

6th March 2008

Choosing the Lesser Evil

Wesley Trobaugh



Spain and the U.S. have something in common this year. We are called to exercise our right (duty?) to vote. This Sunday is the big day in Spain and November 4th in the U.S. Citizens awake!

I personally can't vote in Spanish elections so I won't go too much into it (besides that, we are all more than bored of hearing the "debates" and the like). I'd rather explain some of the things that might be confusing about American politics. That said, I do have my preferences for the government that currently governs me, too!

U.S. presidential election campaigns start at least a year before the actual presidential election. Each party, Republican, Democrat, or [third party](#) chooses its representative for president by means of national caucus or primary election. All of the members of the political parties can vote. To be a member of a political party, you must do nothing more than check a box on your voter registration form. You only have to register to vote once, unless you change your address or want to change your

political party. I live abroad, so my local elections office sends me all of my ballots to my address here.

Each state organizes a caucus or primary election. A caucus is, in my opinion, a strange, roundabout way to select a candidate but other [lowans](#) seem to like them. The Democratic caucus basically consists of groups of people trying to convince each other that their candidate is better. The Republicans don't bother; they just cast a secret, silent vote. A primary election has the same process as a normal election, only with party exclusivity.

As candidates win or lose, they drop out of the race. Republicans that have dropped out include Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani. Democrats that threw in the towel include the likes of John Edwards and my ex-governor Tom Vilsack. Now the Democrats are left to choose between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, while John McCain seems to be the Republican choice.

Recently, the current Vice-President has been the automatic candidate for the incumbent party, as was the case of George Bush (father) and Al Gore. Dick Cheney would thus be the logical Republican candidate but apparently he decided that Vice-President was as powerful as he wanted to get. I imagine he will retire and do some [hunting](#).

I've heard people here say that American is not ready for a woman president or America is not ready for a black president when in fact, I think you'd be surprised how little that matters in this day in age. If it did matter that much, make no doubt that the Democratic party would have made sure that a [WASP](#) male were the candidate instead!

I look forward to seeing the results of both elections. I suspect I will like the outcome here and will vote in the U.S., the only thing I can do in hopes that my choice will win! Happy Voting!

Photo by transplanted mountaineer.

© Copyright Planet Lingua 2008