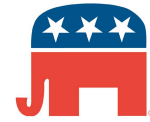


## THE ROLES OF AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTIES



1. **Mobilizing Support and Gathering Power**
  - Provide support to candidates and office holders, and their policies
  - The party creates a community of interest that bonds disparate groups over time into a coalition
2. **A Force of Stability**
  - Parties represent continuity in the wake of changing issues and personalities, anchoring the electorate
  - Because it wants to win elections, each party acts to moderate public opinion, and tames its own extreme elements by pulling them toward an ideological center in order to attract a majority of votes on election day
  - Stable coalitions created by the parties often strengthen the nation as a whole ex: FDR's new deal coalition
3. **Unity, Linkage, Accountability**
  - Parties provide the glue that holds together disparate elements of an often fragmented US Government
  - Parties help link all govt. Institutions, and help to moderate the rivalry between the executive and legislative branches of govt.
  - Parties help to link national, state and local governments.
  - Party identification and organization are natural connectors and vehicles for communication between the voter and the candidate as well as the office holder resulting in greater accountability
4. **The Electioneering Function**
  - Parties funnel, eager, interested individuals into politics and government (recruit candidates)
  - Ensure competitive elections
5. **Policy Formulation and Promotion**
  - Creates the national party platform (statement of the general and specific philosophy and policy goals of a political party, usually promulgated at the national convention)
  - About 66% of the promises in the victorious party's presidential platform have been completely or mostly implemented
  - Even more astounding, about 50% of the losing party's pledges find their way into public policy
  - Party platform has great influence on a new presidential administration's legislative program and on the state of the union address
  - Party affiliation is normally the single most important determinant of voting in congress and in state legislatures
6. **Controlling the Agenda of Government**
  - President serves as the informal head of the party.
  - Jobs in Congress (party leadership, committee placements) are assigned on a party basis