

Explain how the different processes work in U.S. Congressional election.

The process and outcomes in U.S. congressional elections are impacted by:

- Incumbency advantage phenomenon
- Open and closed primaries
- Caucuses
- General (presidential and midterm) elections

REGULARLY SCHEDULED ELECTIONS

- Elections are held at fixed intervals that cannot be changed by the party in power.
 - N_____ government establishes W_____ they will be held
 - States determine H_____ the voting will occur
 - It does not make any difference if the nation is at war, as we were during the Civil War, or in the midst of a crisis, as in the Great Depression; when the calendar calls for an election, the election is held.

Voting On Tuesday

- Elections for members of C_____ occur on the f_____ T_____ after the first M_____ in N_____ of e_____ -numbered years.
- Although there are some exceptions (for special elections or peculiar state provisions), participants know *in advance* just when the next election will be.
- The predetermined timing of elections is one of the defining characteristics of democracy in the United States.
- Regular chance to replace leaders (a_____)

FIXED, STAGGERED, AND SOMETIMES LIMITED TERMS

- **Electoral system is based on fixed terms, meaning that the length of a term in office is set, not indefinite**
 - The term of office for the U.S. House of Representatives is t_____ years (can be elected as many times as they want)-no term limit
 - The term of office for the Senate is s_____ years (can be elected as many times as they want)
 - The term of presidency is f_____ years (can only serve t_____ full terms – _____ amendment)
 - Our electoral system has s_____ terms for some offices, meaning that not all offices are up for election at the same time
 - A_____ 4_____ House members are up for election every t_____ years
 - Only o_____ -third of the senators are up for election at the same time
 - President is elected every f_____ years
- **Our electoral system has limits on the number of terms a person can hold a particular office**
 - The _____ Amendment limits presidents to t_____ terms
 - Despite their popularity, proposals for term limits have repeatedly lost when they have come to a vote in Congress
 - If term limits are to be imposed on Congress, it will have to be done either by an a_____ to the U.S. Constitution since the Supreme Court has ruled term limits for congressional offices (as set by the s_____) is u_____

WINNER-TAKE-ALL

- The candidate with the m_____ votes w_____
- Most American election districts are s_____ -member districts, meaning that in any district for any given election, the voters choose o_____ representative or official (i.e. House of Reps districts)
- When a single-member district is combined with the winner-takes-all rule, there is a powerful push to sustain a t_____ -party system
- In contrast to the winner-takes-all rule, p_____ representation r_____ minor parties and permits them to participate in government
- In many other countries, political seats (offices) are awarded to parties that come in 2nd, 3rd, or 4th place that still win votes (not in the United States).

Example: If one state had 10 legislative seats in Congress, and a party wins 20% of the vote, that party would win 2 congressional seats in Congress. THAT DOES NOT HAPPEN IN USA. No p_____ r_____

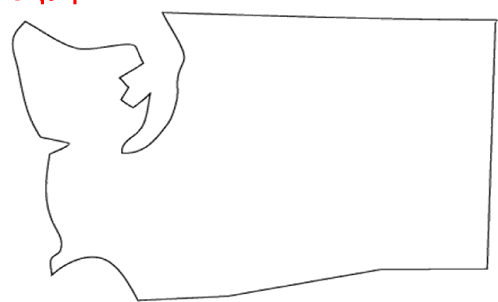
- In the United States, the winner of the p_____ (highest number of votes) wins.
- No political seats awarded for 2nd place in the U.S.
- In the U.S. House of Reps, the voters of each district choose o_____ representative or official for that district
- Candidate who receives the m_____ votes (p_____) is the winner (difference between a plurality election and majority election)
 - Plurality Election
 - Majority n_____ needed
 - Largest # of votes wins-**P**_____
 - AKA: First-past-the-post
 - No Run-off election
 - Single-Member District vs. “At-Large” Districts Ex. S_____ or Wyoming

How does this support the 2-Party System?

SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS & THE 2-PARTY SYSTEM

Washington = 10 Reps Single-Member Districts:

- Individuals compete,
1 winner in each district- plurality vote
- Minor parties get a small # in each and don't win!!



At-Large Election/Proportional Representation

- Parties compete statewide
- % vote = % of seats
- Minor parties a win a little

RUNNING FOR CONGRESS

PRIMARY ELECTIONS

- Definition – elections in which the voters choose which c_____ will represent their p_____ party in the general election (Democrat vs. Democrat, Republican vs. Republican)
- **Closed**
 - Used in most states
 - O_____ r_____ party m_____ can v_____ for partisan offices, no c_____ of party lines
- **Open**
 - I_____ may vote, voters get ballot of any one party they wish
 - Crossing of party lines allowed >>> danger of “r_____”
- **Blanket (“free love”)**
 - Independents may vote, voters can “mix and match” their votes
 - i.e., vote for candidates of d_____ parties for different offices
 - Unconstitutional

- Who establishes when we vote? Who establishes how we vote?

- **Why does our current voting system favor a two-party system?**

- **How can we change this?**

FACTORS AFFECTING OUTCOMES OF CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

- **Incumbency: The Greatest Influence**
 - Scope of incumbency advantage
 - +90% of Congressmen who run are reelected, +80% of Senators
 - Lack of competitiveness >> charges of “permanent congress” and the call for congressional term limits (ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court when states attempted to limit terms for their members)
 - **Advantages of Incumbents**
 - **Franking Privilege**
 - Staff already in place
 - Patronage
 - **Casework done for constituents**
 - **Gerrymandered Districts (Safe Seats)**
 - **Name Recognition**
 - **Pork Barrel** projects for the district- “Log Rolling”
 - “W_____ Chest” built up of financial support to discourage challengers from running from. PACs donate most of their money to incumbents because they tend to win most often.

CONGRESS: THE INCUMBENCY ADVANTAGE

Incumbents are those already in o_____. Typically, 90% of Congress are incumbents; rarely lose an election. Why?

- **Franking privilege** allows for members of Congress, and their staff, to send m_____ to their c_____, or supporters, without having to pay postage. This allows for Congress to be able to c_____ more effectively with their s_____.

- Staffers-who sole job is to assist the incumbent in all areas including re-election. AA= Administrative Assistant- office mgr, LA=Legislative Assistant- help member of Cong with legis. work
- P_____
 - One of the key inducements use by political machines. It is a job, promotion, or contract that is given for political reasons rather than for merit or competence alone.
- N_____ recognition
- C_____ (constituency service)
 - Legislative work on behalf of individual constituents to solve their problems with government agencies and programs- Social Security, Immigration, West Point.
- Money, esp. from PACs for re-election campaigns
- G_____
- P_____ Barrel projects for the district
- “War Chest” built up of f_____ support to discourage challengers from running

CONGRESS: THE INCUMBENCY ADVANTAGE

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- Casework (constituency service)
 - Legislative work on behalf of individual constituents to solve their problems with government agencies and programs

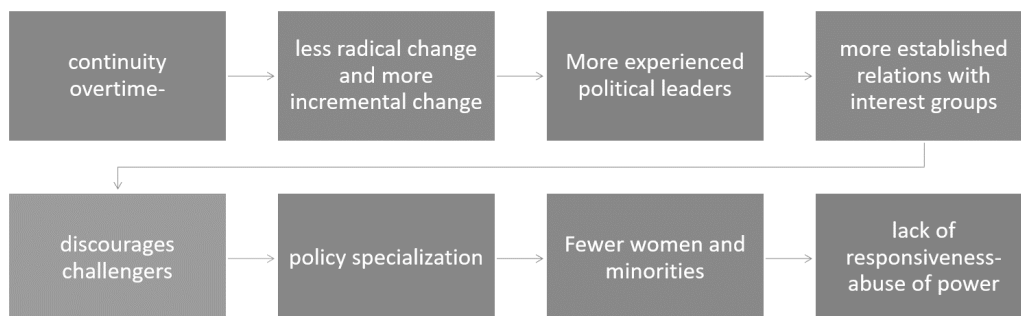
***Explain how case work may impact a members’ attention to legislation? AP Gov Past FRQs 2012 #1c**

Case work is work done on the behalf of a constituent to solve their problems with the government agency and program. Case work is often tedious and time consuming. Casework diverts resources and staff, thus reducing member’s ability to focus on legislation. As a result, case work takes away from the important work of legislation.

- **Coattail effect** – The extent of presidential p_____ affects both House and Senate elections
 - President’s party generally gains seats in the House and Senate in presidential election year
 - President’s p_____ generally loses seats in the House and Senate in m_____ election year
 - Media, especially in S_____ elections
- **Party affiliation** – still a strong predictor of v_____ behavior
- **Issues** – House seats lost relates to presidential popularity/e_____ conditions

INCUMBENCY ADVANTAGE: Consequences

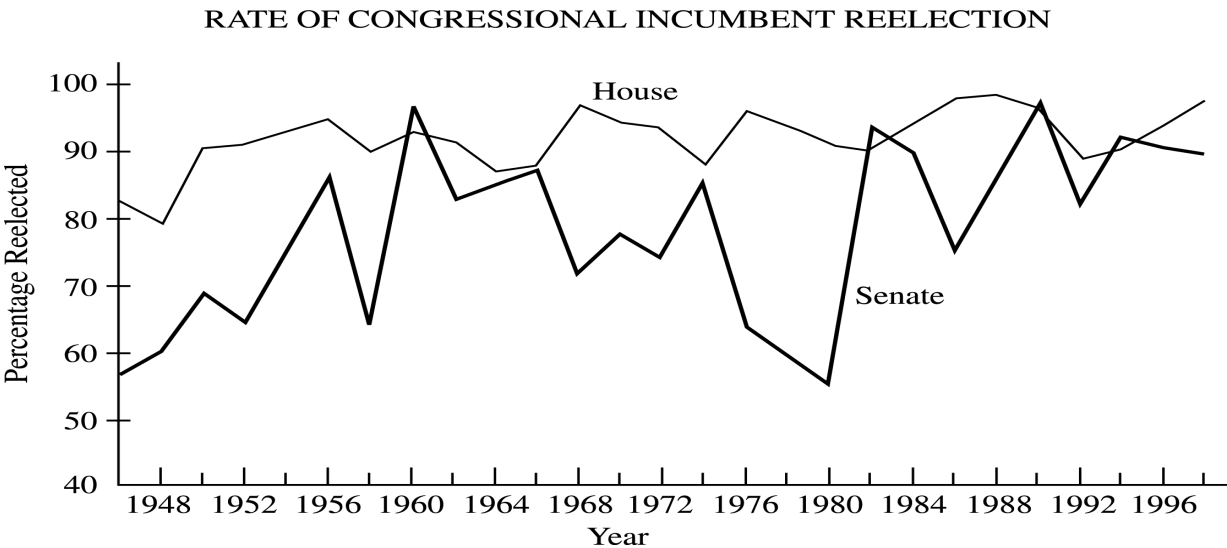
Incumbency advantage is obviously good for the incumbents in office, but it may not always be good for the nation's political process. Incumbents in office may be more likely to abuse their power and start to get a false sense that they do not have to work as hard to get reelected. It is also harder for new candidates with new political ideas to get into the system so often older traditional ideas are just recirculated.



The _____ midterms or midterm elections are general elections which are held at the m_____ of a presidency this is usually two years into a four-year term period. A_____ members of the h_____ of representatives are up for reelection in the midterms in addition to approximately a

t_____ of the senate and the results can change the political landscape. Usually, the party that holds the p_____, l_____ seats.

THE HOUSE	THE SENATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I_____ campaigns; In 2000, 98% of House incumbents were successful• Weak challenger campaigns (don't have perks such as f_____ privilege)• Strong challenger campaigns (due to incumbent vulnerability and challenger wealth)• Open seat campaigns (through death, retirement, redistricting-promotes some turnover)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The s_____-year term and the n_____ exposure make a S_____ seat c_____• The essential tactics of Senate races are much like those for the House• Incumbency is an advantage for senators, although not as much as for representatives, because senators run s_____, while reps have a g_____ district• Competitive elections increase in number when Senate only controlled by a few votes



The graph above shows reelection rates for incumbents in the House and Senate. From this information and your knowledge of United States politics, perform the following tasks.

- Identify two patterns displayed in the graph.
- Identify two factors that contribute to incumbency advantage. Explain how each factor contributes to incumbency advantage.
- Discuss one consequence of incumbency advantage for the United States political process.