

Washington: Government and Lobbyists

SAMDS

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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*



□ *Executive*



□ *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*

How Washington is really “set up”

- *“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”*

How Washington is really “set up”

Cont’d

■ Party politics has created a polarization of issues

□ *Immigration*



□ *Economy, energy and Climate Change*



□ *Debt Ceiling – and spending*

□ *Trade*



How Washington is really “set up”

Cont'd

- The Republican Party panders to the extreme right wing



- *Grover Norquist, Ted Cruz and Karl Rove*



- *Tea Party Activists*



How Washington is really “set up”

Cont'd

- *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*



How Washington is really “set up”

Cont'd

- *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*

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, polling*
 - *Messaging*

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?

The image shows the United States Capitol building at night. The building is illuminated with warm, yellow lights, highlighting its architectural details, including the large central dome and the surrounding wings. The sky is a deep, dark purple. In the foreground, a statue of George Washington on horseback is visible, standing on a pedestal. The text "Questions and Discussion" is overlaid in a large, white, serif font across the center of the image.

Questions and Discussion