

A-level POLITICS

Paper 2 Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics

Thursday 4 June 2020

Morning

Time allowed: 2 hours

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is **7152/2**.
- Answer **all** questions from Section **A** and Section **B**.
- Answer **either** Question 5 **or** Question 6 from Section **C**.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.
- If you use more than one answer book, check that you have written the information required on each book.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 77.

Section A – US Government, politics and comparative theory

Answer questions 1, 2 and 3.

- 0 1** Explain and analyse three roles performed by US congressional committees. **[9 marks]**
- 0 2** Explain and analyse three ways in which the US political system encourages pressure group activity. **[9 marks]**
- 0 3** Explain and analyse three ways that rational theory could be used to explain voting behaviour in the US and UK. **[9 marks]**

Section B – Extract Question

Read the extracts below and answer question 4 that follows.

Is the Supreme Court a politicised institution?

The appointment of a Supreme Court Justice is an event of major significance in American politics.

Congressional Research Service Report, June 2018 (a report prepared for members of Congress) on the Supreme Court Appointment Process.

Each appointment is of consequence because of the enormous judicial power the Supreme Court exercises as the highest appellate court in the federal judiciary. Under the US Constitution, Justices on the Supreme Court receive what can amount to lifetime appointments which, by constitutional design, helps ensure the Court's independence from the President and Congress. The Senate through its "Advice and Consent" function acts as a safeguard on the President's judgement. Closely related to the expectation that a Supreme Court nominee will have excellent professional qualifications are the ideals of integrity and impartiality in a nominee. Accordingly, Presidents will often cite such qualities, as President Obama did when announcing his nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Court, noting both her "mastery of the law" and "a commitment to impartial justice".

Extract from *Congressional Research Service Report*, June 2018

Who are the Federalist Society? How a group of conservative law students have come to dominate the judicial nomination process, by Sophie McBain, North American correspondent for the *New Statesman* (a centre-left UK political magazine), September 2018.

Brett Kavanaugh, the newest Supreme Court Justice, is one of five of the nine Supreme Court justices who are members of the Federalist Society. The Society is made up of lawyers who promote a strict constructionist view of the US Constitution. Its first advisers were Robert Bork and Antonin Scalia who were nominated by President Reagan. In 2018 the Trump administration asked the Society to draw up a list of potential Supreme Court nominees for the president's consideration, which included Kavanaugh. Steven Teles, the author of *Rise of the Conservative Legal Movement: The Battle for Control of the Law* has argued Trump effectively gave the task of filling the vacancy to the Federalist Society. Teles says that 'it used to be that Senators played an important role in judicial appointments' but by doing so Trump could be sure the Federalist Society would put forward people who appeal to his social conservative base.

Extract from *www.newstatesman.com*

0 4

Analyse, evaluate and compare the different arguments in the above extracts regarding the extent to which the US Supreme Court is a politicised institution.

[25 marks]

Turn over for the next question

Turn over ►

Section C – Comparative Government and Politics Essay Questions

Answer either Question 5 or Question 6 from Section C.

In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

Either

0 5

'The US Constitution is rigid and too difficult to change whereas the British constitution is flexible and too easy to change.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

or

0 6

'Political circumstances have a greater impact on the power of the UK prime minister than they do on the US president.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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