

Political Party Organization



Party Membership

Anyone can feel aligned with a political party's beliefs

To officially be a registered member:

1. 18 years old (lowered with the 26th Amendment in 1971)
2. Registered to vote
3. U.S. citizen

What can party members do?

-Vote

-Donate money

-Donate their time

Gallup Poll

	Republicans	Independents	Democrats
	%	%	%
2021 Sep 1-17	29	41	29
2021 Aug 2-17	28	40	29
2021 Jul 6-21	26	43	27
2021 Jun 1-18	24	44	30
2021 May 3-18	29	35	33
2021 Apr 1-21	26	40	31
2021 Mar 1-15	25	41	32
2021 Feb 3-18	26	41	32
2021 Jan 21-Feb 2	25	50	25
2021 Jan 4-15	24	45	30

List of Functions	Description of the Functions of Political Parties
Nomination	Officially sponsor individuals to elected office or sponsor individuals with shared political beliefs
Organization	Organize political campaigns to win public office for nominated individuals
Policy choices	Provide clear choices to voters of individuals nominated for office or those with differing viewpoints
Coordination	Coordinate among members elected to office; develop public policy following party principles

Party Organization

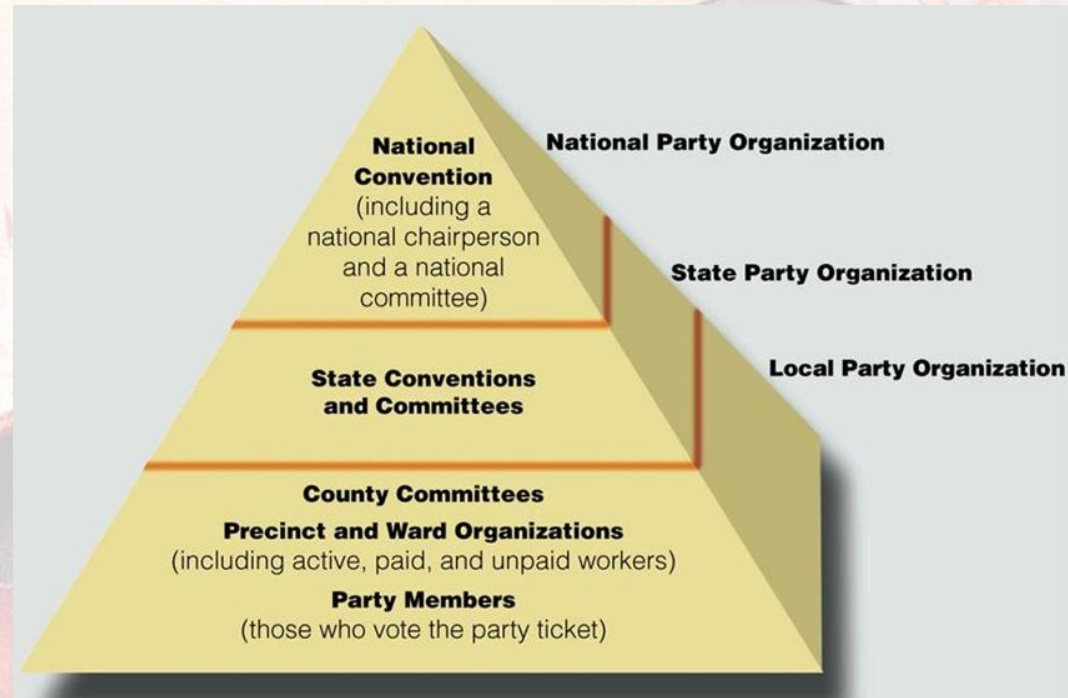
The responsibilities of campaigning and fundraising are organized just like the U.S. government

-Local level: individual voters → precinct → ward → city

(precinct - term for a district or area; several precincts make up a ward)

-State level: county, state committees & conventions

-National level: national committees



Organization of Political Parties

National committee



State central committees



County committees



City committees



Ward committeemen and committeewomen



Precinct captains
(local committeemen and committeewomen)



The American voters who are members of the party



Local Level

- The role of a party committee at the county level is to support party efforts at the local, state, and national levels
 - Local committees: conduct campaigns; recommend appointments and candidates; raise money; crucial to party success; precinct captains encourage voters to cast ballots for the party's candidates
1. All voting takes place here
 2. Most volunteers work at this level
 3. Local elections can impact people the most

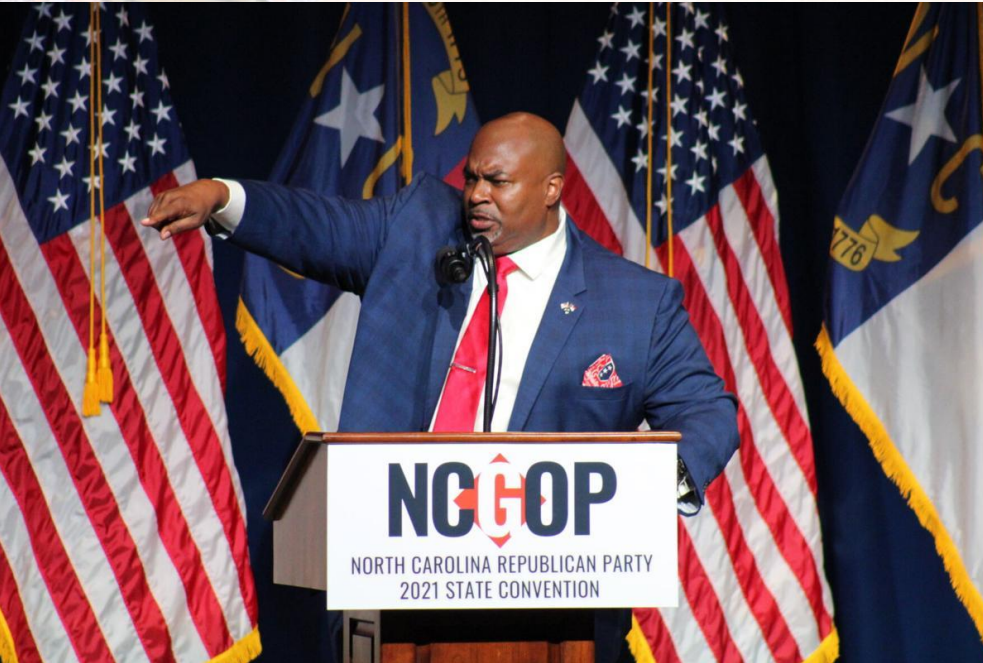


Wake County Board of Elections Operation Center

State Level

-Focus on several elections

-State central committees: supervise operations within the states; maintain harmony and organization; raise money and aid candidates



National Level

-National committee: sets dates, rules, and location of national convention; publishes and distributes literature; arranges speakers; aids presidential candidate

-Majority of party funding is spent at this level

-Party platform and goals are developed at this level

National Convention: meeting held every four years; used to be where presidential candidates were chosen, and the party would develop their official beliefs on policy issues (platform)

-Now more just a “kick-off” to the campaign



Republicans

Beliefs:

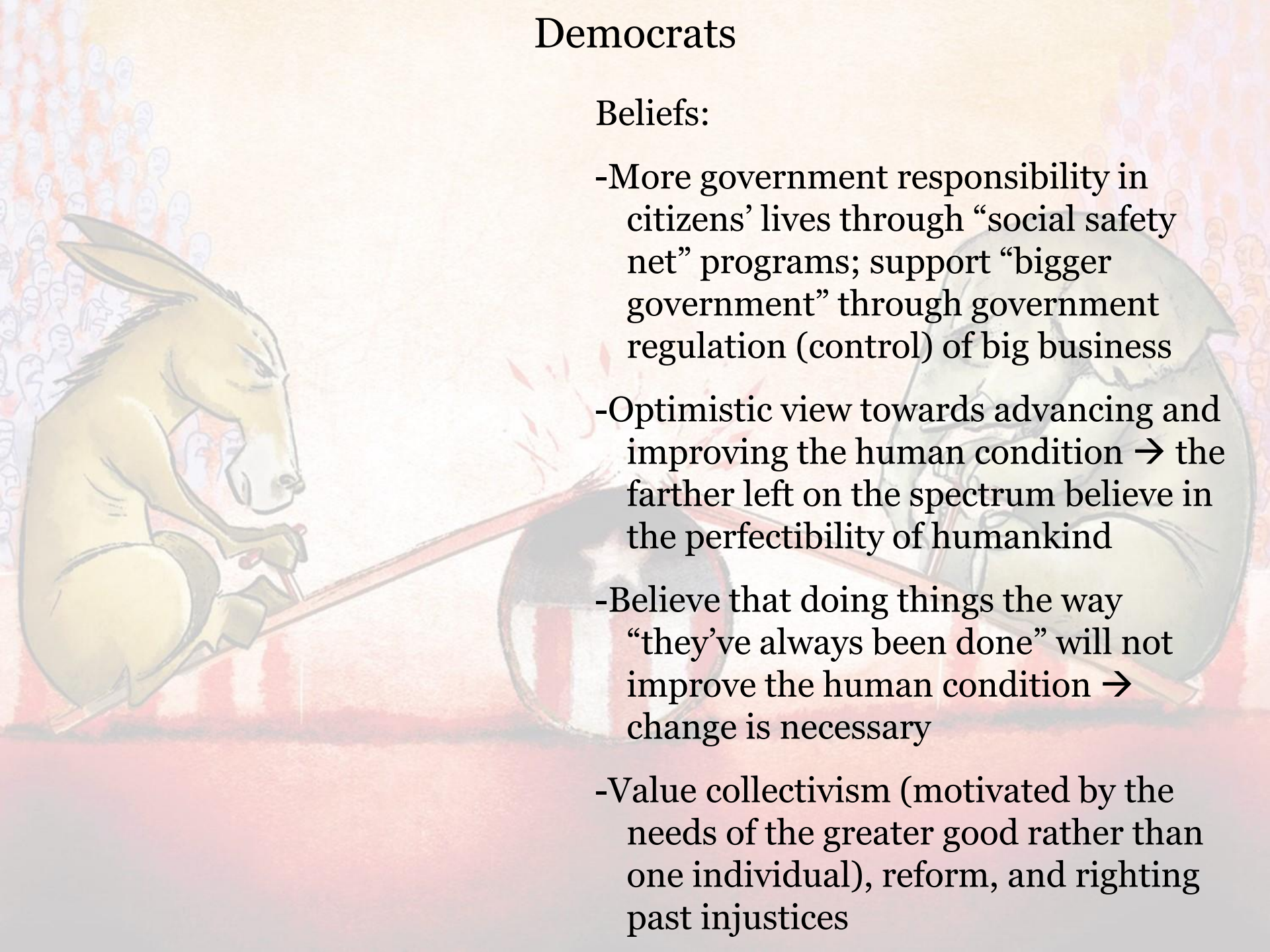
- Less government regulation of business: believe that allowing supply and demand to set prices in a free-market economy will cause economic growth for business, leading to an increase in jobs and higher standard of living
- “Rugged Individualism”: belief that nearly all individuals have the ability to succeed on their own with perseverance and grit without reliance on others → more individualized approach towards improving the human condition
- Confidence in the accumulated wisdom and values of past generations
- Values protection of property, national security, American Exceptionalism



Democrats

Beliefs:

- More government responsibility in citizens' lives through “social safety net” programs; support “bigger government” through government regulation (control) of big business
- Optimistic view towards advancing and improving the human condition → the farther left on the spectrum believe in the perfectibility of humankind
- Believe that doing things the way “they’ve always been done” will not improve the human condition → change is necessary
- Value collectivism (motivated by the needs of the greater good rather than one individual), reform, and righting past injustices

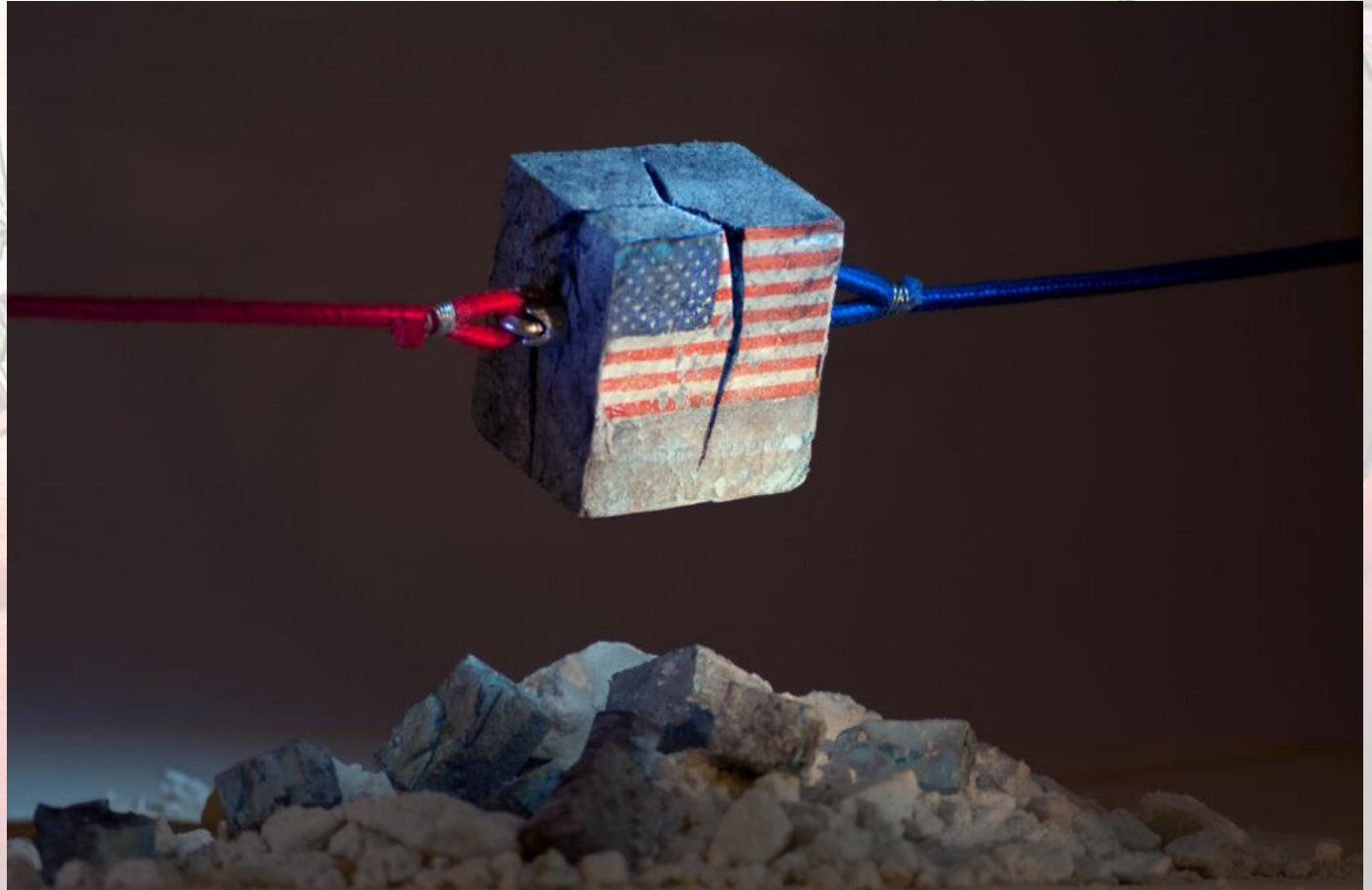


Political Philosophy

Liberal

Moderate: person who is somewhere in-between the major political parties; may have some beliefs which favor one party and other beliefs that favor the other

Conservative



Formation of Third Parties

Formed in the belief that the two major parties have left specific issues either unaddressed by the major parties or inappropriately addressed

Types of Third Parties:

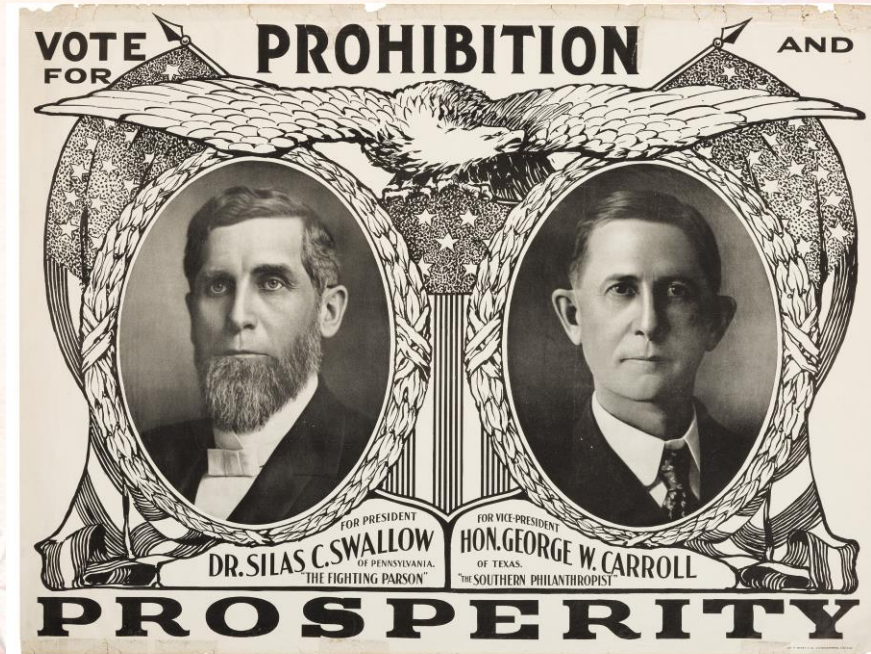
1. Single-issue party: usually stems from a current social, economic, or moral issue; usually only temporarily active

(e.g. Prohibition Party – banning of alcohol)

2. Single-idea: believe in changing society based on ideology or philosophy

(e.g. American Socialist Party, American Communist Party)

3. Single-person: independent candidate who did not get support from the two major parties; usually the party doesn't survive past the defeat of their candidate

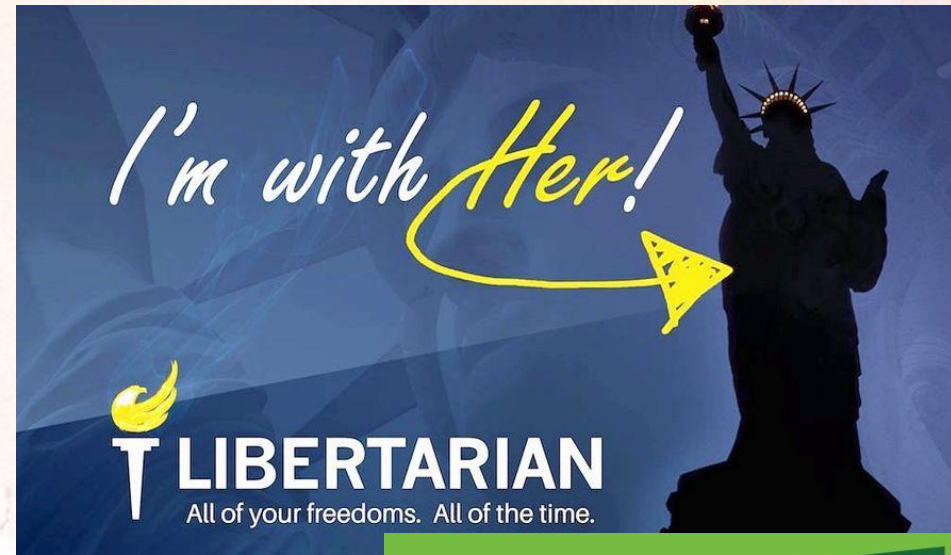


Today's Third Parties

-Libertarian Party: founded in 1971; strongly opposes any government interference into personal, family, and business decisions; believe all Americans should be free to live their lives and pursue their interests as they see fit as long as they do no harm to another; “small government”

-Green Party: founded in 1984; peace and non-violence, ecological wisdom, grassroots democracy, social justice, decentralization of wealth and power, and community-based economics

-Constitution Party: founded in 1992; organized in response to a perceived shift away from "limited and empowered local government, and very broad and significant individual freedoms“, goal to limit the federal government to its delegated, enumerated, Constitutional functions



Party “Platforms”

Statement of a party’s beliefs and their position on current issues

- Planks: what the party’s policy is on a single issue → planks make up the platform
- Written in the spring and summer prior to the presidential conventions
- For parties challenging a sitting president, the platform committee holds hearings around the nation, in person and online, to hear from the public
- Truth is, the platform-writing committee, composed of major party figures and representatives of interest groups closely linked with the party and the candidate running really have the most influence



-Not representative of all party members or even one party member’s beliefs as a whole