

**Chapter 1 : Steffen W. Schmidt (Author of American Government and Politics Today, , Brief Edition)**

*American Government and Politics Today, Edition (with InfoTrac and CD-ROM) / Edition 11 AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS TODAY helps students experience the excitement that comes from active, informed citizenship.*

The Constitution of the United States of America. Public Opinion and Political Socialization. Campaigns, Nominations, and Elections. The Media and Cyberpolitics. Domestic and Economic Policy. Foreign and Defense Policy. State and Local Government. The Declaration of Independence. Presidents of the United States. Justices of the U. Supreme Court, to the Present. Party Control of Congress, to the Present. Reviews

"The book is very current. In fact, some parts of it read like a newspaper. An example would be the blue ink modifications to the Constitution in chapter 2. The book is very meticulous. An excellent example is the discussion on page The authors make the following statement Since the early twentieth century, presidents have spoken more to the public and less to Congress. Many authors would have let the statement stand without any verification. The authors make good use of the Internet. I am not comfortable with the Internet as a research tool. However, it is with us and students will use it. I also appreciate that a good web site is worth two days searching the library. This books takes pains to sort through the cyber jungle leading students to sites containing information as reliable and valid at they will find anywhere, as opposed to? It deals with contemporary topics in an easy to understand manner, and provides the instructor with a variety of manners in which to use the text and have the student delve into issues and ideas. It is also well organized with the chapter outline to start with and the chapter summaries at the end. It helps the student with the key terms and definitions in the margins and the internet is well integrated into the chapters. Another great strength of the book is the great number of pedagogical features, especially the "what if," "whic.

**Chapter 2 : U.S. Government And Politics Study Guides - SparkNotes**

*American Government and Politics Today, Brief Ed. by Steffen Schmidt See more like this American Government and Politics Today ed. (includes policy chapters) Pre-Owned.*

State governments of the United States States governments have the power to make laws that are not granted to the federal government or denied to the states in the U. Constitution for all citizens. These include education , family law , contract law , and most crimes. Unlike the federal government, which only has those powers granted to it in the Constitution, a state government has inherent powers allowing it to act unless limited by a provision of the state or national constitution. Like the federal government, state governments have three branches: The chief executive of a state is its popularly elected governor , who typically holds office for a four-year term although in some states the term is two years. Except for Nebraska , which has unicameral legislature , all states have a bicameral legislature, with the upper house usually called the Senate and the lower house called the House of Representatives , the House of Delegates , Assembly or something similar. In most states, senators serve four-year terms, and members of the lower house serve two-year terms. The constitutions of the various states differ in some details but generally follow a pattern similar to that of the federal Constitution, including a statement of the rights of the people and a plan for organizing the government. However, state constitutions are generally more detailed. Urban politics in the United States The United States has 89, local governments, including 3, counties, 19, municipalities, 16, townships, 13, school districts, and 37, other special districts that deal with issues like fire protection. Typically local elections are nonpartisan—local activists suspend their party affiliations when campaigning and governing. City governments are chartered by states, and their charters detail the objectives and powers of the municipal government. The United States Constitution only provides for states and territories as subdivisions of the country, and the Supreme Court has accordingly confirmed the supremacy of state sovereignty over municipalities. For most big cities, cooperation with both state and federal organizations is essential to meeting the needs of their residents. Types of city governments vary widely across the nation. Cities in the West and South usually have nonpartisan local politics. There are three general types of city government: These are the pure forms; many cities have developed a combination of two or three of them. Mayor-council[ edit ] This is the oldest form of city government in the United States and, until the beginning of the 20th century, was used by nearly all American cities. Its structure is like that of the state and national governments, with an elected mayor as chief of the executive branch and an elected council that represents the various neighborhoods forming the legislative branch. The mayor appoints heads of city departments and other officials, sometimes with the approval of the council. The council passes city ordinances, sets the tax rate on property, and apportions money among the various city departments. As cities have grown, council seats have usually come to represent more than a single neighborhood. Commission[ edit ] This combines both the legislative and executive functions in one group of officials, usually three or more in number, elected citywide. Each commissioner supervises the work of one or more city departments. Commissioners also set policies and rules by which the city is operated. One is named chairperson of the body and is often called the mayor, although his or her power is equivalent to that of the other commissioners. The answer has been to entrust most of the executive powers, including law enforcement and provision of services, to a highly trained and experienced professional city manager. The city manager plan has been adopted by a large number of cities. Under this plan, a small, elected council makes the city ordinances and sets policy, but hires a paid administrator, also called a city manager, to carry out its decisions. The manager draws up the city budget and supervises most of the departments. Usually, there is no set term; the manager serves as long as the council is satisfied with his or her work. County government[ edit ] The county is a subdivision of the state, sometimes but not always containing two or more townships and several villages. New York City is so large that it is divided into five separate boroughs, each a county in its own right. In other cities, both the city and county

governments have merged, creating a consolidated city-county government. In small counties, boards are chosen by the county; in the larger ones, supervisors represent separate districts or townships. The board collects taxes for state and local governments; borrows and appropriates money; fixes the salaries of county employees; supervises elections; builds and maintains highways and bridges; and administers national, state, and county welfare programs. In very small counties, the executive and legislative power may lie entirely with a sole commissioner, who is assisted by boards to supervise taxes and elections. In some New England states, counties do not have any governmental function and are simply a division of land. Municipal government [edit] Thousands of municipal jurisdictions are too small to qualify as city governments. These are chartered as towns and villages and deal with local needs such as paving and lighting the streets, ensuring a water supply, providing police and fire protection, and waste management. In many states of the US, the term town does not have any specific meaning; it is simply an informal term applied to populated places both incorporated and unincorporated municipalities. Moreover, in some states, the term town is equivalent to how civil townships are used in other states. The government is usually entrusted to an elected board or council, which may be known by a variety of names: The board may have a chairperson or president who functions as chief executive officer, or there may be an elected mayor. Governmental employees may include a clerk, treasurer, police and fire officers, and health and welfare officers. One unique aspect of local government, found mostly in the New England region of the United States, is the town meeting. Once a year, sometimes more often if needed, the registered voters of the town meet in open session to elect officers, debate local issues, and pass laws for operating the government. As a body, they decide on road construction and repair, construction of public buildings and facilities, tax rates, and the town budget. The town meeting, which has existed for more than three centuries in some places, is often cited as the purest form of direct democracy, in which the governmental power is not delegated, but is exercised directly and regularly by all the people. Campaign finance in the United States Successful participation, especially in federal elections, requires large amounts of money, especially for television advertising. Both parties generally depend on wealthy donors and organizations—traditionally the Democrats depended on donations from organized labor while the Republicans relied on business donations. Even when laws are upheld, the complication of compliance with the First Amendment requires careful and cautious drafting of legislation, leading to laws that are still fairly limited in scope, especially in comparison to those of other countries such as the United Kingdom, France or Canada. Fundraising plays a large role in getting a candidate elected to public office. Without money, a candidate may have little chance of achieving their goal. Attempts to limit the influence of money on American political campaigns dates back to the s. Recently, Congress passed legislation requiring candidates to disclose sources of campaign contributions, how the campaign money is spent, and regulated use of "soft money" contributions. In Federalist Papers No. In addition, the first President of the United States, George Washington, was not a member of any political party at the time of his election or during his tenure as president. Washington hoped that political parties would not be formed, fearing conflict and stagnation. Hamilton and Madison ended up being the core leaders in this emerging party system. In modern times, in partisan elections, candidates are nominated by a political party or seek public office as an independent. Each state has significant discretion in deciding how candidates are nominated, and thus eligible to appear on the election ballot. Typically, major party candidates are formally chosen in a party primary or convention, whereas minor party and Independents are required to complete a petitioning process. Political parties in the United States The modern political party system in the United States is a two-party system dominated by the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. These two parties have won every United States presidential election since and have controlled the United States Congress since The Democratic Party generally positions itself as left-of-center in American politics and supports a modern American liberal platform, while the Republican Party generally positions itself as right-wing and supports a modern American conservative platform. Third parties and independent voters have achieved relatively minor representation from time to time at local levels. The Libertarian Party is the largest third party in the country, claiming more than , registered

voters in ; [29] it generally positions itself as centrist or radical centrist and supports a classical liberal position. Other contemporary third parties include the left-wing Green Party , supporting Green politics , and the right-wing Constitution Party , supporting paleoconservatism. Elections in the United States Unlike in some parliamentary systems , Americans vote for a specific candidate instead of directly selecting a particular political party. With a federal government, officials are elected at the federal national , state and local levels. On a national level, the President , is elected indirectly by the people, through an Electoral College. In modern times, the electors virtually always vote with the popular vote of their state. All members of Congress , and the offices at the state and local levels are directly elected. Various federal and state laws regulate elections. The United States Constitution defines to a basic extent how federal elections are held, in Article One and Article Two and various amendments. Organization of American political parties[ edit ] See also: Political party strength in U. The two major parties, in particular, have no formal organization at the national level that controls membership, activities, or policy positions, though some state affiliates do. In the United States, one can often become a "member" of a party, merely by stating that fact. A person may choose to attend meetings of one local party committee one day and another party committee the next day. The sole factor that brings one "closer to the action" is the quantity and quality of participation in party activities and the ability to persuade others in attendance to give one responsibility. Party identification becomes somewhat formalized when a person runs for partisan office. A party committee may choose to endorse one or another of those who is seeking the nomination, but in the end the choice is up to those who choose to vote in the primary, and it is often difficult to tell who is going to do the voting. The result is that American political parties have weak central organizations and little central ideology, except by consensus. Once in office, an elected official may change parties simply by declaring such intent. At the federal level, each of the two major parties has a national committee See, Democratic National Committee , Republican National Committee that acts as the hub for much fund-raising and campaign activities, particularly in presidential campaigns. The exact composition of these committees is different for each party, but they are made up primarily of representatives from state parties and affiliated organizations, and others important to the party. However, the national committees do not have the power to direct the activities of members of the party. Both parties also have separate campaign committees which work to elect candidates at a specific level. The most significant of these are the Hill committees , which work to elect candidates to each house of Congress. State parties exist in all fifty states, though their structures differ according to state law, as well as party rules at both the national and the state level. Despite these weak organizations, elections are still usually portrayed as national races between the political parties. By the s, however, most joined one of the two new parties, and by the s parties had become accepted as central to the democracy. Men who held opposing views strengthened their cause by identifying and organizing men of like mind. The followers of Alexander Hamilton , were called " Federalists "; they favored a strong central government that would support the interests of national defense, commerce and industry. The followers of Thomas Jefferson , the Jeffersonians took up the name " Republicans "; they preferred a decentralized agrarian republic in which the federal government had limited power.

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