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A PRESIDENTIAL AND ELECTIONS GUIDE

**DEPARTMENT  
OF  
ELECTIONS**

**MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA**



***Adrian Fontes Maricopa County Recorder***

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## Election of a President and Vice President

The United States Constitution mandates that a Presidential election be held once every four years. The process of choosing a President is a long one that begins months, and sometimes years, before Election Day. Over the last two centuries the process has evolved into a more complex series of events.

While the election gives all citizens of legal age the opportunity to vote in a national election, the President is not elected by a direct popular vote. The Constitution requires that a process known as the Electoral College ultimately decides the winner of a presidential election. The Electoral College is a system of indirect popular election, in which voters cast their ballots for electors, who then vote for the actual presidential candidates. Each state is apportioned a number of electors equal to the total number of their Congressional delegation. After Election Day, the electors assemble and cast their ballots.

The challenge of electing a President and Vice President begins long before Election Day. Candidates from both parties begin raising money and campaigning for their party's nomination at least one, and sometimes two years, before each party's national convention. These battles often create factions within political parties and affect the policies and agendas of the politicians themselves. The candidates begin courting party leaders and activists early on, in an attempt to shore up as much support as they can in the early period of the nominating process.

The nominating process officially begins with the first state primaries and caucuses, which are usually held in February of the election year. At these primaries and local caucuses, the voters are given their first opportunity to participate in choosing the nation's next President. The state party organization, through either a primary or caucus system, will select delegates for the national convention. These delegates cast votes for the candidates at the national conventions. In order to win the party's nomination, one candidate must receive a majority of the delegates' voters. This means delegates may experience several rounds of voting before one candidate receives a majority.

The selection of delegates to the national conventions ultimately decides who will become a party's nominee, but there are many other factors that influence the public's view of candidates. Countless media reports, opinion polls, surveys and straw ballots weight heavily in determining the strengths and weaknesses of candidates in the months leading up to the primaries and caucuses. These other factors, especially the media, also play an extremely significant role in shaping the voters' images of the candidates long before the nomination process officially begins.

Throughout the spring of the election year, candidates vigorously campaign in primaries and caucuses throughout the nation. This part of the process comes to its conclusion at the Democratic and Republican national conventions. At the conventions, the candidate who can garner a majority of delegates' votes will be nominated. The conventions themselves have a parade-like atmosphere, with red, white and blue decorations and balloons, and patriotic music. Every state delegation announces its votes on the floor of the convention in a roll call vote. The outcome of these conventions can sometimes be predicted before the convention takes place, but it is never certain.

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After a national convention selects a party's Presidential candidate, the delegates endorse a candidate for Vice President. Generally, the parties allow the Presidential candidates to choose their own running mates, but the official state-by-state roll call process of endorsement is still conducted. Presidential candidates often select a running mate who will balance the ticket in some way, either by being extremely popular in a specific region or state or by representing a specific set of interests or an ideology.

If a sitting President is running for re-election, he must also go through the nominating process. Even though the President may not face opposition from within his/her own party, the national convention will still go through the pageantry and showmanship of a Presidential nomination. It is not uncommon for a sitting President to receive a primary challenge from within his own party.

From time to time there are third party candidates who, while having no chance of winning an election, may alter the outcome of the election.

After the parties have held their national conventions and nominated their candidates, the race becomes a contest between the two major parties. For most part, all of the factions and divisions that develop within a party during the nomination battles are set aside, and the entire party unites behind its candidate. The candidates campaign without end, until Election Day, when the nation finally selects its President. The candidates will travel across the country, attending and speaking at countless dinners, breakfasts, town hall meetings and campaign events. The parties and the candidates' campaigns will coordinate massive direct mailings, get-out-the-vote drives, and telephone campaigns. Campaign activists will also distribute campaign literature at the grass roots level and never miss an opportunity to plug their candidates, while the candidates themselves will meet and shake hands with millions of Americans.

While election results will be known by Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning, the election is not official for a few months. After the election, the Electoral College casts the final ballot. The President of the Senate officially announces the results of the election and the President-elect and Vice President-elect will take the oath of office and be inaugurated on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

Inauguration Day was on March 4 from 1793 until 1933. Since then, Inauguration Day has occurred on January 20 (the 1933 ratification of the Twentieth Amendment changed the start date of the term).

It is every citizen's right and duty to take part in the election process and assist in choosing the President of the United States of America and other candidates. As citizens of America, we are privileged to live in a country governed by a constitution that gives all of its citizens an opportunity to vote for our leaders. Take this responsibility seriously, learn about the candidates and choose wisely.

## **Presidential Politics and Political Parties**

**E**very fourth year, the citizens of the United States participate in electing an individual to the most powerful office in the world. This event is without parallel, and the office of the Presidency itself is without peer. Dozens of prominent politicians compete for a chance at this office, and will collectively spend hundreds of millions of campaign dollars to be nominated.

Presidential elections, however, have not always been this elaborate. Our first President, George Washington, was elected with almost no contest. Washington never really had to campaign, since there was an overwhelming national conviction that the General who guided the nation to independence ought to be the first President of the new constitutional government. Never again would selecting a chief executive be such an easy process. Obviously, the nation has changed a great deal since the days of the Washington Presidency!

After George Washington, no President every enjoyed such national support. In all of the following elections, political parties became involved in this process of selecting a President. The seeds of political parties were sown the moment the Constitution became the law of the land. The first political parties consisted of the Federalists, who supported the new constitution, and the Anti-Federalists, who were weary of the new Federal Government's power.

These new political parties were more loose and informal than today's political parties, but they did make politics adversarial. In the election of 1796, John Adams ran against his old friend, Thomas Jefferson, in a hotly contested race. Adams won, but Jefferson and his new Democratic Republican party defeated him in the 1800 election. This election was do divisive that Adams and Jefferson, who had been very close friends and who had worked together in Europe as diplomats during the Revolutionary War, refused to speak with one another following that election. In fact, Adams would not even attend Jefferson's inauguration! The two became friends again in 1812, when Benjamin Rush, a mutual friend, persuaded the two former Presidents to reconcile their differences. An interesting fact, Adams and Jefferson both died within hours of one another on July 4, 1826.

The Election of 1800 marked a change in political parties. The Federalist Party began to decline, while Jefferson's new Democratic Republican Party, which would eventually become the modern Democratic Party, began to gain support. Jefferson's party represented rural interests and was especially strong in the South. It became the dominant party until the Civil War, winning twelve of the next sixteen elections. As the Federalist Party withered away, the Democratic Republicans were the only major national party. This was the case until the 1830's, when the Whig party was born from the ashes of the Federalist Party. The Whigs were stronger in New England and their supporters included urban dwellers and merchants.

After the election of 1800, presidential elections cooled off for a few years in what came to be known as the "Era of Good Feelings." The Democratic Republican Party was almost entirely dominant and elections were less divisive. Nevertheless, but 1824 this moment in history had passed. At this point, the nature of presidential elections changed and became more factional. The power and organization of political parties increased. The election of 1824 was a very heated race. The Democratic Republican party began to splinter, as two prominent politicians, John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, fought a bitter battle for the Presidency. In the 1824 election, none of the candidates received a majority of Electoral College votes, and thus the election had to be decided by the House of Representatives. While Andrew Jackson had received the most votes in the election, the House chose John Quincy Adams. Jackson was furious and vowed to defeat Adams in the next election. In 1828, Jackson did defeat Adams and the splintered Democratic Republicans began calling themselves the Democratic Party.

By the 1830's, political parties had become more organized. In 1832 the Democratic Party held the first national convention, and the process of political party nominations was born when the convention nominated Andrew Jackson for a second term. This increased activity and organization was a reaction to increased competition, not only from the Whig Party, but also from within the Democratic Party itself. The election of 1824 and 1828 had split the Democratic Republicans, and by 1836 a second national party, the Whigs, had become a major player in presidential politics. In 1900 Frances Warren of Wyoming became the first woman delegate to a Republican National Convention. In the same year, Elizabeth Cohen of Utah was chosen as an alternate to the Democratic National Convention. When another delegate became ill, Cohen became the first woman delegate to a Democratic National Convention.

The Whigs and the Democrats were the two major parties for the next two decades. During this period the two-party system was born. Elections became a series of battles and skirmishes between these two parties. In 1856, with the Whigs having died out, the Republican Party held its first national convention and ran its first presidential candidate, John C. Fremont. In 1860, the Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln as their candidate for the Presidency. Lincoln won the election and the Republicans dominated presidential politics for the next three decades.

The Republicans carried much of the old Whig constituency in New England and urban areas, but they also became immensely popular in the Midwestern farm states.

The Democrats and the Republicans have been the only major political parties. There have been many attempts to create third parties, but these efforts have not come to fruition. While the two major parties are based on different political philosophies, both strive to represent a broad range of ideological and geographical interests. Conversely, third parties often focus on a specific issue or geographical region of the nation, and thereby reduce their opportunity for any broad based support.

Under the two-party system, candidates initially compete with members of their own party for the party's nomination. The nomination is decided by a long and arduous campaign for votes in state caucuses and primaries, which select delegates to the national convention. The party's nomination belongs to the candidate who receives a majority of the delegates' votes. Following the convention, the parties assemble all of their campaign machinery behind their candidates

### National Political Conventions Since 1856

Opening date	Party	Where held
June 17, 1856	Republican	Philadelphia
June 2, 1856	Democratic	Cincinnati
May 16, 1860	Republican	Chicago
April 23, 1860	Democratic	Charleston and Baltimore
June 7, 1864	Republican <sup>1</sup>	Baltimore
Aug. 29, 1864	Democratic	Chicago

May 20, 1868	Republican	Chicago
July 4, 1868	Democratic	New York City
June 5, 1872	Republican	Philadelphia
June 9, 1872	Democratic	Baltimore
June 14, 1876	Republican	Cincinnati
June 28, 1876	Democratic	St. Louis
June 2, 1880	Republican	Chicago
June 23, 1880	Democratic	Cincinnati
June 3, 1884	Republican	Chicago
July 11, 1884	Democratic	Chicago
June 19, 1888	Republican	Chicago
June 6, 1888	Democratic	St. Louis
June 7, 1892	Republican	Minneapolis
June 21, 1892	Democratic	Chicago
June 16, 1896	Republican	St. Louis
July 7, 1896	Democratic	Chicago
June 19, 1900	Republican	Philadelphia
July 4, 1900	Democratic	Kansas City
June 21, 1904	Republican	Chicago
July 6, 1904	Democratic	St. Louis
June 16, 1908	Republican	Chicago
July 7, 1908	Democratic	Denver
June 18, 1912	Republican	Chicago
June 25, 1912	Democratic	Baltimore
June 7, 1916	Republican	Chicago
June 14, 1916	Democratic	St. Louis
June 8, 1920	Republican	Chicago
June 28, 1920	Democratic	San Francisco
June 10, 1924	Republican	Cleveland
June 24, 1924 <sup>2</sup>	Democratic	New York City

June 12, 1928	Republican	Kansas City
June 26, 1928	Democratic	Houston
June 14, 1932	Republican	Chicago
June 27, 1932	Democratic	Chicago
June 9, 1936	Republican	Cleveland
June 23, 1936	Democratic	Philadelphia
June 24, 1940	Republican	Philadelphia
July 15, 1940	Democratic	Chicago
June 26, 1944	Republican	Chicago
July 19, 1944	Democratic	Chicago
June 21, 1948	Republican	Philadelphia
July 12, 1948	Democratic	Philadelphia
July 17, 1948	( <sup>3</sup> )	Birmingham
July 22, 1948	Progressive	Philadelphia
July 7, 1952	Republican	Chicago
July 21, 1952	Democratic	Chicago
Aug. 20, 1956	Republican	San Francisco
Aug. 13, 1956	Democratic	Chicago
July 25, 1960	Republican	Chicago
July 11, 1960	Democratic	Los Angeles
July 13, 1964	Republican	San Francisco
Aug. 24, 1964	Democratic	Atlantic City
Aug. 5, 1968	Republican	Miami Beach
Aug. 26, 1968	Democratic	Chicago
July 10, 1972	Democratic	Miami Beach
Aug. 21, 1972	Republican	Miami Beach
July 12, 1976	Democratic	New York City
Aug. 16, 1976	Republican	Kansas City, Mo.
Aug. 11, 1980	Democratic	New York City
July 14, 1980	Republican	Detroit



Aug. 20, 1984	Republican	Dallas
July 16, 1984	Democratic	San Francisco
July 18, 1988	Democratic	Atlanta
Aug. 15, 1988	Republican	New Orleans
July 13, 1992	Democratic	New York City
Aug. 17, 1992	Republican	Houston
Aug. 10, 1996	Republican	San Diego
Aug. 26, 1996	Democratic	Chicago
July 29, 2000	Republican	Philadelphia
Aug. 14, 2000	Democratic	Los Angeles
July 26, 2004	Democratic	Boston
Aug. 30, 2004	Republican	New York City
Aug. 25, 2008	Democratic	Denver
Sept. 1, 2008	Republican	Minneapolis-Saint Paul
Aug 27, 2012	Republican	Tampa
Sep 4	Democratic	Charlotte



Image: Library of Congress.com



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## The Origins of the Presidency: Chief Executive or a Committee of Ten

When the Founding Fathers gathered in Philadelphia for the Constitution Convention in 1787, there was much disagreement over the issue of executive power. The Constitutional Convention had been called because the Articles of Confederation, the first document governing the newly independent states, was a failure. The Articles of Confederation had failed to grant the first national government any power to execute laws on a national level. In many respect, the Constitutional Convention was called in order to solve this problem and create a functional national government with jurisdiction over all states.

While the Founding Fathers understood that a national executive authority was needed for the laws of the new national government to be enforced, many were weary of allowing one person to possess too much power. After all, the Revolutionary War had been fought in order to dispel the tyranny of King George and preserve American liberty. The colonists loved their freedom, and many saw a single chief executive as being nothing less than a new version of the English King.

Eventually, the idea of having one chief executive, the President, triumphed. Nevertheless, this decision did not come to pass without enormous debate. The staunchest advocate of a single, powerful and supreme executive was Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton wanted the chief executive to possess broad and sweeping powers. His version of the chief executive bore close resemblance to that of the English King, with its provision that election to the position of chief executive be for life. Indeed, Hamilton was unabashed in his views, and gave a six hour speech in favor of his proposal for a single chief executive. He argued that the English system of government was the best one on earth and that the American Government would be the one that closely resembled the English model.

Ironically, two men who would serve as Presidents of the United States were opposed to the idea of a single chief executive. James Monroe and James Madison thought that placing executive power over the armed forces and the entire government, even if only for a short term, was dangerous. For this reason, they thought that some of that power of the chief executive should be vested in a committee and not in the hands of a single man.

Ultimately, the Founding Fathers decided on a single chief executive. After even more debate, they named this executive the President. Imagine how much different American history might have been if the executive powers had been vested in a council of ten people rather than in one person.

## The Powers of the Presidency

The Presidency has outlasted the thrones of emperors and kings to become the world's principal seat of power. The story of the great office is one of triumph and tragedy, success and failure, crisis, compromise and courage.

When the Founding Fathers were drafting the United States Constitution, the question of a single executive posed many problems. It was feared that the Presidency would be an elective monarch, that the person elected would hold office for life with unrestrained power. In response to these

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concerns, the framers provided for a government of separate institutions which would share in, and compete for, political power. This system of checks and balances gives the Congress the power to make the laws, the President the power to administer them, and the Supreme Court the power to interpret them.

The President is required to be many people in one. The President is Chief of State, Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The President also administers and enforces the laws and recommends legislation, and receives and signs or vetoes all bills passed by Congress.

In addition, the President nominates members of the Cabinet, justices of the Supreme Court, ambassadors and ministers, heads of boards, agencies and commissions – all subject to Senate approval. The President directs the nation’s foreign policy and conducts all official business with foreign nations. With the consent of a two-thirds vote of the Senate, the President negotiates and enters into treaties with other nations. The President appoints thousands of people to Federal offices which do not require Senate approval. The President is the national leader of the political party in power. Essentially, the President’s decisions shape the destiny of every citizen and, to a large extent, the future of the world.

When these broad Presidential powers were originally put into writing, it was with the assumption that George Washington would interpret and limit them in a responsible manner. It is generally agreed that he used his veto power sparingly and was sensitive to the needs of the nation.

At that time, and for the next few decades, little reliance was placed on the President as a decisive force. Men holding the office were extremely cautious in putting their powers into action.

Today we know that the Presidency did not turn into an elective monarchy, that this unique governmental office has been a vital force in the making of a great nation. As America has grown, so has the office of the Presidency.

Through the years, the group of advisers surrounding the executive office has experienced vast growth. During Washington’s term, the executive department was small and included only the Departments of State, War, Treasury and Attorney General. However, as the burdens of the Presidency steadily mounted, additional assistance was needed. The executive office now includes many persons to aid the President in the execution of his/her duties.

***The Presidential Oath of Office***

***“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”***

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## The Electoral College

The Electoral College is a method of indirect popular election of the President of the United States. The authors of the Constitution hoped this system would promote calm deliberation and selection of the best qualified candidate for President. Therefore, the constitution provides for a body of electors whose duty it is to elect the President. Voters in each state actually vote for the electors who, in turn vote for the candidate of their choice.

At the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the proposal that the Congress elect the President was rejected because he would then be under the control of the legislature. Another proposal that the people elect the President was also rejected because it was felt that the common people didn't have the time or the opportunity to get to know the candidates, and therefore, would not be able to vote wisely.

In those days, each state's electors gathered together and each elector named two men on his ballot. A clerk listed all the names with the number of votes for each and forwarded the list to Washington. The person with the most votes became President, if his total vote was the majority of all the electors. The second highest candidate became Vice President. If no candidate received a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives was empowered to choose the President.

After the election of George Washington, however, the Electoral College never worked the way it had been intended. People demanded and received the right to vote directly for their electors. Later, when political parties were formed in strength, the election of the President came closer to home than ever. Voters chose only those electors who promised to support the candidates of the parties. The elector became more and more just a device in counting the people's votes.

Electors may not be Federal office holders or members of Congress. Each state has as many electors as it has Senators and Representatives, plus three electoral votes from the District of Columbia. Customarily, electors are nominated by their parties at their state conventions.

Electors cast their votes at their state capitals on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December. Legally, they may vote for someone other than the party candidate, but generally they do not because of their pledge to one party and its candidate on the ballot. Therefore, the candidate who receives the most votes in each state at the general election is also the candidate for whom the electors later cast their votes.

Because the winner in each state is awarded all of that state's electoral votes, it is possible for a candidate to receive a majority of the electoral votes even though he did not receive a majority of the total popular votes. This is very rare, but it did happen in 1824, 1876 and 1888.

The votes of the Electors are sent to Congress where the President of the Senate opens the certificates, and they are counted in the presence of both Houses on January 6, unless that date falls on a Sunday. In this case, the elector votes are counted on the next day.

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Why the first Tuesday after the first Monday? Lawmakers wanted to prevent Election Day from falling on the first of November for two reasons. First, November 1st is All Saints Day, a Holy Day of Obligation for Roman Catholics. Second, most merchants were in the habit of doing their books from the preceding month on the 1st. Apparently, Congress was worried that the economic success or failure of the previous month might prove an undue influence on the vote.

***“No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent”***  
**Abraham Lincoln**

## **Voting Rights in America**

**T**he right to vote has been a tumultuous theme in the history of America. When the United States Constitution was drafted, standards of voter qualifications were left as a matter for the states to decide. Consequently, few people were given this right in the next several years.

Women were denied the right to vote everywhere, and in some states the vote was limited to male taxpayers. Slaves were not allowed to vote and men in some states had to meet religious tests before they could go to the polls.

But these conditions didn't last long. White men 21 years of age and older were soon gaining an increasing electoral voice and most religious requirements were dropped by 1811.

Two large groups of Americans, however, remained on the sidelines – Black Americans and women. Their struggles to secure the vote have been among the most significant movements in our history.

The 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Amendments gave Black Americans their freedom, but the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment was the one that gave them the right to vote. Despite this land-mark decision, racial minorities continued to be denied voting rights through strictly administered literacy tests and other discriminatory practices.

In 1920, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment was enacted. Finally, women were granted the right to vote, but only after more than 40 years of active crusading and a series of dramatic movements in Congress and in numerous state legislatures.

For the next three decades the voting picture remained relatively quiet. Then in the 1950's a new civil rights movement began. Civil rights acts passed by Congress in 1957, 1960 and 1964 provided Blacks with legal means to obtain the ballot for federal elections when confronted by discriminatory registration or voting practices. Another hurdle was removed when the 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment, outlawing the use of poll tax as a pre-requisite to voting in federal elections, was ratified.

But it was the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which finally went to the heart of the problem. In broad terms, this act suspended literacy tests and other voter qualification devices. It authorized federal supervision of voter registration and new voting laws in certain states and counties. This act was

renewed in 1975 and its protection was extended to Spanish-speaking Americans and other “language minorities.” It was again extended in 1982

A significant and permanent provision of the 1970 Voting Rights Act was the lowering of the voting age to 18. It also established uniform residency requirements for voters. However, this court ruling caused some confusion because it only covered federal elections and only three states were allowing 18-year-olds to vote in state and local elections. The 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment, ratified in 1971, eliminated this confusion by allowing 18-year-olds the right to vote in all elections held in the United States.

Even after the years of demonstrations and the public outcry that all Americans be allowed to vote, after all the legislation to secure every citizen that right, there are many Americans who do not vote. The 1995 *Information Please Almanac* estimated that only 57.4% of registered voters participated in the 1984 presidential election. It also stated that voter turnout for the presidential election of 1992 was the largest since 1972 with 61% of the voting age population going to the polls. Remember that these are percentages of registered voters. What about the many citizens who never bother to register? New voters played a decisive role in the 2008 election, according to a new research memorandum by Project Vote Research Director Lorraine Minnite. In [First-Time Voters in the 2008 Election](#), Minnite finds that new voters accounted for 12 percent of the votes cast in 2008, and that they voted for Obama over McCain by slightly more than two-to-one. In all, first-time voters cast an estimated 10 million ballots for Obama, comprising 15 percent of the vote total.

Just as significantly, the composition of the new voter electorate shifted along race/ethnicity and class lines in 2008, compared to 2004. The percentage of blacks and Latinos voting for the first time increased in 2008. Minnite finds that the most significant relative increase, however, occurred along class lines. She writes “First time voting among the lowest income group, those with annual family income of \$15,000 a year or less, nearly doubled in proportion among all voters in this income category, from 18 percent in 2004, to 34 percent in 2008.”

The right to freedom is the cornerstone of American freedom. It is a priceless heritage and a responsibility to be exercised by every eligible citizen. **Your Vote Counts!**

## **Your Right to Vote**

**O**ur American form of democracy begins with You – the citizen. Ours is a system of checks and balances between the governed and those who govern. Our forefathers spelled it out in the Constitution of the United States. The Bill of Rights guarantees to each individual citizen freedom of religion, speech and press. The citizen has the right to bear arms and to trial by jury. Citizens cannot be forced to testify against themselves, nor may their homes or personal possessions be taken without due process of law. They are protected against cruel and unusual punishment. Most important, powers not delegated to the federal government, nor prohibited to the several states, “are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”

It was in the summer of 1787 that our American Constitution was written. Through four long months of debate, George Washington, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin and others like them, formulated the basic law of our land. Each of them, as private citizens and delegates of the states, donated a

part of their personal lives to go to Philadelphia for the solemn business of founding a nation. It was they who gave us the principles that have guided us through over 200 years of war and peace. On Election Day, every American citizen is asked to give a portion of their life, just a few minutes, for the purpose of voting to maintain our freedoms. It is at the ballot box that we exercise our most cherished heritage, our proudest legacy, the right to vote.

As citizens of a free country, we have both the privilege and responsibility to make choices that determine how and by whom we will be governed. It is the right to vote in a secret ballot that makes a democracy strong or weak. Your vote may help elect a school board member, a judge, a mayor. Your vote may result in increased police protection or improved facilities for health and sanitation. Your vote may mean the building of a library or a new city hall. Your vote may provide funds for a playground or park. Your vote elects a President! Know the issues. Know the candidates – and **VOTE!**

### **Does My Vote Really Make a Difference?**

**J**ust one vote can and often does make a difference in the outcome of an election. Here are some recent examples of real elections decided by one vote.

In 1997, Vermont State representative Sydney Nixon was seated as an apparent one vote winner, 570 to 569. Mr. Nixon resigned when the State House determined, after a recount, that he had actually lost to his opponent Robert Emond 572 to 571.

In 1989, a Lansing, Michigan School District millage proposition failed when the final recount produced a tie vote 5,147 for, and 5,147 against. On the original vote count, votes against the proposition were ten more than those in favor. The result meant that the school district had to reduce its budget by \$2.5 million.

In 1994, Republican Randall Luthi and Independent Larry Call tied for a seat in the Wyoming House of Representatives from the Jackson Hole area with 1,941 votes each. A recount produced the same result. Mr. Luthi was finally declared the winner when, in a drawing before the State Canvassing Board, a Ping-Pong ball bearing his name was pulled from the cowboy hat of Democratic Governor Mike Sullivan.

In 1997, South Dakota Democrat John McIntyre led Republican Hal Wick 4,195 to 4,191 for the second seat in Legislative District 12 on election night. A subsequent recount showed Wick the winner at 4,192 to 4,191. The State Supreme Court however, ruled that one ballot counted for Wick was invalid due to an overvote. This left the race a tie. After hearing arguments from both sides, the State Legislature voted 46 to 20 to seat Wick.

***A nation that is afraid to let its people judge the truth and falsehood in an open market is a nation that is afraid of its people.***  
***John F Kennedy***

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## Maricopa County Election Facts

With an area of 9,224 square miles and a population of over four million residents, Maricopa County Arizona is one of the fastest growing counties in the United States. It is larger than 5 states and the District of Columbia and has more than 1.9 million registered voters. It once had over 1100 voting precincts, but because of the popularity of early voting, those precincts have been reduced to around 800. Just over half of the registered voters in Maricopa County are on the permanent early voting list (PEVL)

Many questions can be easily answered by visiting the Maricopa County Recorder's website, [www.recorder.maricopa.gov](http://www.recorder.maricopa.gov) and clicking on "elections" or calling 602/506-1511. For instance:

- Where Do I Go to Vote/Where Is My Polling Place?
- Who Can Register to Vote?
- Where Can I Register?
- What Are the Registration Deadlines?
- When Does Early Voting Begin?
- What Kind of Identification Do I Need to Vote?
- How Can I Get on the Permanent Early Voting List?
- When Are the Elections Held?
- Can I Get A Ballot If I Live/Work Overseas?
- If I'm Out-of-Town on Election Day Can I Vote Early?
- If I Vote A Provisional Ballot How Do I Know If It Is Tabulated?
- Can I Become a Board Worker?
- Can Teenagers Work the Polls
- Are the Early Ballots Counted and If So – When?
- Who Can Run for Office and What is Required?
- If I Move Do I Still Have to Register Again?
- I'm Registered As an Independent – Can I Vote in a Primary Election?
- Why Do the Polling Places Change?

Every ten years, following the taking of the census, the precinct lines are adjusted in the state and the counties. The Independent Redistricting Commission decides on the congressional and state lines while the county elections departments are responsible for re-drawing supervisory, justice of the peace and precinct lines. The Maricopa County Elections Department has "hearings" throughout the county to allow citizen participation and input. The department meets with elected officials, political party representation, jurisdictions, and residents of the community. Once the lines have been re-drawn and presented to and accepted by the Board of Supervisors they are then sent to the Department of Justice for final approval.

You now have read a great deal of information on how elections came about in this country and how this process is like no other in the world. As a citizen you have the privilege and responsibility to elect your choice to represent you at the city/town level, county level, state level, and national level. Yes, it is your responsibility – don't leave it to someone else to make the selection. The Choice Is Yours!

**REGISTER! VOTE! REGISTER! VOTE! REGISTER! VOTE**

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