



## What about Americans who don't belong to the Democratic or Republican Party?



- SOMETIMES AMERICANS FEEL THAT NEITHER MAJOR PARTY ADVANCES THEIR PREFERRED POLICIES AND BELIEFS.



In recent decades, increasing numbers of American voters call themselves politically “independent,” or affiliated with no party.

Yet opinion polls suggest that most independents lean toward either the Republican or Democratic Party. Some do belong to smaller political parties. Regardless of party affiliation—or lack thereof—all Americans age 18 and older are allowed to vote in local, state and presidential elections.

**How does the two-party system represent the beliefs of Americans who affiliate with neither party?** Sometimes Americans feel that neither major party advances their preferred policies and beliefs. One strategy they may pursue is to form a new party for the purpose of demonstrating the popularity of their ideas. One famous example occurred in 1892, when dissatisfied Americans formed the Populist Party. Its platform called for a graduated income tax, direct election of senators, and an eight-hour workday. The Populists never captured the presidency, but the big parties noticed their new competitor’s growing popularity. The Democrats and Republicans began to adopt many of the Populists’ ideas, and in time the ideas became the law of the land.

