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Trust and confidence in politicians has declined over the past due to the concept of divided government or separation of powers. Divided government is the separation of powers between the 3 branches of government: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. These branches must work together to accomplish anything, yet that is hardly the case most of the time. Most of the time, all people hear about is bickering and arguing between branches. President vetoed this; Congress didn't confirm or satisfy this, the Supreme Court ruled this unconstitutional, that is all people hear. During campaigns, candidates make all these promises, most of which can't be fulfilled. A presidential candidate claims he/she will introduce a bill, but Congress doesn't like it so he/she can't. This has led to distrust.

The increased cost of election campaigning has done two things: contributed to the corruption of politicians and created more campaign advertising; most of it negative. PAC's contribute money in exchange for something to aid them, which has led to candidates saying more about pleasing PAC's than their own constituents. Also, most of
Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

This distrust in politicians has led to the rise of demagogues—leaders who make choices based on the opinion of the public, not necessarily the correct action. Politicians will do much to please the public since they are the ones who ultimately have the power.

Negative advertising has now stipulated that any candidate must have a clean history, since the opposition will take any mistake and blow it out of proportion, leading to mistrust. In this upcoming election, the Republicans have picked against John Kerry for throwing away his medals, while Kerry has been claiming Bush went AWOL during his tour in the service. With ads like this running, which candidate can the public trust? 
Divided government has caused a loss of trust and confidence in recent years. A divided government is when the President is one party, say Republicans, and the Congress in the other, Democrats. People don’t trust the divided government because it is to blame when the two parties cannot agree on an issue and legislation is proposed. It is almost guaranteed to fail coming from two parties if the two sides disagree, it will stay on hold indefinitely while mean spirited people on both sides will not want to pass anything that is even acceptable to the other sides. To get some of the worst divided governments, people must cross party lines and that rarely happens.

Increased campaign costs have also contributed to a decline in trust in government. With campaigns costing so much, candidates must get their funds somewhere. That place is usually interest groups. Once people know that you are funded by an interest group, they know that you are generally a slave to whom you said thank you.

The decline in trust in government has had many consequences. One such consequence is the rich candidate. If a candidate can win at his campaign by his/her own money, they can claim they are free of interest group influence and will work just for whom they are elected. Also, the decline of trust has led to people voting across party lines. This is perhaps for the best because people vote for the candidate who is best suited for the job and who’s policies they agree with most, not just based on any party lines.
Divided government is when one party controls the presidency and another party controls one or both houses of Congress. In a divided government, the President and Congress are constantly competing to get their bills, policies, and appointments passed. As a result, there is usually a lot of legislative gridlock. In order to get around the gridlock and achieve their objectives, each branch tries to overturn or circumvent the other branch. The president may use several vetoes. In turn, the Congress may unite to overturn the President's veto with a 2/3 vote. The president may use executive order or interpret enforce laws passed by Congress as he sees fit in order to undermine the powers of Congress. Congress may not pass the president's budget, cut spending for his favorite programs, or not confirm his nominees for federal appointments in order to display their power. This struggle for power is responsible for a decline in public confidence in the government. When the government is quasipermanent fighting for power, and undermining the powers of the other branches, it appears weak and public confidence in it decreases.

The increased cost of election campaigns have forced many politicians to abuse the loopholes in campaign finance reforms. Such manipulation of campaign finance regulation makes the candidate and government in general look untrustworthy.
Other times, in order to obtain a sufficient amount of money to run a campaign, a candidate may accept contributions from opposing interest groups. This causes the candidate to look either untrustworthy for receiving support from both sides of an issue or weak because he is indecisive. Since these are possible qualities of all candidates, manipulating, untrustworthy, weak, and indecisive, it is understandable there is a decline in trust and confidence in the government. The government is made up of winning candidates, therefore government is likely to reflect those same negative qualities.

The decline in trust and confidence in the government has caused a decrease in voter turnout. People don't want to take part in a system that they don't feel is honest or are confident in to represent and protect them. People aren't interested in participating in a system they don't have faith in. Another consequence of the decline in trust and confidence in government is an increase in independent parties. Many people associate the Democratic and Republican parties with government, the government they no longer trust or have faith in. As a result they distance themselves from the two major parties. Some of these people still have a desire to participate in political system so they join an independent party.