

RUNNING FOR OFFICE

It wasn't until 1951 that the states ratified the 22nd Amendment, stating that no person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice. Franklin Roosevelt was in his fourth term when he died; Grover Cleveland served two non-consecutive terms, establishing himself as the 22nd and 24th President. Through history, one thing is clear: for all its power, the Presidency is only a temporary job. And to stay in office, a President must hit the campaign trail and compete against opponents who believe they have a better plan for running the affairs of the nation. Watch the Bartlet re-election campaign in progress, and get an insider's view of what's really at stake in a democracy.

Part 1 Campaign Strategy

The first Tuesday in November is a fairly famous day, but Presidential elections begin long before voters approach the polls to cast their ballots. Shortly after candidates announce their intent to run in the election, they participate in the primaries - state elections through which the Democratic and Republican parties choose a nominee. From the Iowa Caucuses to the historic New Hampshire Primary to Super Tuesday, these primaries test not only a candidate's qualifications, but his campaign strategy.

Watch this flashback episode in which then-Governor Bartlet's new campaign team game out a strategy for the upcoming primaries. Based on what you learn behind the scenes, what advice would you offer someone who wanted to run for President?

Based on what you learn about Bartlet behind the scenes, what would you tell potential voters about his qualifications? Does he seem like a future President and leader of the free world?

Part 2 Popular Support

Much of the Presidential campaign season is devoted to winning voter support. The candidates give speeches, make appearances, and ultimately clash in televised debates. Along the way, polls gauge each candidate's success, and there are usually some unexpected developments that test their character. As you watch four episodes from Bartlet's re-election campaign, ask yourself how these election year "rites of passage" influence voter opinion. Which do you think is most important for winning the election?

Campaign speeches

Opinion polls _____ Televised debates

The candidate's

character

Part 3 The Voting Process

In the 2000 election, only 52 percent of Americans cast their vote for the next President of the United States. While it's true that Presidential elections aren't decided by popular vote, every individual vote does count - a single voting district can swing a state's electoral vote, and even a small state can tip the scales of the national electoral tally. Consider these possibilities as you watch three scenes from the last day of Bartlet's re-election campaign. Then debate these questions about the voting process.

+ Do you believe it's worth rallying the vote at the last hour?

Do you think it's fair to disqualify voters who make mistakes filling out the ballot?

Do you agree that campaigning should be kept out of the polling place?