

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Date of Elections: November 3, 1970

Reason (or Elections)

The United States electors were called to the polls to renew all the members of the House of Representatives on normal expiry of the 91st Legislature, as well as one third of the members of the Senate, i.e. 35 Senators.

Characteristics of Parliament

The United States Congress consists of two Houses:

— The Senate, composed of 100 members elected for 6 years on the basis of 2 per State, a third of whom must stand for election every 2 years but in such a manner that, in each State, both Senators are not normally standing for election at the same time.

— The House of Representatives, with 435 members elected every 2 years in such a manner that each member represents roughly the same number of citizens, provided that each State has at least 1 Representative.

Electoral System

The Federal Constitution lays down that all citizens who, " in each State, shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State Legislature " are entitled to vote in elections to Congress; it prescribes, furthermore, that the right of citizens to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of race, colour or sex, or by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Under these terms, determination of the right to vote falls under the authority of each State, with the assurance that no violation is made of the factors of discrimination proscribed by the Constitution. In most States, to be allowed to vote, electors were required to be United States citizens and no less than 21 years of age on the date of the polls *.

In 31 States, employers are required to permit their employees to take time off to vote without loss of pay.

Literacy tests, which were proscribed by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, particularly in the Southern States and in Alaska, were declared by that same Act to be inapplicable to anyone who has completed the sixth grade in a school in a State, the District of Columbia, or Puerto Rico, in which the classroom

* Voting age has since been lowered to 18 years, following ratification of the 26th Amendment to the Constitution by % of the States, i.e. by 38 States on June 30, 1971.

language is other than English; this was done for the sole purpose of avoiding any kind of discrimination.

Electors are required by 33 States to have one year's residence on State territory; in 15 other States the residence requirement is only 6 months; in New York and in Pennsylvania, the requirement is 3 months or 90 days.

Under the terms of a Supreme Court order, persons found guilty of a felony may recover their civil rights on a decision of the executive authorities of a State, without judicial control.

Electors are not required to register on electoral rolls in all States; the methods applied vary a great deal.

A permanent electoral roll is maintained in 9 States; in other words, the elector is not required to register on the rolls before each election. In one State, Texas, electors are required to register every year. In 10 States, electors are required to vote in every general election to ensure that their name is maintained on the rolls. In 2 other States, the requirements are the same, with the exception that the electors are given the choice between the general elections and primaries. In 2 States, the electors are required to have voted once in the preceding 2 general elections. In 7 States, the electors must have voted once in the last 2 years at any election to maintain their name on the rolls; in 1 State, the requirement is 1 vote in a period in which 2 primary and 2 general elections were held. In 15 States, electors are required to vote once during a period ranging from 30 months to 5 years, depending on the State, to maintain registration. In South Carolina, electors must re-register every 10 years. Lastly, 2 States require re-registration each presidential election year.

Candidates to the House of Representatives must be at least 25 years of age and citizens of the United States for no less than 7 years.

For Senate seats, a candidate must be at least 30 years of age and have United States citizenship for no less than 9 years.

Once elected, a member of Congress must reside in the State he represents.

The Constitution provides that no member of Congress may hold any other federal public office during his term of office.

The 435 Representatives and 100 Senators are elected in single member constituencies by simple plurality of vote.

If a seat becomes vacant in the House of Representatives in the course of a Legislature, a by-election is held. If a seat becomes vacant in the Senate, the Governor of the respective State may fill it until a by-election is organized in conformity with the laws of that State.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The election campaign started as early as September 1970, when Mr. Spiro Agnew, Vice-President of the United States, embarked on his campaign tour.

From September to November, the Vice-President visited 29 States while the President, Mr. Nixon, visited 23.

Observers noted, in particular, the efforts deployed by the governing Administration to strengthen its position in the House of Representatives and, more so, in the Senate. While it is customary that polls held during a presidential mandate tend to result in more or less of a climb-down for the governing majority, it is, however, exceptional to observe such participation on the part of the governing Administration during such elections.

The two major parties proposed candidates to the legislative and senatorial elections in practically all the constituencies, and the American Independent Party, created by Mr. George Wallace at the presidential elections in 1968, proposed 62 candidates (in 16 States) to the House of Representatives and 10 (in 10 States) to the Senate. On an individual basis or in the name of small groups, 161 prominent figures sought to canvass electors' votes.

During the 1970 electoral campaign, which was the most expensive in United States history, particularly through intensive use of television, the themes propounded by the different parties showed a distinct change from previous years. The issues concerning civil rights and the war in Vietnam were overshadowed by economic issues; remedies for inflation and unemployment weighed heavily in the scales of the different electoral programmes. However, protection of law and order and condemnation of university campus disorder were in the forefront of the issues propounded by the Republican Party while the Democratic Party centred on economic issues.

On the whole, and in spite of the bitterly partisan nature of the campaigns, they were conducted in a peaceful manner.

The elections did not result in any fundamental changes in the United States Congress. The Republicans were not, as they had hoped, successful in gaining a majority over the Democrats in the Senate, while the Democrats were successful in strengthening their position in the House of Representatives.

The Democratic Party still has the majority in both the Houses of Congress and, moreover, has increased the number of its Negro representatives (12 in the House of Representatives and 1 in the Senate).

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in House of Representatives

Number of registered voters . . .	(no figure available)
Voters	
Blank or void ballot papers . . .	
Valid votes.	54,258,885

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats in House of Representatives
Democratic Party .	430	28,781,048	53.1	255 (+ 12)
Republican Party .	381	24,121,959	44.4	180 (— 12)
American Independent Party	62	130,568	0.2	—
Independent Party .	16	122,430	0.2	—
	145	1,102,880	2	
	1034			435

2. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in Senate

Number of registered voters	(no figure available)
Voters	
Blank or void ballot papers	
Valid votes	48,478,460

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Seats obtained on Nov. 3	Number of Seats in Senate
Democratic Party .	35	25,402,791	52.5	22	54 (—4)
Republican Party .	34	19,326,064	39.8	11	44 (+2)
Conservative-Republican Party of New York	1	2,179,640	4.4	1	M+i)
Independent Democratic Party . . .	1	506,237	1.1	1	M+i)
American Independent Party	10	185,223	0.4	—	—
	32	878,505	1.8		
					100

3. Distribution of Members of Congress According to Sex

	Senate				House of Representatives		
	Democ- ratic Party	Repub- lican Party	Others	Total	Democ- ratic Party	Repub- lican Party	Total
Men	54	43	2	99	246	177	423
Women		1		1	9	3	12
				100			435

4. Average Age: 52.7 years