

Political Parties & Interest groups

- Parties defined
- Different from interest groups

Political parties

- The Framers
 - Equated w/ factions
 - Framers were divided
- Modern political parties
 - Substitute for factional warfare
 - At best:
 - At worst:
- Party Systems
 - Systems vary
 - Dynamics depend
 - Ex. winner-take-all system vs. proportional representation
 - Cultural factors

- Parties not essential to republic
- American Party System
 - Two-party system
 - Republicans & Democrats
 - Why two parties?
 - Two factors
 - Third Parties?
 - Republican Party
 - American Independent party
 - Progressive party
 - Bull Moose party
 - Weakness of American Political Parties
 - Two principal factors:
 - Parties = decentralized
 - Ex. Blue Dog Democrats

- Parties must be open

— Party structure

- Conventions
- DNC
- RNC
- National chairs
- Committees=major operations

— Party Activities

- Nomination of candidates
- Fund raising Attracting & keeping voter loyalty
- Research & strategy
- Media Relations

Interest Groups

- Framers

— Two critical issues

- Madison - Federalist #10
 - “Public interest?”
 - Idea of “representation”
 - Madison naïve?
 - Interest groups exercise power far out of proportion to #s
 - Pursue own interest @ expense of public
 - Small factions just as dangerous
 - Ex. loopholes in tax code; “pork barrel”
 - Govt’s protects from large & small groups
- Types of Interest Groups
 - Profit Sector Groups
 - Nonprofit and Public Sector Groups
 - Mixed Sector Groups
 - Citizens’ Groups Civil Rights Groups
 - Consumer Organizations

- What Do Interest Groups Do?
 - Power of Information
 - Lobbying Legislature & Executive
 - Insider lobbying
 - Outsider activities
 - Formalized participation in decision making process
 - Broad-based coalitions
 - Going to Court
 - Money & PACs
 - Make campaign contributions
 - “Campaign finance reform”
 - 527 organization
 - *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010)
 - Result = Super-PACs
 - Power to Protest