

American government: u s democracy

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



Democracy is a system of governance whereby power vested on leaders is held by the population and leadership is through an accountable and transparent electoral system that respects the choice of the majority while listening to the views of the minority. The path to democracy has been long and vibrant with stiff obstacles that have had to be evaded or crushed in order for equality and equity to prevail under a democratic system of governance that promotes respect for individual and collective rights and freedoms.

A radical shift from hereditary and monarchical leadership was necessary since this unitary holding of power vested too much privilege and power upon an individual leading to abuse due to self interest. However though democracy is perceived to exist in some regions due to a free electoral system, the process though accountable may bring about individuals who renege on their promises and completely disregard the pillars of democracy leading to a dictatorial regime that is unjust and oppressive and does not respect the will of the masses.

There are some countries that have endeavored to be a model of democracy by striving to grant all citizens an equal status and ensuring that a supreme constitution exists on which fundamental rights and freedoms are anchored. This is not to say that the democratic records of these countries are clean. For any monumental success on democracy to be achieved, society must be prevailed upon to discard certain moral and legal evils to ensure that freedom and equal opportunity thrives.

On this front it is safe to say that the United States of America is a true democracy whereby all citizens and visitors coexist peacefully and all

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disregarding race are guaranteed equal rights and freedoms in the pursuit of their dreams and aspirations (Miroff, Seidelman, & Swanstrom 2007). The American constitution was formulated on the basis that power must always rest upon the people and so provided that all state and national representatives must be elected by the people through a fair and transparent election.

The constitution further sought to limit the terms of office of a certain government to ensure that a regime may not abuse its authority to disregard the will of the people in order to selfishly retain power. A democracy is characterized by a view for fair representation and a prudent understanding that a separation of power is important to prevent a conflict of interest that might contravene the intentions of a true democracy.

Where such separations do not exist or where those divisions are superficial, rule of law becomes geared toward promoting the will of the ruling minority and justice becomes fleeting since there usually results in a breach of the rights and freedoms of the populace. In this respect it becomes important to have three important branches of government whose mandate is clear and there exists clear guidelines on the powers vested upon each arm of government.

In any democracy there should be a legislative arm whose mandate comes directly from the people and their primary role the formulation of law to act as a basis for unity, growth and oversight. Secondly a judicial system that is impartial and independent for the proper dispensing of justice and the protection of individual rights and freedoms. Lastly an executive is important to represent the sovereignty of a nation and lead the process of protecting

the people and service provision. The United States of America has come a long way to reach democratic maturity.

This process was full of radical actions by people like Martin Luther who felt that racial segregation was uncharacteristic of a democratic nation. The civil movements of the 60 have brought equality that was important to propel the nation to great social, economic, political and military dominance. Further more women lobby groups that relentlessly advocated for gender equality saw the broadening of democratic space and women have continued to reach influential political and business positions and prospects are there on the possibility of a woman president in the country.

Critics to this notion would need to be reminded that a few decades ago the prospect of a black president would have been unimaginable but 2008 brought a new dawn in American politics and democracy in general with the election of Obama as president. This is a result of a fair and accountable electoral system that ensures that the choice of the American people is respected. Miroff, Seidelman, & Swanstrom (2007) adds that the United States continues to ensure that individual rights and freedoms are respected and several bills have been passed by congress to ensure that .

Some include the freedom of movement, information, privacy and expression. A robust security system continues to safeguard the rights of citizens to be protected from harm with strict laws enforced to protect property both tangible and intellectual. American government consists of the national federal government and the state governments. While these states are subject to national legislation by congress, they however retain the

power to make decisions that are of interest to these states on issues ranging from education, health, security and the administration of justice.

National government consists of an executive, congress and the judiciary. The power of the executive is vested upon the president who may delegate such powers to the vice president and his cabinet for the smooth execution of government functions. The president is also the commander in chief of the armed forces but is also subject to consult with congress over the deployment of soldiers to wars. The executive can also enter into international treaties with approval from senate. The president is also responsible for signing bills into law and retains to an extent the power to veto certain bills.

Executive power in the States is held by an elected governor who is responsible for providing leadership in the state and signing bills into state laws. The most important arm of government is Congress which is granted several powers by the constitution. Congress however works hand in hand with the Senate but the constitution clearly spells out that congress is supreme in law making. Congress has oversight powers over the executive in issues ranging from taxes, military and security, provision of services, providing guidelines to the administration of justice among others.

Lastly the last arm of government is the Judiciary whose core function is the administration of justice and the interpretation of the constitution to ensure that law passed by the legislative and executive arms of government do not contravene the constitution. There are federal courts charged with administration of federal laws and state courts subject to state laws. The

highest court in the land is the Supreme Court and its decisions are binding upon all subordinate courts whether federal or state.

These courts try both criminal and civil cases to bring redress where violations occur. There have been this believes through out American politics that there is a great influence of a small minority of rich individuals in the outcome of American elections and in the way that elected leaders make their decisions. It is widely accepted that these individuals who are the core contributors in campaign funding will choose individuals whom they feel will contribute towards continuing with policies that will benefit their causes and make them wealthier.

This greatly contravenes what the American constitution envisioned since it takes the power of the greater masses to decide elections since the choice of candidates in the primaries is greatly influenced by minority rich and influential individuals. Therefore Americans simply endorses one of the fronted candidate who is simply one of the two fronted by two different rich factions and the notion that Americans choose a president is jus a sham.

It is my opinion therefore that we need to increase public funding to parties and independent candidates to counter the effect of the rich on Americas politics. It is also important that we see an entrance of more parties to give Americans more choice during elections to improve democracy. References Miroff, B. , Seidelman, R. , &Swanstrom, T. (2007). The Democratic Debate: An Introduction to American Politics. 4th. ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin.