

Third Parties: Guide to Responding

1. In what category does the third party belong? Why?

The **Green Party** would be considered ideological. It aims to create an ecologically sustainable society rooted in environmentalism, social justice, and grassroots democracy – ideals that can be considered widely divergent from those embraced by the Republican and Democratic parties.

The **Prohibition Party** is a single-issue party best known for its historic opposition to the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages. The party was an integral part of the 19th-century temperance movement and is the oldest existing third party in the U.S.

The **Progressive Party** is a factional party because it originated after a split in the Republican Party between former president Theodore Roosevelt and President William H. Taft.

2. What political and/or social factors led to the emergence of this party?

The roots of the **Green Party** and Green movement began in the early 1970s with the Values Party in New Zealand, and other similar movements. They combined environmental issues and non-violent resistance into a broader philosophy that refused to embrace single-issue politics. The Green Party first won seats for elective office in Germany in the early 1980s while focusing on issues of nuclear missiles and nuclear power. Greens first met in the United States in 1984 in St. Paul, Minnesota, where the early party efforts ranged from non-electoral activism to alternative institution-building. After the 1996 presidential election, state Greens formed the Association of State Green Parties (ASGP). Four years later the ASGP became the Green Party of the United States. They filed for national party status with the Federal Elections Commission in 2001.

The **Prohibition Party** was founded in 1869. Following the Civil War, temperance groups increasingly called for the power of the state to be used to prohibit the legal production and consumption of beverage alcohol. The Prohibition Party found early success in pressuring towns and counties to enact prohibition laws. While other prohibition groups such as the Anti-Saloon League were non-partisan and supported dry (pro-prohibition) candidates regardless of party affiliation, the Prohibition Party ran candidates on its own ticket.

The **Progressive Party** was founded in 1912 by former president Theodore Roosevelt. He was particularly dismayed that his successor, William Taft, dismantled many of the key programs that were central to Roosevelt's progressive policy agenda. During the 1912 presidential election, Roosevelt felt he could not support Taft's reelection. He decided to create a new party led by the more progressive elements of the Republican Party.

3. List three of the party's platform issues or political goals.

The **Green Party** is governed by its Ten Key Values, which include civic action, social justice, and ecological sustainability. They also seek to diminish the role of corporate power in the political system and disengage the U.S. from all foreign conflicts.

The contemporary **Prohibition Party** espouses a generally ultra-conservative Christian social agenda, which still includes the prohibition of alcohol as part of its platform. It also calls for the prohibition of abortion, gambling, and homosexual conduct, and stricter laws governing tobacco and “commercialized vice” (pornography, prostitution, and/or drugs).

In its original incarnation, the **Progressive Party** platform called for tariff reform, stricter regulation of industry, women's suffrage, and prohibition of both child labor and alcohol. Currently, the party's goals include campaign finance reform, an increase in the minimum wage, and a single-payer health care system.

4. What has been the impact of the party on electoral politics and/or national public policy?

The **Green Party** has won elective office mostly at the local level. Its strongest popular support lies on the Pacific Coast, Upper Great Lakes, and Northeast regions of the United States. Its most well-known candidate was political activist Ralph Nader, who ran under the party's banner in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections. Because the former election was so close, Nader was accused of being a “spoiler,” drawing votes from Democratic candidate Al Gore and causing him to lose the election to George W. Bush. As a result, many Democrats urged Nader to abandon his 2004 candidacy, which he refused to do.

The **Prohibition Party** reached the peak of its national strength in the elections of 1888 and 1892, in which each of its candidates for president polled 2.2 percent of the popular vote. After 1900 its strength was effective mostly on the local and county levels. The party was also instrumental in securing passage of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which outlawed the production, sale, transportation, import and export of alcohol. This ushered in the era of Prohibition, which lasted from 1919 to 1933.

The **Progressive Party** candidate for the 1912 presidential election, Theodore Roosevelt, yielded the highest vote count of any third party since the beginning of the modern two-party system (1864). However, the split in the Republican vote between Roosevelt and the incumbent William H. Taft made it possible for Democrat Woodrow Wilson to carry a number of states that had been reliably Republican for decades. During the high tide of progressive politics, elements of the party's platform did make their way into the U.S. Constitution with the enactment of the 16th Amendment (imposition of the income tax), 17th Amendment (direct election of Senators), 18th Amendment (prohibition of alcohol), and 19th Amendment (women's suffrage).