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**Policy and Structure** Though the early Democratic Party favored a decentralized federal government, the modern Democratic Party generally supports a strong federal government with powers to regulate business and industry in the public interest. The party supports the protection of civil rights and federally financed social services and benefits for the poor, the unemployed, and the aged. Most Democrats also endorse a strong separation of church and state, and they generally oppose government regulation of the private, noneconomic lives of citizens. Regarding foreign policy, Democrats tend to prefer internationalism and multilateralism—i.e., the execution of foreign policy through international institutions such as the United Nations. The party is highly decentralized, however, so opinions on certain issues vary. Although most Democrats favor affirmative action and gun control, for example, some moderate and conservative Democrats oppose these policies or give them only qualified support.  |  |  |

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