

Politics and Healthcare

Where is Nursing?

By

Sue Johnson

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This book first published 2024

Ethics International Press Ltd, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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Print Book ISBN: 978-1-80441-527-6

eBook ISBN: 978-1-80441-528-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface vii

Introduction ix

| | | |
|----|---|----|
| 1 | What is Politics? | 1 |
| 2 | The United States—Birth of a Republic | 5 |
| 3 | The American Republic | 15 |
| 4 | The American Political System | 21 |
| 5 | Intersection of Politics and Healthcare | 27 |
| 6 | Policy Challenges | 33 |
| 7 | Nursing and Social Challenges | 37 |
| 8 | Nurses as Advocates | 43 |
| 9 | Nurses on Boards | 51 |
| 10 | Fostering Nurses' Political Awareness | 63 |
| 11 | Navigating Today's Political Process | 67 |
| 12 | Nurses in the Political Arena | 77 |
| 13 | Nurses and Local Politics | 85 |
| 14 | The Future of Nurses in Policy and Politics | 95 |

Afterword 101

Acknowledgments 103

Appendix 105

References 107

Index 113

PREFACE

The true forms of government, therefore, are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest; but governments which rule with a view to the private interest, whether of the one or of the few, or of the many, are perversions. For the members of a state, if they are truly citizens, ought to participate in its advantages.

—Aristotle

Politics frequently have a negative connotation today. Yet politics are a fact of our daily life. We encounter politics when we read the morning paper, watch a news program, chat on the Internet, and talk with others at work, church, school, civic organizations, volunteer occasions, and even at home. Nurses have numerous opportunities to engage in politics on the local level and often avoid them like the plague.

This book is a different view of politics and the role it plays in our everyday lives. It uses a historic perspective to define politics and its influence on health care and nursing from our nation's founding to today. It explores why nurses must use their knowledge and expertise to engage in the political process for the sake of their patients, community, colleagues, family, and themselves.

Nurses must be informed citizens of our republic. That sounds easy, but there are multiple ramifications for policy issues and staying informed and updated is a challenge. The process begins with awareness and progresses to knowledge and involvement even on a small scale. Nurses understand how the social determinants of health (SDOH) impact the health and safety of their fellow Americans, especially

minority, underserved, and rural populations. The voices of nurses are essential for creating policies to address these needs and educate leaders at all levels to support these individuals.

Several nurses who have navigated the political process locally, regionally, and nationally share their stories of success and challenges. Their advice is invaluable for nurses who are unsure about how to begin.

Where do we go from here? Politics is what we make it—positive, negative, or neutral. Nurses have an opportunity to lead the way to healthcare equity and system changes that benefit everyone and that starts locally. The information here is a starting point, not the end of the journey.

INTRODUCTION

All politics is local in the last analysis.

—Price, Thomas P. 1932

This quote was popularized by Speaker of the House Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill, Jr. in his first political campaign in 1935. It’s important for nurses to remember this as they become politically aware. In the greater scheme of things, why does it matter?

Two reasons come to mind:

1. Nurses are the most trusted profession and
2. Nurses are the largest healthcare profession in the United States.

The Gallup Poll has ranked nursing as the most trusted profession annually except for 2001 after the September 11 attacks. For 21 years, nurses are national leaders in ethics and honesty (Advisory Board, 2023 & ana.org, 2023). While this is good news, there is a caveat. The 79% very high or high rating for nurses in 2023 is the lowest percentage since 2014. In comparison, the professions rated least honest and ethical were members of Congress (63%) and telemarketers (59%) (Advisory Board, 2023).

Much of the data for health professions is from 2020–2021. The 2020 National Nursing Workforce Survey revealed that there are almost 4.2 million RNs and 950,000 LPNs or LVNs in the United States. That is 4 times as many nurses than physicians. So in the U.S.: nursing careers

make up the largest portion of America's healthcare professions (usa.edu, 2021).

With this information in mind, why does it matter if nurses are politically aware and involved? The obvious response is nurses have the prestige and numbers to advocate for health care changes that will benefit our society.

Why doesn't this occur routinely?

- Is it lack of awareness about issues?
- Is it lack of education in navigating the political process?
- Is it lack of desire to get involved?
- Is it fear of failure?
- Is it lack of confidence in own persuasive skills and abilities?
- Is it the lack of taking a stand that may be unpopular?
- Is it lack of support by friends or colleagues?
- It is lack of time?

There are probably myriad reasons nurses avoid involvement which brings us to the saying at the beginning, "All politics is local in the last analysis" (Price, 1932). Nurses live and work in their own communities. Their children go to local schools. They buy groceries and supplies locally. They participate in local organizations. They have family, friends, and acquaintances locally. They see changes that should be made to improve the community. Their initial response may be to study positions of school board candidates and vote for the best person for the position. From there, they can increase their involvement in political advocacy as their comfort increases.

Think of the power of 4.2 million nurses, members of the most trusted profession, as they truly make a difference in the political canvas of the United States—one step at a time!

—Sue Johnson

WHAT IS POLITICS?

Politics is the master science through which individuals collectively set structure, purpose, and ideals in their lives. Politics, therefore, does not emerge from the activities of a single individual but from that of many.

—Aristotle, n.d.

Aristotle's definition of politics is one of many, and scholars do not agree on a uniform definition. Let's examine how politics has different meanings depending on the definition and how these meanings affect its use in practice.

| Politics is | Politics includes | This definition excludes |
|---|--|---|
| that which concerns the state | permanent institutions that provide public services, ensure security, enforce laws, and regulate the conduct of those in their jurisdictions | the many political activities that don't directly involve the state |
| a non-violent method of conflict resolution | peaceful negotiation and arbitration to solve problems | the possibility that differences and conflict may be desirable |
| conflict | respect for those who are different and conflict is organized and productive | conflict resolution as the only desirable outcome |
| the exercise of power | influence over the actions of others and distribution of resources | a single definition of power—narrow or broad |

(continued)

| Politics is | Politics includes | This definition excludes |
|---|--|---|
| a social activity | interactions and dialogue with each other | if everything that is social is or is not political |
| a public activity | an action directed outward in the public or private sector | attempts to preserve the status quo |
| dependent on context and interpretation | everything potentially may be political depending on the situation and how it is interpreted | the intention of those performing an action |
| a struggle over the meaning of political concepts | lack of agreement about terms and criteria | where politics begins and ends |

(The Open University, 2019)

As shown in the chart, definitions vary, overlap, and move from a narrower perspective to a broader one. It is essential to critically consider these competing definitions of politics and understand that they are not mutually exclusive.

Another way to define politics is based on scholars' definitions over time. Aristotle's quote is one of many interpretations of the word. He believed that every individual action is political in nature and that politics is essentially the study of ethics and values, right and wrong, and what should be and could be. He believed that communication between two people involves these subjects and is political in nature (Aristotle, n.d.).

Other scholars defined politics differently. Machiavelli, the 16th century philosopher, is widely considered to be the founder of modern political theory. He stated that politics is the study of power, and that political leaders may use any means necessary to strengthen the political institution and preserve authority, peace, and stability. In order to ensure the development of strong and stable societies, he advocated for the separation of church and state (Rose, 2018).

Harold Lasswell was a leading American political scientist in the 20th century. He believed politics were based on who gains and who loses. He focused on power dynamics to determine the distribution of values or desired goals in society. Power was the ability to participate in decision-making, and political power had the ability to produce intended effects on other people. Lasswell considered the opinions and actions of those in power to influence nearly all forms of public policy implemented at all government levels (Rose, 2018).

Jeff Stonecash is currently one of the foremost experts on the American political system, and his definition is a broad one.

Stonecash believes that politics is all-encompassing and includes the study of opportunities, individual responsibilities and beliefs, and the government’s role in making these possible (Rose, 2018).

Scholars have also debated whether or not politics is a science like physics, chemistry, or biology. Although it deals with intangible concepts and theoretical assumptions that are difficult to measure and record, it is a form of science because the scientific method is used in every new political theory to test its validity. Political scientists also differ from politicians in several ways.

| Political Scientists' Approaches | Politicians' Approaches |
|--|---|
| Measured, well-thought-out responses to policy questions | Quick answers to policy questions to appeal to voters |
| Reach tentative conclusions after understanding the facts behind a political issue | Tend to hold firm in their views to appeal to voter base and stay in tune with their ideologies |
| Seek accuracy and measured responses | Seek ways to expand their popularity and improve chances of reelection |

(Rose, 2018)

What is politics? Is it an art, a science, or both? What impact, if any, does it have on our daily life? How would you define it based on the above information? These are questions you must ask yourself as you explore this book. You may find that your current definition of politics changes as you learn more about American politics and the role of nurses in today’s political process.

THE UNITED STATES—BIRTH OF A REPUBLIC

When in the Course of Human Events, it becomes necessary for one People to dissolve the Political Bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind required that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation.

Declaration of Independence, 1776

This quote prefaces the Declaration of Independence of the United States and is an excellent beginning to any study of politics in the United States. In the summer of 1776, colonial representatives in Philadelphia were interested in justifying their decision to declare independence from Great Britain. As Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, and the others realized, this document had to do more than discredit British rule. It became the template for the future American government—one that still exists today. Jefferson's statement that "We hold these truths to be self-evident" invokes the belief that human law is derived from a natural law of right and wrong. Everyone is capable of moral reasoning that enables them to question laws and change them if needed; this is the foundation of today's political system (Cato Institute, 2013).

The Declaration of Independence delineates colonists' grievances against King George III and his government. The representatives of the Thirteen Colonies took a radical step that created the United States

of America by dissolving all allegiance to Great Britain and declaring the colonies “Free and Independent States.” The Declaration further outlines the power of the new United States “to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.”

In 1787, another meeting occurred in Philadelphia to draft a plan to govern the new nation. Some of the original participants were there along with others sent to represent their respective states. At the Constitutional Convention James Madison of Virginia became a leading force in developing the document with input from other delegates. Their work was based on the Declaration of Independence and designed to create a government strong enough to prevent domestic and foreign oppression with a system of checks and balances. The United States had fought a long war to achieve liberty from government oppression and they were not about to endow their new government with absolute power. As the Preamble states,

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Power belonged to the people, but they delegated limited and specific powers to the government to exercise on their behalf; this was intentional. The Constitution created three branches of the federal government: legislative, executive, and judicial.

The legislative branch is defined in Article I, which outlines the membership and duties of the Senate and House of Representatives. The House of Representatives has the power to impeach and originate all bills for raising revenue, while the Senate has the power to try all impeachments and propose or concur with amendments to such bills. Congress’ powers include:

“To lay and collect Taxes, Duties. Imposts and Excises;

“To pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States;

“To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

“To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes;

“To establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

“To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

“To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

“To establish Post Offices and post Roads;

“To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

“To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

“To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offenses against the law of Nations;

“To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

“To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;

“To provide and maintain a Navy;

“To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

“To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

“To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States;

“To exercise exclusive Legislation over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may become the Seat of the Government of the United States; and

“To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof” (U.S. Const. art. I, § 8).

The states retained legislative authority in appointing officers and training militia. The delegates also ensured that:

“The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the Public Safety may require it;

“No bill of attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed;

“No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion to the Census or Enumeration herein before directed to be taken (requirement removed in the Sixteenth Amendment);

“No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State;

“No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another;

“No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time; and

“No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States; And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State” (U.S. Const. art. I, § 9).

The Constitution also constrained States from the following:

“No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance,
or Confederation;

“grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal;

“coin Money;

“emit Bills of Credit;

“make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment
of Debts;

“pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing
the Obligation of Contracts or;

“grant any Title of Nobility” (U.S. Const. art. I, § 10).

Consent by Congress was needed for States to:

“lay any Imposts or Duties on Imports or Exports, except
what may be absolutely necessary for executing its inspection
Laws: and the net Produce of all Duties and Imposts, laid by
any State on Imports or Exports, shall be for the Use of the
Treasury of the United States; and

“lay the Duty of Tonnage, keep Troops, or Ships of War in time
of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another
State, or with a foreign Power, or engage in War, unless
actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not admit
of delay” (U.S. Const. art. I, § 10).

Although the language is antiquated, the intent of this section of the Constitution is clear—to define the roles and responsibilities of Congress and the respective States.

Article II defines the executive branch, including the requirements and duties of the president, vice president, and civil officers. When the Constitution was written, the most common form of government internationally was the monarchy, and the delegates had not escaped one monarchy to create another. Aristotle described monarchy in

two forms: a perpetual, hereditary generalship, and absolute royalty. He maintained that there are three forms of government—royalty, aristocracy, and constitutional. In his own words,

... where men are alike and equal, it is neither expedient nor just that one man should be lord of all, whether there are laws, or whether there are no laws, but he himself is in the place of law.

—Aristotle, n.d.

His views on constitutional government also influenced the delegates at the Constitutional Convention:

... the people who are suited for constitutional freedom are those among whom there naturally exists a warlike multitude able to rule and to obey in turn by a law which gives office to the well-to-do according to their desert.

—Aristotle, n.d.

Article II describes the term of office for the president and vice president and implements the Electoral College, which still exists today. Since there were no political parties at that time, the electors, who could not include any senator or representative, “shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of the same State with themselves” (U.S. Const. art. II, § 1). The list of votes was submitted to the president of the Senate who opened all ballots in the presence of both the Senate and House of Representatives. The top vote-getter became president, and the person receiving the next number of votes became vice president.

The president was required to take an oath when entering office that continues today: “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” (U.S. Const. art. II, § 1). The president received certain powers during their term in office. These powers included:

“...shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States;

“...may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices;

“...grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment;

“...fill up all Vacancies that may happen during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall expire at the End of their next Session;

“...receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers;

“...take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed; and

“shall Commission all the Officers of the United States” (U.S. Const. art. II).

A system of checks and balances was designed to prevent the president from executing absolute power; this included Advice and Consent of the Senate:

“to make treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and

nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law” (U.S. Const. art. II, § 2).

Congress also had the right to “vest the appointment of such inferior officers, as they think proper, in the President alone...or in the Heads of Departments” (U.S. Const. art. II, § 2). The President was also required periodically to report to Congress on the State of the Union and recommend “to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient” (U.S. Const. art. II, § 3). Even the President’s power to veto legislation was subject to override by two-thirds of the House of Representatives and Senate (U.S. Const. art. I, § 7).

Article III addresses judicial power. According to this section, “The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish” (U.S. Const. art. III, § 1). Rather than specific terms of office such as Congress and the president, judges appointed to all courts “shall hold their Offices during good Behavior” and their power extended to:

“all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;

“all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls;

“all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;

“Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party; and

“Controversies between two or more States; between Citizens of different States; between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants under different States [and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and foreign States, Citizens or Subjects]” (U.S. Const. art. III, § 2). This was subsequently changed by the Eleventh Amendment: “The Judicial power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another State, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State” (U.S. Const. amend. XI).

Article III also delineates trial by jury except in cases of impeachment and defines treason against the United States with Congress determining punishment.

Article IV deals with state and citizen rights and Article V addresses the process for proposing amendments to the Constitution. Proposed amendments must be ratified by the legislatures of three fourths on the states, ensuring that the federal government doesn’t overreach its power in the governing process. The Constitution became “the supreme Law of the Land” and all leaders in Congress, in state legislatures, and

all executive and judicial officers are required “by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution” (U.S. Const. art. VI).

The Constitution remains a living document to ensure that powers not granted to the three branches of government will reside in the people of the United States. A system of checks and balances is designed to guarantee that liberty endures. It remains unique and valid today in our Republic and in the world.

THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

That all things should be decided by all is characteristic of democracy; this is the sort of equality which the people desire.

—Aristotle, n.d.

Many people believe the United States is a democracy because the framers of the Constitution stated, “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government” (U.S. Const. art. IV, § 4). This led to a conversation between Elizabeth Powel, the wife of Philadelphia Mayor Samuel Powel, and Benjamin Franklin, which was recorded by Dr. James McHenry, a Maryland delegate. Although he edited the conversation years later, the original quote in 1787 was:

“Powel: Well Doctor, what have we got—a republic or a monarchy?”

“Franklin: A republic, if you can keep it” (Bell, 2017).

The words democracy and republic are not interchangeable, and their functions are different. Perhaps the best description of the two was from James Madison in *The Federalist Papers* on November 23, 1787. Madison was a proponent of republican government. In Federalist No. 10 he expressed concern about dangers to the new government and how to address them. The Constitution has not totally prevented these dangers, particularly those of factions or groups united by common interests that are “adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community” (Madison, 1787). These groups

could be either a majority or minority, but their influence could taint public administrations and create “distrust of public engagements, and alarm for private rights” (Madison, 1787).

Madison believed that such factions or groups must be dealt with and recommended “two methods of curing the mischiefs of faction: the one, by removing its causes; the other, by controlling its effects” (Madison, 1787). According to Madison, it is not practical to remove the causes by destroying liberty or making every citizen have the same interests, opinions, and passions. Liberty is essential to political life and there will always be different interests, opinions, and passions. Therefore, it would be impossible to remove the causes of these factions or groups. The only alternative is to control their effects. Minority factions can be controlled by regular voting. When a majority faction is present, it is essential to “secure the public good and the rights of other citizens, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and the form of popular government” (Madison, 1787), leading to Madison’s definitions of a democracy and a republic.

As illustrated in the table (see below), Madison lent his support to the Republic, believing that its advantages outweighed its weakness. The Constitution was designed to address the Republic’s weakness with “the great and aggregate interests being referred to the national, the local and particular to the State legislatures” (Madison, 1787). Representatives selected by more citizens were more likely to keep the Union secure by preventing one party from outnumbering and oppressing the rest.

When the Constitution was ratified in 1789 as a Republic, the Union was difficult to establish. The country was large with sectional differences, arduous travel, and slow, unreliable communication. Americans put the interest of their state or region ahead of the country and many opposed the Constitution as threatening states’ rights and individual liberty. The Constitution, as previously discussed, did not alleviate these concerns. John Adams of Massachusetts was concerned that there was no bill of rights like the one he had written for the Massachusetts Constitution in 1780 (Handlin, 1966; McCullough, 2001).

In 1789, Adams was the first vice president under George Washington and presided over the Senate. Madison, who had opposed a bill of rights earlier, now became its most vocal proponent. When Massachusetts balked at ratifying the Constitution, adding rights-related amendments became imperative (archives.gov). Because citizens within the states were concerned about potential abuse of power by the federal government, the Senate and House of Representatives met in New York City to consider adding rights-related amendments that would make

| Democracy | Republic |
|---|---|
| Definition: “a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person” | Definition: “a government in which the scheme of representation takes place” |
| Delegation of the government: “A small number of citizens elected by the rest” | Delegation of the government: “Greater number of citizens and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended” |
| Philosophy: “by reducing mankind to a perfect equality in their political rights, they would, at the same time, be perfectly equalized and assimilated in their possessions, their opinions, and their passions” | Philosophy: “To secure the public good and private rights, and at the same time to preserve the spirit and form of popular government” |
| Sphere of Control: Narrow | Sphere of Control: Broad |
| Advantage: Confined to a small region “The smaller the society, the fewer probably will be the distinct parties and interests composing it; the fewer the distinct parties and interests, the more frequently will a majority be found of the same party.” | Advantage: Extended over a large region “Extend the sphere, and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests; you make it less probable that a majority of the whole will have a common motive to invade the rights of other citizens; or if such a common motive exists, it will be more difficult for all who feel it to discover their own strength, and to act in unison with each other.” |
| Weaknesses: “there is nothing to check the inducements to sacrifice the weaker party or an obnoxious individual;” “incompatible with personal security or the rights of property” | Weaknesses: “By enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representatives too little acquainted with all their local circumstances and lesser interests; as by reducing it too much, you render him unduly attached to these and too little fit to comprehend and pursue great and national projects” |

(Madison, 1787)

the Constitution more palatable to the states. In June 1787, Madison introduced a list of amendments designed to reflect the importance of these protections to citizens. He also believed that including them in the Constitution would educate people about their rights and prevent more drastic changes to the document. The House subsequently passed

a joint resolution with 17 amendments based on Madison's list. The Senate reduced the number of amendments to 12 and a joint Senate and House Conference Committee agreed on the 12 amendments (archives.gov).

Then, copies of the 12 amendments were sent to each state in October 1789 for ratification. For reasons previously mentioned, this was a lengthy process. However, by December 1791, three-fourths of the 13 state legislatures ratified 10 of these amendments. The other 2 that concerned Congressional representation and Congressional pay were not adopted at that time (Cato Institute, 2013).

The first 10 Amendments to the Constitution are commonly called the Bill of Rights and include:

Amendment I—"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances";

Amendment II—"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed";

Amendment III—"No Soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the Owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law";

Amendment IV—"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized";

Amendment V—"No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentation or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb, nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness

against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation”;

Amendment VI—“In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed; which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense”;

Amendment VII—“In Suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any Court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law”;

Amendment VIII—“Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted”;

Amendment IX—“The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage other retained by the people”; and

Amendment X—“The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people” (Cato Institute, 2013).

The Bill of Rights is profoundly important to all United States citizens. A bill of rights existed in several states during the time the Constitution was written and delegates didn’t see the need to include one in that document. However, when Massachusetts was reluctant to ratify the Constitution, threatening its existence, circumstances changed. Madison originally opposed adding amendments to the Constitution, believing that they would adversely impact the limited government defined in the Constitution. As he reached the conclusion

that these rights could be framed to prevent the abuse of powers not explicitly granted to the government, he first recommended that they be included within the Constitution. The members of the First Congress did not agree with his recommendation, but he led writing proposed amendments to be sent to each state for ratification anyway (Postell, 2007).

Only 10 of the 12 amendments were subsequently ratified, and they were not called the Bill of Rights. Each amendment was voted on separately and reflected rights defined in the Declaration of Independence: "...all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the consent of the Governed..." (Declaration of Independence, 1776).

These amendments did not attempt to identify all citizen rights and privileges. They also do not say how to safeguard "individual liberty from tyranny of the majority" (Postell, 2007). Madison and his colleagues believed that people must be responsible for the defense of their liberties. These amendments would increase public understanding of their rights and better prepare them to defend these liberties. The first 10 Amendments to the Constitution historically have been called the Bill of Rights, although the term is not found in the document. They did not enlarge the power of the federal government and the 9th and 10th Amendments served as a check on unlimited government. Each individual is unique, and the Bill of Rights serves to safeguard the liberties and privileges of all citizens (Postell, 2007).

The American Republic has endured for nearly 250 years, and these founding documents continue to guide our path as a country today.

THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM

However [political parties] may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people. . .

Washington's Farewell Address on September 19, 1796

As the quote implies, George Washington was opposed to political parties. However, political parties have played a huge role since the beginning of the United States. Washington attempted to circumvent political parties during his administration by appointing two political adversaries to his cabinet in the hopes that they would work together in the national interest. The young nation was threatened by an economic crisis and Washington's appointees—Alexander Hamilton (treasury secretary) and Thomas Jefferson (secretary of state)—had divergent views about how to resolve this crisis (University of Minnesota, 2016).

Hamilton planned to have the federal government assume the debts incurred by the states during the Revolutionary War. His measures included a controversial whiskey tax and the establishment of a national bank. Jefferson and local farmers opposed Hamilton's plan for a whiskey tax, resulting in the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. Hamilton's response was to bring together a group of powerful supporters to endorse his plan. This group became the Federalist Party, initially at the federal level. The Federalists soon spread to states, counties, and towns, particularly in the Northeast. Hamilton used his military and business connections to develop the Federalist Party at the grassroots level (University of Minnesota, 2016).

Since voting rights had increased during the Revolutionary War, the Federalists wanted to attract voters to their cause using the new organization to create propaganda and campaign for their candidates. They created several newspapers in large cities and smaller ones in rural locations. This partisan press began some of the key tasks of political parties by influencing public opinion and expressing positions on issues. Jefferson and Madison began an anti-Federalist movement, which became the foundation for the Republican Party (not today's Republican Party). The Republicans used other newspapers to communicate their views and actions while inspiring local leaders and groups to align themselves with their party. The political parties feared by Washington had come to life (University of Minnesota, 2016).

The Whiskey Rebellion in 1794 ignited fears that the government could be overthrown by violent factions (parties). In 1796, the two political parties became evident in the presidential election. John Adams, a Federalist, barely won over Thomas Jefferson, a Republican. In 1800, the Federalist and Republican members of Congress met formally to nominate the presidential candidates. This practice was a precursor to today's nominating conventions. Upon election, President Thomas Jefferson established a tradition in the United States of political parties as grassroots organizations where small groups joined to represent various interests, select slates of candidates for office, and present platforms on issues (University of Minnesota, 2016).

These two early political parties were largely comprised of political office holders. The Federalists never expanded beyond the wealthy classes, and their influence decreased over the next several years until the election of 1816. The Federalists received few votes in the 1816 election and soon ceased to exist as a party. By 1820, the Republican Party was the only surviving national party. However, the Republicans experienced infighting and developed into two warring factions. These became the National Republicans and Democratic-Republicans (University of Minnesota, 2016).

By 1828, a true two-party system had developed. The Democratic-Republican Party became the Democratic Party, and a branch of the National Republicans became the Whig Party. Andrew Jackson became president with support of the Democratic Party. The period from 1834 until the start of the Civil War was a time of party politics. Both parties used grassroots campaigning to their advantage. There was door-to-door canvassing for voters, picnics, and rallies sponsored by both parties. Voting by citizens was as high as 96% in some states and campaign buttons came into existence. The Whig Party was replaced in 1854

with the Republican Party when the Whigs suffered internal conflicts over patronage and slavery. This new party consisted of former Whigs, unhappy Democrats, and members of a small anti-slavery party—the Free-Soil Party. The Republicans gained influence with the election of Abraham Lincoln as the 16th president in 1861. In the 1860s, cartoonist Thomas Nast created two symbols for the Democrats (donkey) and Republicans (elephant), which still persist today (University of Minnesota, 2016).

Political parties exerted massive power during the post-Civil War era to the Great Depression. Immigrants from Europe settled mainly in urban areas during this time and machine politics was born. Party machines in these cities were run by bosses who demanded loyalty and service in exchange for jobs and support in becoming citizens. These new citizens then voted as the party bosses demanded. Party machines controlled the government in major cities like Boston, New York, and Chicago and used their power to create public improvement projects that employed many of their voters. The system was corrupt, and bosses used their powerful positions to become wealthy. By ensuring employment in exchange for votes, party bosses could elect officials who let the graft continue. Thomas Nast used political cartoons to alert people of the crimes occurring due to party machines, resulting in the ousting and eventual jailing of Boss Tweed in New York City (University of Minnesota, 2016).

While party bosses got rich and some people got work, political machines didn't benefit everyone. As the United States became more industrialized and large corporations formed, greater disparities in wealth became evident. Factories and coal mines presented dangerous working conditions, and farmers faced declining prices for their crops. Reformers blamed corruption and incompetence of party machines for these conditions. They believed that funds for improving social conditions were being diverted into the bosses' pockets while keeping incompetent associates in power. These reformers, called the mugwumps, joined together in the 1880s to form the Progressive Movement. They began reforms to reduce the parties' grip on the electoral system. By 1896, Progressives succeeded in implementing secret ballots in most states. Before people could only vote for one party; now, they could split their ticket and vote for a person from another party. In 2022, straight ticket voting is only offered in six states: Alabama, Indiana (except for at-large races only), Kentucky, Michigan, Oklahoma, and South Carolina (ncsl, 2022). Progressives also advocated for primary elections where the people could participate rather than caucuses where candidates were

chosen by party elites. Primaries began in a few states, but it wasn't until the 1970s that they became commonplace (University of Minnesota, 2016).

Progressives instituted a merit system in 1833 for employment in government by passing the Pendleton Act and establishing the civil service. This helped reduce the influence of political machines but did not eliminate them. Progressive reformers were unsuccessful in running for president, and the Great Depression led to new national leadership. Beginning in 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal to end the Great Depression also had massive impact on political parties. The government became a pivotal force in ensuring citizens' economic welfare, and Washington, DC became the power center while the power of the president expanded. Political parties became centered in Washington and national party leaders became detached from their local organizations and voters. They also lost the ability to control the policy agenda (University of Minnesota, 2016).

After World War II, presidential candidates pushed their own agendas on issues and independence as they ran for office. Running on a party label, presidents were elected based on personal, not partisan, appeals to the electorate. Political parties began reforms in the late 1960s to show they were responsive to the public. The Democrats acted first to revamp nominating convention delegates to include more average voters. Many state Democratic parties shifted from caucuses, where delegates were selected by party leaders, to primaries where voters had a voice. Republicans followed with reforms that resulted in states adopting primaries. The resulting candidate-centered politics exists today, and candidates develop their own personal campaign organizations and appeal directly to the public through television and social media. Campaign professionals and media consultants develop election strategies and get voters to the polls (University of Minnesota, 2016).

Here is the story of United States political parties:

| Dates | Parties | Overview |
|-----------|-----------------|--|
| 1789 | No formal Party | Washington did not approve of political parties and none were identified during his term of office. |
| 1794–1796 | No formal Party | Two factions were forming: Federalists who believed that the central government and wealthy, well-educated classes should hold the most power. Anti-Federalists who believed that the vast majority of ordinary, less educated people had skills and common sense to run the government. |

| Dates | Parties | Overview |
|--------------|---|--|
| 1797 | Federalist & Anti-Federalist Party | Federalist party elects John Adams as second President of the U.S. and the <i>Federalist Papers</i> explain the Constitution to the American people. |
| 1798 | Republican Party | Anti-Federalist party renamed to reflect Republicanism in supporting states' rights and strict interpretation of the Constitution. |
| 1800 | Democratic-Republican Party | What was a derogatory term for the new Republican party became accepted by Jeffersonian Republicans. |
| 1815–1816 | Federalist Party Democratic-Republican Party | Federalists opposed the War of 1812 and were discredited resulting in massive loss in the 1816 election and leading to the dissolution of the party. |
| 1817–1823 | Democratic-Republican Party | Having only one political party resulted in more stable government. |
| 1824 | National Republican Party | Two factions of the Democratic-Republican party unified to enhance national defense and develop U.S. resources. |
| 1825–1828 | Democratic-Republican Party | The party split into two factions: northern-dominated Republicans and southern-dominated Democrats. |
| 1829 | Democrat Party | Jacksonian Democrats removed “Republican” to form the Democrat party. |
| 1834 | Whig Party | This was a new name for National Republicans to support reform. |
| 1837–1853 | Democrat Party Whig Party | The presidency veered between both parties until 1853 when intra-party divisions destroyed the Whig party. |
| 1854–1869 | Republican Party | This party was organized to oppose extension of slavery. |
| 1869–present | Two Party System | The Democrats and Republicans comprise the two major political parties in the United States. |

(Adapted from Lachin, 2015: University of Minnesota, 2016)

As the table above shows, we still have a two-party system and although not all-powerful, the Democrat and Republican parties far outnumber Independents in United States elections.