

# CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE: WHY YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS</b>	<b>xv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>xxi</b>
 <b>1 Voting and Participation</b>	 <b>1</b>
<i>How does the United States conduct elections?</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>What's the historical background on the right to vote in America?</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Why was the Voting Rights Act of 1965 important? What's the importance of the 2013 Shelby decision?</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Are the Voting Rights Act protections needed today? What about voter suppression?</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Who votes more, men or women? Why is there a gap between the voting participation of women and men? What about Millennials?</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>What are the rates of voting for African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans? And what was the racial makeup of those who voted in recent elections?</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Have there been efforts to diminish voting participation?</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Do convicted felons ever get back the right to vote?</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Why do so few voters participate in elections, especially in state and local contests?</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Compared to other democracies, how does the United States rank in terms of voting participation?</i>	<i>14</i>

<i>What would happen if every American adult were required to vote, as in some other countries?</i>	14
<i>After the 2000 presidential election exposed problems in local voting systems, Congress passed legislation to make sweeping reforms in the administration of voting procedures. Has that made any difference?</i>	15
<i>How vulnerable are state and local voting procedures to hacking and cyber threats?</i>	17
<i>How accurate are voting records?</i>	17
<i>Can a person be kicked off the voting rolls for failing to vote in previous elections?</i>	18
<i>How have mail-in ballots, absentee-ballot voting systems, and early voting worked out?</i>	19
<i>Is there widespread voting fraud today?</i>	20
<i>Why did President Trump order an investigation into alleged voter fraud, and what did the Voter Fraud Commission find?</i>	21
<b>2 Carving Out Legislative Districts</b>	<b>23</b>
<i>How do some states gain and some states lose congressional seats following reapportionment?</i>	23
<i>Why has redistricting been such a problem?</i>	24
<i>What are the requirements for creating legislative districts?</i>	26
<i>Who makes the decision about redistricting legislative districts?</i>	27
<i>What is partisan “gerrymandering”? How far can it go before it is unconstitutional?</i>	27
<i>Has there been any attempt to take redistricting and gerrymandering out of the hands of partisan legislators?</i>	30
<i>Why do all states get two senators no matter how big—or small—they are?</i>	30
<b>3 Political Parties and Elections</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>When did the two major political parties play an important role in elections and campaigns?</i>	33

<i>The South was once very Democratic but now is largely Republican. What happened?</i>	34
<i>What's the difference between Republicans and Democrats?</i>	35
<i>Why are we so polarized today?</i>	37
<i>How much disagreement is there within the political parties?</i>	39
<i>Who has more followers, Democrats, Republicans, or independents?</i>	40
<i>How did we get the labels "red states" and "blue states"?</i>	40
<i>Where do we find the heaviest concentrations of Republicans and Democrats?</i>	41
<i>Wasn't the Tea Party a separate political party?</i>	42
<i>Do other political parties get involved in presidential elections?</i>	43
<i>Have the political parties surrendered their role in campaigning to wealthy donors and super PACs?</i>	44
<i>What's happened to the Democratic Party and the Republican Party?</i>	45
<b>4 Statewide, Local, and Congressional Elections</b>	<b>47</b>
<i>How many state and local elections are there?</i>	47
<i>What are the rules and regulations controlling campaign financing at the state and local levels?</i>	48
<i>How do local candidates get out the message and let voters know about themselves?</i>	49
<i>Are more women running for political office than in previous years?</i>	49
<i>Does it cost a lot for local candidates to run for office?</i>	51
<i>Do states have public financing laws and, if so, what offices do they apply to?</i>	54
<i>How can an average citizen help a candidate or a cause at the local level?</i>	55
<i>Electing judges has become more and more like electing regular political candidates. Is there any danger to this?</i>	56
<i>Congressional incumbents hardly ever lose when they are up for re-election. Why is that so?</i>	57
<i>You are kidding about elections for dogcatcher, aren't you?</i>	59

<b>5 Presidential Elections</b>	<b>60</b>
<i>Can anyone run for president, or is that just an old American myth?</i>	60
<i>Why do presidential elections last so long?</i>	61
<i>Why do we have so many primaries and caucuses?</i>	62
<i>What's the difference between a caucus and a primary?</i>	63
<i>Why does Iowa go first?</i>	64
<i>How do you become a party delegate? What's a "superdelegate"?</i>	65
<i>What is the electoral college and how does it work?</i>	66
<i>Why did the Founding Fathers decide that we needed the electoral college to determine presidential elections?</i>	68
<i>Who are the electors, and how do you get to be one?</i>	70
<i>What if "faithless" electors refuse to vote for the winner of the popular ballot?</i>	71
<i>What if the president-elect dies before the electoral college meets?</i>	71
<i>What happens if no candidate receives 270 votes when the electoral college tallies the votes?</i>	72
<i>What's the "winner-take-all" system?</i>	74
<i>What is a "battleground" state?</i>	74
<i>What was the Democrats' "Blue Wall"?</i>	75
<i>How close have recent presidential contests been?</i>	75
<i>What about third-party candidates, with no chance of winning, acting as spoilers?</i>	76
<i>How much money is spent in presidential elections? Do the candidates (and their allies) who spend the most money always win?</i>	77
<i>What kinds of reforms have been suggested for our lengthy primary and caucus season?</i>	79
<i>Why don't we just have a nationwide election where whoever gets the most votes wins, and not worry about the electoral college vote?</i>	80
<i>What is the idea of a national popular-vote compact?</i>	82

## 6 Money, Mega-Donors, and Wide-Open Spending 84

<i>What federal rules and regulations controlled campaign financing before 1971?</i>	84
<i>What did the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 do?</i>	85
<i>Can individual candidates spend as much as they want on their own campaigns?</i>	86
<i>What's the difference between "hard" money and "soft" money?</i>	87
<i>What are political action committees (PACs)?</i>	88
<i>What did the McCain-Feingold Act do to fix campaign-finance problems?</i>	90
<i>What do organizations do to get around campaign funding restrictions?</i>	92
<i>How did the Supreme Court undo campaign-finance reform in Citizens United and subsequent cases?</i>	93
<i>What are 501(c) groups, and how do they impact campaign spending?</i>	96
<i>How do super PACs differ from ordinary PACs?</i>	98
<i>What is "dark money" and how important has it been in recent elections?</i>	99
<i>Who are the top individual mega-donors, how much have they spent, and where do they stand politically?</i>	100
<i>What about regular people? Do they give money to political candidates?</i>	102
<i>How well has the FEC performed its job of enforcing campaign-finance rules?</i>	103
<i>Didn't the IRS get in trouble for trying to oversee these organizations?</i>	104
<i>Where does all that campaign money go?</i>	104
<i>What are the most expensive campaigns at the federal (but not presidential) level?</i>	105
<i>Do candidates who amass the most money always win?</i>	106
<i>What about self-funded candidates?</i>	107
<i>Where are we now with federal campaign laws?</i>	108

## 7 Inner Workings of Modern Campaigns 110

<i>Why can't candidates just run on their own, without the need for consultants and handlers?</i>	110
<i>What are the key elements of any successful political campaign?</i>	111

<i>What do you mean by political consultants, and what kinds of services do they provide?</i>	113
<i>What do media consultants provide?</i>	113
<i>What do pollsters do for a campaign?</i>	114
<i>How much information do political campaigns have on the average voter?</i>	115
<i>Who have been some of the most important political consultants over the years, and where are they now?</i>	117
<i>Hillary Clinton had the best team of consultants available; Donald Trump's group was best described as "junior varsity." Did Trump show that consultants aren't all that necessary or smart in getting a candidate elected?</i>	117
<b>8 Direct Democracy—Ballot Campaigns</b>	<b>121</b>
<i>When and why did ballot campaigns become a part of American politics?</i>	121
<i>What's the difference between initiatives, referendums, and recalls?</i>	122
<i>What states have direct democracy through ballot campaigns? What about at the local level?</i>	125
<i>How do political consultants get involved in ballot issues?</i>	125
<i>What was California's Proposition 13?</i>	128
<i>How many people are affected by ballot initiatives?</i>	129
<i>How much money is spent on ballot campaigns, and who spends the money?</i>	130
<i>How successful are ballot issues? What is "choice fatigue"?</i>	130
<i>What are the downsides of ballot initiatives and direct democracy?</i>	131
<i>Is there a federal recall mechanism? Can voters recall a member of Congress, a cabinet member, or the president?</i>	132
<i>What about a national referendum? Is it allowed in the Constitution? What might the ramifications of a nationwide ballot initiative be?</i>	133
<b>9 How Campaigns Have Changed</b>	<b>135</b>
<i>Federal candidates now say, "I'm [name] and I approve this message." When did that become a part of campaigning, and why?</i>	136

<i>How has the digital revolution changed campaigning?</i>	136
<i>Is regular television dead, or is there still room for national and local television news coverage in our digital age?</i>	138
<i>There is more polling done today than ever before. Is it worthwhile, and is it more accurate than past polling?</i>	139
<i>Has early voting changed the way campaigns are run? Has early voting been good for voters and for democracy?</i>	142
<i>How have outside voices expanded their impact on campaigns?</i>	142
<i>In sum, how have campaigns been transformed since the twentieth century in the first two decades of the twenty-first century?</i>	143
<b>10 Threats to Democracy</b>	<b>145</b>
<i>Is voter suppression real?</i>	145
<i>Why don't more citizens participate in voting? Is registration the barrier?</i>	147
<i>What about voter apathy, especially among young voters?</i>	149
<i>Why not hold general elections on the weekend or make Election Day a holiday?</i>	150
<i>Can our election process be trusted?</i>	150
<i>How confident should we be about our decentralized election system?</i>	152
<i>How can we combat "fake news" and social media lies?</i>	154
<i>Do plutocrats control our elections?</i>	156
<i>Many consider the current campaign-financing system to be a mess. Is there any way to reform it?</i>	156
<i>How can citizens find out which groups gave money to political candidates? For example, who received money from tobacco companies, pro-choice organizations, from unions, or from the National Rifle Association?</i>	158
<b>NOTES</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>FURTHER READING</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>INDEX</b>	<b>181</b>