

Chapter 10: Elections and Voting Behavior

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

- Explain how elections provide regular access to political power and how the process is related to the level of political *legitimacy*.
- Describe procedures that permit voters to enact legislation directly, such as the initiative, petition, and referendum.
- Trace the historical evolution of the American style of campaigning from 1800 to 2000.
- Identify the characteristics of voters and nonvoters.
- Explore the reasons why voter turnout has actually declined as the right to vote was extended to new groups.
- Ascertain the role that voter registration procedures and requirements have played in structuring voter turnout.
- Explain why *party identification* is crucial for many voters and review the decline of party affiliation since the 1950s.
- Identify the conditions that must be present for true *policy voting* to occur.
- Outline the procedures of the electoral college and compare the present system with the process that was envisioned by the framers of the Constitution.
- Understand the tasks that elections accomplish, according to democratic theory.
- Establish how elections may affect public policy and how public policy may affect elections.
- Analyze how elections influence the scope of government in a democracy.