

General Certificate of Education
June 2003
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 5 The Politics of the USA

GOV5

Monday 23 June 2003 Morning Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen. Pencil should only be used for drawing.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV5.
- Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary, where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

Advice

- You are advised to spend approximately 10 minutes reading the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

1

Total for this question: 40 marks

Study the extract below and answer parts (a), (b) and (c) which follow.

ELECTION FINANCE

In the United States, personal wealth is a necessary precondition for a political career. It is said that anyone can rise from log cabin to White House, but in reality this is not the case. In the age of the permanent campaign, political campaigning has become so expensive, so technocratic and so unrelenting that it requires far more time, effort and money than in the past.

Modern US elections are very expensive to organise given the size of the country and the diversity of the voters. Large “war chests” enable the candidates to create campaign organisations to get their message across to the voters, especially by the use of the electronic media. As a result fundraising becomes a major preoccupation of modern presidential candidates, often being described as a “fundraising arms race” with America having “the best democracy money can buy”.

There are many admirable things about the American political system, not least its ability to force politicians to get to know every part of their sprawling country. But there is no doubt that the campaign finance system is flawed. The 2000 election was the most expensive in American history, with an increase in expenditure of 50% compared with 1996 and \$3 billion spent on presidential and congressional races. *Soft money* has overwhelmed American election spending, rising from \$90 million in the presidential campaign of 1992 (17% of the total spent) to \$500 million in 2000 (41% of the total). These contributions avoid the federal controls imposed in 1974 and raise the question of ‘influence buying’ in American politics.

In 1999, George W. Bush raised \$100 million for his primary campaign and decided to turn down federal matching funds and the limitations that go along with them. This ‘war chest’ allowed him to buy media time, blanketing states with television advertisements when necessary. His rivals, having accepted matching funds, faced spending limits. In 2000, Jon Corzine, a former head of Goldman Sachs, spent around \$60 million of his own money to become the senator for New Jersey.

Does all this matter? Why shouldn’t rich individuals be allowed to spend their own money on getting elected? Why shouldn’t special interests be allowed to express their political choices through expensive ‘issue advertising’ and soft money, rather than make direct contributions to campaigns? Many argue that it is bad for democracy, and that it reduces the choice of candidates for high office to rich, well-connected and well-financed incumbents, and it may work to force many other able candidates out of the race.

- (a) Using the extract, explain the term *soft money*. (8 marks)
- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, explain why American elections are increasingly expensive. (12 marks)
- (c) Discuss the view that money is not the most important factor in explaining the success of modern presidential and congressional candidates. (20 marks)

Answer either **Question 2** or **Question 3** or **Question 4**.

- 2 “US parties defy political logic. With few differences between them, each party is a vast coalition of people with little, if any, shared ideology. Yet they dominate the political system.”

Assess the accuracy of this statement.

(40 marks)

- 3 Consider whether the activities of Political Action Committees (PACs) help or hinder democracy in the USA.

(40 marks)

- 4 Why do so many US voters split their ticket when voting in presidential and congressional elections, and what are the consequences of this?

(40 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS