional Constitution, and the nation must not spend beyond its means except for in times of (justified) war or emergency. Work to eliminate national debt. Repeal the Federal Reserve Act of 1913 and allow America's free market system to flourish based on natural laws of supply and demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe it's a constitutional requirement that the federal government protect the states from foreign invasion, both military and of illegal immigrants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas mined or explored should be restored to their original condition. Preserve forests through replanting efforts, healthy management, and the use and development of alternative materials. Favor all federal government and international interference in state environmental and land matters. Favor the development of safe and inexpensive alternative energy sources and support use of other natural resources for the production of power and synthetic fuels.
LIBERTARIANS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish medical saving accounts. Deregulate the healthcare industry by repealing all government policies that increase health costs and decrease the availability of medical services. Remove barriers to safe, affordable medicines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The family budget is more important than the Federal budget. No more expensive "boondoggle" projects. No more "special interest" favors at the expense of American taxpayers. Will stop the "waste" in government by decreasing its size and power. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those workers already in the United States illegally, "amnesty" can be avoided while still offering a pathway out of the underground economy. Newly legalized workers can be assessed fines and back taxes and serve probation befitting the misdemeanor they've committed. They can be required to take their place at the back of the line should they eventually apply for permanent residency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abolish sovereign immunity. Protect the environment and save endangered species by encouraging private ownership of both land and animals.

Sources:
<http://www.dummies.com/>
<http://www.fox.com/>
<http://www.fedreserve.gov/aboutthefed/press.htm>
<http://www.fox.com/>

Learn more at www.Dummies.com

Republican Issues vs. Democrat Issues



Political Issues:

Where do you stand?

<https://www.isidewith.com/>

Providing Leadership

- Political Parties provide leadership in two major ways:
 1. Developing/Making Laws
 - Party members in Congress select Majority and Minority Floor Leaders and Whips to provide leadership in making laws.
 2. Developing and maintaining efficient programs.
 3. The political party represented by the President (executive), is known as the party “in office”.
 4. The Executive (President, Governor, Mayor) often appoints loyal members of the party in office to high government posts.

Acting as “Watchdogs”

- At the conclusion of an Election:
 - The losing party watches to see if the winning party makes any mistakes.
 - Reports any wrongdoing.
 - Ensures that the party “in power” remain honest and hardworking.

How Parties HELP Citizens

- Political Parties help by:
 - Fulfilling their responsibilities in our Democracy.
 - Make our individual voices heard.
 - Help to inform us by finding ways we can participate.

How Parties INFORM citizens

- Parties inform by:
 - Discussing Party “Planks” and “Platforms” also called an agenda.
 - Through mail, newspapers, radio stations.
 - Arranging meetings and forums with candidates.
 - Go door to door (*canvassing*) with volunteers handing out fliers while gaining an understanding for the concerns of citizens.

Where does each 2016 Presidential candidate rank on Social Media presence?

Overall (Republican and Democratic)

Ranking	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	YouTube
1	Mike Huckabee	Bernie Sanders	Donald Trump	Bernie Sanders
2	Ben Carson	Donald Trump	Hillary Clinton	Rick Perry
3	Ted Cruz	Hillary Clinton	Bernie Sanders	Mike Huckabee
4	Rand Paul	Ted Cruz	Scott Walker	Hillary Clinton
5	Hillary Clinton	Jeb Bush	Jeb Bush	Donald Trump
6	Donald Trump	Rand Paul	Rand Paul	Lindsey Graham
7	Bernie Sanders	Scott Walker	Chris Christie	Marco Rubio
8	Marco Rubio	Lindsey Graham	Rick Perry	Ben Carson
9	Rick Perry	Rick Santorum	Bobby Jindal	Rand Paul
10	Jeb Bush	Ben Carson	Marco Rubio	Chris Christie