

UNITED STATES POLITICAL PARTIES



"However [political parties] may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people..."

GEORGE WASHINGTON, FAREWELL ADDRESS, 1796

In his farewell address, George Washington warned our nation on the dangers of political parties. Though Washington was a well-respected man, even he could not stop the formation of political parties. Since the 1790s, political parties have greatly influenced American politics.

INDEPENDENT 1788-PRESENT



George Washington was not in a political party, thus making him the first independent party candidate.

FEDERALIST 1789-1816



This party believed in a strong central government and was led primarily by Alexander Hamilton.

DEMOCRATIC-REPUBLICAN 1792-1828



As early as 1792, the Democratic Republicans were led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. The party also referred to itself as just Republican. In 1828, the party officially became the Democratic Party.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY 1828-PRESENT



Only the Democratic-Republican Party existed during the election of 1824. But party members could not unite behind one candidate and split. One faction emerged as Jacksonian Democrats. This faction became the Democratic Party in 1844.

WHIG PARTY 1834-1854



After the National Republican Party (1825-1834) failed to defeat Andrew Jackson in the 1832 election, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster formed the Whig Party, which took its name from the British Whig Party that opposed royal power.

REPUBLICAN PARTY 1854-PRESENT



Alarmed over the spread of slavery, Northerners formed the Republican Party in Ripon, Wisconsin. The party's popularity quickly grew and in 1860 Abraham Lincoln was the first Republican elected president.

MODERN TWO-PARTY SYSTEM



PROMINENT THIRD PARTIES

REPUBLICAN "CONSERVATIVE"



This party believes in limiting the power of the federal government, strengthening the free enterprise system and restoring traditional values. (Leans right)

DEMOCRATIC "LIBERAL"



This party supports expanding federal power, increasing consumer protections and promoting social justice. (Leans left)

LIBERTARIAN 1971



This party supports protecting individual rights from any government interference, promoting a free market economy and abolishing income taxes.

GREEN 1984



This party supports protecting ecological resources, promoting social justice and supporting those in poverty and unemployed.

CONSTITUTION 1992



This party supports establishing laws based on biblical principles, strictly following the Constitution and nullifying certain federal laws by the states.

Think it Through

1. Why do you think George Washington warned the nation against the dangers of political parties?
2. Which secondary party is more like the Republicans? Which secondary party is more like the Democrats?
3. Which political party do you identify with more and why?

