

LINKAGE INSTITUTIONS - POLITICAL PARTY

A political party is an organized group of people with similar political beliefs that work to put people in office who will support their political beliefs, and as damaging and problematic as they are, seem to be a natural response when like minded people interact over time.

A linkage institution is an organization that shines light into the government's doings or provides a platform on which they are able to participate. Other LIs include the media and interest groups.

The primary goals of a political party are as follows (not what the AP test wants - just what I noticed):

- Encourage participation in the political process
 - Robocalling; reminding people to go vote (for the people we believe will further our political interests the most) via telephone.
 - Voter registration drives: people entering an area, walking door to door, handing stuff out to people, reminding voters to register and vote for certain candidates, etc.
 - Driving people to polls.
- Educating the public (subset of encouraging political participation)
 - Publishing information and government doings that either support their cause or shoot at their opponent's cause.
 - Hosting political rallies and events to show off their support for an issue
 - Supporting local community leaders
 - Educating prospective officials on how to build and manage the party.
 - Educating prospective officials on what their constituents want through surveying and polling.
 - Publishing a platform and releasing it to the GP:
 - A platform is a list of beliefs that the party holds to be very important to them (appeal to rational choice voters?)
 - These platforms are created during national conventions, where members of a party will arrive at a location with a draft of the platform. Leading up to nominations and primaries, each prospective official is given input (and even after one is nominated - the others still have input).
 - Parties recognize the use of the party platform as a way to attract voters. An example of this is the Republican Party losing two elections in a row, before subsequently picking out what issues had repelled voters and recommending changes (some of which are to the platform).
- Choosing and supporting candidates:
 - Parties typically want a talented, well known person to run for office. They also want clean records and some form of fundraising ability.
 - They will usually keep track of "safe" and "swing" regions of the United States and monitor them for potential state/Congressional officials (especially in safe states - acc. to the book)

- Once there is a candidate, the party will support their campaign through:
 - Fundraising: some candidates may have already established a “war chest” full of funds to spend for campaigns. However, parties and other donors are still able to give, although the Federal Election Commission (A) requires their registration and (B) limits their contribution (for federal elections, \$5000 per candidate).
 - Support: while the FEC may regulate monetary-based support, parties can still publish information, run ads, etc. to promote a candidate without actually ever involving the candidate, thus bypassing the FEC rules. This also includes the other purposes listed above that target the GP

Note that these goals apply to local and federal government (although party operations differ between the levels of government, they do share some elements)

PARTY LEADERSHIP

The DNC and RNC consist of a large hierarchy of people who will all work towards increasing party influence over the nation. Every 4 years, these two NCs will meet and perform a number of party functions dedicated to increasing influence.

At the top is a national chairperson who is the chief spokesperson and operator of the party, although candidates tend to be the most front facing part of the party.

Then, a number of subcommittees exist underneath with specific purposes, such as comms, recruitment, outreach, etc. Other non-party organizations such as interest groups can also count as a part of the structure, as they are often imperative to the party’s overall operation.

Finally, there is one committee (that is not charged with the power to touch and make legislation) in each chamber for each party that strategizes on how to win seats in that chamber. These committees conduct polls, fundraise, and support the election of incumbents within their chamber. These are: the Natl Rep Senatorial Committee, the Natl Rep Congressional Committee, the Dem Senatorial Campaign Committee, and the Dem Congressional Campaign Committee.