

### **U.S.** Government

### Civics 101

- Established to prohibit any form of monarchy or single powerful executive
  - □ States' representatives hated King George and aristocracy
  - But many "founding fathers" came from upper classes, so constitutional framework went against their upbringing
- Created a government that is deliberate and slow-moving
  - Decided that speed of action often leads to power grab by small wealthy constituencies
- Founders were determined to protect rights of the minority from the majority
  - US form of government gives protections to people not in the majority or mainstream
- 3 Branches of Government:
  - Legislative





□ Judicial





### **U.S.** Government

#### Civics 101

- Characteristics of Three Branches of US Government
  - □ Each thinks it's omnipotent the most important
  - □ Rarely speak with each other talk **AT** each other
  - President is only chief executive elected by the entire country (all other elected officials come from states and districts). This gives the President enormous power and credibility
  - □ Supreme Court Justices serve for life and can only be taken off the bench through impeachment ,or death
  - Members of Congress take broad prerogatives and assume a mantel of more power than they actually have
  - □ If Congress can't/won't act in numbers, Members are just another shrill political voice bellowing in the wind

- "The more you read about politics, the more you got to admit that each party is worse than the other."
  - Will Rogers
    American Comedian



- Incumbency tends to be the "regular order"
  - □ Terms expire when members retire OR when there is a tectonic shift in voter attitudes (1994/2008/2010)
- Bi-partisanship (working together) has devolved to party politics
  - □ Members used to socialize after hours
  - □ Now everything is about "business" and is "on-the-record"

- Party politics has created a polarization of issues
  - □ *Immigration*
  - □ Economy, energy and Climate Change
  - □ Debt Ceiling and spending
  - □ Trade





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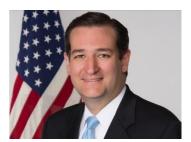
The Republican Party panders to the extreme right wing





☐ Grover Norquist, Ted Cruz and Karl Rove







□ Tea Party Activists



- The Democratic party has come more to the center, but is susceptible to liberal political extremes
  - □ Still believes government is the answer to many problems
  - Many believe the wealthy and business should pay much higher portion of income in taxes







- Alliances are the foundation of true success but difficult to form
- Issue alliances sometimes make strange "bedfellows"
  - □ Gun Control





- □ Climate change and energy policy
- □ Electronic records, and electronic surveillance legislation brought liberals and conservatives together

### Doing business in Washington, DC

- It's what and who you know
- Relationships are preeminent in getting things done
- Be strategic and never let your guard down
- Compromise is now seen as weakness

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### Doing business in Washington, DC

- The media can be a great equalizer you must be ahead of the information flow
  - □ Gun Control: talk shows and news shows
  - ☐ Health Care: cutting back Medicare benefits
- The internet ("social media ") is the new power nexus for politicians
  - □ Fundraising, poling
  - Messaging

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### **The Bottom Line**

- Success is possible
- Not every issue is bad, and not every organization is bad
- Present issue as looking out for the public's interests (even if you don't really mean it)
- Know your constituency it's not always obvious
- Stay ahead of the issues by always being on the offensive
- Playing defense rarely yields a victory

"No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Sir Winston Churchill



### QUESTIONS?

