Polity & Governance · GS - II

Explain the significance of midterm elections in the United States. How can the composition of the legislature influence the functioning of a presidential system of government?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 04/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Bicameral legislature; Senate and House of Representatives; midterm elections; legislative oversight; separation of powers; checks and balances; executive accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

The United States follows a presidential system in which executive and legislative powers are institutionally separated. Midterm elections provide voters an opportunity to influence the composition of Congress halfway through a presidential term.

Significance of Midterm Elections

Midterm elections determine all seats in the House of Representatives and approximately one-third of the Senate. They can reflect public assessments of the President’s policies, economic performance and governance. The reported re-election of Democratic Senator Jon Ossoff in Georgia in 2026 illustrates how an individual Senate contest can influence the balance of political power.

Impact on Governance

Congress legislates, approves federal spending and exercises oversight over the executive. If the President’s party lacks a congressional majority, legislation and budgetary priorities may face greater resistance. Conversely, stronger legislative support can facilitate the passage of the administration’s agenda. Senate composition also influences confirmations of senior appointments and federal judges.

Conclusion

Midterm elections are an important mechanism of democratic accountability. By shaping the balance between the executive and legislature, they influence policymaking, oversight and the operation of checks and balances in the US presidential system.

BECOME
IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP