



AP[®] United States Government & Politics 2002 Sample Student Responses

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The political institutions of the U.S. government can both help and harm the opportunities to racial minority groups.

The electoral system can be very detrimental due to the winner-take-all electoral college system on the national level, and the districting tendencies on a local level. The electoral college is designed so that the winner of a state will get all of its electoral votes (with very few exceptions). Thus, if the general populous of a state votes one way, the racial~~ly~~ minority vote ^{possibly} will not have an effect on the national election. Also, districting at the local level can be divided so that minorities ~~do~~ will not have sway in the districts. Through unconstitutional methods of gerrymandering, or from just the fortune of the way the lines are drawn, ethnic minorities have the potential of being drowned out by the majority.

The political party system, however, can often lead to benefits for ethnic minorities in political say. A political party often will adopt

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policies designed to incorporate the wants and needs of the ethnic minority, while still appealing to members of the majority. This allows for ethnic minorities to unite behind one nationally popular party in order to ~~gain~~ gain influence and say in the political ~~process~~ process. These parties can also appoint members of ethnic minority to different offices. Thus, they can allow these leaders to look out for the needs of their race, while still gaining support on a national or local level due to the party they are a part of, and the interests that party represents to the rest of the community.

Thus, the political party system can be beneficial to ^{ethnic} minorities because candidates can represent their needs while still those of others who also follow that party. However, the election process can be an obstacle at times for ethnic minorities stuck in an all or nothing situation where the votes of the majority can make their votes inconsequential.

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Throughout history, political institutions have presented ~~obstacles~~ ~~for~~ ~~top~~ impediments and opportunities for minorities to achieve political influence. The United States electoral system has presented obstacles while the United States political party system has given opportunities to racial minority groups.

The electoral system has presented several obstacles to minorities. During the ~~1800~~ 19th century, such devices as the grandfather clause, literacy tests, and the implementation of poll taxes were used to impede African Americans from ~~no~~ voting in elections. The grandfather clause stated that if ~~was~~ an African-American's grandfather was free from slavery and was able to vote in the last election, then the present person would be able to vote. However, few slaves had been freed and ~~had~~ had not voted in any election. This proved to be detrimental into the ability for African-Americans to place their vote. Moreover, literacy tests were designed ~~to~~ to purposely fail the African-American and deny ~~number~~ ~~of~~ voting. Poll tax was required of African-Americans if they were able to vote. This method

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was placed into effect because the voting officials knew that the African-Americans would not be able to pay the tax.

However with the addition of the 23rd Amendment, the requirement of poll tax was abolished. As time progressed, the literacy tests and the grandfather clauses disappeared.

→ Despite the obstacles presented by the United States electoral system, the ^{American} political party has revealed opportunities for minorities. The minorities have usually sided with the Democratic party because of its views on the economy and labor unions. They have been able to seek support in Democrats who are in power. They are able to be provided with legislation that can help them achieve political goals.

In history, the American electoral system has impeded minorities in their efforts to achieve political influence as in the cases of the poll tax requirement and the literacy tests. However, the political party system of the United States has given minorities opportunities to gain political goals with the Democratic representation in government. In our society, we can only hope ~~that~~ and work

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towards outnumbering the ~~opponents~~
obstacles with opportunities for minutes.

The United States electoral system has presented obstacles to minority groups when states, especially in the South, denied voting rights through the uses of literacy tests, poll taxes, and grandfather clauses. States could deny the right to vote if one couldn't read, couldn't pay a tax to vote, and if their grandfather couldn't vote because he was a slave.

Federalism has helped minority groups because the federal government forced Voting and civil rights acts to give minorities more equality.