Political Corruption in the Gilded Age

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| Local Level | National Level |
| Political Machines: group of people that control the activities of political parties in a city and offer services to voters in exchange for political and financial support | Patronage (giving government jobs to your supporters) is rampant; sometimes unqualified people are given jobs in the government |
| Example: Tammany Hall (Democratic Party) in New York City | Reformers want to eliminate patronage by giving civil service jobs to those based on merit (or ability) to perform a job |
| Leaders are called political bosses (ex. Boss Tweed) | President Rutherford B. Hayes (Republican) works to end patronage by appointing independents to government positions and firing unqualified people in office; gets members of his party angry |
| Can use power to build parks, sewer systems, water system, give money to schools/hospitals/orphanage | Two factions of the Republican party: Stalwarts are pro-patronage and reformers are anti-patronage |
| Bosses usually second-generation immigrants; helps immigrants relate to them in exchange for their vote | President James A. Garfield (reformer/anti-patronage) and VP Chester A. Arthur (Stalwart ties) gets elected |
| Cons: Engage in voter fraud; offer bribes; receive kickbacks for giving their friend government contracts; gambling; graft | July 2, 1881: Charles Guiteau assassinated President Garfield because he believes new President Arthur will give him a job through patronage |
| Political cartoonists (such as Thomas Nast) help reveal corruption of the political machine | President Arthur shocks everyone by supporting the Pendleton Civil Service Act (government jobs can only go to those who pass a civil service exam and are qualified or a job) |