**Unit 5 Topic 5.9 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, AMSCO Chpt. 18 pg. 596-605**

**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?***

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**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 privileg**e 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**

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

* 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.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

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.

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| **THE HOUSE** | **THE SENATE** |
| * 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) | * 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 |

Chart, line chart

Description automatically generated

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.

a. Identify two patterns displayed in the graph.

b. Identify two factors that contribute to incumbency advantage. Explain how each factor contributes to incumbency advantage.

c. Discuss one consequence of incumbency advantage for the United States political process.