

Re-Teach: Political Reforms of the Progressive Era



Ret-Teach Wednesday

Standard:

US 15 Analyze the goals and achievements of the Progressive movement, including:

- Adoption of the initiative, referendum, and recall
- Adoption of the primary system
- 16th Amendment
- 17th Amendment
- 18th Amendment

Reforming Government

- Progressives pushed for election reform.
- Traditionally, party leaders picked candidates for state and local offices.
- In Wisconsin, a reform governor established a direct primary, an election in which citizens themselves vote to select nominees for elections.

Political Reforms

- Progressives wanted to make sure that elected officials would follow the citizen's wishes.
- To achieve this goal, they worked for 3 political reforms:
- 1—Initiative: gave people the power to put a proposed law directly on the ballot in the next election by collecting citizen's signatures on a petition.
- 2—Referendum: allows citizens to approve or reject laws passed by the legislature.
- 3—Recall: gives voters the power to remove public officials from office before their term ends.

16th Amendment

- The sixteenth amendment, enabling Congress to levy an income tax
- The purpose of the amendment was to support the government, not to punish anyone.
- The significance of this amendment to the Business Reforms of the Progressive Era was that it helped rebuild the financial aspect of the nation after the devastating losses of the Civil War and Reconstruction period.

17th Amendment

- Progressives also call for the direct election of Senators by voters, not state legislatures.
- This reform becomes law in 1913, with the 17th Amendment to the Constitution.

Direct Primary

- Prior to the direct primary, political parties usually chose their candidates in closed-door meetings or at political conventions
- As a result of a few influential people were often able to manipulate the party's choice of candidates
- Political corruption kept elections from being truly democratic and led the progressives to create the Direct Primary
- A **Direct Primary**: the voters chose for themselves who would represent their political party in the regular election.

Turn and Talk

What was the impact that Progressive reforms, such as initiatives, recalls, and referendums had on the political power of the American people?
