

Political parties

The life of an American major political party is a constant struggle, in the face of serious internal differences, to achieve enough unity to win elections and to maintain it long enough to develop a program of government.

Our politics has thus put a strong premium on the practical rather than the ideological bent of mind, on the techniques of negotiation and compromise rather than the assertion of divisive ideas and passions, and on the necessity of winning rather than the unqualified affirmation of principles, which is left to minor parties.

Richard Hofstadter,
"Goldwater and Pseudo-Conservative Politics"
[1964]