

RUNNING FOR CONGRESS

PRIMARY ELECTIONS

The primary began in the early part of this century as a result of reforms of the Progressive Movement that supported more direct control by ordinary citizens of the political system. A primary is used to select a party's candidates for elective offices, and states use three different types.

- Definition – elections in which the voters choose which candidate will represent their political party in the general election (Democrat vs. Democrat; Republican vs. Republican)
- Closed
 - A voter must declare in advance his or her party membership, and on election day votes in that party's election
 - Only registered party members can vote for partisan offices, no crossing of party lines
 - Used in most states
- Open
 - A voter can decide when he or she enters the voting booth which party's primary to participate in
 - Only a few states have open primaries
 - Crossing of party lines allowed >>> danger of "raiding"
- Blanket ("free love")
 - A voter marks a ballot that lists candidates for all parties
 - A voter can select the Republican for one office and a Democrat for another
 - Unconstitutional

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)
 - 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
 - "War Chest" built up to discourage challengers from running
- Coattail effect – The extent of presidential popularity affects both House and Senate elections
 - President's party generally gains seats in the House and Senate in presidential election year
 - President's party generally loses seats in the House and Senate in midterm election year
- Media, especially in Senate Elections
- Party Affiliation – still a strong predictor of voting behavior
- Issues – House seats lost relates to presidential popularity/economic conditions

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- Incumbent campaigns - In 2000, 98% of House incumbents were successful
- Weak challenger campaigns (don't have perks such as franking privilege)
- Strong challenger campaigns (due to incumbent vulnerability and challenger wealth)
- Open seat campaigns (through death, retirement, redistricting - promotes some turnover)

How is Cao's reelection campaign different from his first?	
How is Cao's party membership an asset?	
How is Cao's party membership a liability?	
Identify three actions Cao takes to mobilize voters.	

Mr. Cao Goes to Washington Film Notes

Elections & Campaigns

Media

Political Parties (*Roles & Functions 5.3*)

Ideology & Public Opinion (*Unit 2*)