Political Ideology
To be an effective citizen and voter, people need to be informed about Current Issues and how political groups represent those issues.

- **Ideology**: a set of basic beliefs about life, culture, government, and society.
- **Political Ideology**: An individual’s or group’s set of beliefs about governmental or political structures and functions.

Organization of Political Representation
In a representative Democracy, we vote for people to represent us in government and to vote the way we would if we had the opportunity to vote. In order to select people with similar beliefs as ours, the US has developed the following to help the citizens become informed voters.

- **Political Party**: a group of people with similar political platforms who organize to nominate candidates for office, win elections, conduct government, and determine public policy.
- **Political Platform**: the set of planks that a politician or citizen stands on.
- **Political Planks**: the individual issues or beliefs of a politician or citizen.

Political Spectrum: Types of Platforms

1. **Conservative**: social control, economic freedom
2. **Liberal**: social freedom, economic control
3. **Moderate**: (Centrist) moderate control of social and economic
4. **Libertarian**: social freedom, economic freedom
5. **Authoritarian**: (Populist) social control, economic control toward communism
6. **Radical**: wants extreme changes in government.
7. **Reactionary**: strongly opposes changes in government.
Political Socialization
How an individual acquires their sense of political identity. Four agents of political socialization

**Home and family**
--observe and copy parents
--tend to follow same ideology pattern
--information is filtered based on ideology of parents

**School**
--teach citizenship and societal values
--teach democratic principles
--usually first knowledge of how system works

**Peers**
--share similar ideas
--reinforce attitudes
--desire for acceptance *may* change family ideas

**Media**
--greatest source of information
--generates interest in issue that may not have been of concern

**Public Opinion** - The combination of many individuals' ideas on the government and on political issues