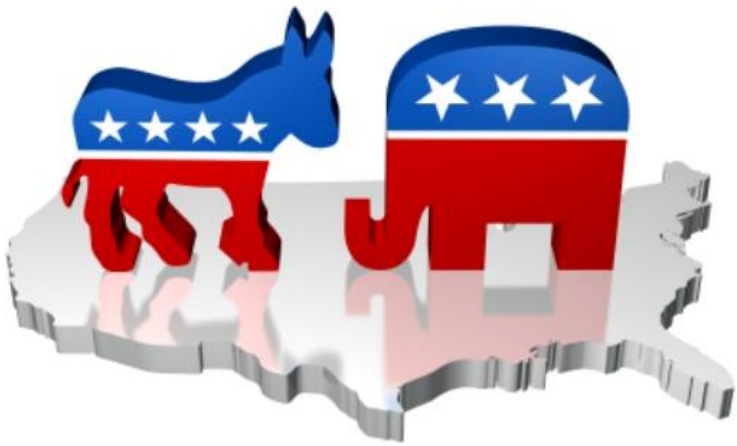
Political Parties

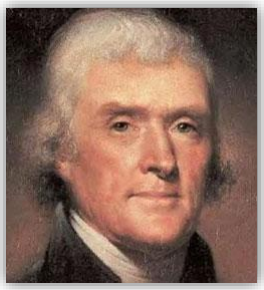


TERMS TO KNOW

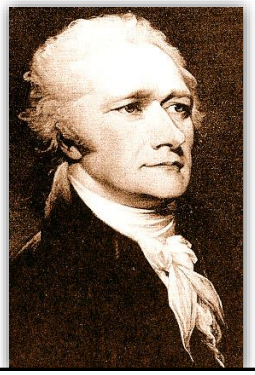
- Political Party
  - An association of voters with broad, common interests who want to influence policy by electing candidates to government office
- Two-party system
  - During most of American history there have been two major political parties
- Platform
  - A series of statements expressing a party's positions on election issues
- Plank
  - Individual parts of a party's platform
- Political Machines
  - Party "bosses" in the late 19th and early 20th centuries who used unfair voting practices in elections, traded favors for votes, and often put unqualified friends into political office

EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

- Democratic-Republicans → party of Jefferson; favored limited federal government



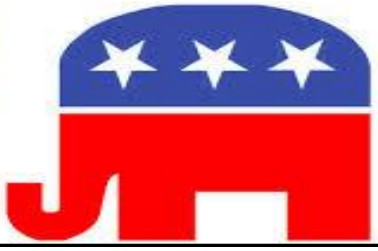
- Federalists → party of Hamilton; favored strong federal government



EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

- Democrats → transformed under Jackson; dominant party from 1930-1968

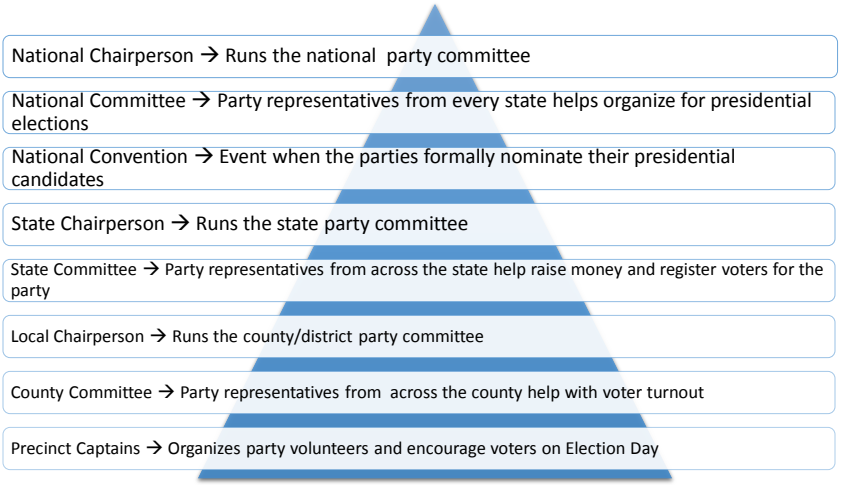
- Whigs → rose to compete w/ Democrats during the 1830's
- Republicans → party of Lincoln; dominant party from 1860-1929



EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES

- "Democratic" Third Parties
  - Populists → 1880's; supported farmers moving west
  - "Dixiecrats" → 1948; supported states' rights & segregation
  - Green → 2004; supported environmental protection
- "Republican" Third Parties
  - Bull Moose → 1912; Teddy Roosevelt supported progressive reforms
  - Libertarian → 1970's; federal gov't should only focus on defense
  - Independent → 1992; party of Ross Perot

5 ROLES OF POLITICAL PARTIES

- Campaigning for Candidates
  - Parties raise money for candidates & help register voters
- Informing Citizen
  - Parties use pamphlets, speeches, TV, radio, and newspaper to inform citizens about issues
- Helping Manage Government
  - Executives (president, governor, mayor) often get to appoint party members to jobs in government
- Linking Different Levels of Government
  - Connections between party leaders at different levels make it easier to tackle mutual problems
- Acting as a Watchdog
  - The out of power party monitors the actions of the party in power for mistakes and misuses

PARTY ORGANIZATION