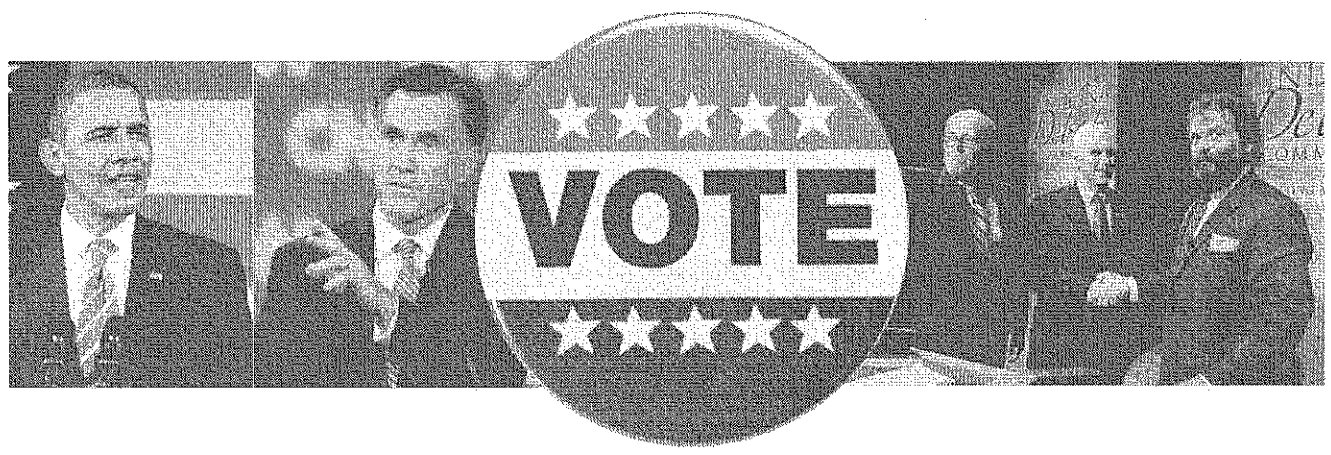


# New Castle High School

# 2012

# ELECTION ★ GUIDE ★



## For the Teacher

IC 20-30-5-4

### System of government; American history

Sec. 4. (a) Each public school and nonpublic school shall provide within the two (2) weeks preceding a general election for all students in grades 6 through 12 five (5) full recitation periods of class discussion concerning:

- (1) the system of government in Indiana and in the United States;
- (2) methods of voting;
- (3) party structures;
- (4) election laws; and
- (5) the responsibilities of citizen participation in government and in elections.

(b) A student may not receive a high school diploma unless the student has completed a two (2) semester course in American history.

(c) If a public school superintendent violates this section, the state superintendent shall receive and record reports of the violations. The general assembly may examine these reports.

Indiana state law requires all students from grades 6-12 to receive five full days of instruction about the content listed above. This election guide, created by the social studies department of New Castle High School, is intended to help teachers in meeting that requirement.

This guide is designed to thoroughly supplement the requirements of each of the five sections above. Each topic may correlate with a day of the week for the unit. Teachers may use their professional discretion as to which particular areas of study they wish to emphasize and which resources will prove most helpful. The "Questions for Discussion" sections can serve as starting points for class discussion or as the basis for writing assignments. At the end of the unit, be sure to spend some time analyzing the election results and discussing implications.

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*Prepared by the New Castle High School Social Studies Department, October 2012.  
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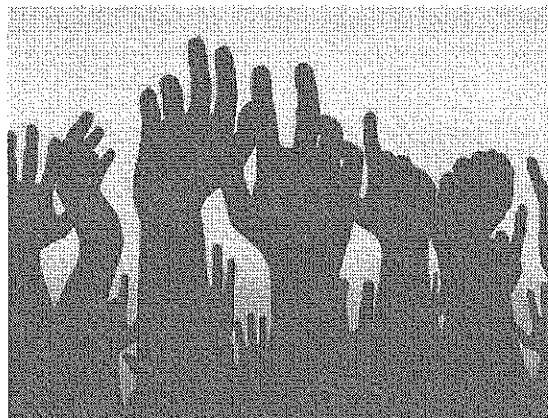
# Why learn about the 2012 Election?

If you are a senior, you may be voting for the first time on November 6, 2012. The rest of you will be eligible to vote before you know it. Whether you are old enough to vote this time or not, the results of this year's election will affect *your* future for many years to come. The candidates who end up representing us will ultimately be responsible for how much you pay in college tuition, whether it will be easy to find a well-paying job, how much you pay for healthcare, and whether you will have the same opportunities for success as previous generations. As an American citizen, it is your duty to learn as much as you can about the election process—not only for your own benefit, but to ensure that our democratic way of life continues.

## The basics

There are 195 different countries in the world. Each of these countries has a different form of government. Some countries are ruled by a king or a queen. Other countries are ruled by a dictator or by one political party. The United States, however, has a **democratic** form of government. Democracy means “rule by the people.”

The United States, however, is not a pure democracy. The framers of the Constitution were wary of concentrating too much power in the hands of the citizens. Because they feared “mob rule,” they created a system of government in which the citizens would be represented by elected officials. This is called **representative democracy**.



In certain situations, pure, or direct, democracy is practical. Citizens often vote on issues in town hall meetings. Shareholders vote on issues affecting corporations. Students in a class may vote on which day they would prefer to take a test. However, the United States has a population of nearly 315 million people, and Indiana has over 6.5 million people. If even a very small fraction of Hoosiers showed up in Washington, D.C. to vote on an important issue affecting Indiana, it would be logistically impossible.

The United States is actually a **democratic republic**. Our United States Constitution gives us the power to elect people to represent us in government. The Constitution also tells us who is eligible to run for president, how long the president's term is supposed to be, when the president takes office, and what powers the president has. The same is true for members of Congress.

## Three branches of government

A unique feature of our United States government is that we have three branches of government. This is because of a concept known as **separation of powers**.

BRANCH	PURPOSE	WHO WE ELECT
Executive	enforces laws	President (national level), Governor (state level)
Legislative	makes laws	Senators, Representatives (both national and state level)
Judicial	interprets laws	Judges (at the local level)

# Three levels of government

During your senior year you will learn quite a bit about how our American government is organized, especially if you take AP United States Government and Politics. For now, it is helpful to know that there are basically three levels of government—national, state, and local. In this election guide, we will learn about candidates running for office at all three levels.

## National level

The national level of government involves the **entire United States**.

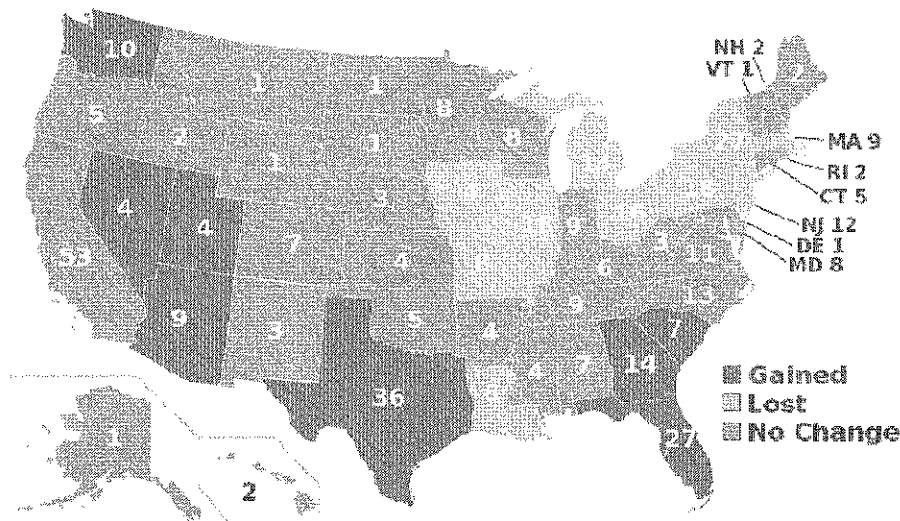
### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

Every four years, Americans elect a President and Vice-President. The president and vice president run together—this is called a **ticket**. The current president, Barack Obama, is running for re-election. This means he is the **incumbent**. Obama is being challenged by former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney. Obama is a Democrat; Romney is a Republican. The Libertarian candidate is Gary Johnson. Of all the electable offices, this one is the most important.

### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Our United States Congress is **bicameral**, which means it has two houses—the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Every two years, all 435 seats the **House of Representatives** are up for election. The number of seats each state has in the House is determined every ten years based on population (this is called **apportionment**). Indiana has nine seats (we are in the 6<sup>th</sup> District). California, the most populous state, has fifty-three seats. Sparsely populated states like Wyoming only have one representative in Congress.



Map showing House of Representatives reapportionment based on the 2010 census.

◆ In which region of the United States did states lose population?

The **Senate** is different. Each state has two senators regardless of its population. Senators are elected for a six-year term, and these terms are staggered. As an example, Republican Dan Coats was elected as our Indiana Senator in 2010. The seat currently occupied by Republican Richard Lugar is up for election in 2012. In 2014, there will be no seats up for re-election. By 2016, Dan Coats' seat will once again be available. This means that during any election, only one-third of Senate seats are available.

## State level

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The **governor** is the main elected official at the state level. Mitch Daniels, who was first elected in 2004, is not eligible to run again. Republican Mike Pence, Democrat John Gregg, and Libertarian Rupert Boneham are all vying to be Indiana's next governor. Like the office of president, the term of an Indiana governor is four years.

Two other statewide executive branch positions are up for election this year. Greg Zoeller (R) is running against Kay Fleming (D) for Indiana Attorney General. Incumbent Tony Bennett (R) faces challenger Glenda Ritz (D) for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The state superintendent's race is being closely followed by those who have a stake in education.

### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Indiana General Assembly in Indianapolis is the state-level equivalent to the United States Congress in Washington, D.C.

The **Indiana General Assembly** is the legislative body of Indiana. It consists of an upper house, the **Indiana Senate**, and a lower house, the **Indiana House of Representatives**.

Chamber	Number of Members	Length of Term
Indiana Senate	50	4 years
Indiana House of Representatives	100	2 years

The central and southern thirds of Henry County are part of **State Senate District # 42**. Republican **Jean Leising** of Oldenburg is our current state senator and she is running unopposed for re-election.

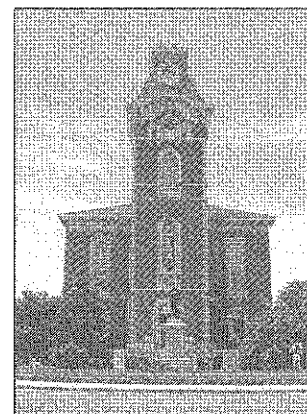
In the House of Representatives, all of Henry County is currently represented by Republican **Tom Saunders** of Lewisville. We are in the **54<sup>th</sup> District**. Saunders is running for re-election this year against Libertarian Jeremiah Morrell. There is no Democratic challenger this time.

## Local

Local government is right here in New Castle and Henry County. You may know someone who is on the City Council or who works in the Mayor's office. Decisions made by city and county officials affect our lives on a daily basis. It is very easy to be involved in local government. You can attend council meetings, write letters to the editor, participate in local events, help with campaigns, and work at the polls on Election Day.

In 2012, the following offices are up for election: Judge of the Henry Circuit Court #2, county coroner, county surveyor, county commissioner (middle and southern districts), county council at-large, and school board.

November 2012 marks the first time school board elections will be held in the fall. Previously they were held in the primary election in May. School board elections are **non-partisan**, which means they do not involve political parties.



## ☑ Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between direct democracy and representative democracy, and why is representative democracy more practical?
2. Which issues will be most important to you once you graduate high school?
3. What would be some disadvantages if we only had one house in Congress instead of two?
4. Which house of Congress, Senate or House of Representatives, do you think is more directly responsible to the people, and why?
5. At which level of government—national, state, or local—do you think you can make the most difference as a voter and as a citizen? Explain.

## Key Terms

democratic  
representative democracy  
democratic republic  
executive branch  
legislative branch

judicial branch  
ticket  
incumbent  
bicameral  
House of Representatives

Senate  
apportionment  
governor  
Indiana General Assembly  
non-partisan

## Suggested Activities

1. **Persuasive writing.** Imagine that you have a friend who is a senior and is eighteen years old. Your friend, however, sees no reason to vote. In a well-organized response, convince your friend of the importance of voting. Be sure to include arguments that are aimed toward voters in the 18-24 year-old age group (which historically has the lowest voter turnout).
2. Choose an issue that affects you directly (tuition, jobs, healthcare, etc.) and explain why it is important to you.
3. Explore the Indiana General Assembly District Lookup Service.

## Resources

### 📖 ONLINE:

- Indiana General Assembly District Lookup Service (<http://district.iga.in.gov/DistrictLookup/>)
- Henry County ([www.henryco.net](http://www.henryco.net))
- City of New Castle ([www.cityofnewcastle.net](http://www.cityofnewcastle.net))

# Methods of voting

The Constitution says that the states are responsible for conducting elections. Traditional voting takes place on Election Day—the first Tuesday in November. However, there are other ways to vote in Indiana:

## Absentee voting

As a registered voter in Indiana, you are eligible to vote **absentee-in-person** at your county election board office beginning 29 days before Election Day. This is known as “early voting” and has become increasingly common among the states in recent years, in part to encourage greater voter turnout.

In order to vote **absentee-by-mail**, one of the following must apply:

1. You have a specific, reasonable expectation that you will be absent from the county on Election Day during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open (6 am to 6 pm).
2. You have a disability.
3. You are at least 65 years of age.
4. You will have official election duties outside of your precinct.
5. You are scheduled to work at your regular place of employment during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
6. You will be confined due to illness or injury or you will be caring for an individual confined due to illness or injury during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
7. You are prevented from voting because of a religious discipline or religious holiday during the entire 12 hours that the polls are open.
8. You are a participant in the state’s address confidentiality program.
9. You are a member of the military or a public safety officer.
10. You are eligible to vote at a precinct or former residence under a fail safe procedure in IC 3-10-11 or IC 3-10-12.

When the county election board receives your application for a mail-in absentee ballot, they will process it and if the application is approved, mail you an absentee ballot for the upcoming election.

In order to vote **absentee-by-traveling board**, you must fit into bullet points 2 or 6 above. The ballot will be delivered to you by a bi-partisan absentee voter board who will be able to assist you with your ballot.

## Key Terms

absentee-in-person

absentee-by-mail

absentee-by-traveling board

## Discussion Questions

1. What are some advantages to voting early?
2. What are some potential disadvantages to voting several days before Election Day?

 **ONLINE:** [http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/files/2012\\_Indiana\\_Voter\\_Information\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/files/2012_Indiana_Voter_Information_Guide.pdf)



# Political parties

Political parties play a tremendously important role in American politics and government. A **political party** is an organization of citizens who wish to influence and control government by getting their members elected to office. In the United States, we have a **two-party system**.

## History of political parties

Although George Washington warned against political parties in his Farewell Address, we have had two major parties since the earliest years of our republic.

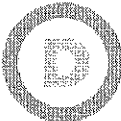
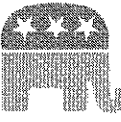
The first major rivalry was between the Federalists (led by Alexander Hamilton) and the Democratic-Republicans (led by Thomas Jefferson). The Federalists favored a strong central government. The opposition believed that more power should rest with the people. When Thomas Jefferson defeated incumbent Federalist John Adams for the presidency in 1800, it marked a remarkably smooth transition of power from one party to the other. Since that time, America has been known for peaceful elections. The same cannot be said, however, for other nations whose elections are often marred by violence and unrest.

After the influence of the Federalists faded, the Democratic Party grew strong under the presidency of Andrew Jackson. Their main competition was from the Whig Party. The Republican Party was founded in 1854 as tensions grew over slavery. The Republicans replaced the Whigs as a major party. Abraham Lincoln became the first Republican president in 1860. Republicans continued to be successful until the election of Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932.

Today, just as in the time of Lincoln, we have two major political parties — the **Democratic Party** and the **Republican Party**. The Democrats control the White House under the leadership of Barack Obama. Republicans hold a majority in the House of Representatives, and Democrats control the Senate. This is what is known as **divided government**. Since the election of Richard Nixon in 1968, neither political party has dominated politics—the influence of the two parties has been fairly even. This ensures that elections are competitive. It also means that in recent years our nation has become more **polarized** and more sharply divided.

## Democrats vs. Republicans

Although there are other political parties in the United States (the third largest being the **Libertarian Party**), our focus in this section is on the two major parties.

PARTY	SYMBOL	IDEOLOGY*	BASIC BELIEFS
Democratic		liberal	The role of government is to help its citizens. The government has a responsibility to alleviate social ills and protect civil liberties and individual and human rights.
Republican		conservative	Government should be limited in favor of personal responsibility, the free market, individual liberty, and traditional American values. A strong national defense is important.

\* An **ideology** is a set of ideas that constitute one's goals, expectations, and actions.



## Function and purpose of political parties

Although an increasing number of Americans are growing disillusioned by political parties, parties nevertheless play an important role in our government.

Political parties ...

- give people a voice in government
- choose, or **nominate**, candidates to run for public office
- provide candidates with resources (financial support, voters, etc.)
- provide leadership in government (whichever party is in power influences public policy)
- act as “watchdogs” (the party out of power makes sure that the party in power is living up to its promises)
- educate voters (political parties present information to voters about important issues)
- get citizens involved in the political process (voting, campaigning, participating in events)
- encourage debate

## Third parties

Unlike many Western European democracies, third parties have generally been unsuccessful in the United States (despite a few notable exceptions). Third parties often form to support a particular cause or idea. In 1912, former president Theodore Roosevelt formed the Progressive, or “Bull Moose” party after he failed to win the Republican nomination. In 1992, independent Texas billionaire H. Ross Perot launched a successful campaign for president against George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. Perot got 19 percent of the popular vote and formed the Reform Party. Although third-party candidates rarely win major elections, third parties nevertheless play an important role in American politics. Third parties often point out weaknesses in the major parties. Additionally, third parties frequently introduce new ideas which become part of the national political discussion.

Major Third Parties in the United States include the Libertarian Party, Green Party, and Constitution Party. There are many more officially recognized political parties in the United States. However, they do not receive much attention.

## Party structure

SOURCE FOR THIS SECTION: CliffsNotes.com. *The Structure of Political Parties*. 21 Oct 2012  
<[http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study\\_guide/topicArticleId-65383,articleId-65505.html](http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/topicArticleId-65383,articleId-65505.html)>.

The major political parties are organized at the local (usually county), state, and national levels. Party leaders and activists are involved in choosing people to run for office, managing and financing campaigns, and developing positions and policies that appeal to party constituents. The national party organizations play key roles in presidential elections.

## Local party organization

Political parties operate at the local level in municipal and county elections (though many cities choose officials — mayors and members of city council — through **nonpartisan elections**, in which candidates effectively run as independents without party affiliation). In *partisan elections*, the party is involved in identifying candidates,

providing professional staff, and taking positions on issues of immediate concern to voters. The party leadership recognizes that the interaction between party workers, candidates, and voters is important.

In the late 19th century on through a good part of the 20th century, **political machines** flourished in several large cities; Tammany Hall in New York, Frank Hague in Jersey City, the Pendergast family in Kansas City, and Richard Daley in Chicago are examples. The political bosses, the mayors, and the party leaders used their control of patronage jobs to reward party loyalty and provide a broad range of social services. Reforms in the civil service and the growth of primary elections gradually brought an end to machine politics.

## State party organization

Political parties prepare for statewide elections. Party activists are named as electors in the Electoral College if their party carries the state in a presidential election. Candidates for state office may be chosen through a primary election, state convention, or caucus process. At a state **caucus**, party members select their candidates. In many states, the executive officials — governor, lieutenant governor, treasurer, and attorney general — are elected as individuals. Although the party's **slate**, its candidates for office, is listed on the ballot, voters can vote for any candidate they want. In such states, it is not unusual for voters to elect a Democratic governor and a Republican lieutenant governor or vice versa.

## National party organization

At the national level, political parties run candidates for Congress and the presidency. Each party has its own national committee made up of party leaders, elected officials, and the chairs of the state party organizations. The chair of the national committee is chosen by the party's candidate for president. The Democratic and Republican national committees do not run the campaigns of their respective presidential candidates; they play a supporting role to the campaign organizations of the candidates themselves. In both the Senate and the House, each party has its own congressional campaign committee, which raises money for congressional elections.

## The national convention

The national committee loosely runs the party between national conventions. As noted earlier, a party's choices for president and vice president are nominated at the national convention. The delegates to the convention are already committed to vote for particular candidates based on the results of the state primary or caucus voting. While some delegates are appointed by the state party organization, the overwhelming majority are selected through primaries and caucuses. A party's nominee is often determined months before the convention, which makes the choice official. The party works on and announces its **platform** at the national convention. The platform is made up of **planks** that explain how the party stands on the issues facing the country. The terms *platform* and *plank* date from the presidential election of 1832, when national party conventions were first held. Developing the platform is often the most controversial part of the convention. The Republicans, for example, have had to work out an acceptable compromise on abortion between pro-choice and pro-life forces within the party.

## Discussion Questions

1. Would our country be better off without having two major political parties? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think third parties are not as successful in the United States? What would need to change to make them successful?
3. How do political parties make a positive impact on American politics?

4. Why might members of a political party have trouble agreeing on a platform?
5. Are national party conventions still useful? Or are they more for show these days?
6. Republicans will often use the phrase “liberal” as something negative. Democrats do the same thing with the terms “Tea Party” or “extremist.” Do you think politicians spend too much time on labels, and not enough on issues? Or is it important to point out the perceived shortcomings of your opponent?
7. America is deeply divided. Are there some issues that both parties should “agree to disagree” on? Or do these controversial issues (abortion, gay marriage, faith, values, etc.) need to remain in focus? Explain.

## Key Terms

political party  
two-party system  
Democratic Party  
Republican Party  
Libertarian Party  
divided government

polarized  
ideology  
nominate  
non-partisan elections  
political machines  
caucus

slate  
platform  
planks

## Suggested Activities

1. Visit the websites of at least two political parties of the United States. Compare their platforms.
2. Identify whether you consider yourself a liberal, conservative, or somewhere in between. Then take the Political Compass Test (<http://www.politicalcompass.org/>) to see how your views align with particular ideologies. Were your results what you expected?
3. Try the Pew Research Center Political Typology Quiz (<http://www.people-press.org/typology/quiz/>). It’s very similar to the Political Compass Test, but may yield different results.
4. Using the resources of the Internet, create a diagram to show how political parties are organized at the local, state, and national level.
5. Write a persuasive essay using one of the following theses (or one of your teacher’s recommendation):
  - The two party system is bad for America.
  - Political parties play an important role in politics.
  - Americans are too sharply divided because of political parties.
  - Political parties promote healthy debate of important issues.
6. Interview someone in your family or neighborhood who considers themselves to be a strong Democrat or Republican. Ask them why their political party is important to them and why they support it.
7. It is rare that someone would agree completely with all the views of a political party. Research the issues and *create your own* political party. Write a brief explanation of the purpose of your party and its goals. Make your own platform by saying what you believe about important issues (the economy, education, national defense, abortion, healthcare, gun rights, gay marriage, taxes, immigration, etc.) Make a poster to feature your party’s main positions on the issues.

# Election laws

The following information is taken from “**Questions and Answers About Voter Registration in Indiana**” by the Indiana Election Division. ([http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/files/08VoterRegistrationQ\\_ABrochure.pdf](http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/files/08VoterRegistrationQ_ABrochure.pdf))

**Q: Can I register to vote in Indiana?**

You can register to vote in Indiana, if you are: 1.) 18 years old by the day of the general election; 2.) A United States citizen; 3.) Have lived in your precinct in Indiana for at least 30 days before the next general election; and 4.) Not currently in prison after conviction of a crime.

**Q: What if I don't live in a traditional residence?**

If you have a non-traditional residence, you still have the right to register and vote. Simply draw a map on the voter registration application indicating where you live (where you usually spend the night) and list a mailing address within your county that can be used to mail your notification that you are registered.

**Q: Am I already registered at the address where I currently live?**

You can call your county voter registration office to find out if you are currently registered to vote at that address. A phone number for each county office is listed on the back of the brochure. You can check your registration at [www.indianavoters.com](http://www.indianavoters.com).

**Q: I'm turning 18 right before the election. When can I register? When can I vote?**

If you are turning 18 before or on the next general election date, you can register. You can vote in both the primary and general election, even if you are not 18 on the primary election date. However, you will not be eligible to vote on school board members, political party precinct committeemen, or political party state convention delegates elected at the primary election.

**Q: Where can I register to vote?**

You may register to vote by applying at a variety of places: your county voter registration office or circuit court clerk office, any license branch or public assistance office or other sites. You may register to vote in Indiana by mail on a simple, preaddressed card that you can pick up at public libraries, license branches, local school corporations with public secondary schools or local government offices. Mail-in registration forms are also included with Indiana income tax return forms.

**Q: How do I register to vote?**

You only need to fill out a simple form that asks for name, address, birth date and a voter identification number (see explanation below). You will also be required to check boxes on the form to indicate that you are a U.S. citizen, and will be 18 years of age on or before election day. The voter registration form requests some optional information, such as your telephone number and e-mail address. The form also asks you to list any previous name or address you have used on a former voter registration so that these records can be updated. You must then sign the form.

**Q: What is my Voter Identification Number as required on the voter registration form?**

The voter identification number is your Indiana driver's license number. If you do not have an Indiana driver's license, then you must provide the last four digits of your social security number. If you do not have an Indiana driver's license or a social security card, you will be assigned an ID number when your application is processed.

**Q: Do I have to present personal identification documents when I register to vote?**

No, unless you are registering to vote for the first time in Indiana by returning a registration form through the mail. If you register using the mail, you can include a photocopy of a current valid photo ID, a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other document. Whatever document you present must have your name and address printed on the ID. Certain voters, such as military voters, are exempt from this requirement.

**Q: What if I am unable to fill out the form myself?**

Someone can help you fill out the form. If you cannot sign your name, you must make an identifying mark on the signature line. If someone fills out the form for you, that person must write their name and address in the lower right corner of the form.

**Q: When must I register to vote?**

You can apply to be registered to vote at any time. However, to vote in a primary or general election, you must be registered at least 29 days before that election. A mail-in voter registration application must be postmarked at least 29 days before that election. Some military voters and their family members can register until noon on election day. Contact your county voter registration office for information.

**Q: What do I do when I move?**

You must file a new registration application. Check address change and fill out all the information, including your previous address. You can use a mail-in form or do this in person at any county voter registration office. It is important that you do this so that we can cancel your old registration.

**Q: What if I move right before an election?**

If you move in the last 29 days before the election, you may still vote. To do so, contact your county voter registration office. If you moved more than 29 days before the election and did not change your registration before the deadline, you will not be eligible to vote at your former address unless you qualify to do so under special procedures. Contact your county voter registration office for more information.

**Q: When will I be registered?**

Once your voter registration application is received, your county voter registration office will process the application and determine your eligibility. If you are eligible, the county office will send you a voter registration acknowledgment card. Once you receive that card, you will be officially registered. If you are not eligible, or if the application was incomplete, you will receive a notice denying the application or requesting the missing information. If you have not received a voter registration card or a notice from your county within about 30 days, call your county voter registration office.

**Q: Can anyone cancel my voter registration?**

If you have not changed your address since you registered to vote, the only way your voter registration may be canceled is if your county voter registration office is notified that you have (1) been convicted of a crime and imprisoned, or (2) died. You can not be "purged" just because you have not voted recently. You can request that your voter registration be canceled, if for any reason you no longer wish to be registered. If you have changed your address since you last registered, then your registration at your old address may be cancelled if your county voter registration office is notified that you have registered at a new address. There are also special procedures that permit your county voter registration office to cancel your registration after two general elections have been held if your county voter registration office is notified that you no longer reside at your old address. Remember to file a new voter registration form with your county voter registration office whenever you move to a new address or change your name!

**Q: Where will I vote?**

Call your county voter registration office to find out where your polling place will be located.

**Q: What if I can't get to the polls on election day?**

You may vote by absentee ballot for a variety of reasons: if you will be outside the county on election day during the entire 12 hours the poll is open; working in another poll on election day; confined due to illness, injury, or disability; or scheduled to work during the entire 12 hours the poll is open. You must request an absentee ballot from your county election board before the election to vote absentee. For more information, call your county voter registration office or the Indiana Election Division.

# WHY SHOULD I VOTE?

## ↑ WHY PEOPLE VOTE

- To have a say in issues that affect them
- To help decide a close election
- To support a candidate they like
- To help a friend or family member
- Out of a sense of duty
- Because they value the right to vote

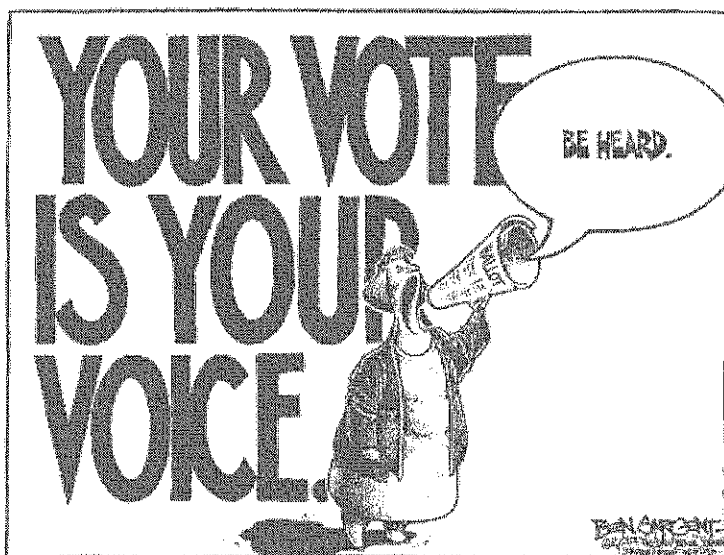
## ↓ WHY PEOPLE DON'T VOTE

- They don't think one vote matters
- Voting never seems to change anything
- They don't feel like going to the polls
- They have no way to get to the polls
- They don't like politicians
- They don't feel informed on the issues

## WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE

Young voters (age 18-24) usually have among the **lowest voter turnout**. As a result, elected officials often ignore the issues that are important to this age group. By voting, you help send a clear message that your voice needs to be heard!

Voting keeps our elected officials accountable for their actions. By actively participating in each election, you are helping keep democracy alive and making your local, state, and federal governments more representative of **all** Americans.



## One Vote Makes a Difference!

- **ONE VOTE** in 1776 made English the official language of the United States instead of German.
- **ONE VOTE** kept Aaron Burr from becoming President in 1800. That same one vote elected Thomas Jefferson President.
- **ONE VOTE** admitted Texas, California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho to the United States.
- **ONE VOTE** saved President Andrew Johnson from impeachment in 1868.
- **ONE VOTE** in the Electoral College elected Rutherford B. Hayes to the presidency in 1876.
- **ONE VOTE** made Adolf Hitler head of the Nazi Party in 1933.
- **ONE VOTE** in 1977 the mayor of Ann Arbor, Michigan was elected by one vote.
- **ONE VOTE** on the Supreme Court in 2000 determined that George W. Bush had won the Presidential Election instead of Al Gore.

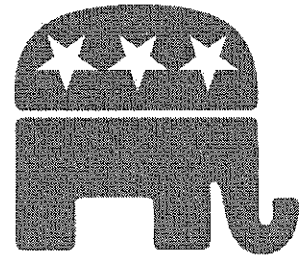
# Political Cartoons

**Political cartoons** in the United States are an important way to express opinions about politicians and issues while having a little fun. Political cartoons have been around almost as long as our country. They became especially popular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and are still popular today.

German-born **Thomas Nast** (1840-1902) was one of the most famous American political cartoonists. Many of his cartoons were extremely critical of powerful politicians. His cartoons were frequently published in a political magazine called *Harper's Weekly*. Nash first used the elephant to represent the Republican Party. Today both the Democratic and Republican parties use logos that were first seen in political cartoons.

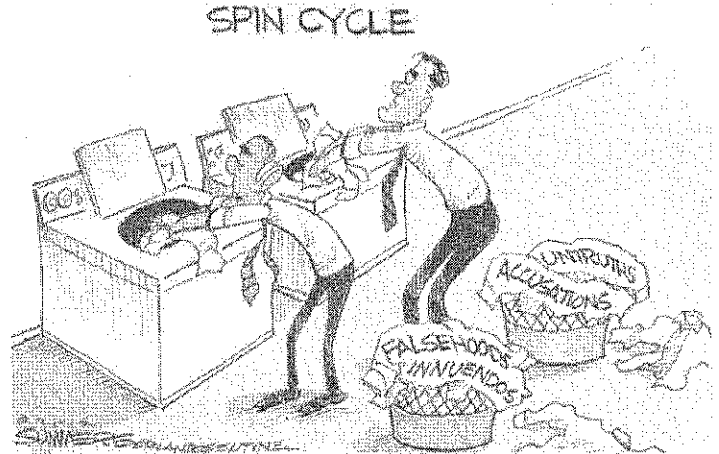
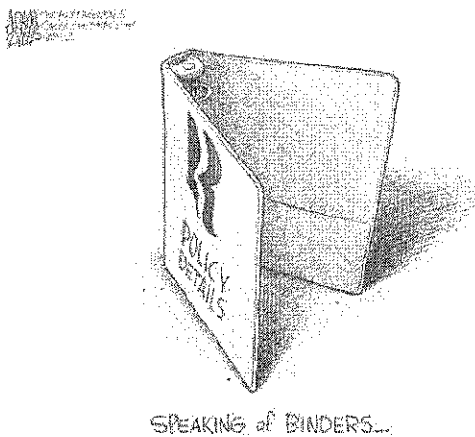
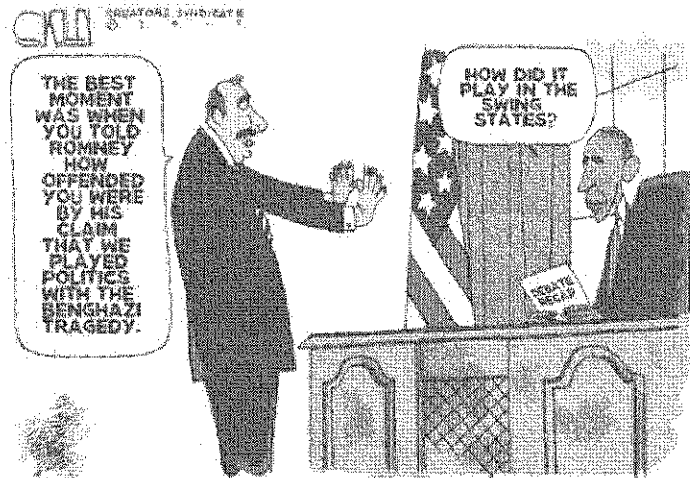
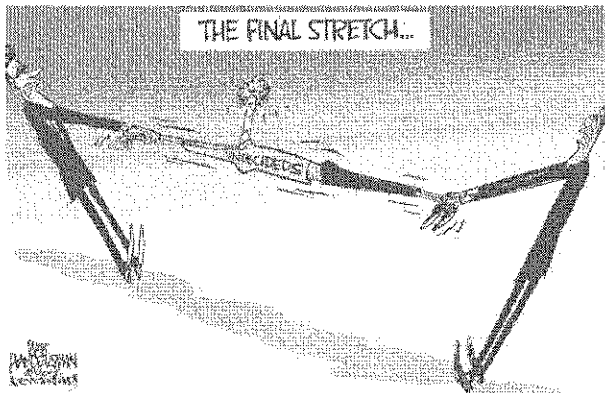


Democratic Party Logo

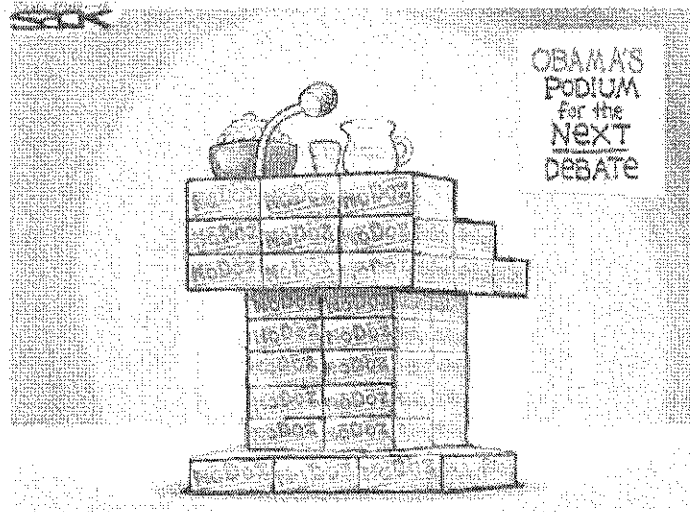
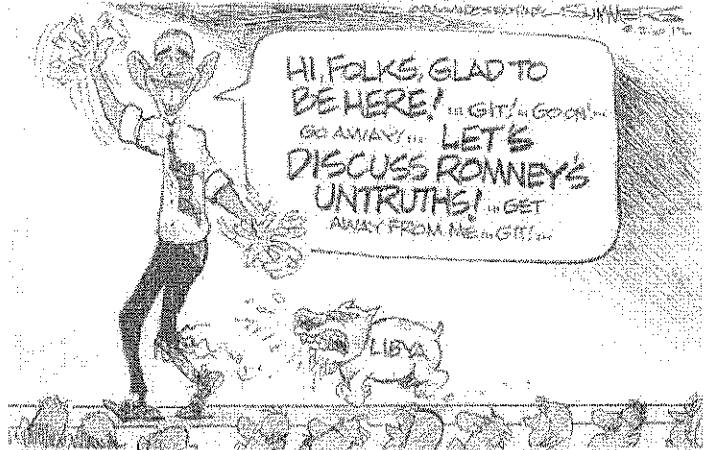
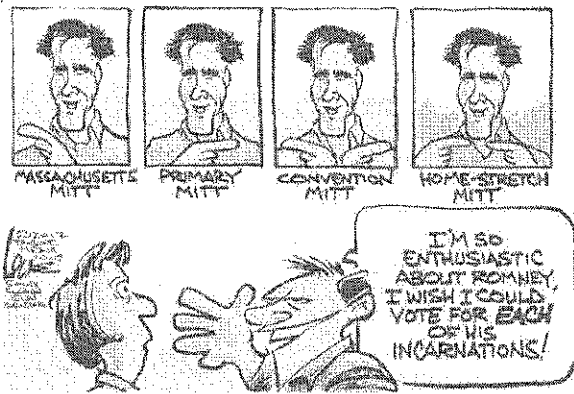


Republican Party Logo

## Some Recent Political Cartoons







## ☑ Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the “undecideds” are playing such an important role in the 2012 Presidential Election?
2. What does the cartoonist suggest was Obama's real reason for saying he was offended by Romney's remarks about the Benghazi tragedy?
3. Mitt Romney drew tremendous attention in the second presidential debate for saying that he had “binders of women” to make sure that qualified female candidates were being considered for jobs while he was governor of Massachusetts. What does the “binder” cartoon suggest about Mitt Romney's policies?
4. Romney and Obama are using washing machines in one of the cartoons. What is this intended to represent?
5. What does the cartoon about various “incarnations” of Mitt Romney suggest?
6. What does the “podium” cartoon suggest about Obama's performance in the first debate?
7. Why might someone express themselves through a political cartoon rather than an essay or commentary?

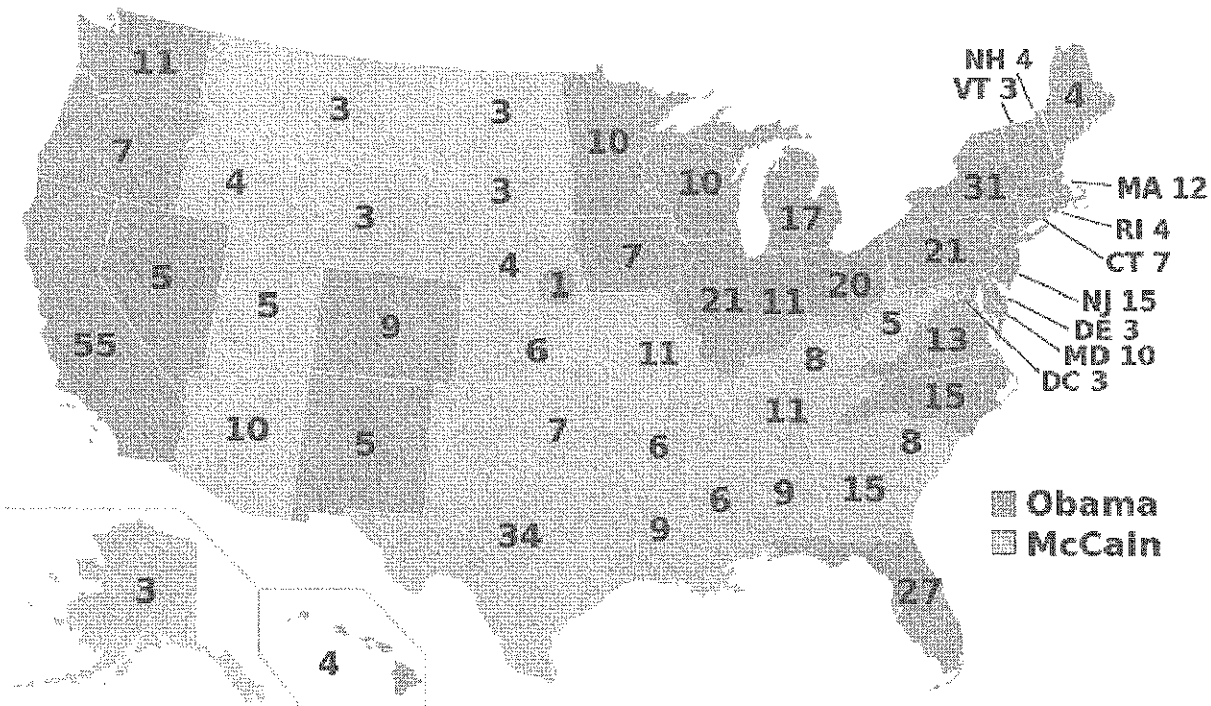
# The Electoral College

Source: Wikipedia (but fact-checked for accuracy)

The **Electoral College** is an example of an indirect election, consisting of 538 electors who officially elect the President and Vice President of the United States. The number of electors is equal to the total voting membership of the United States Congress, 435 Representatives and 100 Senators, plus three electors from the District of Columbia. Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 of the Constitution specifies the number of electors to which each state is entitled and state legislatures decide how they are chosen.

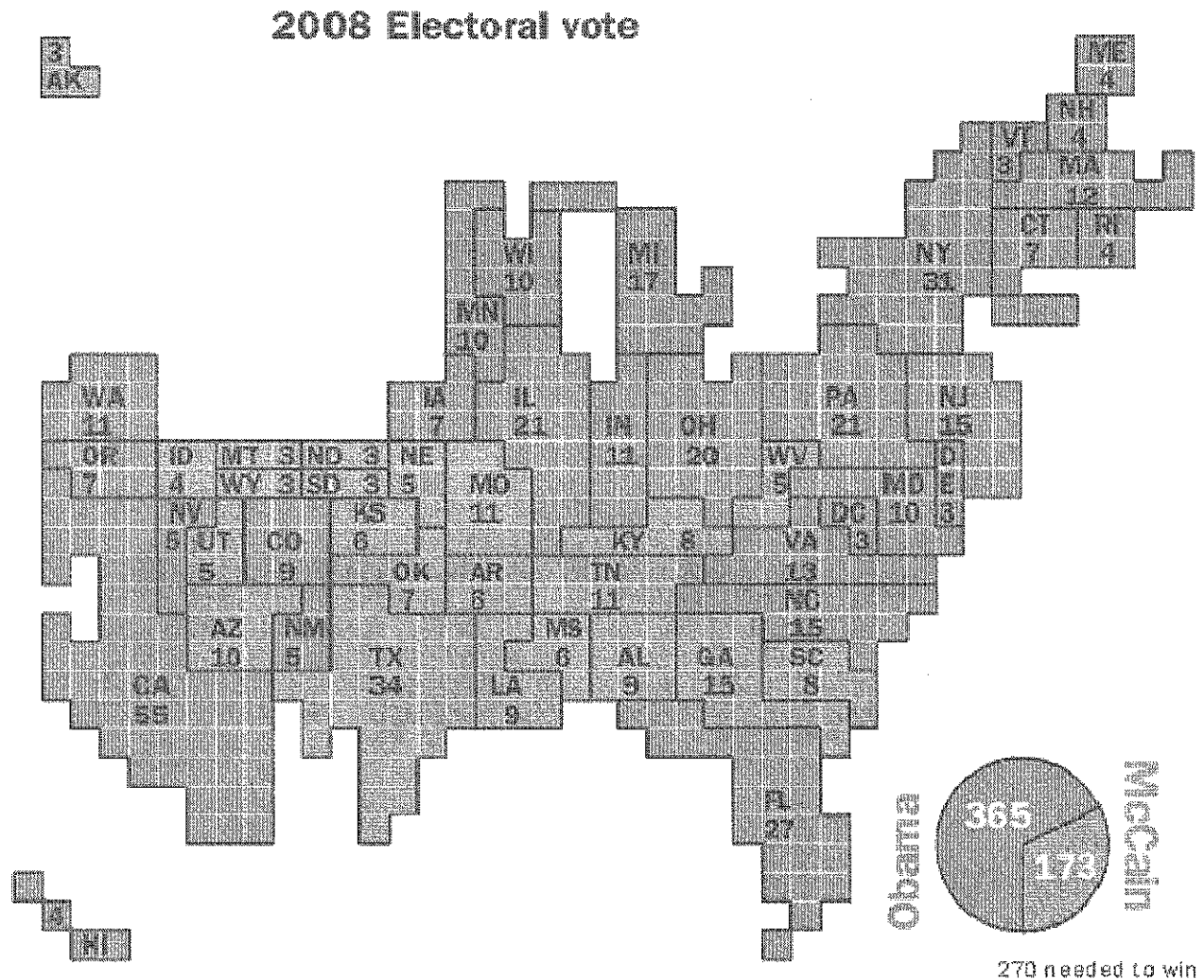
Voters in each state and the District of Columbia cast ballots selecting electors pledged to presidential and vice presidential candidates. In nearly all states, electors are awarded on a winner-take-all basis to the candidate who wins the most votes in that state. Although electors are not required by federal law to honor a pledge, in the overwhelming majority of cases they vote for the candidate to whom they are pledged. The Twelfth Amendment provides for each elector to cast one vote for President and one vote for Vice President. It also specifies how a President and Vice President are elected. The Twenty-third Amendment specifies how many electors the District of Columbia is entitled to have.

Critics argue that the Electoral College is inherently undemocratic and gives swing states disproportionate influence in electing the President and Vice President. Proponents argue that the Electoral College is an important, distinguishing feature of federalism in the United States and that it protects the rights of smaller states. Numerous constitutional amendments have been introduced in the Congress seeking to alter the Electoral College or replace it with a direct popular vote.



Electoral College map showing the results of the **2008 U.S. presidential election**. Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) won the popular vote in 28 states and the District of Columbia (denoted in blue) to capture 365 electoral votes. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) won the popular vote in 22 states (denoted in red) to capture 173 electoral votes. Nebraska split its electoral vote when Senator Obama won the electoral vote from Nebraska's 2nd congressional district; the state's other four electoral votes went to Senator McCain.

# The Electoral College (Continued)



Cartogram representation of the Electoral College vote for the 2008 election, with each square representing one electoral vote.

Note: This shows how states with more electoral votes are ultimately more important to candidates than those states which have fewer votes.

The best way to learn about the Electoral College is use helpful online resources:

**ONLINE:**

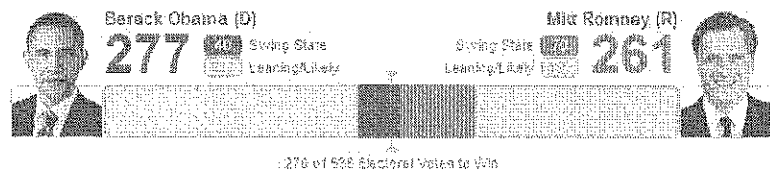
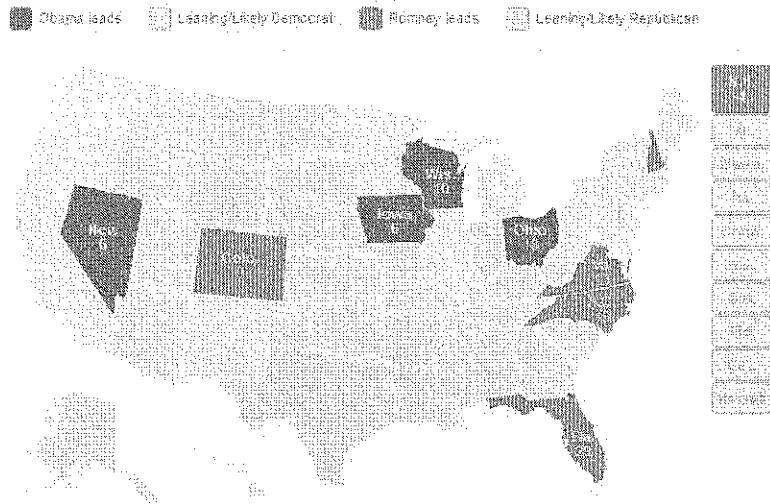
- Interactive Electoral College Map (<http://www.270towin.com/>)
- Real Clear Politics Electoral College Map ([http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/2012\\_elections\\_electoral\\_college\\_map.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2012/president/2012_elections_electoral_college_map.html))
- How Stuff Works: The Electoral College (<http://www.howstuffworks.com/electoral-college.htm>)

# The Electoral College (Continued)

## The importance of “Swing States”

Swing states are those states which neither lean heavily Democratic nor Republican. Candidates will often focus tremendous campaign resources to reach voters in these critical states.

States	RCP POLL AVERAGE		ELECTORAL VOTES	
	Obama	Romney	Obama	Romney
Colo.	47.7%	47.8%	0	8
Fla.	46.6%	46.7%	0	29
Iowa	49.0%	46.6%	6	0
Nev.	49.0%	46.0%	6	0
N.H.	47.6%	46.8%	0	4
N.C.	44.7%	50.3%	0	15
Ohio	46.1%	46.0%	18	0
Va.	48.0%	46.0%	0	13
Wis.	49.8%	47.0%	10	0
<b>Swing-State Votes</b>			<b>40</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Leaning/Likely State Votes</b>			<b>237</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>Total Overall Votes</b>			<b>277</b>	<b>261</b>



• <http://www.politico.com/2012-election/swing-state/>

## Discussion Questions

1. Is the Electoral College a good system? Why or why not?
2. Does the Electoral College system make it unfair to states with smaller population?
3. Why have neither Romney nor Obama spent much time campaigning or advertising in Indiana?
4. Why is Romney not likely to spend much time campaigning in California and New York?
5. Why are both Romney and Obama campaigning so heavily in Ohio and Florida?

## Suggested Activities

1. Visit an interactive website where you can make your own predictions about the Electoral College.
2. Write an essay explaining why the Electoral College is a good or bad idea.

# The candidates

## National Offices

### President of the United States

- Barack Obama (D – Chicago, Illinois) – Incumbent / Vice President: Joe Biden
- Mitt Romney (R – Boston, Massachusetts) – Challenger / Vice President: Paul Ryan
- Gary Johnson (L – Taos, New Mexico) – Challenger / Vice President: Jim Gray

### United States Senate

- Joe Donnelly (D – Granger, IN) – Open Seat
- Richard Mourdock (R – Darmstadt, IN) – Open Seat
- Andrew Horning (L – Freedom, IN) – Open Seat

### United States House of Representatives (6th District)

- Brad Bookout (D – Yorktown, IN) – Open Seat
- Luke Messer (R – Shelbyville, IN) – Open Seat
- Rex Bell (L – Hagerstown, IN) – Open Seat

## Statewide Offices

### Indiana Governor

- John Gregg (D – Sandborn) – Open Seat / Lieutenant Governor: Vi Simpson
- Mike Pence (R – Columbus) – Open Seat / Lieutenant Governor: Sue Ellspermann
- Rupert Boneham (L – Indianapolis) – Open Seat / Lieutenant Governor: Brad Klopfenstein

### Attorney General

- Greg Zoeller (R) – Incumbent
- Kay Fleming (D) – Challenger

### Superintendent of Public Instruction

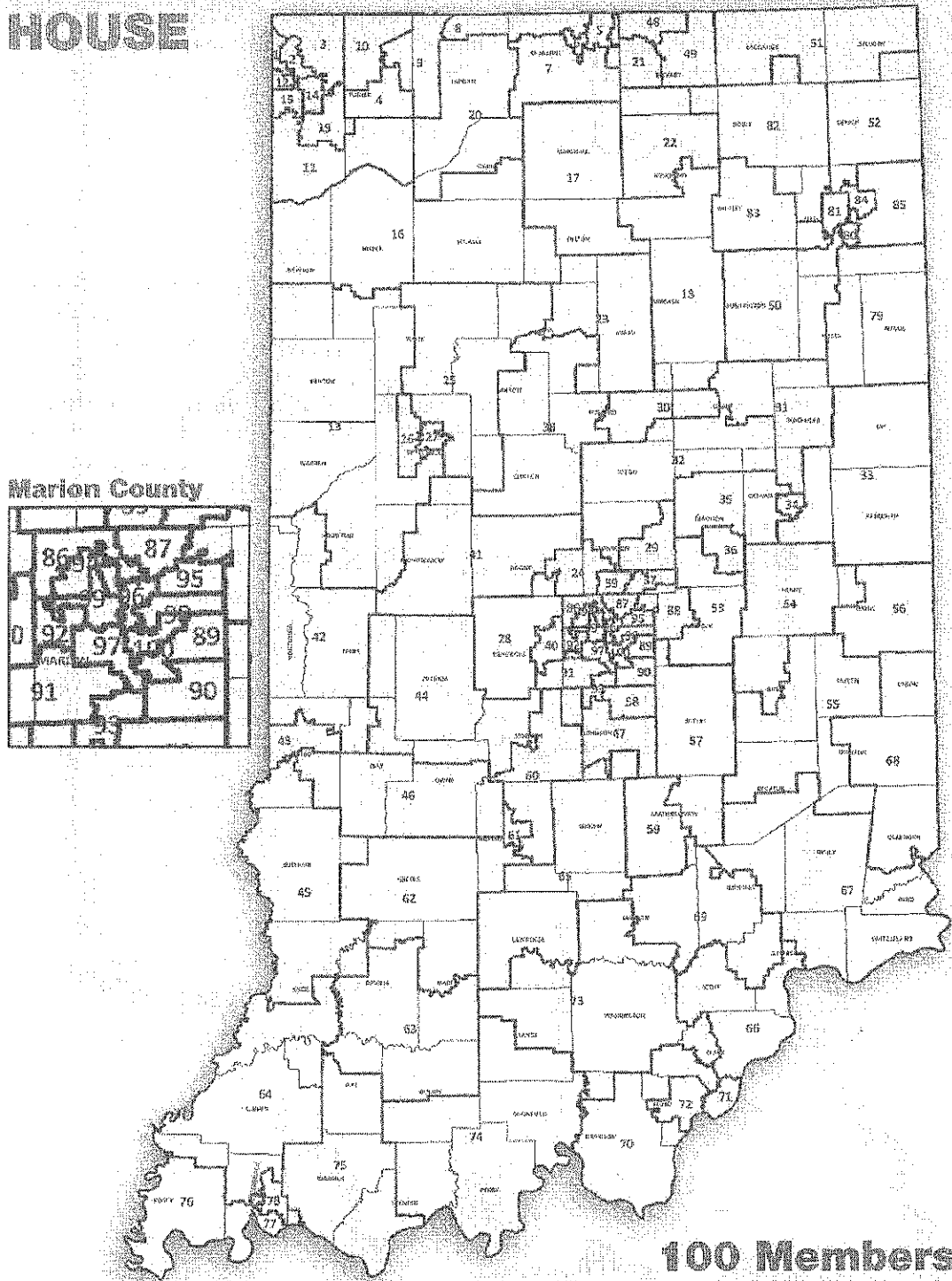
- Tony Bennett (R) – Incumbent
- Glenda Ritz (D) – Challenger



# Indiana General Assembly Districts

Source: *Let's Talk Politics 2012*, Indiana Chamber of Commerce

## HOUSE



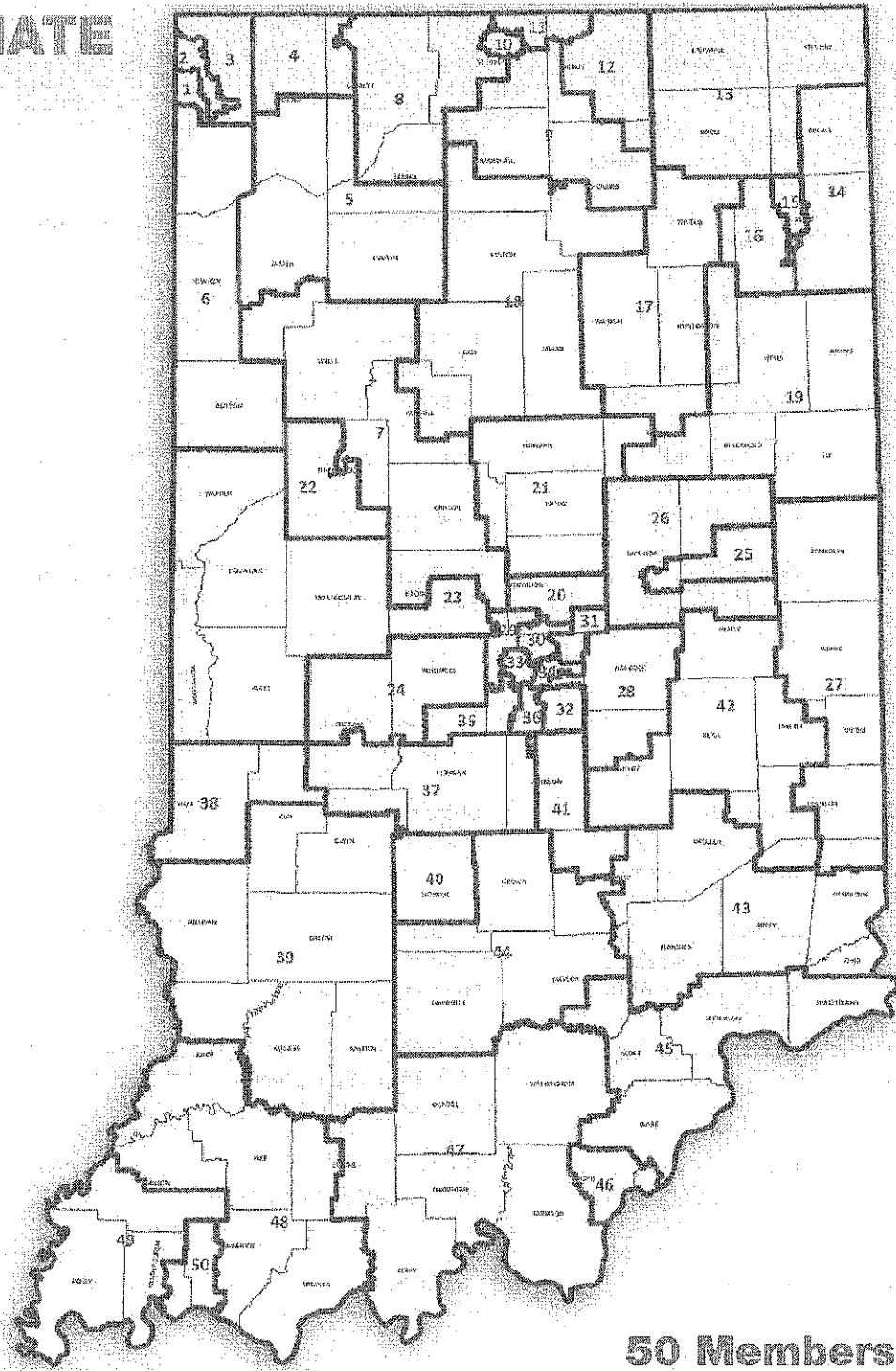
House Districts approved by the Indiana General Assembly in 2011.  
See the Indiana Code for the legal definitions of these districts.



# Indiana General Assembly Districts

Source: *Let's Talk Politics 2012*, Indiana Chamber of Commerce

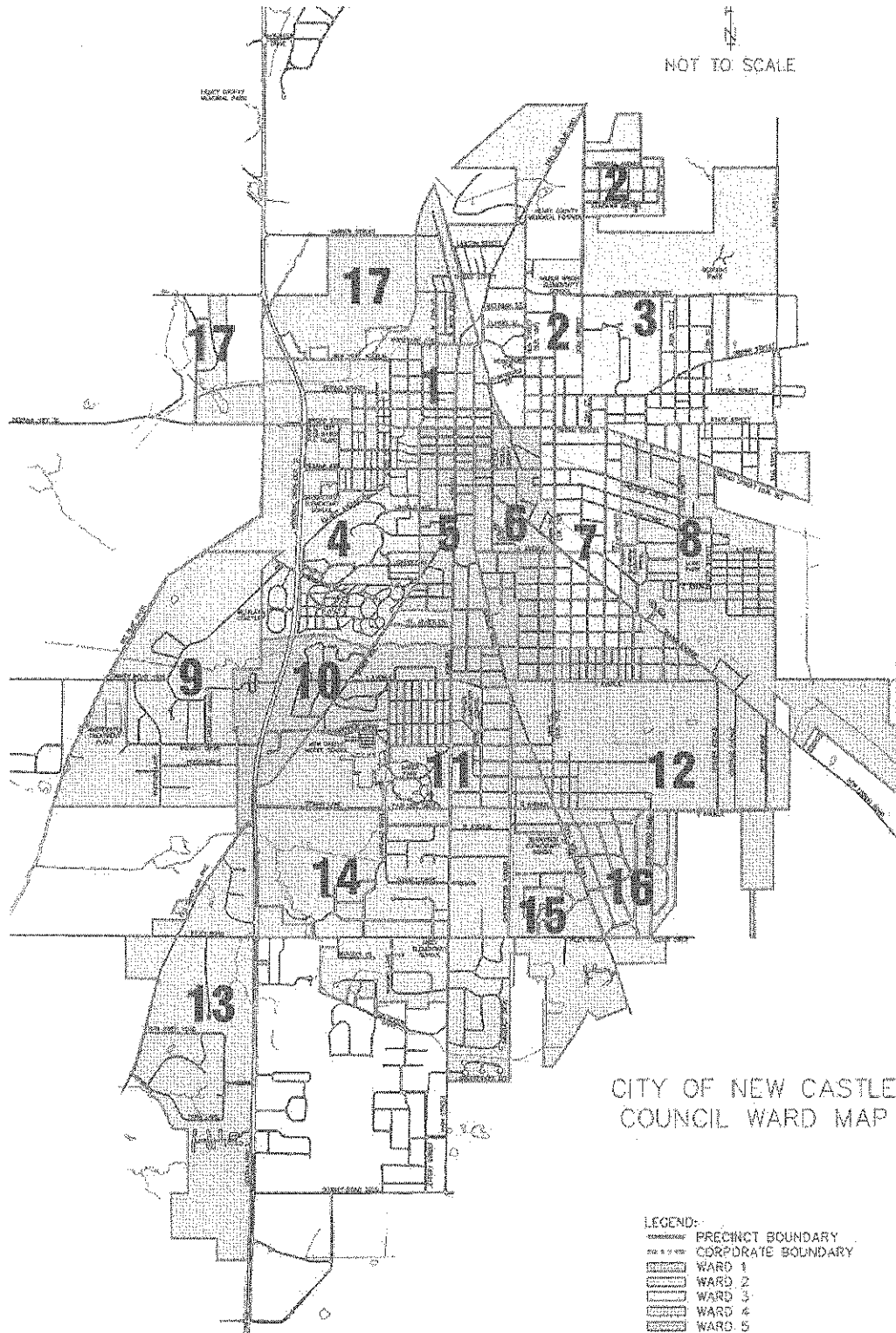
## SENATE



Senate Districts approved by the Indiana General Assembly in 2011.  
See the Indiana Code for the legal definitions of these districts.

# City of New Castle Council Wards

This map shows how New Castle has five wards. Each ward is represented by a city council member. The precincts are the smaller divisions of each ward. Precincts are where people go to vote.



## 2012 GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATES

MITT ROMNEY/PAUL RYAN	PRESIDENT/VICE PRES	REPUBLICAN
BARACK OBAMA/JOE BIDEN	PRESIDENT/VICE PRES	DEMOCRAT
GARY JOHNSON/JAMES P GRAY	PRESIDENT/VICE PRES	LIBERTARIAN
WRITE IN	PRESIDENT/VICE PRES	
RICHARD E MOURDOCK	U S SENATOR	REPUBLICAN
JOE DONNELLY	U S SENATOR	DEMOCRAT
ANDREW (ANDY) HORNING	U S SENATOR	LIBERTARIAN
WRITE IN	U S SENATOR	
MIKE PENCE/SUE ELLSPERMANN	GOVERNOR/LT GOVERNOR	REPUBLICAN
JOHN R GREGG/VI SIMPSON	GOVERNOR/LT GOVERNOR	DEMOCRAT
RUPERT BONEHAM/BRAD KLOPFENSTEIN	GOVERNOR/LT GOVERNOR	LIBERTARIAN
WRITE IN		
GREG ZOELLER	ATTORNEY GENERAL	REPUBLICAN
KAY FLEMING	ATTORNEY GENERAL	DEMOCRAT
TONY BENNETT	SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION	REPUBLICAN
GLENDA RITZ	SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION	DEMOCRAT
LUKE MESSER	U S REP 6TH DISTRICT	REPUBLICAN
BRADLEY T BOOKOUT	U S REP 6TH DISTRICT	DEMOCRAT
REX BELL	U S REP 6TH DISTRICT	LIBERTARIAN
WRITE IN		
JEAN LEISING	STATE SENATOR DIST 42	REPUBLICAN
NO CANDIDATE FILED	STATE SENATOR DIST 42	DEMOCRAT
THOMAS E (TOM) SAUNDERS	STATE REP DIST 54	REPUBLICAN
NO CANDIDATE FILED	STATE REP DIST 54	DEMOCRAT
JEREMIAH MORRELL	STATE REP DIST 54	LIBERTARIAN
KIT C DEAN CRANE	JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT CT #2 53RD DISTRICT	REPUBLICAN
NO CANDIDATE FILED	JUDGE OF THE CIRCUIT CT #2 53RD DISTRICT	DEMOCRAT
STEPHEN A HACKER	COUNTY CORONER	REPUBLICAN
LONDON J DEAN	COUNTY CORONER	DEMOCRAT
STEPHEN L RUST	COUNTY SURVEYOR	REPUBLICAN
NO CANDIDATE FILED	COUNTY SURVEYOR	DEMOCRAT
KIM L CRONK	CO COMM MIDDLE DISTRICT	REPUBLICAN
LARRY BRAYTON	CO COMM MIDDLE DISTRICT	DEMOCRAT
ALAN J MCCRAINE	CO COMM MIDDLE DISTRICT	INDEPENDENT
ED YANOS	CO COMM SOUTHERN DIST	REPUBLICAN
MARK T CRONK	CO COMM SOUTHERN DIST	DEMOCRAT
HAROLD R GRIFFIN	COUNTY COUNCIL AT-LARGE	REPUBLICAN
CLAY MORGAN	COUNTY COUNCIL AT-LARGE	REPUBLICAN
MICHAEL R (MIKE) THALLS	COUNTY COUNCIL AT-LARGE	REPUBLICAN
WHIT BLATTNER	COUNTY COUNCIL AT-LARGE	DEMOCRAT
DALE COLE	COUNTY COUNCIL AT-LARGE	DEMOCRAT
JEFFERY GUY HANCOCK	COUNTY COUNCIL AT-LARGE	DEMOCRAT

Source: Henry County Clerk's Office

BLUE RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL CORP

AT LARGE

MYSIA L BROWN  
JEANNE KEY  
TERRY L VAUGHN

BLUE RIVER TOWNSHIP

JONATHAN D (JON) MADISON

PRAIRIE TOWNSHIP

WAYNE JACOBS

CHARLES A BEARD MEMORIAL SCHOOL CORP

GREENSBORO TOWNSHIP

LANNY KEITH FERRELL  
STEVEN KENT FERRELL  
MICHELLE S WHITE

RIPLEY TOWNSHIP

DON A SCHEUMANN  
TIMOTHY R WEHR

WAYNE TOWNSHIP (2)

LEAH J KOPP  
GERALD W LEONARD

NETTLECREEK SCHOOL CORP

DISTRICT A - JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP

PATSY J BAKER  
JULIE R BLAASE  
EVERETT HAMPTON

DISTRICT D - CLAY TOWNSHIP

GEORGE R CLARK

DISTRICT E - HARRISON TOWNSHIP

NO CANDIDATE FILED

DISTRICT F - LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

GARY L COFFMAN  
GARY RHOADES

NEW CASTLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORP

AT LARGE

LOURDES M DAVIS  
NAN POLK

INSIDE (2)

MARK DAVISSON  
MICHAEL FLEMING

SHENANDOAH SCHOOL CORP

FALLCREEK TOWNSHIP - INSIDE

BETH MIDDLETON

FALLCREEK TOWNSHIP - OUTSIDE

SCOTT T TRENNEPOHL

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP

NO CANDIDATE FILED

SOUTH HENRY SCHOOL CORP

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP (2)

CHRISTINE CASTEEL  
NATALIE FREDENBURG  
JULIA J HOFFMAN  
SONI PIERCE JONES

SPICELAND TOWNSHIP

AMY D MILLER

SPICELAND TOWNSHIP (HOLDOVER)

CASEY N CARMICHAEL  
MARK HERBKERSMAN

UNION SCHOOL CORP

EAST & MIDDLE DISTRICTS AT LARGE

GARTH R JENKINS

EAST DISTRICT

CHRISTA D ELLIS  
DIANA R GRUBBS

MIDDLE DISTRICT

ALAN L MCCORMICK  
HARRY G TERRELL

JUDICIAL RETENTION QUESTIONS

SHALL JUSTICE STEVEN H DAVID BE RETAINED IN OFFICE?

SHALL JUSTICE ROBERT D RUCKER BE RETAINED IN OFFICE?

SHALL JUDGE JOHN G BAKER BE RETAINED IN OFFICE?

SHALL JUDGE NANCY H VAIDIK BE RETAINED IN OFFICE?

Source: Henry County Clerk's Office

HENRY COUNTY, INDIANA

POLLING PLACES APPROVED FOR THE 2012 ELECTIONS

PRECINCT

LOCATION

HENRY TOWNSHIP

1		R.E.M.C.	201 North 6th Street
2		Wilbur Wright Elementary School	1950 Washington Street
3	**	Wilbur Wright Elementary School	1950 Washington Street
4		Greenstreet Elementary School	329 South 5th Street
5		First Friends Meeting Church	503 South Main Street
6		New Castle Public Library	376 South 15th Street
7		Grand Avenue Commons Community Rm	1628 A Avenue
8		Eastwood Elementary School	806 South 22nd Street
9		Whittier Lane Baptist Church	1345 Whittier Lane
10		Parker Elementary School	1819 Roosevelt Avenue
11		New Castle Fieldhouse	801 Parkview Drive
12	**	Grace Baptist Church	2649 Q Avenue
13		Jamestown Village Apt.'s Community Rm	West Colonial Drive
14		Riley Elementary School	1201 Riley Road
15		Sunnyside Elementary School	2601 South 14th Street
16	**	Grace Baptist Church	2649 Q Avenue
17		Fosters Landing Community Room	317 Fosters Way
18		Smith Auditorium	Memorial Park
19		Westwood Elementary School	1015 S Greensboro Pike
20		Duke Energy	4535 Jane Blvd

Source: Henry County Clerk's Office

# Additional Election Vocabulary

**absentee voting** • Voting by mail in advance of the election. Voters who are serving in the armed forces, ill, or who are traveling or working out of town are given permission to vote absentee.

**ballot** • A device used to record choices made by voters. They can be paper or electronic.

**caucus** • A closed meeting of party members in which candidates are chosen or policy is decided upon

**Congressional district** • Defined area of a state having one member in the U.S. House of Representatives

**dark horse** • A surprise candidate who wins support for nomination when no decision can be made between leading candidates

**donkey** • A symbol of the Democratic Party

**Electoral College** • Body of electors chosen by the states to perform the official election of the President and Vice-President

**electoral vote** • Number of votes held by a state in the Electoral College. Indiana has 11.

**elephant** • A symbol of the Republican Party

**GOP** • “Grand Old Party” – A nickname for the Republican Party

**incumbent** • A person currently holding office. Governor Mitch Daniels is an example.

**lame duck** • An officeholder who is finishing a term after failing to win re-election

**landslide** • A big vote that gives a candidate an overwhelming victory

**majority** • More than half the total vote

**minority** • Less than half the total vote

**nomination** • The selection by a political party of a candidate to run for election

**polls** • Places where ballots are cast and votes counted

**popular vote** • The total number of votes cast in an election by the people

**platform** • A statement of principles and values made by a political party at election time

**plurality** • Having more votes than any other candidate but not more than half of the votes cast.

**primary** • An election in which political party members choose the candidate for the general election

**precinct** • A voting area where there is one established voting place.

**split ticket** • Ballot on which the voter selects candidates of more than one party

**straight ticket** • Ballot on which the voter selects only candidates of the same party

### Presidential Trivia

- Abraham Lincoln was the first President to wear a beard. He was advised to grow one to give him a look of distinction.
- U. S. Grant smoked more than 10,000 cigars while winning the Civil War. He died of cancer of the throat.
- President William Henry Harrison had a fear that his body would be stolen from the grave after he died. He was actually buried in five coffins, one inside of each other.
- One President of the United States was good enough to play major league baseball. He was William Howard Taft. In his youth he was offered a contract to pitch for the Cincinnati Reds. He decided to be a lawyer instead.
- When Abraham Lincoln was elected President he had \$601 in the bank.
- Electric lights were installed in the White House in 1891 while Benjamin Harrison was President. The President let them burn 24 hours a day because he was afraid he would be shocked if he touched the switches.
- Zachary Taylor, a professional soldier and the 12<sup>th</sup> President, Never voted once in his life. He didn't even vote in the election that elected him President!
- Andrew Jackson was the first President to travel by train.
- John F. Kennedy was the first Catholic President.
- John Quincy Adams was the only baldheaded man to become President of the United States.
- Thomas Jefferson was the first American President to serve spaghetti in the White house.
- No American President has ever made a hole in one on the golf course.
- President John Tyler was first President to be photographed.
- William Howard Taft was the first President to see a Rose Bowl football game.
- John Quincy Adams was secretary to the American Ambassador to Russia when he was 14 years old.
- George Washington never shook hands during the eight years he was President.
- Theodore Roosevelt holds the Presidential hand-shaking record. At a New Year's Day reception on 1907 he personally shook hands with 8,513 visitors.
- Lincoln, Eisenhower, and Calvin Coolidge had two things in common. They were all Presidents and all three played the harmonica.
- John F. Kennedy was the first Boy Scout to be elected President of the U.S.
- Less is known about Millard Fillmore than any other President. After his death his son burned all of his father's private papers and letters.
- President Fillmore had the first kitchen stove installed in the White House.
- George Washington was the first person in the world to wear a set of false teeth made out of rhinoceros ivory.
- Harry Truman is the only President to date who has actually walked up the 898 steps of the Washington Monument in Washington D.C.
- George Washington was the only President inaugurated in two cities - New York in 1789 and Philadelphia in 1793.
- Grover Cleveland is the only President who ever hanged a man. He did it legally, personally pulling the hangman's trap while serving as sheriff in Buffalo, N.Y., early in his political career.
- John Quincy Adams raised silkworms in the White House.

### Arresting a President

There is nothing in the Constitution that says a President can't be arrested. Jefferson was summoned to appear in court in 1807 when he was President to testify in the treason trial of Aaron Burr. He refused to appear and set a precedent. Grant was arrested and handed over a \$20 fine for driving a team of horses too fast down Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington D.C. President Pierce on horseback late one evening ran over a woman on the streets of Washington. He was placed under arrest but released immediately.



### An Ideal President

Often presidents are criticized for not having this kind of experience, or that kind of style, or a certain kind of personality. Exactly what kind of person do we want to be out president? Aside from political viewpoint, what character traits and experiences do we look for in presidential candidates?

The following exercise allows you to create your version of the "the ideal president." Fill in the blanks and be prepared to explain your reasons to the class.

### *The Ideal President*

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Political Party \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
*Education (circle one)*

Business	Engineering	Political Science	Science
Economics	Law	Public Administration	Other: _____
Education	Medicine	Religion	_____

-----  
*Previous Experience (circle one or more)*

Businessman/woman	Farmer	Lawyer	Teacher
Cabinet Secretary	Governor	Mayor	Vice President
Congressman/woman	Judge	Military Officer	Other: _____
Corporation Officer	Labor Union Officer	Senator	_____

-----  
*Character Traits (circle the number of those desirable)*

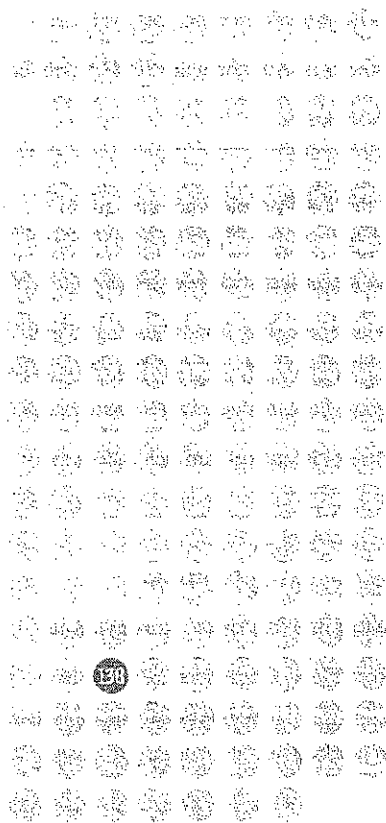
1. Very active worker, who invests a great deal of energy in the job
2. Conscientious but more easy going.
3. Acts very emotional about the job.
4. More detached attitude.
5. Outspoken.
6. Dislikes politics and avoids political conflict.
7. Ambitious and aggressive.
8. Decision-making style is to consult with top aides in meetings or briefing sessions.
9. Believes that in certain crises, the ends justify the means.
10. Believes that the president must always be subject to the laws, regardless of the crisis.
11. Has strong self-image.
12. Has weak self-image.

-----  
List other important character traits in the space below.

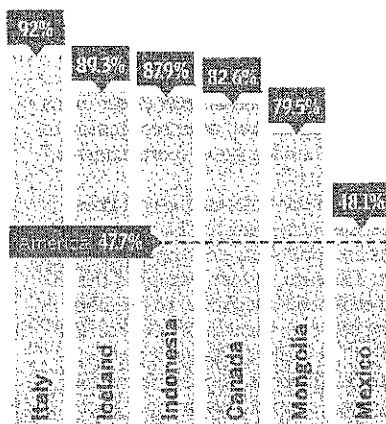
# HOW AMERICA VOTES

## AMERICA VS. THE WORLD

America's ranking among democratic countries in voter turnout — 138th out of 169

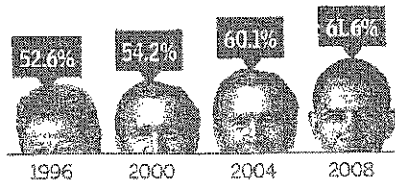


Six countries with higher turnout than the U.S. (average 1945-2001)

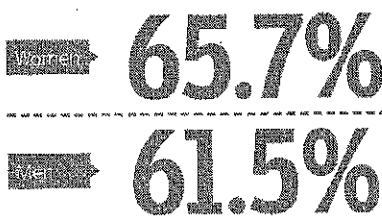


## THE 2008 TURNOUT

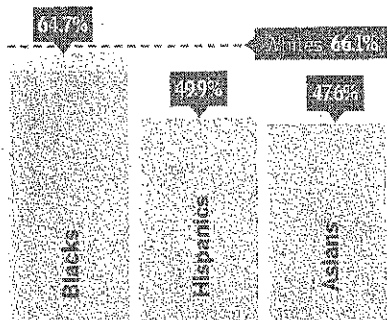
Barack Obama inspired unusually high voter turnout



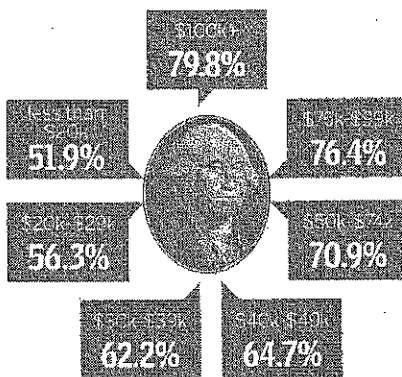
Women outvoted men



Whites outvoted minorities

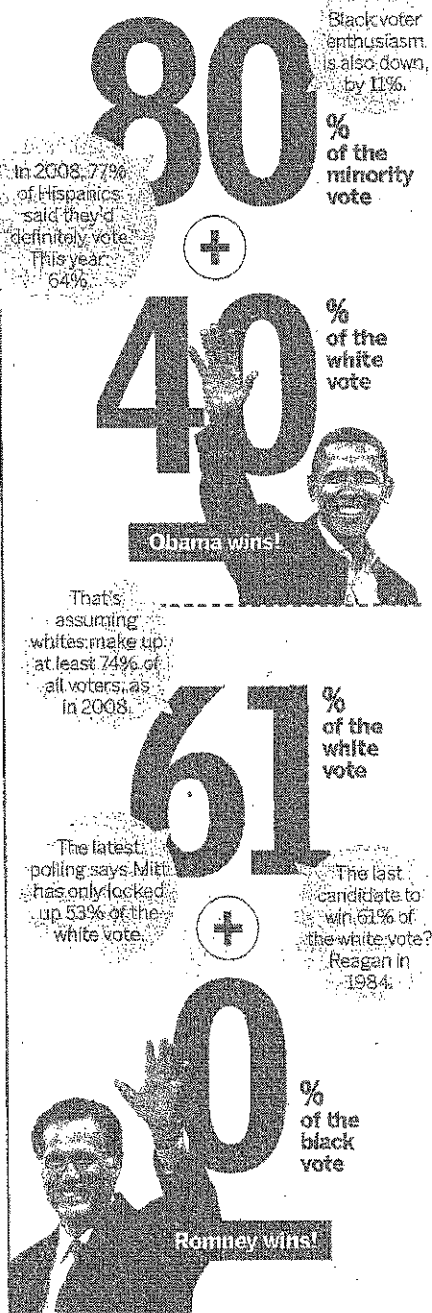


Higher-income Americans outvoted the poor



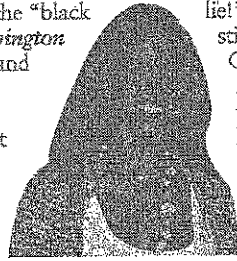
## THE 2012 MATH

President Obama won in 2008 thanks to strong minority and youth turnout. Here's what he — and his GOP rival, Mitt Romney — respectively need to come out on top this November.



## Race: The stealth issue of the campaign?

Stacey Dash obviously did not read the “black memo,” said Crystal Wright in *Washington Post.com*. Dash, an actress of black and Mexican descent who won middling fame for her role in 1995’s *Clueless*, recently tweeted her support for Mitt Romney for president. Her nine-word endorsement, accompanied by a pinup photo, “uncorked racist rage from Obama supporters,” who alerted Dash to the unspoken rule that “all blacks must vote for Democrats.” On Twitter, African-Americans called her a “traitor” and a “house nigger,” mocking her hair, her heritage, and her intelligence. The insults all boiled down to one message, said Jesse Washington in the *Associated Press*. “A black woman would have to be stupid, subservient, or both to choose a white Republican over the first black president.”



Dash: Outlier

Ugly rhetoric aside, there are good reasons why so few blacks support Romney, said Sherrilyn Ifill in *CNN.com*. The GOP’s assault on Obama from day one has been fueled by outrage that such an interloper could occupy the highest office in the land. He has been dismissed as “lazy” and stupid, and called the “welfare president” and the “food stamp president.” A congressman interrupted a presidential address by shouting, “You

lie!” Millions of Republican “birthers” still insist against all evidence that Obama was born in Kenya and is thus an illegitimate president. For blacks, all this represents “an assault on our collective racial dignity.” The appeals to bigotry are not even coded, said David Sirota in *Salon.com*. A few weeks ago, conservative activists dredged up a 2007 Obama speech on Hurricane Katrina to a mostly black audience, and criticized the president for supposed “calls to racial solidarity,” while using a “phony” black accent.

Race still matters—and it would be ridiculous to pretend it doesn’t, said Orson Aguilar in *The Sacramento Bee*. Polls indicate that 94 percent of African-Americans will vote for Obama, while about 60 percent of whites will vote for Romney. Why such a wide gulf? And what about the wealth gap between the races? For every dollar of white family wealth, the median Asian family has about 63 cents, the Latino family has 7 cents, and the black family has less than a nickel. Americans deserve to hear both candidates address the obvious racial and ethnic divisions in our society, and what they plan to do about them. “Please, gentlemen, play the race card. But for once, do it honestly and without fear.”

## Biden vs. Ryan: A generational smackdown

“Now you know what Thanksgiving with my family is like,” said Maureen Dowd in *The New York Times*. Last week’s debate between Vice President Joe Biden and Republican candidate Paul Ryan was an Irish Catholic donnybrook, with Biden playing the role of the bombastic older uncle who denounces “every political opinion except their own as malarkey.” The vice president, “amped to make up for all of Obama’s missed shots” in the first presidential debate, forcefully exposed the gaping holes in the Republican tinker’s tax-reform plans and nailed Ryan “for twice soliciting the very stimulus money he condemns.” Biden, 69, treated the 42-year-old Ryan with patronizing disdain, said Alan Schroeder in *CNN.com*, smirking whenever Ryan spoke and interrupting him 82 times. “At times it looked as if Ryan was afraid Biden might ground him and take away the car keys.”

That doesn’t mean Biden won, said Michael Gerson in *The Washington Post*. He managed only to “further muddle a muddled narrative” on what really happened in Benghazi last month, and dismissed Iran’s defiant progress toward a nuclear bomb, insisting against all evidence that sanctions were working. Biden’s bigger failings were his

“preening exhibitionism and smirking rudeness and egotistical exuberance and bullying condescension.” His Democratic apologists say it’s just “Joe being Joe,” but “Americans have every right to hate politics if it looks like this.” What a pity that Ryan failed to stand up to the bullying, said Bret Stephens in *The Wall Street Journal*. He gulped visibly when under attack, and “was too deferential.” Even when Ryan fought back, such as in defense of Romney’s remarks in the 47 percent video, he “resorted to canned lines.”

Ryan did have one very powerful moment, said Niall Ferguson in *TheDailyBeast.com*. During a discussion of Medicare and Social Security spending, Ryan responded to Biden’s standard entitlement demagoguery when he noted that something must be done to preserve these programs for younger generations. “A debt crisis is coming,” Ryan said, noting that the national debt is now \$16 trillion and rising fast. “We can’t keep on spending money we don’t have.” In other words, it’s time for Biden’s generation to stop running up the credit card, and leaving the bill for younger Americans to pay. Right there, we all heard “the opening round in the clash of generations that will soon dominate American politics.”

## Wit & Wisdom

“Fun is like life insurance: The older you get, the more it costs.”

Cartoonist/humorist Kin Hubbard, quoted in *Forbes.com*

“There are some things one can only achieve by a deliberate leap in the opposite direction.”

Franz Kafka, quoted in *the Associated Press*

“Rudeness is the weak man’s imitation of strength.”

Author Eric Hoffer, quoted in *WSJ.com*

“The best way to keep one’s word is not to give it.”

Napoleon Bonaparte, quoted in *the Montreal Gazette*

“Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.”

Simone Weil, quoted in *the Athens, Ga., Banner-Herald*

“People’s number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death.

This means if you go to a funeral, you’re better off in the casket than doing the eulogy.”

Jerry Seinfeld, quoted in *the Danbury, Conn., News-Times*

“In a full heart, there is room for everything.”

Post Antonio Porchia, quoted in *The Village Voice*

## Poll watch

■ For the first time, a majority of Americans (52%) say the U.S. government should stay neutral on values issues. 44% say the government should promote “traditional values.” Gallup Poll

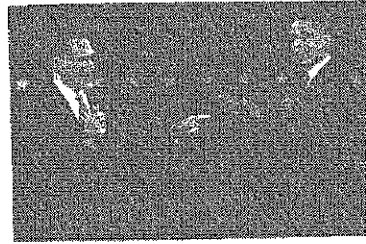
■ Just 22% of Americans say they are in the “47%” who do not pay federal income taxes. Most people do not differentiate between income taxes and payroll taxes.

YouGov.com/*The Economist*

# Obama and Romney's tense confrontation

## What happened

President Barack Obama's re-election campaign regained some traction this week after he showed renewed energy and confidence in a tense, town-hall-style debate with Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Circling each other like two angry lions, the candidates fiercely criticized one another on issues that included taxes, immigration, energy policy, gun control, and the consulate attack in Benghazi, Libya. Obama was on offense much of the night, with a far more animated and assertive tone than in the first debate two weeks ago, when his disastrously disengaged performance helped give Romney a major bump in the opinion polls and put several battleground states back in play.



Romney, Obama: He's lying!

Dismissing Romney's five-point economic plan, Obama said it was actually a "one-point plan" designed "to make sure that folks at the top play by a different set of rules." Romney responded by listing the promises Obama made four years ago that he had failed to keep, including lowering unemployment to 5.4 percent, and failing to cut the deficit in half. "We can't afford four more years like the last four years," Romney said. A CBS News/Knowledge Networks poll of undecided voters found that 37 percent gave the win to Obama, and 30 percent to Mitt Romney, with 33 percent calling the debate a tie. The *RealClearPolitics.com* national election poll continued to find the race virtually tied.

## What the editorials said

Welcome back, Mr. President, said *The New York Times*. Instead of the "windy and lethargic" responses he gave in Denver two weeks ago, Obama "regained full command of his vision and his legacy." He was crisp and "persuasive" when defending the accomplishments of his first term, and he forcefully fought back against Romney's "parade of falsehoods and unworkable promises." Apparently Obama does want to be re-elected after all, said *Bloomberg.com*. But while he "won pretty decisively on points," with a "spirited performance" that often left Romney sputtering defensively, Obama was at his weakest when making the case for why he deserves a second term.

That's because Obama is a president without a plan, said *The Wall*

*Street Journal*. He spoke generically about wanting to lower the deficit and improve education, but voters still don't know what he might seek to accomplish in the next four years. Instead, he reflexively went on the attack, hoping the argument that "he's not as awful as Mitt Romney" will be enough to kick out a victory.

## What the columnists said

The president won this round, but barely, said Stephen Stromberg in *WashingtonPost.com*.

He did voters "the courtesy of bringing his A game," effectively poking holes in Romney's "mathematically challenged tax plan" and scoring points on women's issues and his rescue of Detroit's auto industry. But he also had his fair share of vague and uninspiring moments. Romney, meanwhile, damaged himself by looking "defensive and pushy," bickering over fine points with Obama and repeatedly arguing over procedure with moderator Candy Crowley.

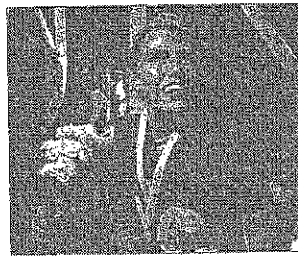
The exchange over the Benghazi assault was Romney's low point, said Daniel Larison in *TheAmericanConservative.com*. By wrongly insisting that Obama didn't initially use the words "act of terror" to describe the assault, Romney turned what is clearly a political liability for the administration into "an advantage for his opponent," giving Obama an opening to lecture him on politicizing a foreign-policy crisis. Romney was right on substance, if not on details, said John Podkoretz in the *New York Post*. The White House did take two weeks to admit the attack was an al Qaeda-planned terrorist attack, and not a spontaneous mob reaction. But by getting tangled up in semantics, Romney let Obama off the hook.

The president's base will be energized by his return to form, said Jonathan S. Tobin in *CommentaryMagazine.com*, but that "won't bring the race back to where it was before" the first debate. That face-off established Romney as a competent and worthy alternative to an incumbent who no longer inspires hope. "It's possible this race is no longer about Barack Obama," said Peter Beinart in *TheDailyBeast.com*. The polls may have swung so dramatically after the first debate because many voters were ready to vote against the president "so long as Romney passed a reasonable threshold." If that's true, "this campaign may now be Romney's to lose."

## It wasn't all bad

■ A 96-year-old Indian man has been declared the world's oldest father after his wife bore a son last month—the second in two years. Ramjeet Raghav, a farmer in a village about 30 miles from Delhi, said the doctors who delivered the healthy boy in a nearby hospital were surprised when he told them he was the father. "I think it's important for a husband and wife to have sex regularly," Raghav said. "My neighbors are jealous and they keep asking me for my secret, but all I tell them is that it's God's will."

■ The first female quarterback in Florida high school history gained further distinction last weekend when she was crowned homecoming queen. Erin DiMeglio of South Plantation High School wore her jersey and shoulder pads along with her tiara and sash after her halftime coronation. She attributed her winning the popular vote among her classmates to her exploits on the field. "A lot of people know me more now because I play football," she said. A teammate, wide receiver Hardy Seide, was selected as homecoming king. "Erin's known around the nation now," he said, "and for me to be up here with her is an honor."



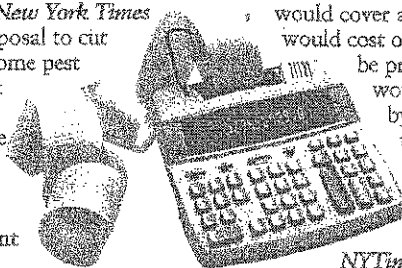
Both a quarterback and a queen

■ A husband's act of solidarity on behalf of his cancer-stricken wife may have saved his life. When Dolly Stringer of Moultrie, Ga., shaved her head last spring in preparation for chemotherapy to treat breast cancer, her husband, Bud, shaved his too. Only then did he discover a black mark on his pate, which was an aggressive form of skin cancer. The Stringers have both undergone multiple surgeries, and Bud still has a round to go. But Dolly said the doctors told her "I would have been burying him by Christmas" if they hadn't found the lesion. Both now have good prognoses.

## Romney's tax-cut plan: Do the numbers add up?

Mitt Romney has a math problem, said *The New York Times* in an editorial. Every time he outlines his proposal to cut all federal income-tax rates by 20 percent, "some pest with a calculator will point out that it doesn't add up." Romney has said he'll eliminate unspecified loopholes and deductions to make his tax cuts revenue neutral, even though a 20 percent tax cut for everyone—along with elimination of the Alternative Minimum Tax and the estate tax—would cost the government about \$500 billion a year. But just last week, the nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation concluded that even if Romney eliminated almost every tax deduction on the books—including those for charitable contributions and mortgage interest—he could only cut tax rates by 4 percent without adding to the deficit. When asked about his plan's numbers during this week's presidential debate, Romney could only say, "Of course they add up." Sorry, but every objective analysis of his numbers says they *don't* add up, said Josh Barro in *Bloomberg.com*. So why propose a 20 percent tax cut in the first place? With his conservative credentials under fire in the Republican primaries, Romney obviously plucked that number "out of thin air for political reasons without regard to whether it was feasible."

Actually, the plan is feasible, said John McCormack in *Weekly Standard.com*. The left-leaning studies that challenge its numbers are "deeply flawed." These studies fail to take into account the increased revenue that will come from repealing Obamacare, and they assume that "pro-growth tax policy can't actually produce economic growth." It can and does. Here's how the math works, said *The Wall Street Journal*. By eliminating loopholes and capping an individual taxpayer's deductions at 17 percent, Romney



would cover about \$3.8 trillion of the \$5 trillion his tax cuts would cost over 10 years. The other \$1 trillion or so would be provided by the increased tax revenues that would come from the economic growth stimulated by "a more efficient tax code and lower marginal tax rates." What's so mysterious about that?

The mystery is the continued faith that tax rates lead to a boom in economic growth, said former Reagan adviser Bruce Bartlett in *NYTimes.com*. An analysis of tax policy over the last half century, including the 1986 Reagan tax cuts that lowered top rates from 50 percent to 28 percent, shows that such cuts do slightly stimulate the economy—but only by "tenths of a percent." And the impact doesn't last. Romney's contention that tax reform would "jump-start" our economy is "nonsense."

Even my fellow conservatives ought to admit the truth here, said Reihan Salam in *NationalReview.com*. It's "highly unlikely that a Romney administration would cut the top marginal tax rate as deeply as it has proposed." To keep his rate cut from expanding the deficit, every credible study shows, Romney would have to eliminate so many deductions that many middle-class taxpayers would have a net increase in taxes paid. That would be political suicide. But President Obama's math is no less fuzzy. His proposed tax increase on the wealthy could not possibly pay for his immense spending commitments. What neither candidate is willing to admit is that something big has to give; we can't keep cutting taxes, and protecting entitlements, benefits, and services from major spending cuts. Either voters accept a "transformative change" in Medicare, Social Security, and other benefits in coming years, or taxes will have to go up for nearly everyone.

## Only in America

■ A schizophrenic inmate on Florida's death row can be executed, a state judge has ruled, because his grandiose religious delusions are quite common. The legally insane may not be executed, but Judge David Giant ruled that murderer John Ferguson's claim to be the "Prince of God" who will sit at God's right hand is "a relatively normal Christian belief" and doesn't prove he's crazy.

■ A Georgia pit bull who attacked a 5-year-old child has been given its own court-appointed lawyer. Judge William Woodrum Jr. ordered an attorney to represent the interests of the dog at a hearing to decide if it should be euthanized. "All I can tell you is that the judge appointed me," said lawyer Claude Kicklighter. "I really don't know what the issues are."

## Good week for:

**Second chances**, after pro quarterback Michael Vick, convicted in 2007 of running a brutal dog-fighting ring, said he'd gotten a dog. "As a father," Vick said, "it is important to make sure my children develop a healthy relationship with animals."

**Wearing your patriotism**, after conservative radio host Glenn Beck launched a clothing line designed to pay tribute to the nation's Founders. Patriots can buy a pair of "premium, ring-spun selvage denim" jeans for \$129 and Western-style shirts for \$90.

**Shotgun weddings**, after a jeweler in Iowa started offering free guns to customers who buy an engagement ring. "Diamonds are a girl's best friend," said store owner Harold van Beek. "So say: I'm hunting deer, and here is a diamond ring, dear."

## Bad week for:

**Rolling Stones fans**, after the band announced several 50th anniversary concerts in London and New Jersey, with top tickets priced at \$680 and the cheapest seats going for \$170. "These prices are a joke," said fan Steve Grace.

**Following the original intent of the law**, after Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's car was issued a \$31 parking ticket in Philadelphia, despite a "Police Official Business" placard on the dashboard. "We don't recognize placards," a parking official said.

**Double meanings**, after a Georgia Chick-fil-A franchise passed out fliers that said, "Only a fruitcake wouldn't love our party trays!" The company, which has campaigned against gay marriage, said it "had no intention of offending anyone whatsoever."

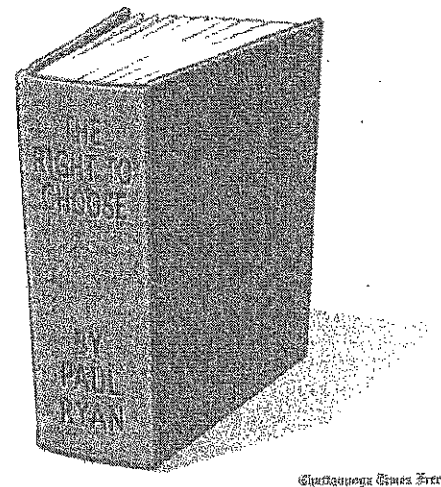
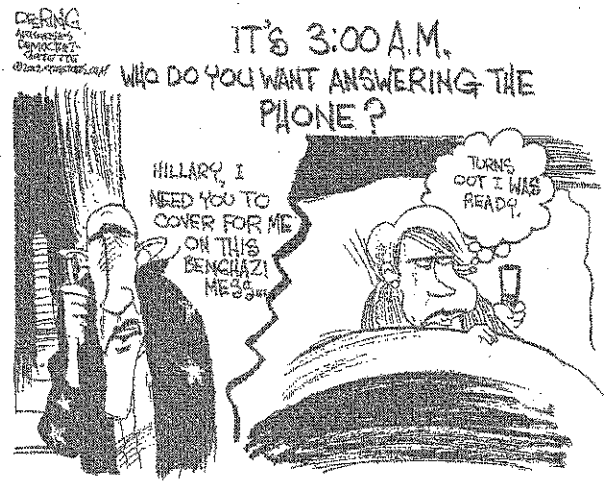
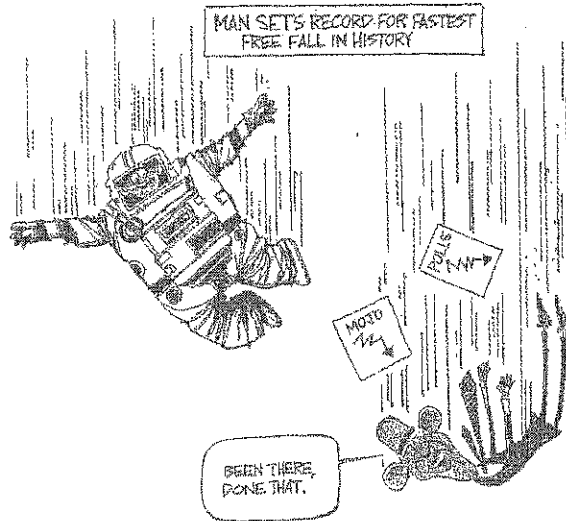
## Boring but important

## Family debt falls to pre-recession levels

After a long period of enforced frugality, U.S. families have cut their debts down to pre-recession levels, setting the stage for faster economic growth, said Moody's Analytics this week. Home mortgages, credit card debt, and most other consumer liabilities have drifted back to 2006 levels, according to Moody's, with the notable exception of student loans, which have skyrocketed in recent years. Consumers are also feeling more upbeat than they have in five years, said a recent survey, though many economists remain wary about the global economy. The International Monetary Fund has issued a pessimistic forecast, warning that risks of a major slowdown are "alarmingly high."

Melissa Bakery





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