The success of democratic government is based on free, honest, and accurate elections. Specific terms of office and regularity of election schedules help to ensure fairness in our political system.

### Congressional Elections

**Term**
- House of Representatives: 2 years
- Senate: 6 years

**Timing**
- First Tuesday following the first Monday in November of every even-numbered year.

### Presidential Elections

**Term**
- 4 years

**Timing**
- First Tuesday following the first Monday in November of every even-numbered fourth year.

### State and Local Elections

Are often held on the same day as congressional and presidential elections. However, some state and local elections take place in “off years.”

The “coattail effect” occurs when a strong candidate at the top of the ballot helps other candidates on the same party ticket gain votes. Example: The popularity of Ronald Reagan in the 1984 presidential election helped many other Republicans win office.

### Election Schedule 1994 to 2000

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Did You Know? Americans elect some 500,000 officeholders in an average election year.