

Group Project: A Political Party Convention

As we have discussed, a **political party** is an organization that performs a number of vital functions in our democracy including selecting and sponsoring candidates for political office. Generally speaking, the members of a political party share a common **political ideology**; however, as we will learn, there can be a broad range of views, and even sharp disagreements, within the membership of a single party. The goal of this assignment is for you to develop a deeper understanding of the divergent viewpoints held by the various political parties active in California.

Working in pre-selected groups, you will be assigned one of the following 6 political parties: **American Independent, Libertarian, Republican, Democratic, Peace & Freedom, and Green**. As a group, you will research your party's positions on the following 9 issues, and then present those positions during a roundtable **political party convention** held in our classroom:

1. Death Penalty
2. Abortion
3. Gun Control
4. Taxes & Economic Policy
5. Immigration
6. Civil Rights
7. Drug Laws
8. Foreign Policy
9. Environmental Policy

At the outset of the convention each party will deliver a **brief opening statement** summarizing your party's general philosophy. The floor will then be opened for discussion and debate on the various issues. Each group member must assume responsibility for researching **2 or 3 of the above topics** and will become the **party spokespersons** on those issues. **Every topic must be covered by at least 2 members** of your group and there may be **no more than 2 or 3 spokespersons per issue**. However, once the convention begins any group member may participate in discussion of an issue. For each topic, the spokespersons must prepare written **"talking points"** summarizing the key ideas you intend to present. These talking points may be handwritten. Each group must also create one or more **placards** so that your party may be easily identified.

The best place to begin your research is your party's website (addresses below) which contains a **party platform** summarizing its views on many issues.

American Independent: www.aipca.org

Libertarian: www.lp.org & ca.lp.org/platform

Republican: www.cagop.org/platform_and_bylaws & www.gop.com/platform/

Democratic: www.democrats.org/party-platform &
www.cadem.org/our-california/platform

Peace & Freedom: www.peaceandfreedom.org/home/about-us/platform

Green: www.cagreens.org/platform/

You may wish to consult the "OnTheIssues" website (www.ontheissues.org) for additional background information.

You will be provided some class time today, and again during our next class session, to perform research and prepare for the convention, but the best presentations will require additional work outside the classroom. The convention will be held on Wednesday, October 24th.