

Election system in us and japan essay

[Politics](#), [President](#)



Introduction

The 2012 Presidential election of US is over and we all know its Barack Obama who has made it to the White House, yet again. Japan's election of Prime Minister will be happening in December 2012, which is being eagerly awaited. In lieu of this, lets study the present election systems in these two countries.

However, before proceeding, it is imperative that we understand the government in these countries. The US is a Two-party Federal Republic, while Japan is a Multi-party Parliamentary Republic. Japan's head of the government is a member of the legislative body, but in US that is not the case.

The national parliament of Japan, Diet, is divided into the House of Councilors with 242 members and the House of Representatives with 480 members. The former is known as the upper house, while the latter is called the lower house. There are basically three types of elections held in Japan. General elections are held to elect members of the House of Representatives, subsequently another round of elections are held to elect members of House of Councilors and finally local elections are conducted to appoint officers in villages, cities and prefectures.

In US, there are two types of elections held. Primary elections are conducted to elect party members for the general election and General elections (including Presidential and Congressional elections) are held to elect a party (member representative) to hold office. The election for Congressional office may occur on different days, but the Presidential election must happen on one day. The Congress has two chambers - Senate with 100 members and

House of Representative with 435 members. The parties nominate their candidates during the Primaries.

Tenure

In US, the Presidential election is held every four years, while the Congressional election is held every two years. The former election takes place on the Tuesday after the first Monday in the month of November. The election may be held before the stipulated time in case of President's resignation, unfortunate death or removal from office. The president of United States can be reelected once, so in all he can hold the office for eight consecutive years.

In Japan, the term of prime minister is four years, but the Prime Minister may be terminated before that if the House of Representatives run a motion of no confidence. The House of Representatives gets reelected every four years, while the House of Councilors gets reelected every six years. The Japan Prime Minister can be reelected as well.

Campaigning

In US, campaigning takes a multi-channel approach, as opposed to Japan. In US, candidates may appear in commercials and TV programmes to spread a message, but in Japan, the candidates can make appearances only in a few government-financed advertisements. In 2000, YouTube and blogs were very crucial campaigning tools for the US parties.

In Japan, the campaign may last for up to twelve days after notification of candidature. Also, there is a specific upper limit to the amount of money a candidate can spend on campaigning. In US, the campaigns may start before

the primary elections. The candidates are allowed to raise funds for the campaigns. The sources may be both private and public but a strict process must be followed in either case.

Eligibility Criteria

In US, for one to run for president, all the following conditions must be met.

He/She must be a born citizen of US. He/She must be at least thirty-five years old. He/She must have lived in the US for at least fourteen years.

In Japan, the following rules apply. He/She must be a citizen of Japan. He/She must be at least twenty-five years old. He/She must be civilian (serving member of Japan's self-defense forces and ex-members of Imperial Japanese army and Imperial Japanese navy do not qualify).

Voting Methodology

In Japan, balloting is the technique used to elect the members of the Diet. A ballot form will be provided to the voter. Every voter must cast his/her vote on the voting date at the designated polling station. The person must cast only one vote, and is eligible to vote once he/she becomes eighteen years.

The votes are then counted by superintendents appointed for this cause.

Once the houses are formed, a member from the House of Representatives is appointed as the Prime Minister. The Emperor then officially appoints the Prime Minister.

Anyone who is eighteen years and older can vote in the US. However, some states ban felons and convicted criminals from casting votes. The US does not have a list of eligible voters, so registration must be done for everyone who wants to vote. This process of self-registration varies from state to state.

The ballot forms and equipment for voting differs from one state to the other as well. Electronic devices and lever machines are also used to carry out the voting in the US. Before the President can execute the duties, he/she must take the Presidential oath.

Powers and Roles

Legislative and Executive powers of US President include passing a bill as an official law or sending back the bill to Congress with objections, functioning as the Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces in the US, planning and executing military strategies, directing the foreign policies, ensuring that laws are faithfully executed, serving as the head of the executive branch of the Federal government, nominating Federal judges after getting Senate confirmation and convening one or both houses of the Congress.

Constitutional and Statutory roles of Japan's Prime Minister include controlling, supervising and directing executive branch, acting as a representative of the Cabinet and presenting bills to the Diet, appointing and dismissing Cabinet ministers, signing new laws and/or Cabinet orders, acting as Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces in Japan, preparing reports on foreign and domestic relations and presenting them to the Diet and permitting legal actions to be taken against Cabinet ministers, if necessary.

Miscellaneous

The President of the United States runs the office from the White House while the Prime Minister of the Japan works from the Kantei. The facilities and services in these premises can be used by them as and when they please.

Secret Service takes the responsibility of protecting the current president and his/her first family of US. The Security Police of Japan must protect the current and former Prime Minister of Japan.

Conclusion

We have discussed here some of the most important factors about the elections conducted in US and Japan. Both the systems are unique in their own ways and come loaded with several pitfalls and pros. We cannot term any one as a better or foolproof way. Debates have been going on as to which system is healthier with no conclusion being reached as such.