

## Civics and Economics



### CE.5 Study Guide

#### STANDARD CE.5A

##### -- POLITICAL PARTIES

The functions of political parties

Political parties play a key role in government and provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.

##### Functions of political parties

- Recruiting and nominating **candidates**
- **Educating the people** about campaign issues
- **Helping candidates** win elections
- **Monitoring** actions of officeholders

#### STANDARD CE.5B

##### -- TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

Similarities and differences of political parties.

A two-party system characterizes the American political process.

Although **third parties rarely win elections**, they can play an **important role** in public politics.

##### Similarities between parties

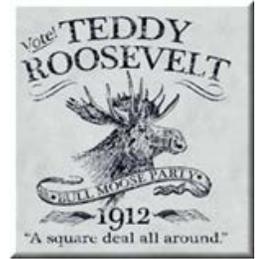
- Organize to win elections
- Influence public policies
- Reflect both **liberal and conservative** views on the political spectrum
- Define themselves in a way that wins **majority support** by appealing to the **center** of the political spectrum

##### Differences between parties

- Stated in **party platforms** and reflected in campaigning

Third parties (e.g., Green Party, Constitution Party, Libertarian Party)

- **Introduce new ideas** and/or press for a **particular issue**
- Often **take votes away** from the two-major parties
- Often revolve around a **political personality** (e.g., Theodore Roosevelt)



#### STANDARD CE.5C

##### -- ROLE OF MEDIA IN CAMPAIGNS

Campaigns for elective office, with emphasis on the role of the media

Voters **evaluate information** presented in political campaigns to make informed choices among candidates.

The **media** play an important role in the political process.



Political Humor

##### Strategies for evaluating campaign speeches, literature, and advertisements for accuracy

- Separating **fact from opinion**
- Detecting **bias**
- Evaluating **sources**
- Identifying **propaganda**

##### Mass media roles in elections

- Identifying candidates
- Emphasizing selected issues
- Writing editorials, creating political cartoons, publishing op-ed pieces, posting to social media and blogs.
- Broadcasting **different points of view**

# STANDARD CE.5D

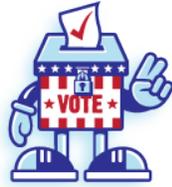
## -- CAMPAIGN COSTS

Role of campaign contributions and costs

Running for political office can be very expensive.

### Rising campaign costs

- require candidates to conduct **extensive fund-raising** activities
- **limit opportunities** to run for public office
- give an **advantage to wealthy individuals** who run for office
- encourage the development of political action committees (PACs) and Super PACs
- give issue-oriented **special interest groups** increased influence.



### Campaign finance reform

- Rising campaign costs have led to efforts to **reform campaign finance laws**.
- **Limits** have been placed on the amount **individuals may contribute** to political candidates and campaigns; however, individuals, business, and unions can donate **unlimited amounts to PACS and Super PACS** (*Citizen's United vs. Federal Elections Committee*).



# STANDARD CE.5E

## -- VOTER REGISTRATION

Requirements for voter registration

Through legislation and constitutional amendments, different American citizens have been granted the right to vote at different times.

### Legislation and constitutional amendments



- 15th Amendment
- 19th Amendment
- 23rd Amendment
- 24th amendment
- 26th Amendment
- Voting Rights Act of 1965



Voter registration is required before a citizen may vote.

Only citizens who **register** may participate in primary and general elections.



### Qualifications to register to vote in Virginia

- **Citizen** of the United States
- **Resident** of Virginia and precinct
- At least **18 years** of age by day of general election

### How to register to vote in Virginia

- In person at the registrar's office
- By mail (application obtained from the Department of Motor Vehicles, public libraries, state/local government offices, or other designated locations)
- Online

Voting is a basic responsibility of citizenship.

Voter **registration** is closed **22 days** before elections.

### Factors in predicting which citizens will vote

- Education
- Age
- Income



The percentage of voters who participate in **presidential elections** is usually **greater** than the percentage of voters who participate in state and **local elections**.

### Reasons why citizens fail to vote

- **Lack of interest** (in candidates or issues)
- Failure to **register**
- Belief that vote **does not count** or will have **no impact**
- **No time** or too busy

**Every vote** is important.

**Students can participate in the democratic process by:**

- participating in **campaigns**
- participating in **classroom** and online simulation

# STANDARD CE.5F

## -- ELECTORAL COLLEGE

The role of the Electoral College in the election of the president and vice president.

The *Electoral College* process is used to select the president and vice president of the United States.

The **Electoral College** casts the **official vote** for president and vice president.

The **number of electors of** each state is based on each state's **congressional** representation (the number of United States **senators** plus the number of **representatives** in the House).

### Electoral College Process

- Each political party chooses its **slate of electors**
- After the popular vote, the **electors** cast their official votes
- Most states have a “**winner-take-all**” system that awards all electors to the winning presidential candidate
- Candidates need **270 electoral votes** to win, which favors the **two-party system**

The **winner-take-all system** leads to the targeting of **densely populated states** for campaigning, although candidates must pay attention to less populated states and swing states whose electoral votes may make the difference in tight elections.

In most states, the party that wins the **popular vote** has its slate of electors cast the official vote for the president.



**Our winner-take-all electoral system gives some states out-sized importance**