



Auditing for Governing: The People We Serve

The People and the Voters

NIAF BIENNIAL

Colorado Springs / May 10, 2018

Ron Elving

NPR / American University



Two Quotes About the Voters

□ Latin motto:

VOX POPULI VOX DEI

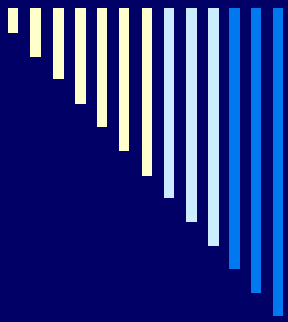
□ Post-election comment by defeated legislative candidate Dick Tuck in 1966:

“The people have spoken, the bastards.”



Key Questions

- How can we best understand the voting public?
 - What do they believe and what do they want?
 - How good are our tools for gathering and assessing public opinion?
-



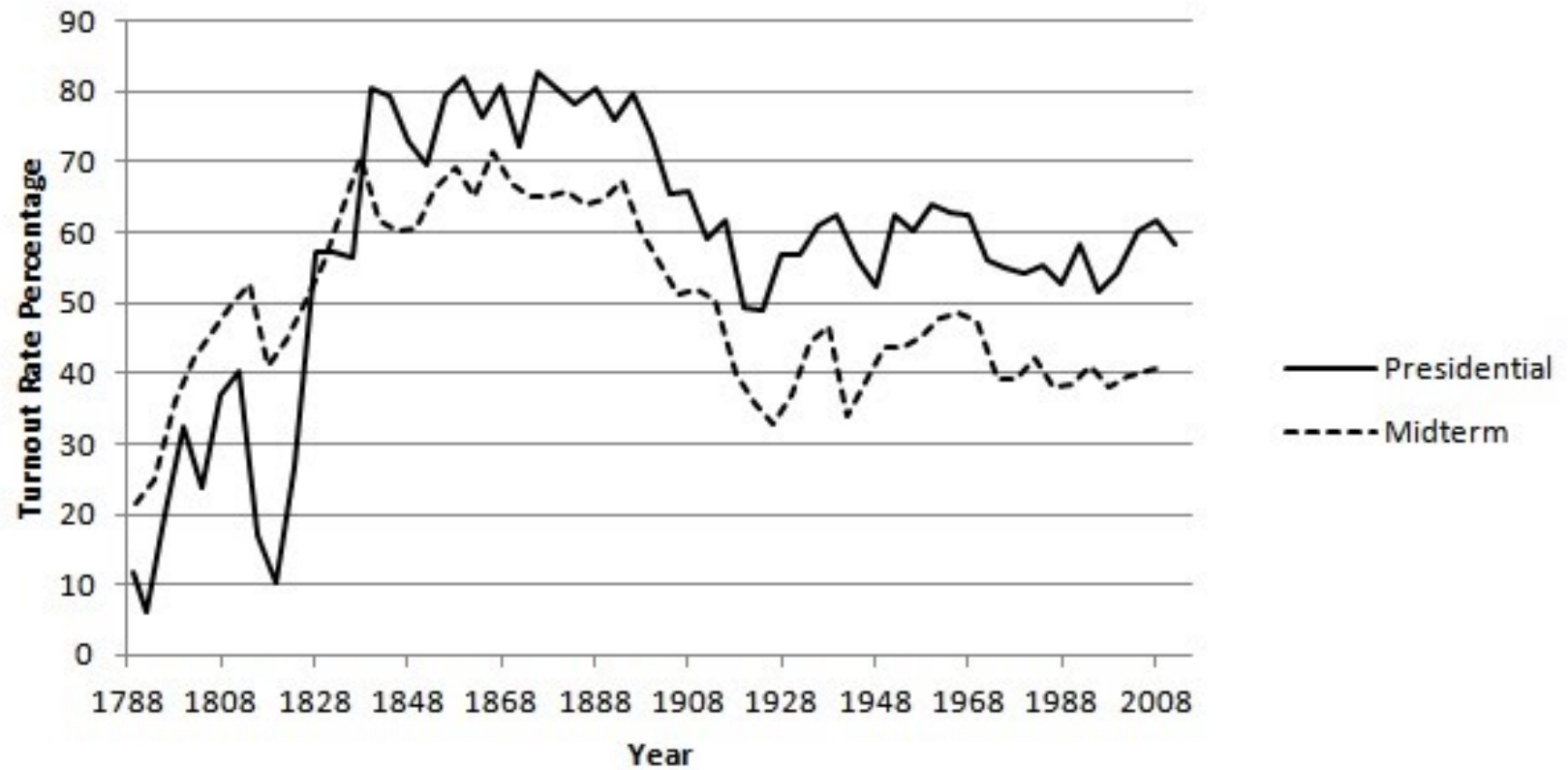
Who actually votes and why?



“We’re Number 12”

U.S. voting participation
is low when compared to
other democracies.

National VEP Turnout Rates 1787-Present



If "Did Not Vote" Had Been A Candidate In The 2016 US Presidential Election

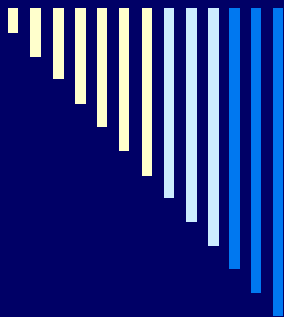




Who Are the Voters ...and the Non-Voters?

Propensity to vote rises with...

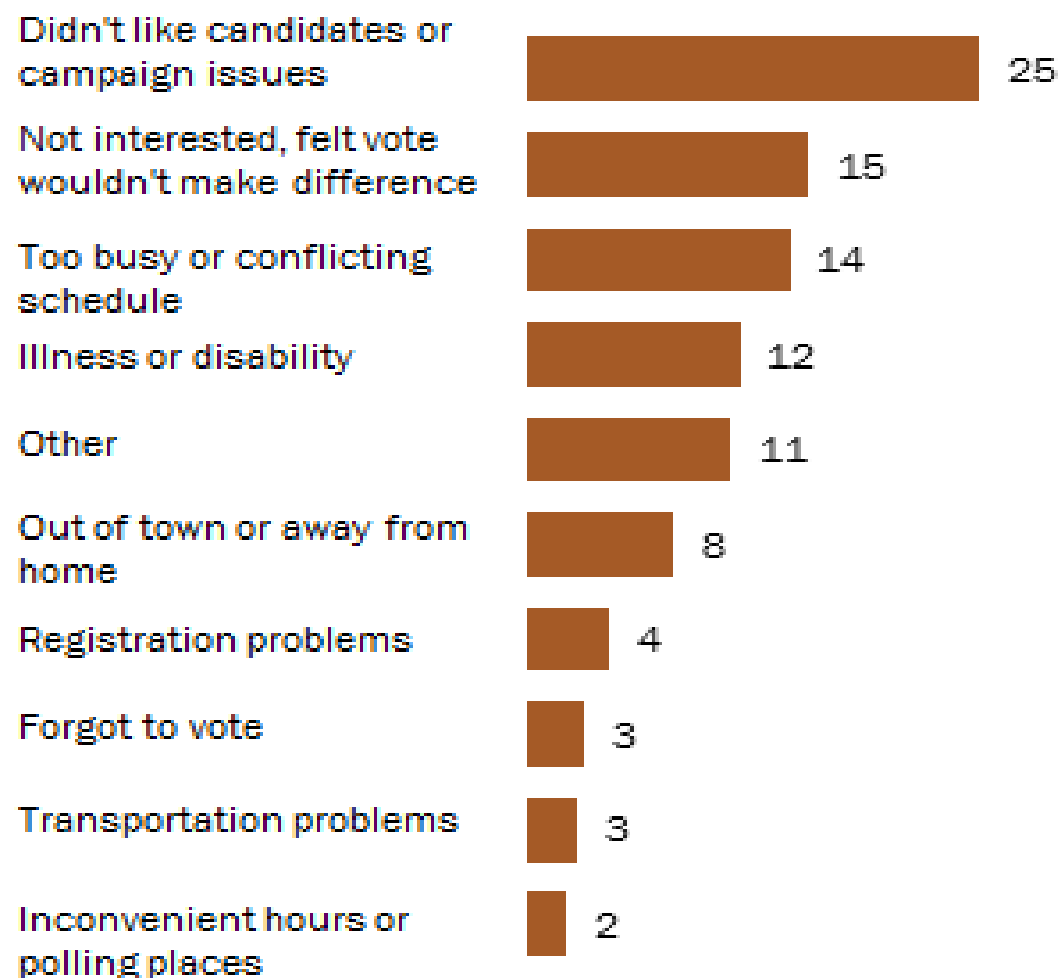
- Higher age
 - Higher income
 - Higher education
 - Greater engagement
 - Greater sense of enfranchisement
-



- ❑ Low turnout does not necessarily make the U.S. less democratic
- ❑ Low turnout does not necessarily make our elected officials less representative
- ❑ So long as all have EQUAL ACCESS non-voting can be called a choice

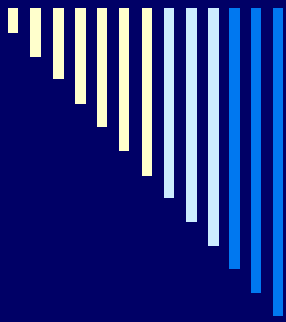
Why registered voters say they did not vote in 2016

Among registered voters who did not vote, % who said main reason was...



Note: "Don't know," "Refused," "Bad weather conditions" and "No response" not shown.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the 2016 Current Population Survey, November Supplement.

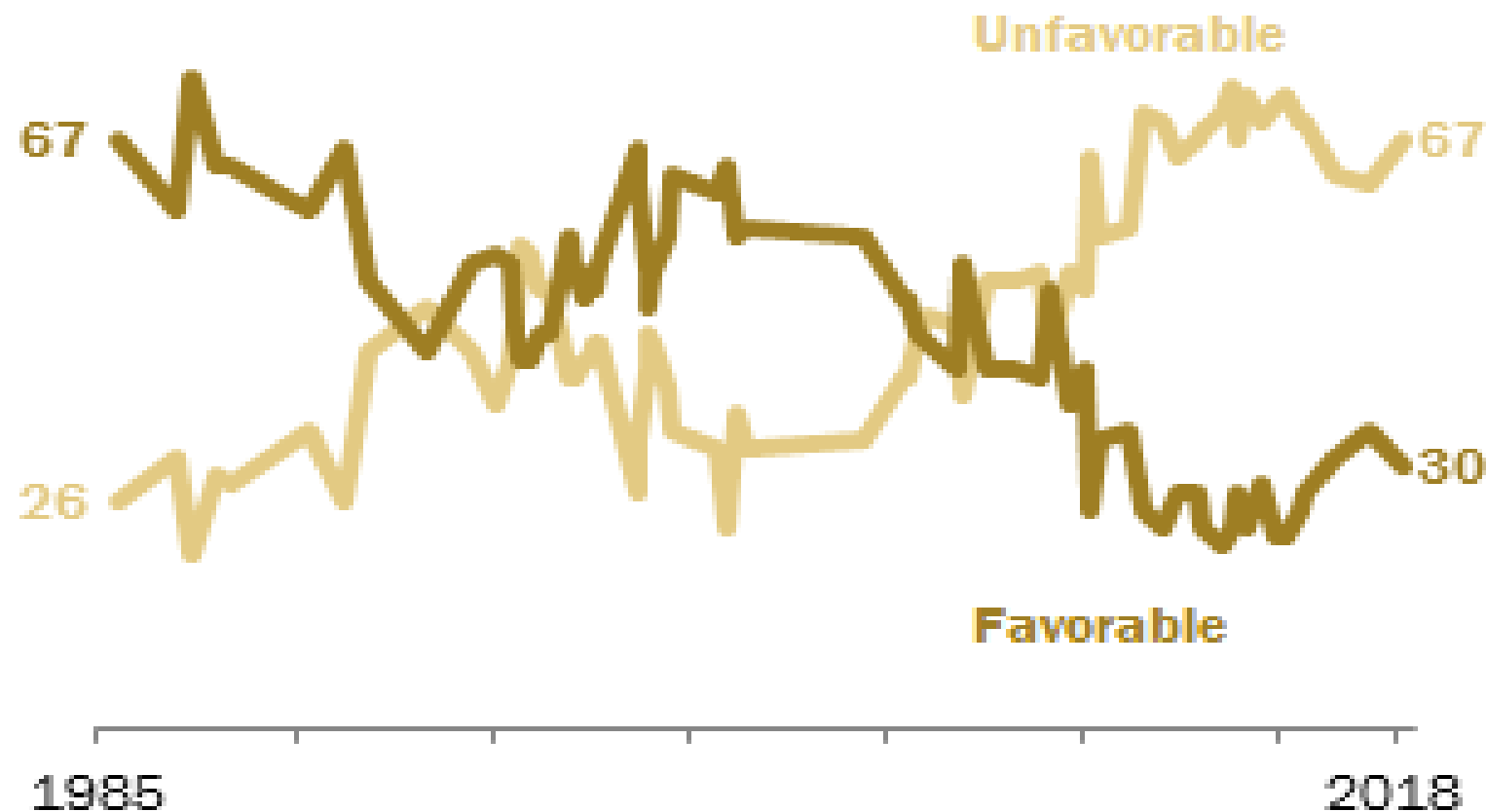


We can also conclude that substantial numbers of Americans are simply disengaged from political life..

Or at least temporarily disillusioned...

Ratings of Congress remain negative

% who have a ____ view of Congress



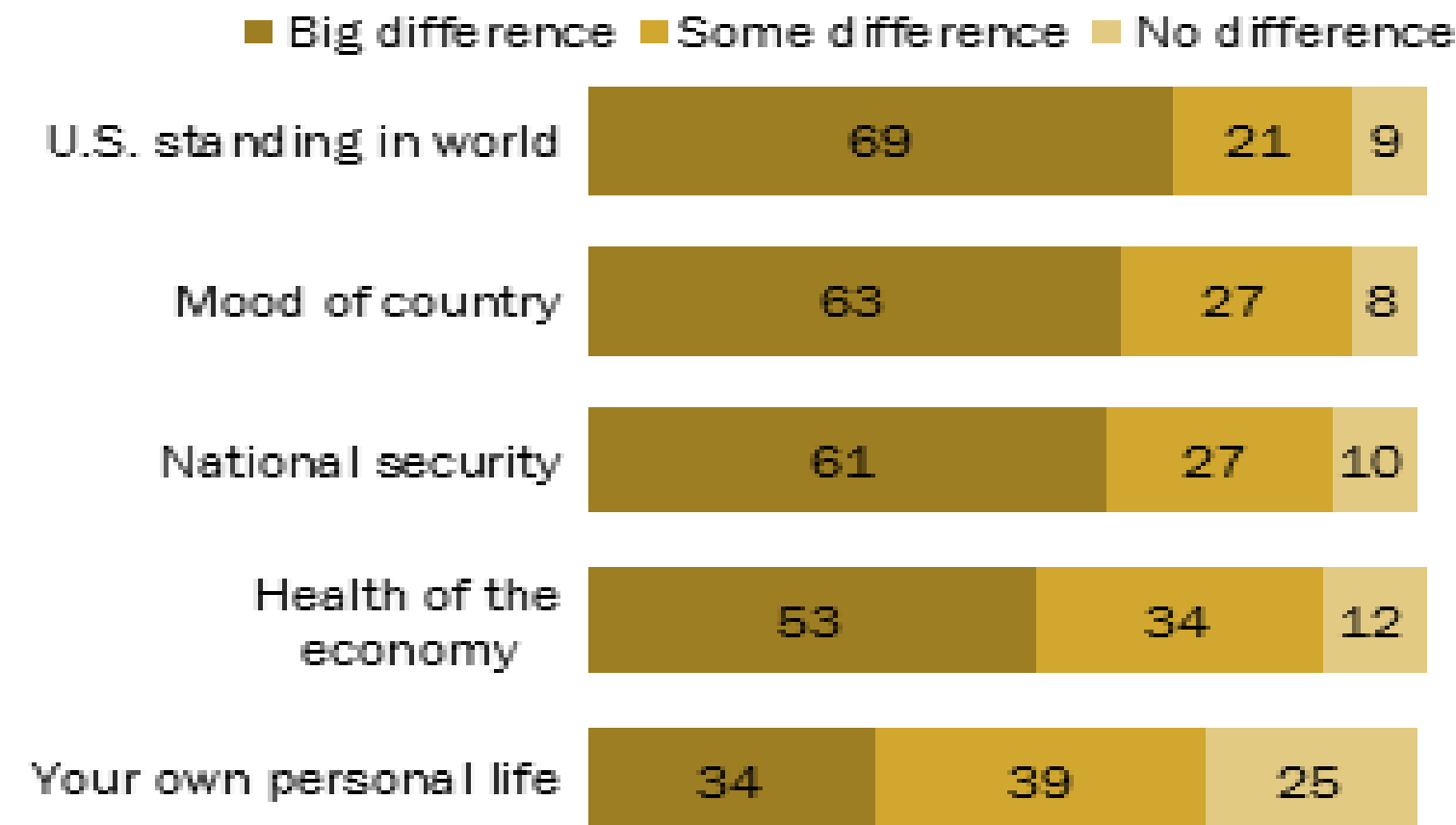
Note: Don't know responses not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Relatively few think who is president has a big impact on their personal life

% who say that who is president makes ____ on each of the following ...

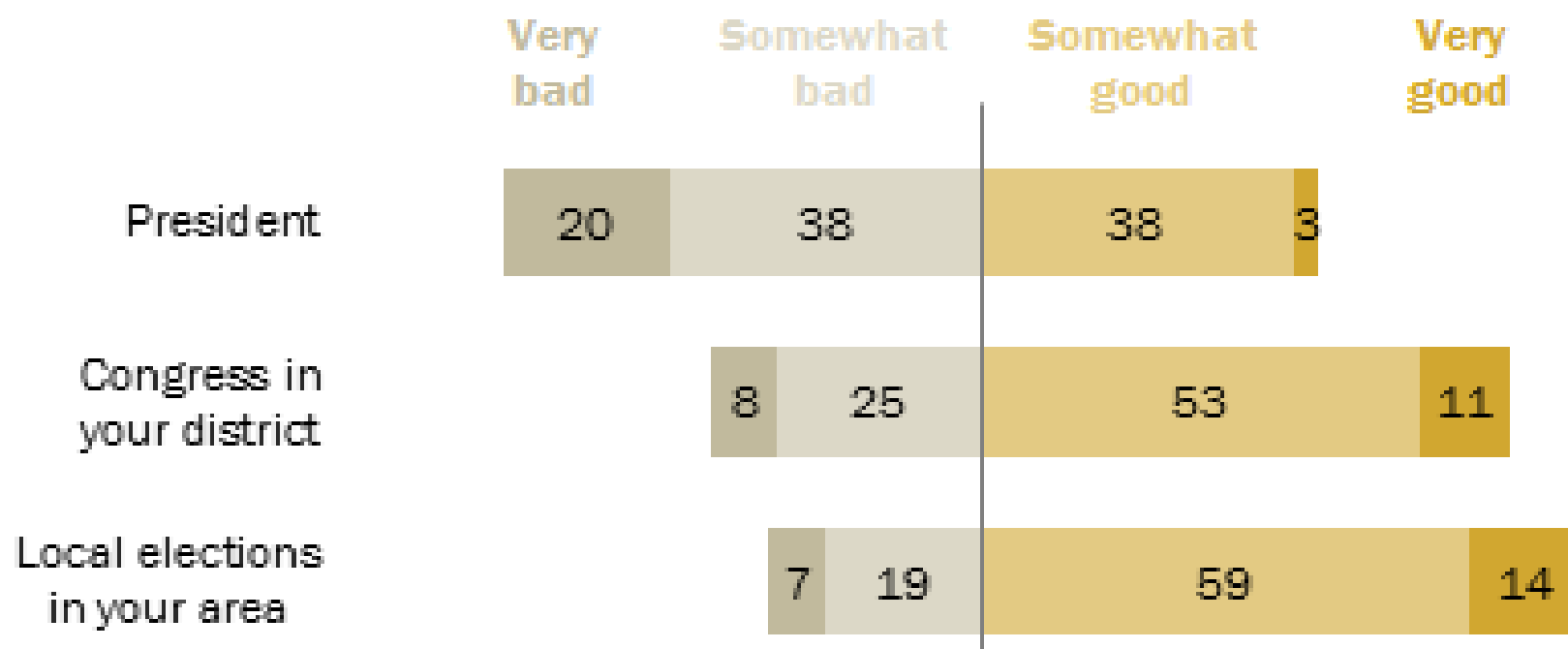


Note: Don't know responses not shown.

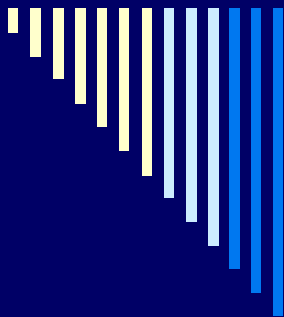
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

Views of candidate quality much less positive for presidential elections than for local contests

% who say, in general, the quality of candidates running for _____ in the last several elections has been ...



Note: No answer not shown. Each respondent asked about candidates in one type of office (sample randomly divided). See topline for full question wording.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

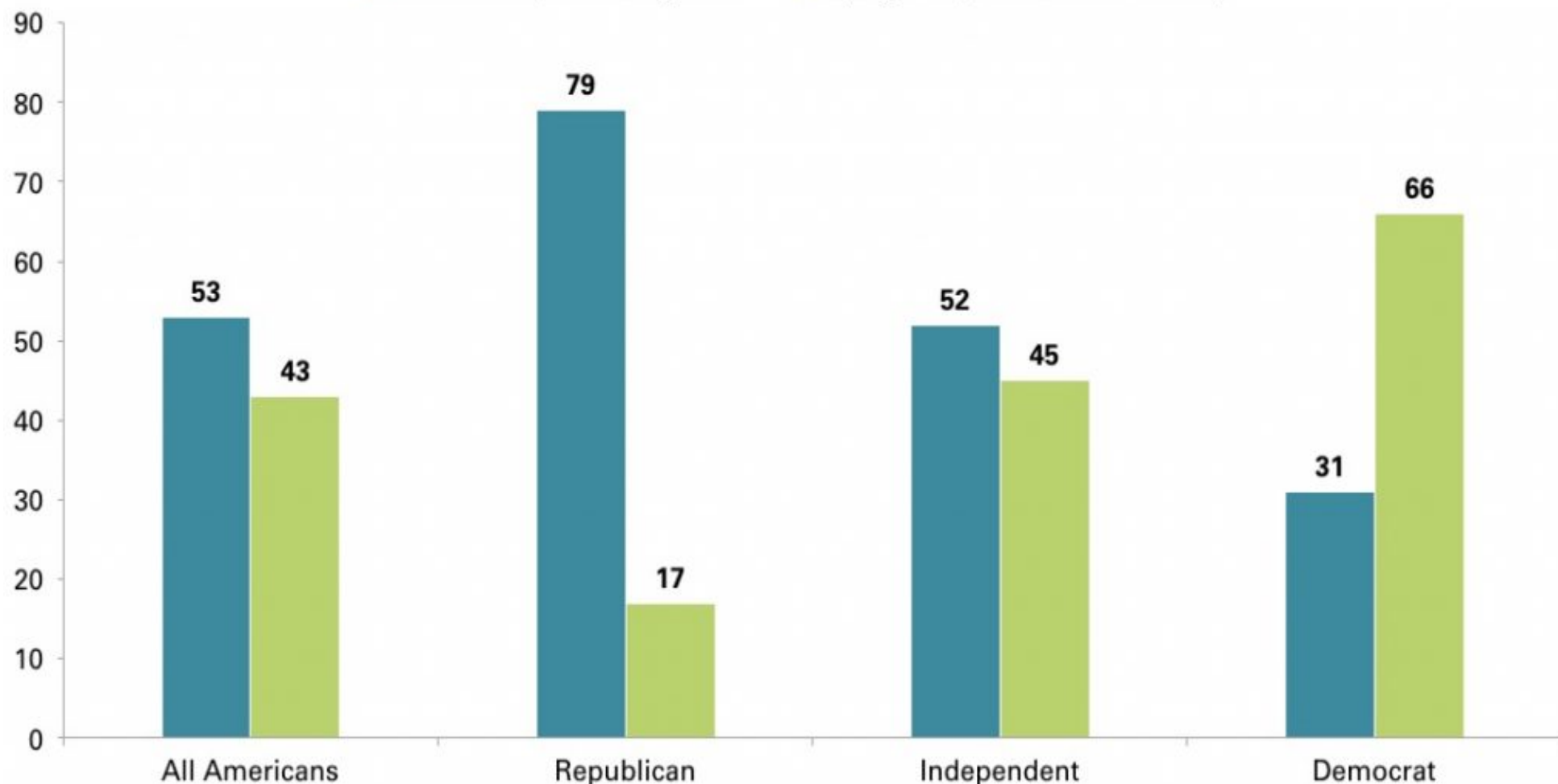


Many potential participants
may also be turned off by
what they see in the news media,
either because it's discouraging or
because they find it
less than credible.

Most Republicans Distrust Reporters' Motives

Do you think most reporters have a personal or political agenda, or are most reporters trying to report the news fairly and accurately?

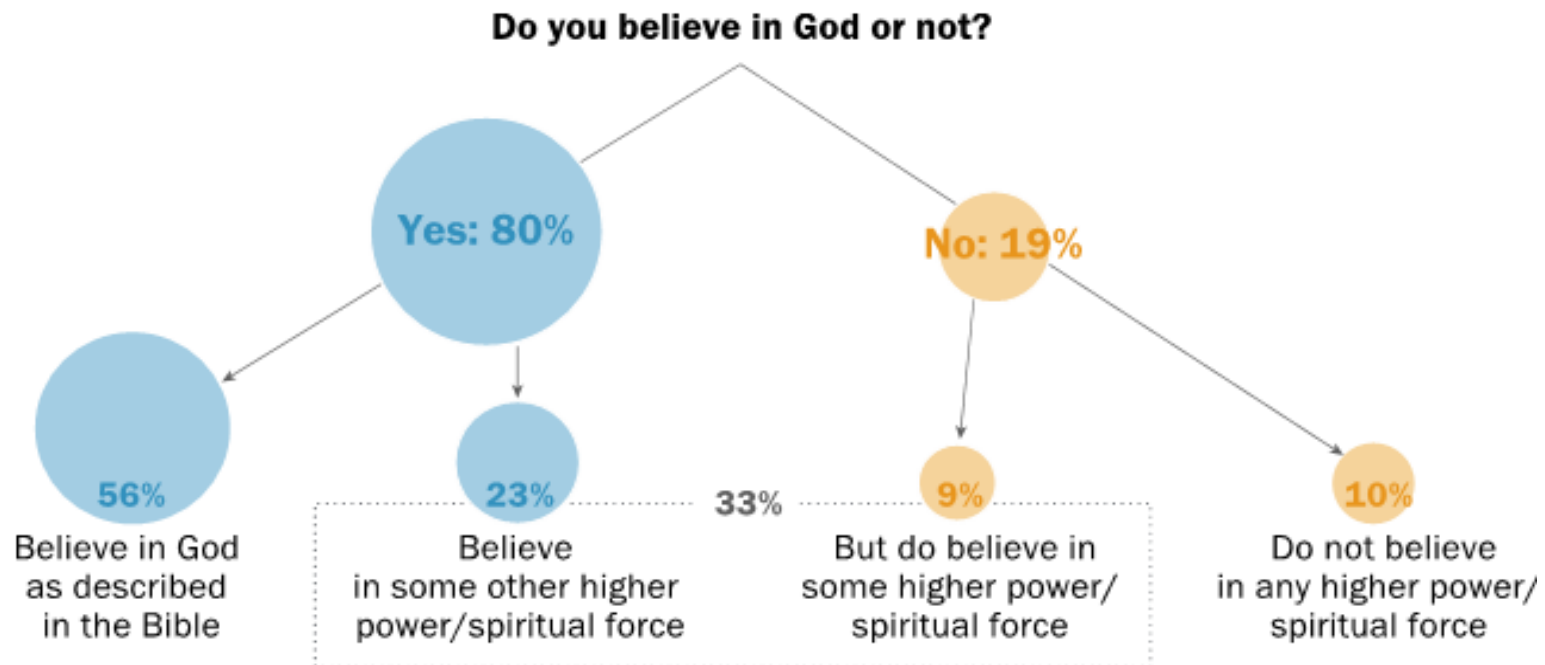
■ Personal or political agenda ■ Trying to report news accurately



Source: PRRI 2017 American Values Survey.

One Thing Still Have Faith In: God

One-third of U.S. adults believe in a higher power of some kind, but not in God as described in Bible

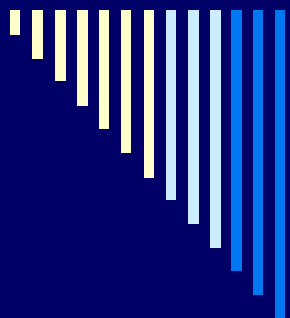


Note: Don't know or unclear responses not shown. Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted Dec. 4-18, 2017, among U.S. adults.

"When Americans Say They Believe in God, What Do They Mean?"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Religious Differences

Belief in God as presented in the Bible?

R's + leaners 70% / D's + leaners 45%

Other view of God or higher power?

R's + leaners 23% / D's + leaners 39%

No belief in Deity

R's + leaners 5% / D's + leaners 14%

2014 National House Vote by Religious Attendance

% who reported voting Democratic or Republican in the race for the U.S. House of Representatives in their district, among those who attend religious services...

	2006		2014	
	Dem	Rep	Dem	Rep
Attend weekly	43	55	40	58
More than once a week	38	60	40	59
Once a week	46	53	40	58
Monthly/yearly	59	39	46	52
Few times a month	57	41	43	55
Few times a year	60	38	48	51
Never	67	30	62	36

Note: Figures for 2010 are not available due to differences in the wording of the religious attendance question.

Source: National Election Pool national exit polls. 2014 data from NBC News.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

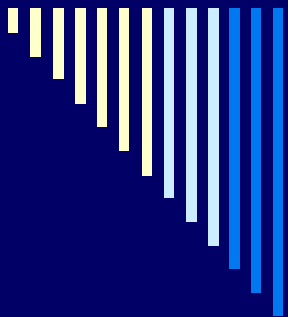


Intaparty Religious Differences

Black Democrats more likely
to embrace Biblical God
than are White Democrats

Among black Democrats
61% believe in God of the Bible

Among white Democrats just 32% do



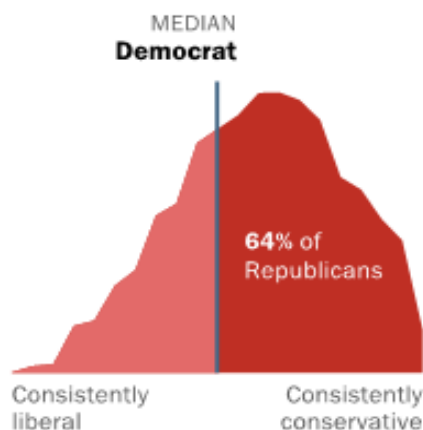
Parties Polarizing

Through most of U.S. history,
each major party had a liberal wing
and a conservative wing.
That has been waning for years
and is fast disappearing.

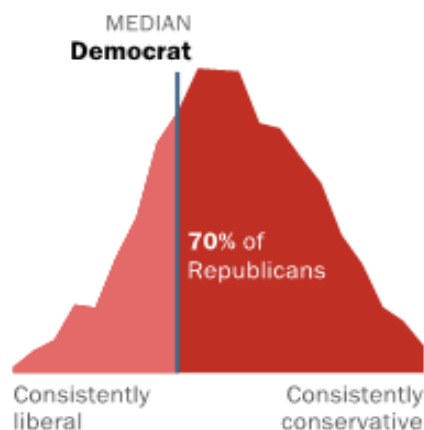
Less overlap in the political values of Republicans and Democrats than in the past

Distribution of Republicans and Democrats on a 10-item scale of political values

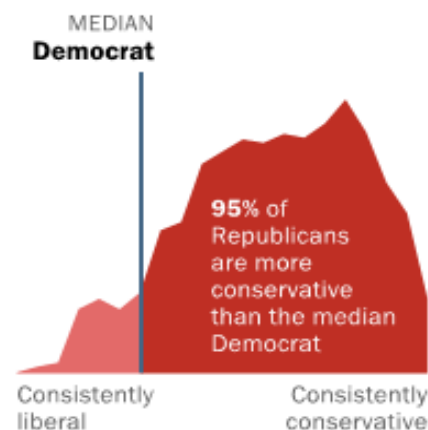
1994



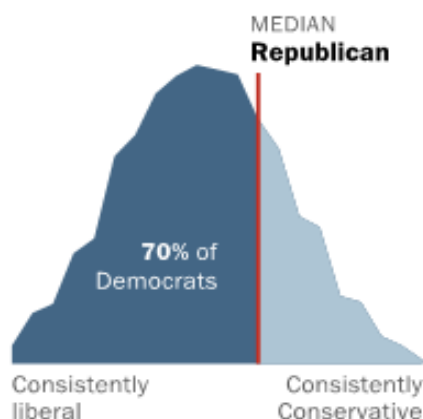
2004



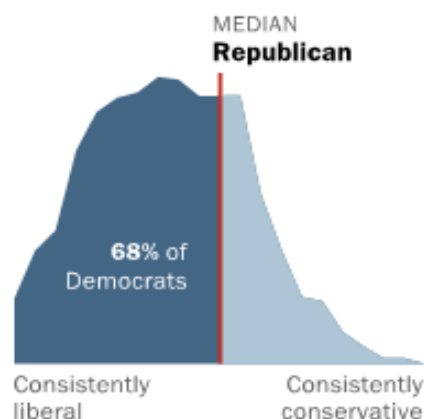
2017



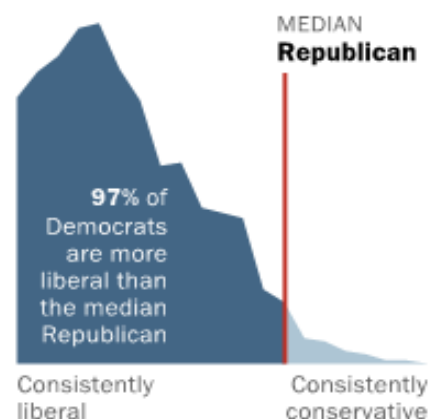
1994



2004



2017

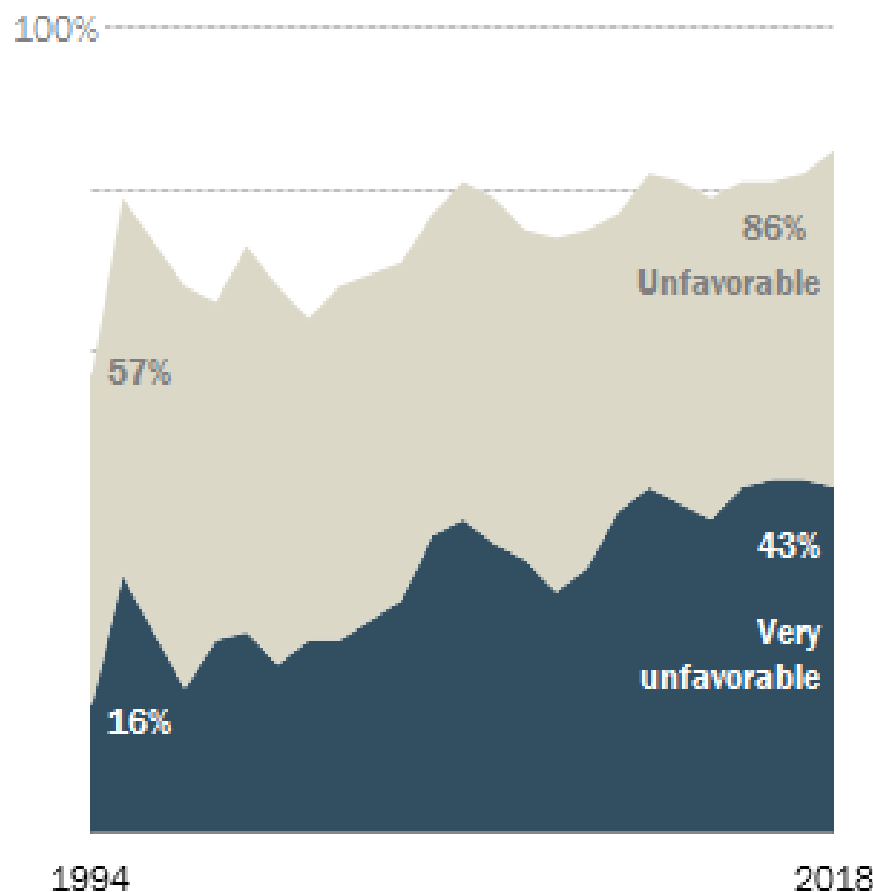


Notes: Ideological consistency based on a scale of 10 political values questions (see report methodology). Republicans include Republican-leaning independents; Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents.

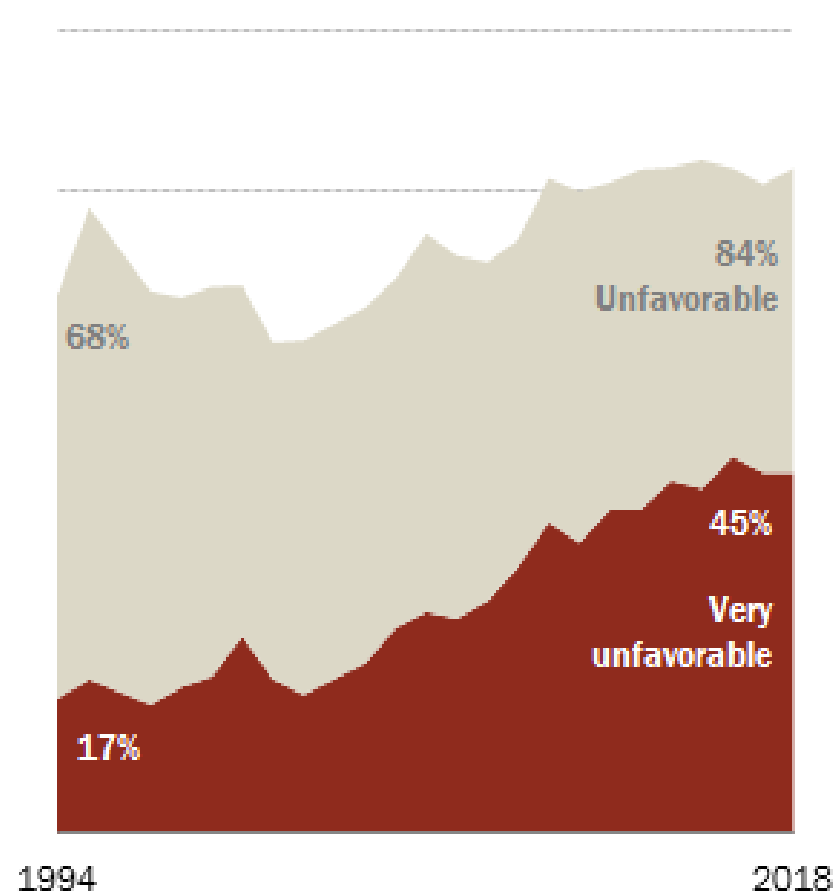
Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

Large majorities of Democrats and Republicans view other party unfavorably; many take a very unfavorable view

Democratic attitudes about the Republican Party



Republican attitudes about the Democratic Party



Note: Democrats include Democratic-leaning independents; Republicans include Republican-leaning independents.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

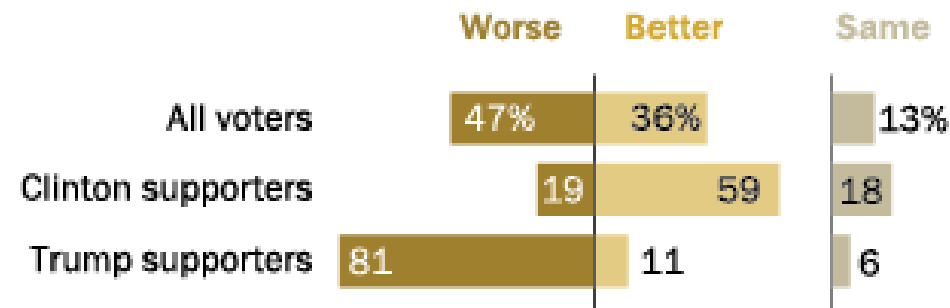


Many Voters Prefer Past to Present (and Future?)

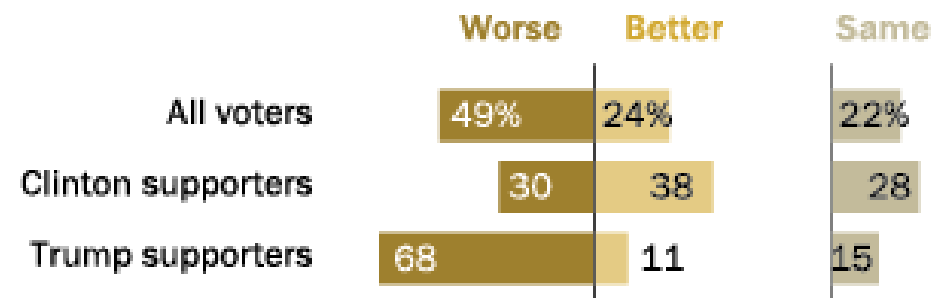
The appeal of the slogan
“Make America Great Again”
(first used by Reagan in 1980)
was evident and potent
with targeted groups.

Voters diverge on how U.S. has changed and where it's headed

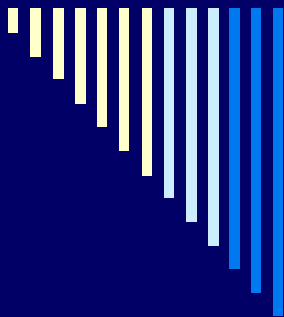
Compared with 50 years ago, life for people like you in America today is ...



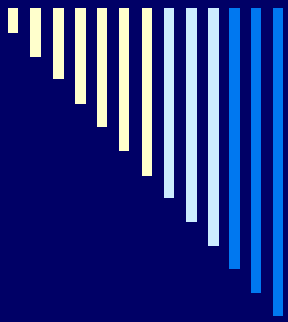
The future of the next generation of Americans will be ___ compared with life today (%)



Notes: Based on registered voters.
Don't know responses not shown. Q7 and Q8.
Source: Survey conducted August 9-16, 2016.



A sizable cottage industry of
academics, journalists,
lobbyists and paid campaign
professionals
study voters constantly...
and believe they know them.



So... What happened in 2016?



Did You See This Coming?





Neither Did We

The people who **thought** they knew about politics missed the **rising power of populist anger** in America...

...anger aimed at the elites of Washington and New York, the East and West Coasts, the media and academia.



What Did We Miss?

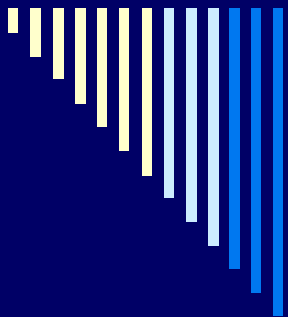
*The extent of economic,
political and cultural
alienation among voters...*

*Especially among millennials
and non-college white voters...*



So As A Result...

*We were shocked when
conventional frontrunners
chosen by older, more affluent
voters with more education,
struggled in both major parties.*



Election Night: Shocked Again

Best national polls were only off by 1 to
2 percentage points.

But...

Previously reliable statewide polls
missed badly in PA, MI and WI.

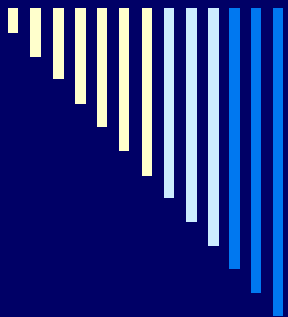


Did We Get It Wrong Again in Analyzing the Outcome?

The Exit Polls

(Edison Research for various news media)
report ASAP on Election Night.

Then they adjust / weight the initial data and
produce reports on who voted and how.



Getting It Wrong in the Exit Polls

The Exit Polls have become our first guide to the election results on Election Night. As such they have often been **misleading**.

They pointed the wrong direction in 2000 and 2004 and overstated Dem turnout in both Obama elections.

Exit Polls Missed Badly On Clinton Share of White Voters Sorted by Education

**Exit Polls said White college grads
cast 37% of total vote**

**Exits said Clinton LOST the category
with 45% to Trump's 48% (7% other)**

Exits: Whites without a college degree = 34%

**Exits said Clinton lost THIS category
with just 29% to Trump's 66% (5% other)**

Why Does This Matter?

Believing Clinton LOST White College Grads

Initially led analysts to believe

she still had upside potential among them

So a similar Dem might win doing better with them.

That would argue for little change in the

Democratic strategy: targeting educated whites

and writing off non-degree whites.

(While assuming pre-dominance among POC)

And the Problem Is: The Exits Were Wrong

**More extensive data gathering and analysis
by several different organizations***

**found the Exit Polls had overstated the share of vote
cast by White college grads
(30% instead of 37%)**

**and understated the share cast by White working class
(44% instead of 34%)**

(* Pew Research Center,
Central for American Progress, Stanford IRSS)

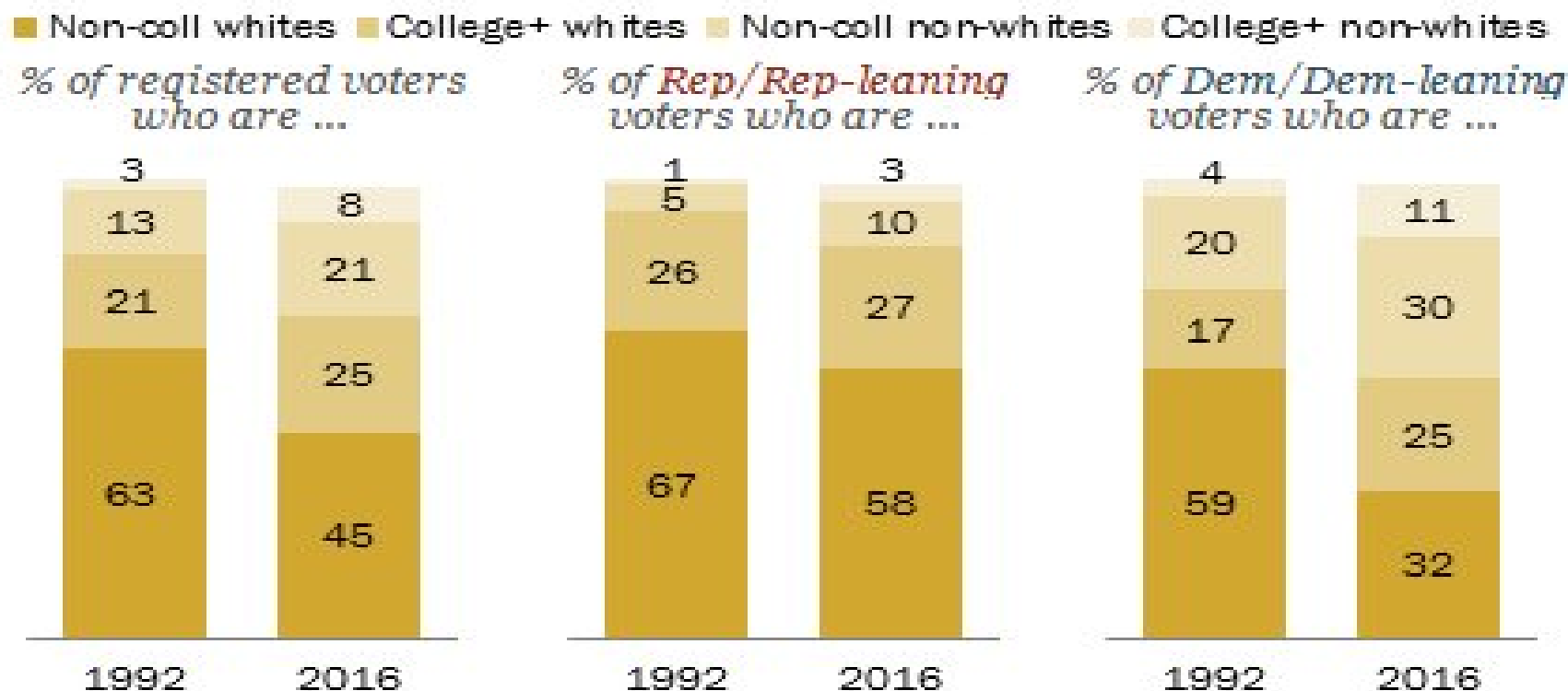
And the Problem Is: The Exits Were Wrong

**These analyses also found that
Clinton ACTUALLY WON among White college
grads with 55%
(10 points higher share than in Exit Polls)**

**So her defeat among non-college whites
(10 points down from Obama's 36%)
was by far the largest factor in her loss.**

(* Pew Research Center,
Central for American Progress, Stanford IRSS)

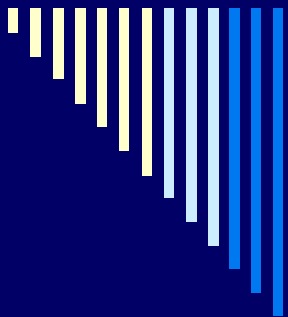
Non-college whites make up a much smaller share of Democratic voters than in 1992



Notes: Based on registered voters. Non-college includes all of those who do not have a degree from a four-year college or university.

Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center survey data; 2016 data based off surveys conducted January-August.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER



Economic Anxiety

The voters were **less** anxious about changes in the **economy** than about changes in the **country**.

Working class voters felt a sense of threatened status and security.

Doubts about new waves of immigration were paramount among these concerns.



Seeking a Protector

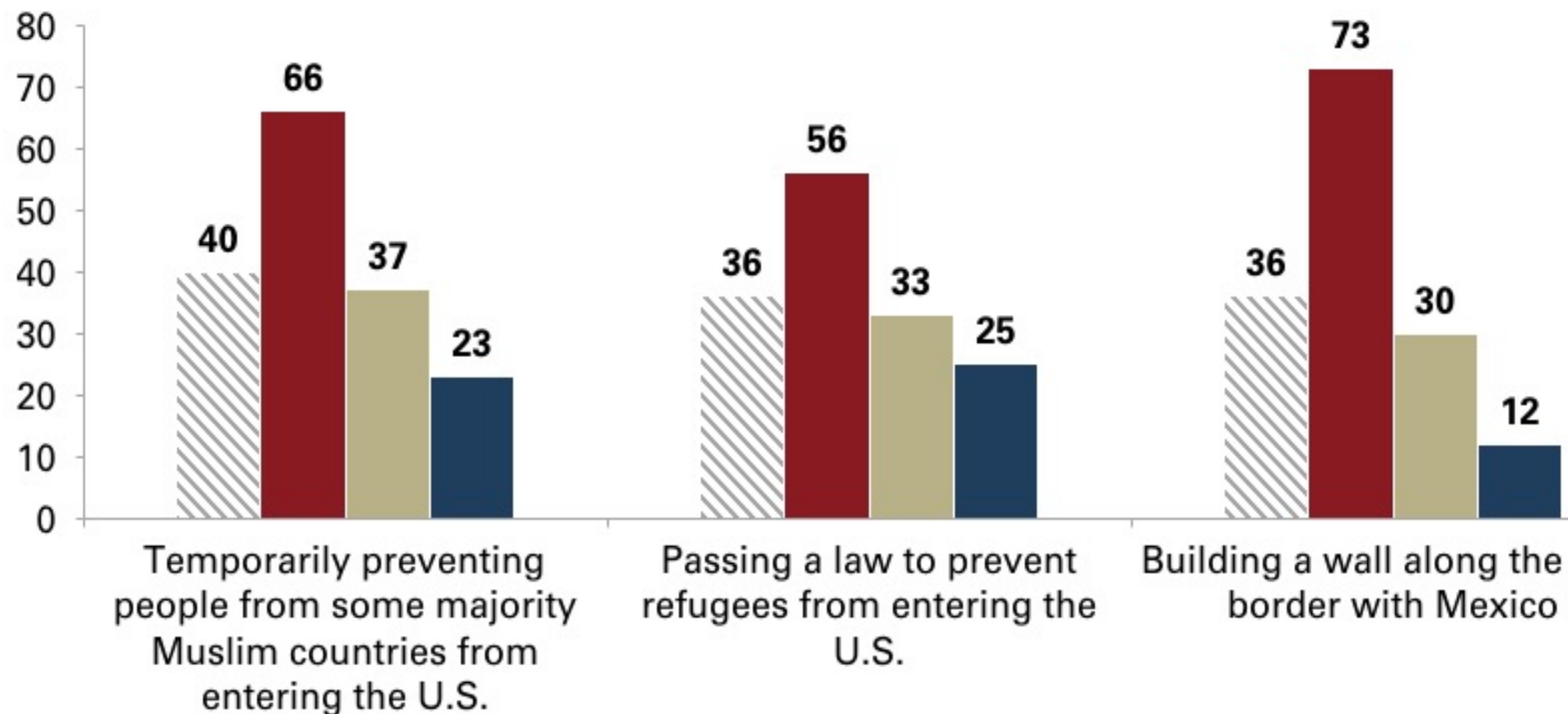
“They are not looking for a husband, or they’re not looking for a pastor, and they’re not looking for a friend. They are looking for someone who will swim the Washington moat with a knife in his teeth.”

-- Penny Nance, President
Concerned Women for America

Stark Political Divide in Attitudes about Immigration Policies

Percent who favor the following...

◇ All Americans ■ Republican ■ Independent ■ Democrat



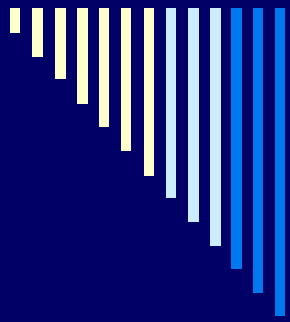
Source: PRRI 2017 American Values Survey.



Have We Learned Any Lessons?

What voters **have done** is our best
indicator of what they **will do**.
But it is far from perfect.

Polling uses **science**, but also uses **art**.
And it can become more of a game
in the mind of the **interviewee**.



What is likely to happen in 2018?



2018: Midterm Elections

Congressional district maps drawn by legislatures
elected in 2010 and since tend to favor the
Republicans who control those states

Democrats gerrymander where they control, they
just control far fewer states

GOP gets bigger payout per vote



2018: Midterm Elections

- ❖ 36 Governors
 - ❖ Most legislature seats
 - ❖ 435 seats in U.S. House
 - ❖ 35 seats in U.S. Senate
-



2018: Governors

36 states choose governors
who will be in office for next Census

Next Redistricting

26 now have Republicans
(9 Democratic, 1 Independent)



2018: Congress Blue Wave?

- ❖ 39 House GOP retiring
 - ❖ Speaker and 8 chairmen
 - ❖ President's approval ratings
 - ❖ Dems lead “generic ballot”
-



2018: Trump Approval

❖ Presidents under 50%

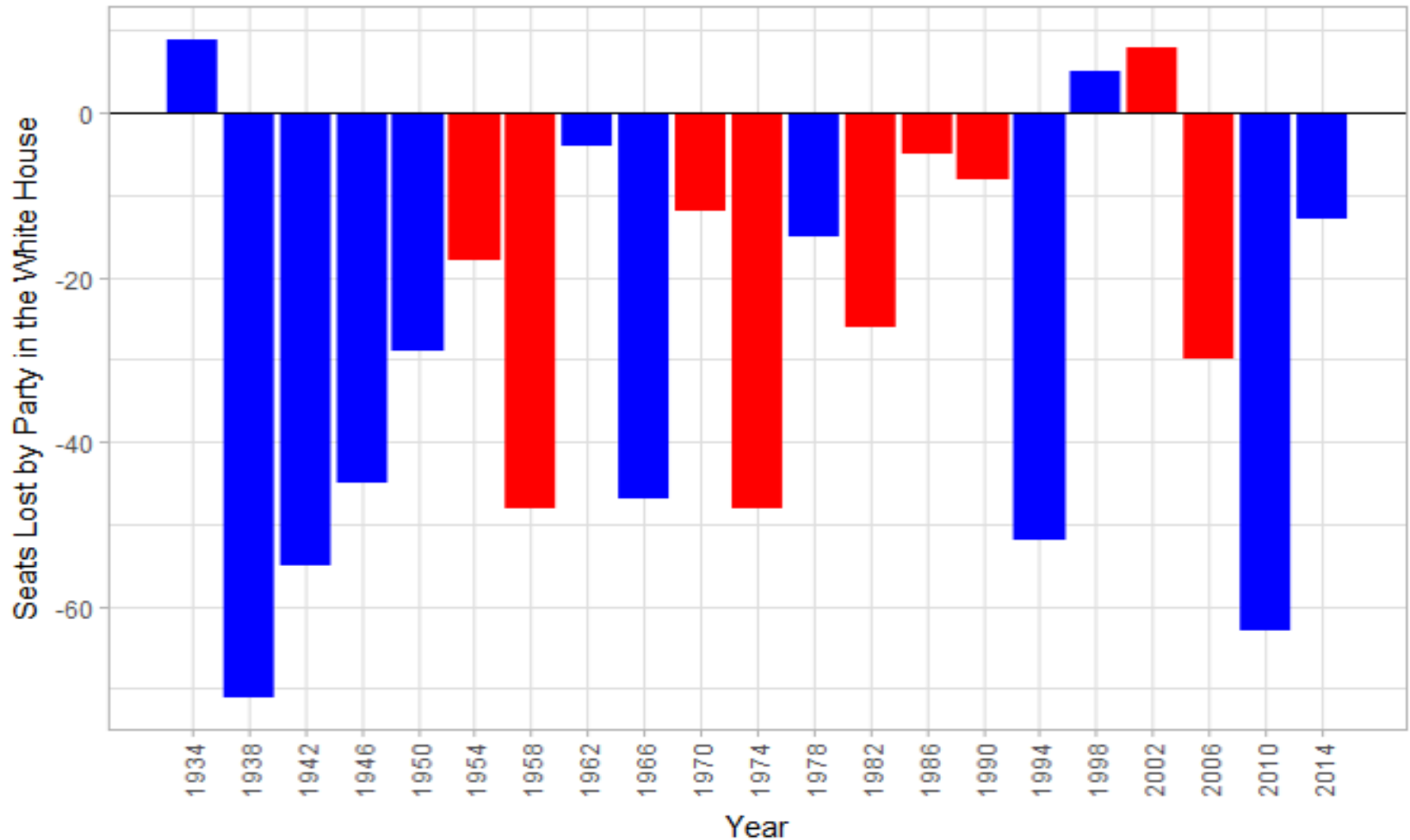
had brutal midterm losses

LBJ / Ford / Carter / Reagan

Clinton '94 / Bush '06 / Obama 2x

❖ Historic average 36 House seats
when President under 50%

Midterm Losses by the President's Party (House)



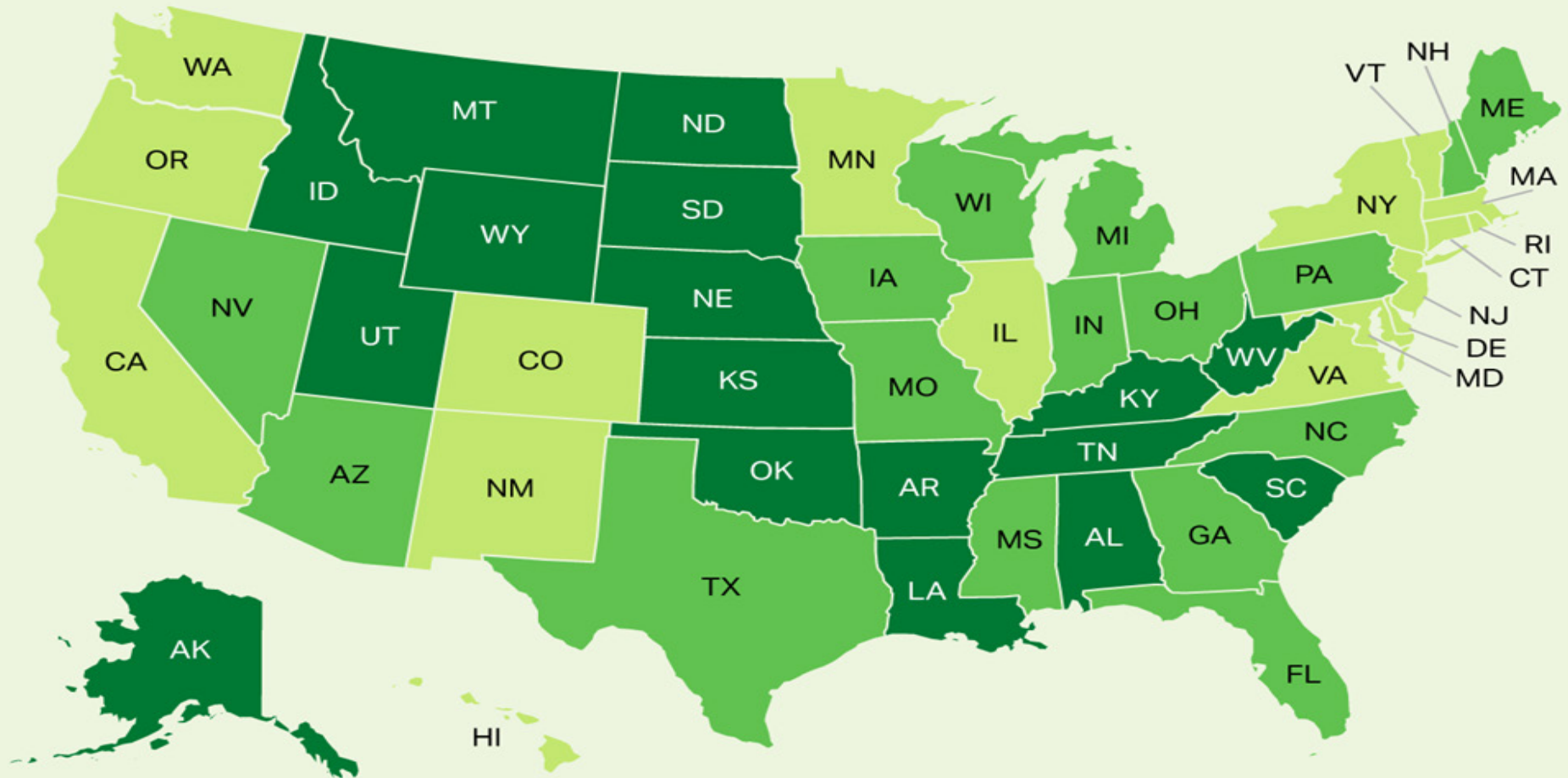


2018: Trump Approval

- ❖ Highest poll = 50% approve
(Rasmussen)
 - ❖ Average all polls = 42% approve
 - ❖ “Strongly approve” 15%
 - ❖ “Strongly disapprove” 33%
-

Trump Job Approval by State

50% or higher 40% to 49% Below 40%



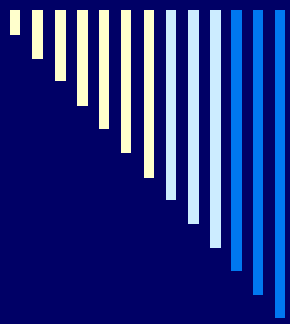
GALLUP DAILY, JANUARY-JUNE 2017



2018: Still GOP's Map

GOP has controlled redistricting
in most states since the 2010 census.

GOP maps build on the existing
concentration of minority vote in cities

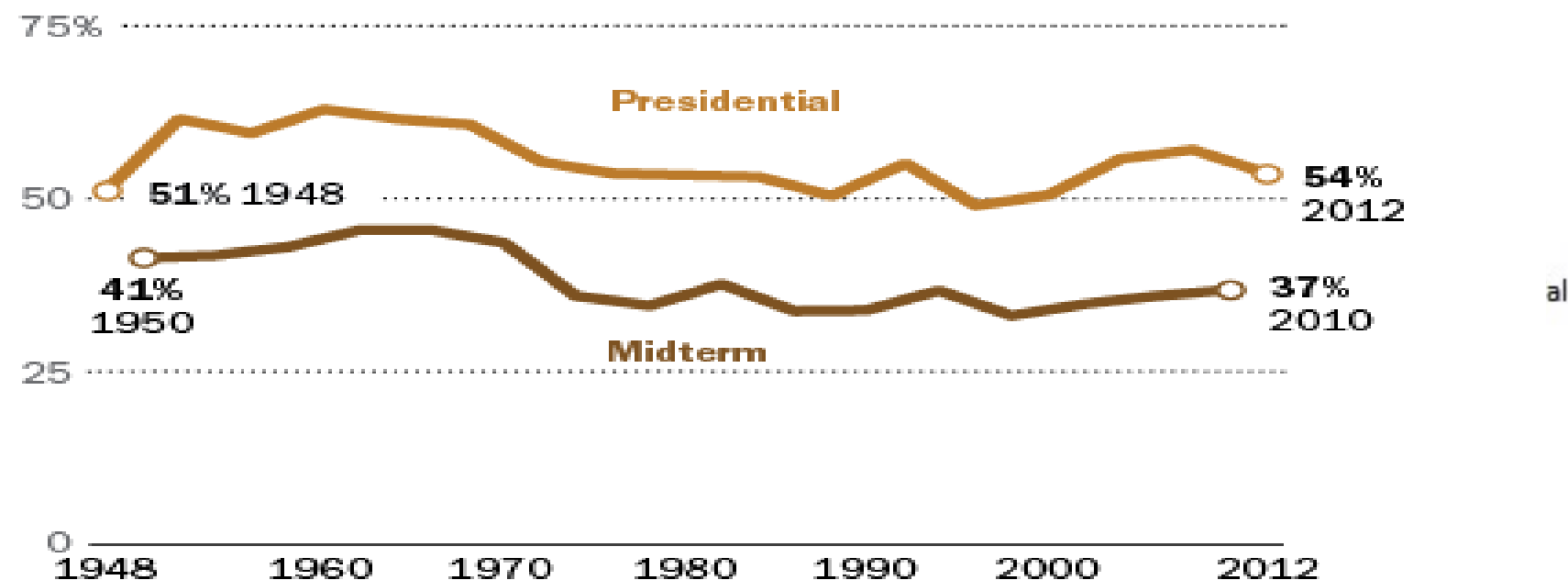


2018: Midterm Demographics

The turnout in midterm years is only about **two-thirds** as large as in presidential election years, with far fewer votes cast by POC or by voters under 30.

When the Presidency's Not at Stake, Fewer Voters Turn Out

Turnout rate during ... election years

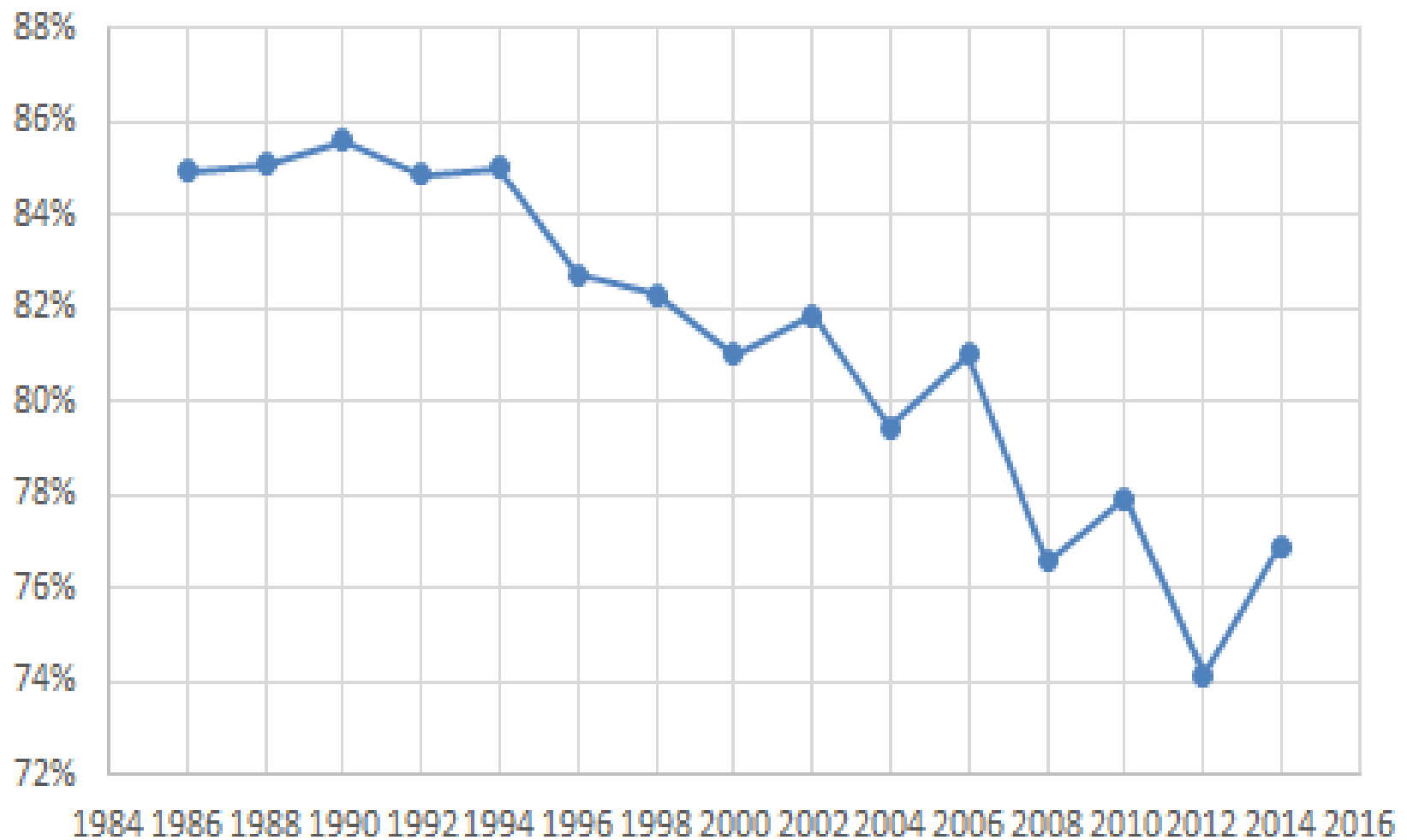


Note: Turnout rates calculated as total votes cast for president (in presidential election years) or House of Representatives (in midterm election years) divided by voting-age population.

Source: Census Bureau (voting-age population), Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives (vote totals)

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Non-Hispanic White Share of Electorate





2018: Senate Gains for GOP

Senate Majority Leader

Mitch McConnell has little at risk

GOP only defending 9-10 seats

(just 1 in a Clinton state)

Nevada

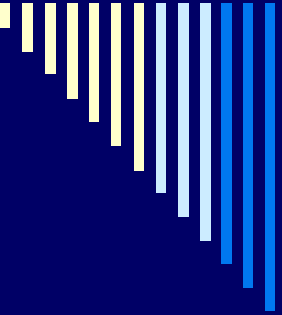


2018: Senate Gains for GOP

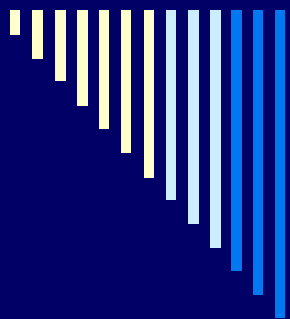
Democrats' caucus defending **26** seats
(10 in Trump states)

Montana. / N. D. / Wis. / Mich. / Mo.

Ind. / Ohio / Penn. / W. Va. / Fla.



What happens
in 2020 and beyond?



The Profile of the U.S. Voter is Changing

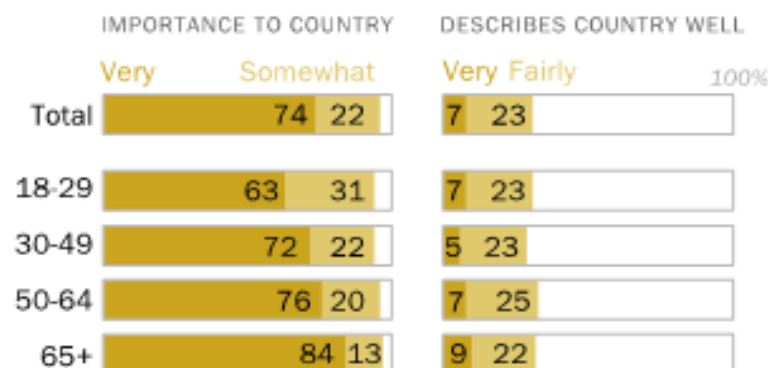
Younger voters differ from older on:

LGBTQ rights and policy
Gun laws and gun violence
Abortion

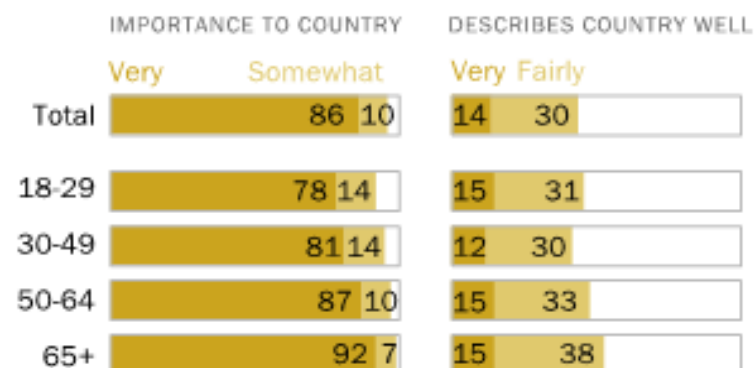
Wide majorities across age groups see key aspects of democracy as important, but older adults are more likely to regard several as 'very' important

% who say each is ___ important for the U.S. and that each describes the U.S. ___ well ...

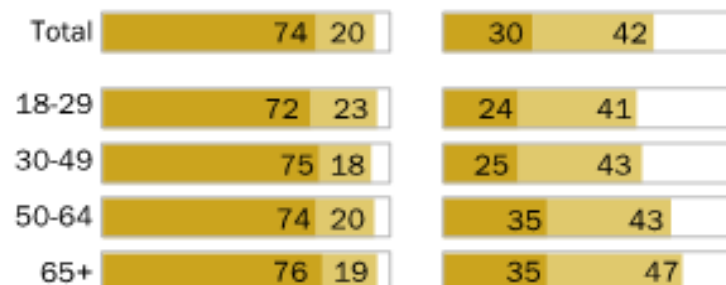
Government is open and transparent



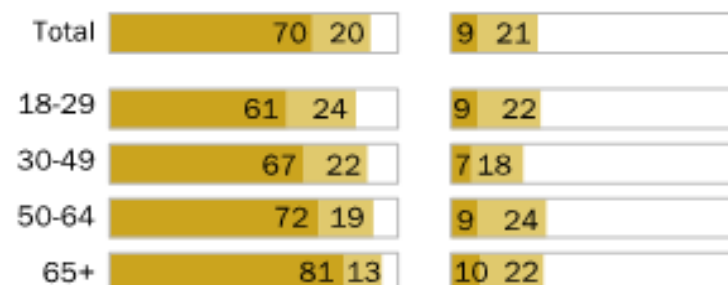
Rights and freedoms of all people are respected



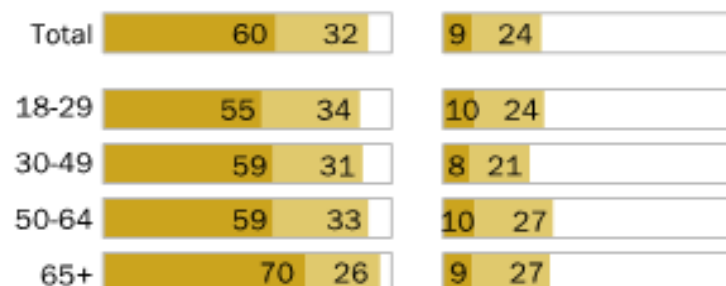
People are free to peacefully protest



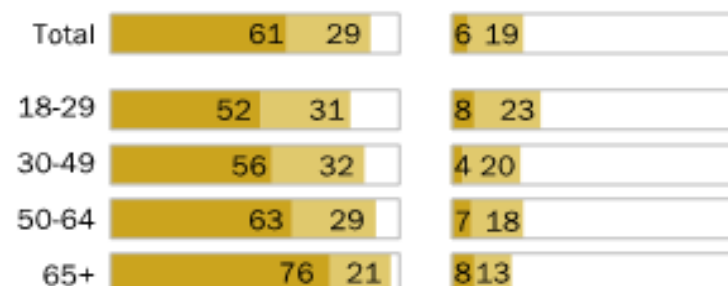
News organization do not favor a party



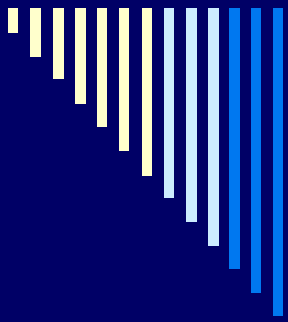
People agree on basic facts, even if disagree on politics



Tone of political debate is respectful



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 29-Feb. 13, 2018.

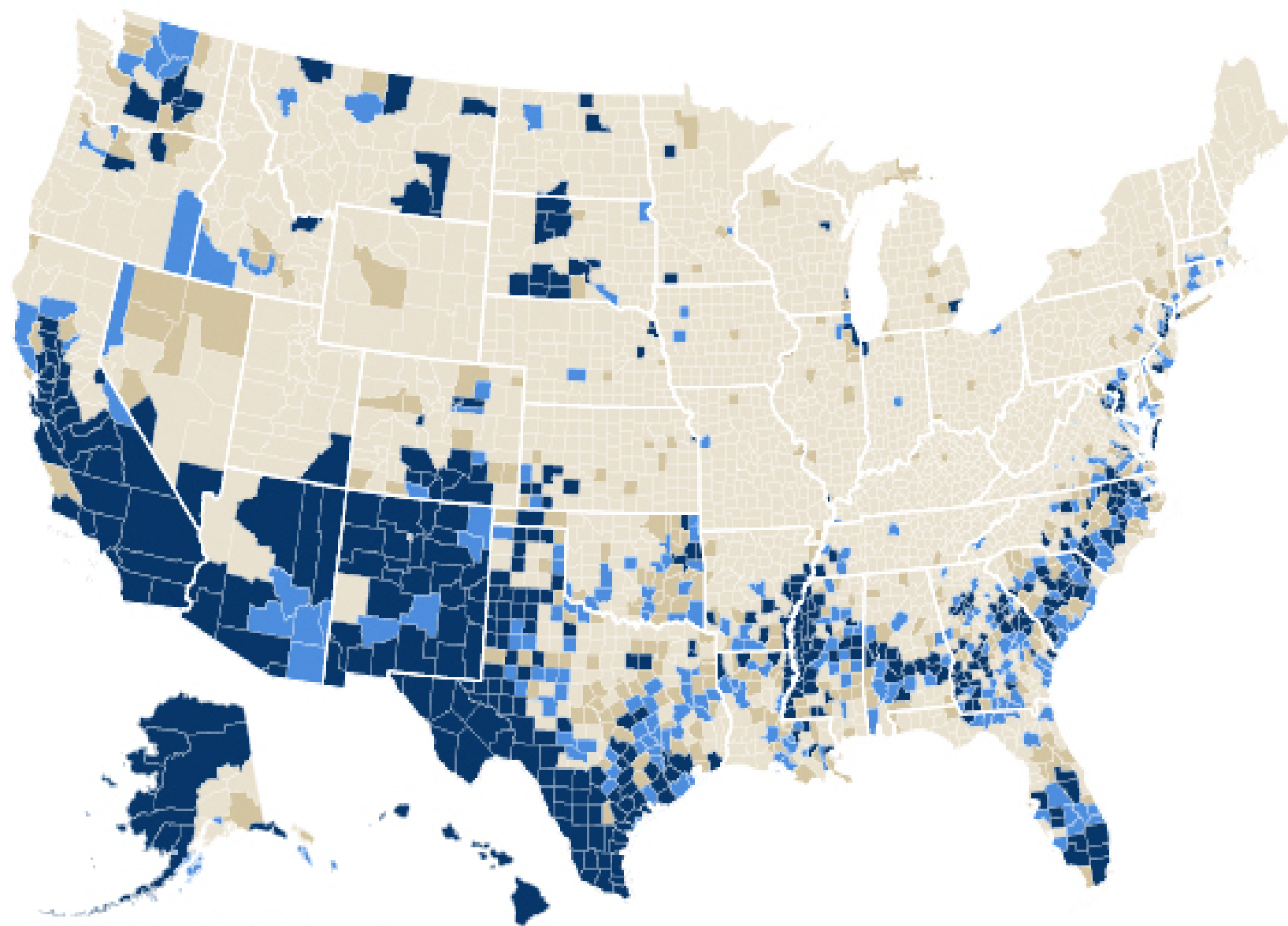


The Profile of the U.S. Voter is Changing

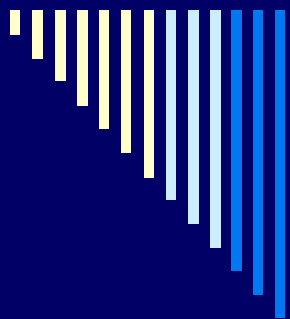
The share of U.S. vote cast
by all people of color
has been rising by about
1.5 percentage points
in each presidential cycle
from 11% in 1980
to roughly 30% in 2016

Percentage of Infants Under Age 1 Who Are Non-White

60.0% and above 50.0 to 59.9% 40.0 to 49.9% Less than 40.0%

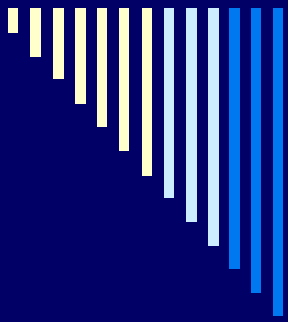


Source: Author's analysis of 2010 census data



The Profile of the U.S. Voter is Changing

Millennials are already
the biggest generation in
the U.S. workforce and will be
the largest among voters by 2020.



The Profile of the U.S. Voter is Changing

There are 50,000 Hispanic youth turning 18 every month in the U.S. counting only the ones born here.

POC will cast one third of the total U.S. vote by 2024.



Last Thought

What the voters have done in the past
is the best indicator of what they will do
in the future.

But the nature of the voters
is always evolving –
and the future is arriving faster than ever.
