

# 2024 Election Preview



February 28, 2024

**POLS 201: California State Government and Politics**

Dr. Isaac Hale  
Spring Semester, 2024

**OXY** Occidental  
College

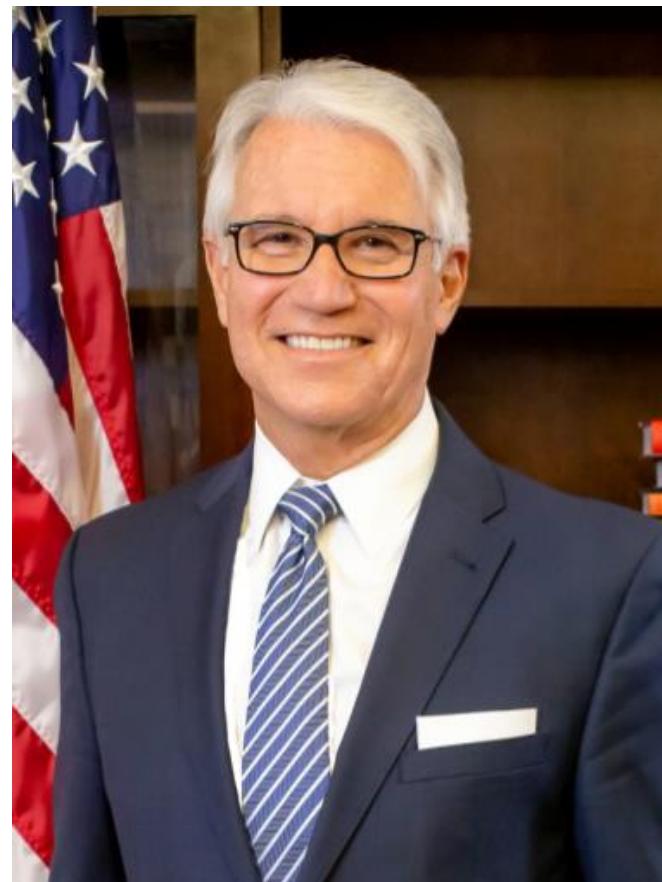
# Outline

1. California character of the day
2. Los Angeles
3. California
4. Congress (if time)
5. White House (if time)

# California Character of the Day

# California Character of the Day

**George Gascón, the “godfather of progressive prosecutors”  
Los Angeles District Attorney**



# An Unorthodox Political Life

- Gascón's family emigrated from Cuba when he was a child
- Struggled to learn English and dropped out of high school
- Served in army, attended CSULB, then joined the LAPD
  - Rose through the ranks, becoming a training commander
  - Transformed the department's civil rights program
- Named SFPD chief by Gavin Newsom in 2009
  - Changed his party to Democrat from Republican
- Named SF District Attorney by Newsom in 2011, replacing Kamala Harris
  - One of Newsom's final acts as mayor

# Gascón: SF DA

- Elected in his own right in 2011, reelected in 2015
- Majorly reformed criminal justice in SF
  - Retroactively cleared misdemeanor marijuana convictions
  - Investigated misconduct accusations
  - Advocated for the end of cash bail
- Co-authored CA Prop. 47 (2014), which made many nonviolent offenses misdemeanors (rather than felonies)
- Declined to seek reelection 2018, saying he needed to care for his mother in LA

# Gascón: LA DA

- In 2019, announced a run against incumbent DA Jackie Lacey
  - Gascón won 54-46
- As in SF, reformed the office
  - No cash bail for certain minor offenses
  - Never seek death penalty
  - End the charging of children as adults
- Reopened cases into police shootings, enraging law enforcement
- Appears on the infamous LA City Council tapes
  - City Council President Nury Martinez: “F\*\*\* that guy... He’s with the Blacks”

# Gascón 2024: His Hardest Election Ever

- Within a week of winning election, a recall effort began
- Petitions were circulated three times, never got enough signatures
- Gascón faces a tough reelection in 2024
- His reformist policies have generated backlash from:
  - LA County cities
  - LAPD and LA Sherriffs
  - His own prosecutors

# Some of His Many Challengers



# Los Angeles

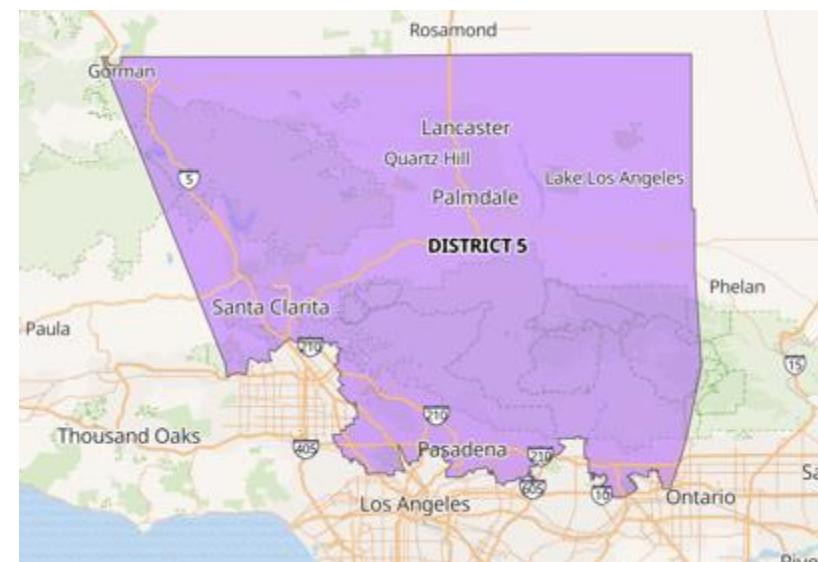
# Key LA Races

- The District Attorney's race is the big fish
- 3/5 Board of Supervisors seats are up for election
- 7/15 city council seats are up for election
- Measure HLA would make city roads more pedestrian and cyclist-friendly

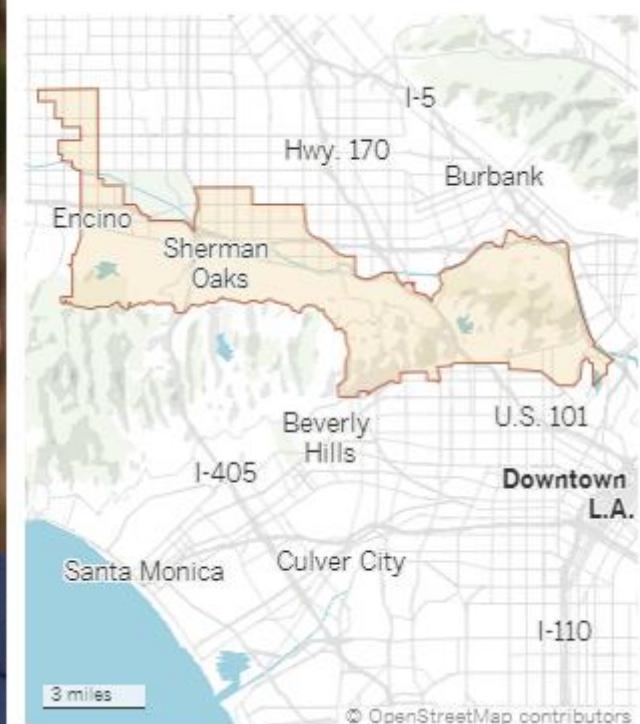
# Key March LA County BoS Race: District 4



# Key March LA County BoS Race: District 5



# Key March LA Council Race: CD-4



# Key March LA Council Race: CD-12

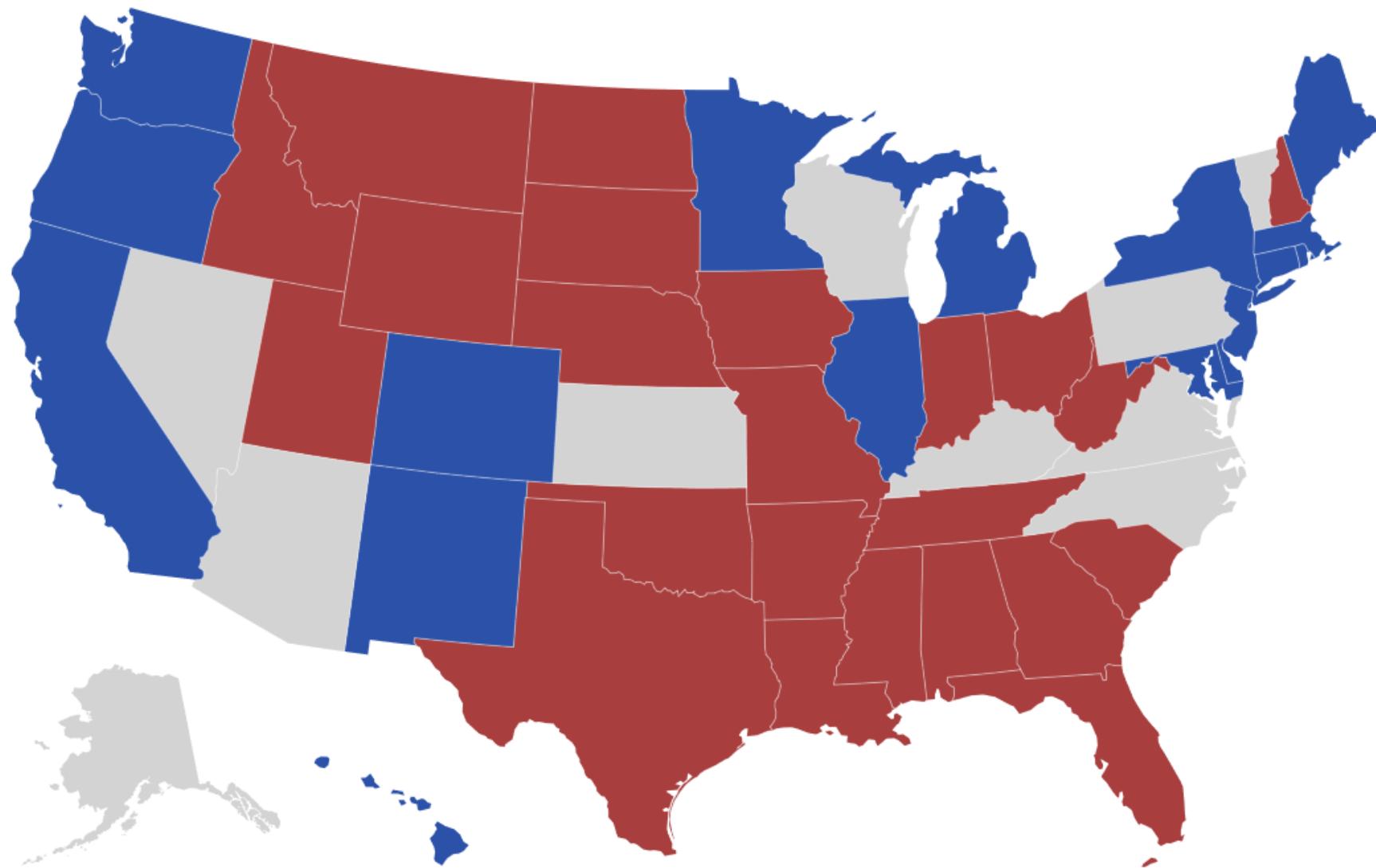


# Key March LA Council Race: CD-14 (That's Us!)



# California!

# Current Control of State Governments



# No Mystery About Control of the CA Assembly or Senate

- California State Senate elections, 2024

Party	As of February 2024
Democratic Party	32
Republican Party	8
Other	0
Vacancies	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

- California State Assembly elections, 2024

Party	As of February 2024
Democratic Party	62
Republican Party	18
Independent	0
Vacancies	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>

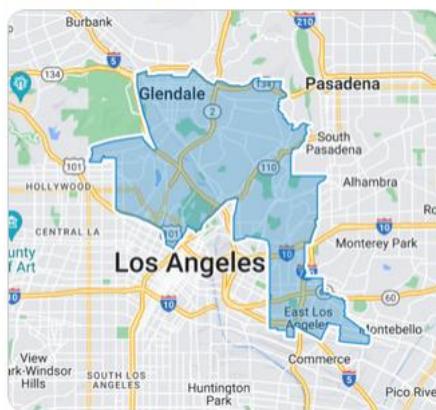
# Key Legislative Races

- We'll look at some key legislative races at the end of the semester
- We don't know the top-two in many races yet
- For now, let's look at some interesting Assembly and Senate "primaries" taking place next week!
- Many of these are *intra*-party conflicts

# Key March Assembly Race: AD-52



DISTRICT MAP

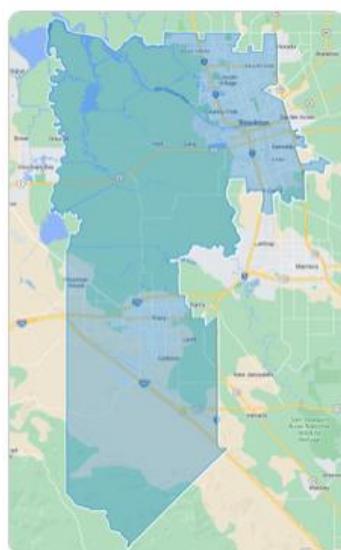


**The hopefuls**

# Key March Assembly Race: AD-13 (and SD-5)



DISTRICT MAP

**Edith Villapudua (D)****Rhodesia Ransom (D)**

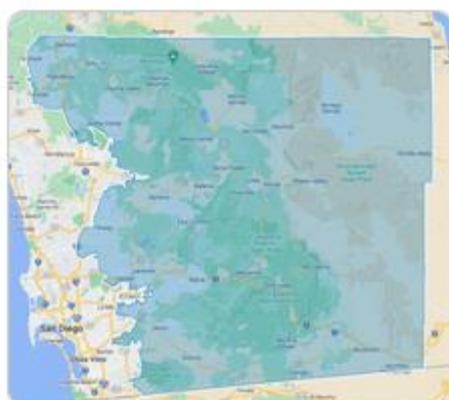
**Didn't expect ol' Jerry McNerny, did you?**

# Key March Assembly Race: AD-75



**Remember me?**

DISTRICT MAP



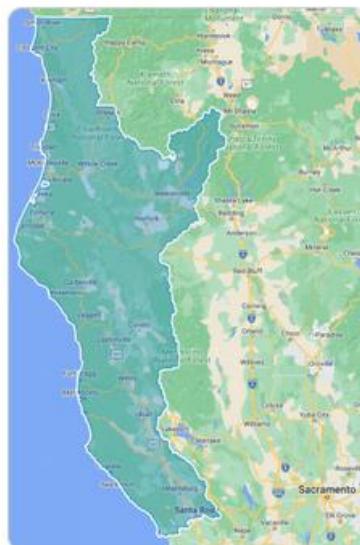
**Andrew Hayes**

# Key March Assembly Race: AD-2



**CA Dem Party  
Chair Rusty Hicks**

## DISTRICT MAP



## CANDIDATES

### Cynthia A. Click

Sales Manager

Democrat

### Rusty Hicks

Educator / Nonprofit Director

Democrat

### Ariel Kelley

Healdsburg Mayor / Mom

Democrat

### Frankie Myers

Vice-Chair, Yurok Tribe

Democrat

### Chris Rogers

Councilmember / Non-Profit Executive

Democrat

### Ted Williams

County Supervisor / Firefighter

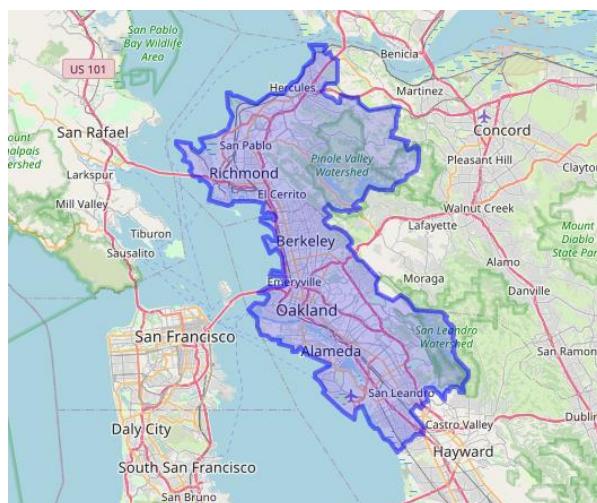
Democrat

### Michael Greer

Retired Special Educator

Republican

# Key March Senate Race: SD-7



**The hopefuls**

# Key March Senate Race: SD-25



## CANDIDATES

### Sandra Armenta

Rosemead Councilmember / Teacher

Democrat

### Teddy Choi

Professor / Insurance Agent

Democrat

### Sasha Renée Pérez

Alhambra Vice Mayor

Democrat

### Yvonne Yiu

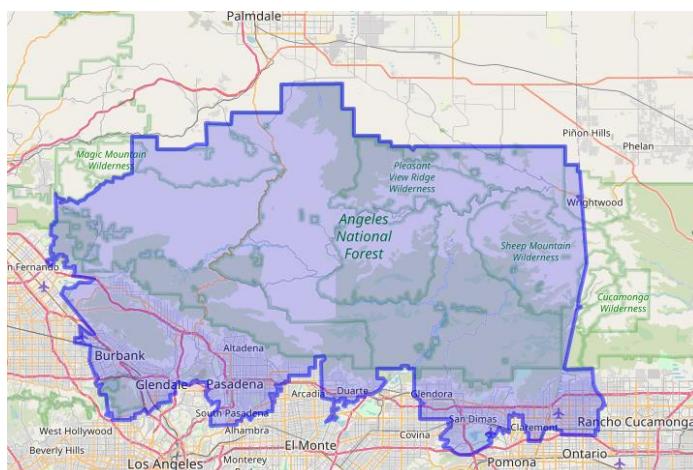
Councilmember / Small Businesswoman

Democrat

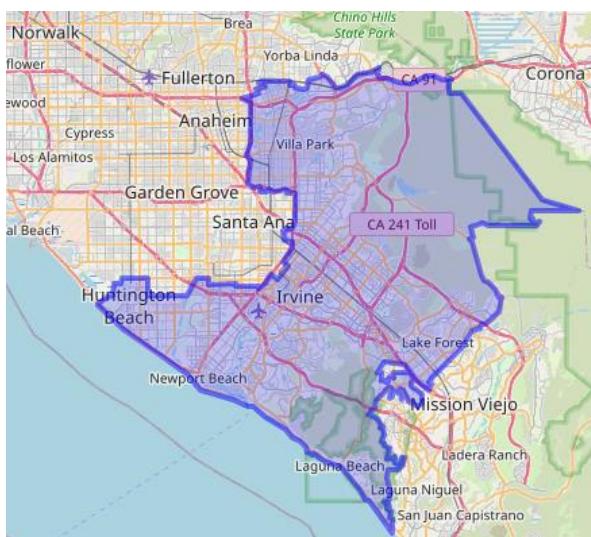
### Elizabeth Wong Ahlers

Crescenta Valley Councilmember

Republican



# Key March Senate Race: SD-37



## CANDIDATES

**Gabrielle Ashbaugh**

Small Business Owner

Democrat

**Leticia Correa**

Neurosurgical Technologist

Democrat

**Jacob Niles Creer**

Surgical Coordinator

Democrat

**Stephanie Le**

Medical Authorization Coordinator

Democrat

**Alex Mohajer**

Civil Service Advocate

Democrat

**Josh Newman**

Orange County State Senator

Democrat

**Jenny Suarez**

Respiratory Therapist

Democrat

**Steven "Steve" Choi**

Small Businessman/Educator

Republican

**Anthony C. Kuo**

Businessman

Republican

**Crystal Miles**

Business Owner / Councilmember

Republican

**Guy Selleck**

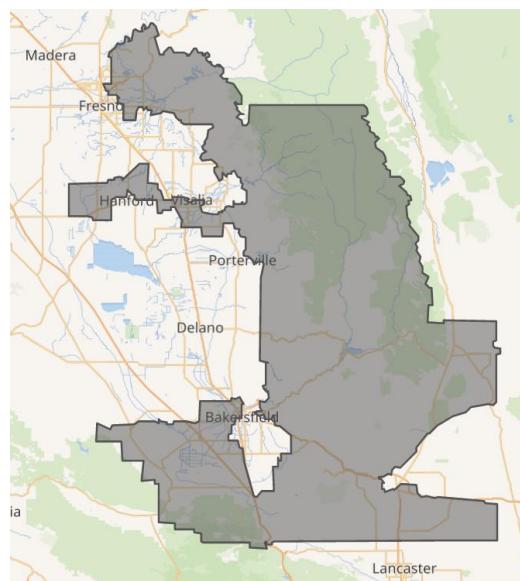
Small Business Owner

Republican

# Key March Congressional Race: CA-20



**Vince Fong (R)**

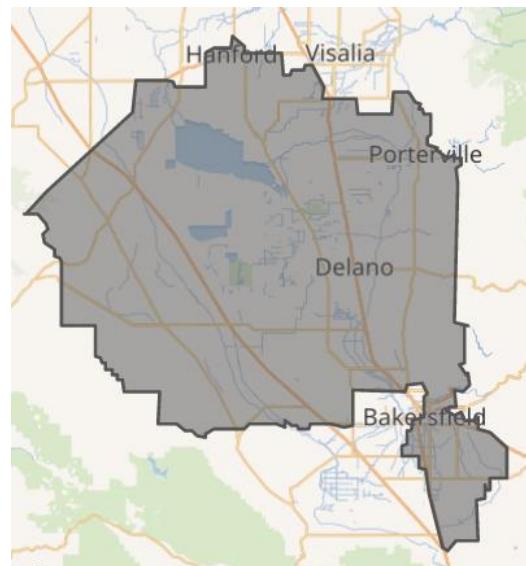


# Key March Congressional Race: CA-22

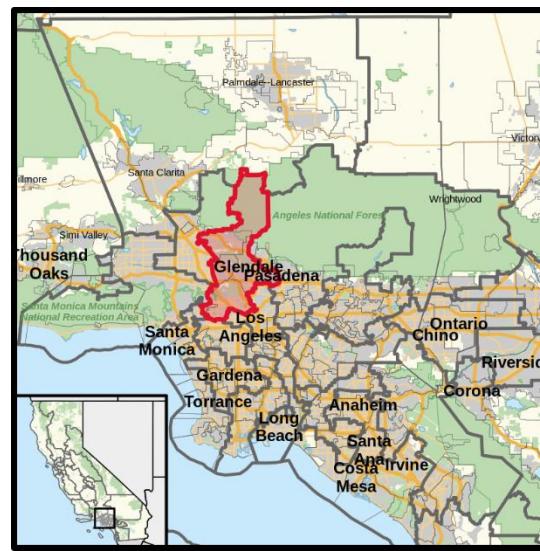


Rudy Salas (D)

Chris Mathys (R)



# Key March Congressional Race: CA-30

**Francesco Arreaga**

Legislative Advisor

Democrat

**Steve Andraé Dunwoody**

Government Affairs Director

Democrat

**Mike Feuer**

University Educator / Attorney

Democrat

**Laura Friedman**

California State Assemblymember

Democrat

**Sal Genovese**

Community Services Director

Democrat

**Nick Melvoin**

Educator / Attorney

Democrat

**Courtney Simone Najera**

No Ballot Description

Democrat

**Anthony Portantino**

State Senator

Democrat

**G "Maebe" Pudlo**

Silver Lake Neighborhood Councilwoman

Democrat

**Jirair Ratevosian**

Public Health Advocate

Democrat

**Ben Savage**

Actor / Producer / Businessman

Democrat

**Sepi Shyne**

Councilwoman / Small Businesswoman

Democrat

**Alex Balekian**

Intensive Care Physician

Republican

**J. Emilio Martinez**

Producer / Writer / Comedian

Republican

**Josh Bocanegra**

Entrepreneur / A.I. Developer

No Party

# What's California Politics Without Some Stars?



# Key March Congressional Race: CA-47



**The hopefuls**

# Weiss Supporters Attacked First



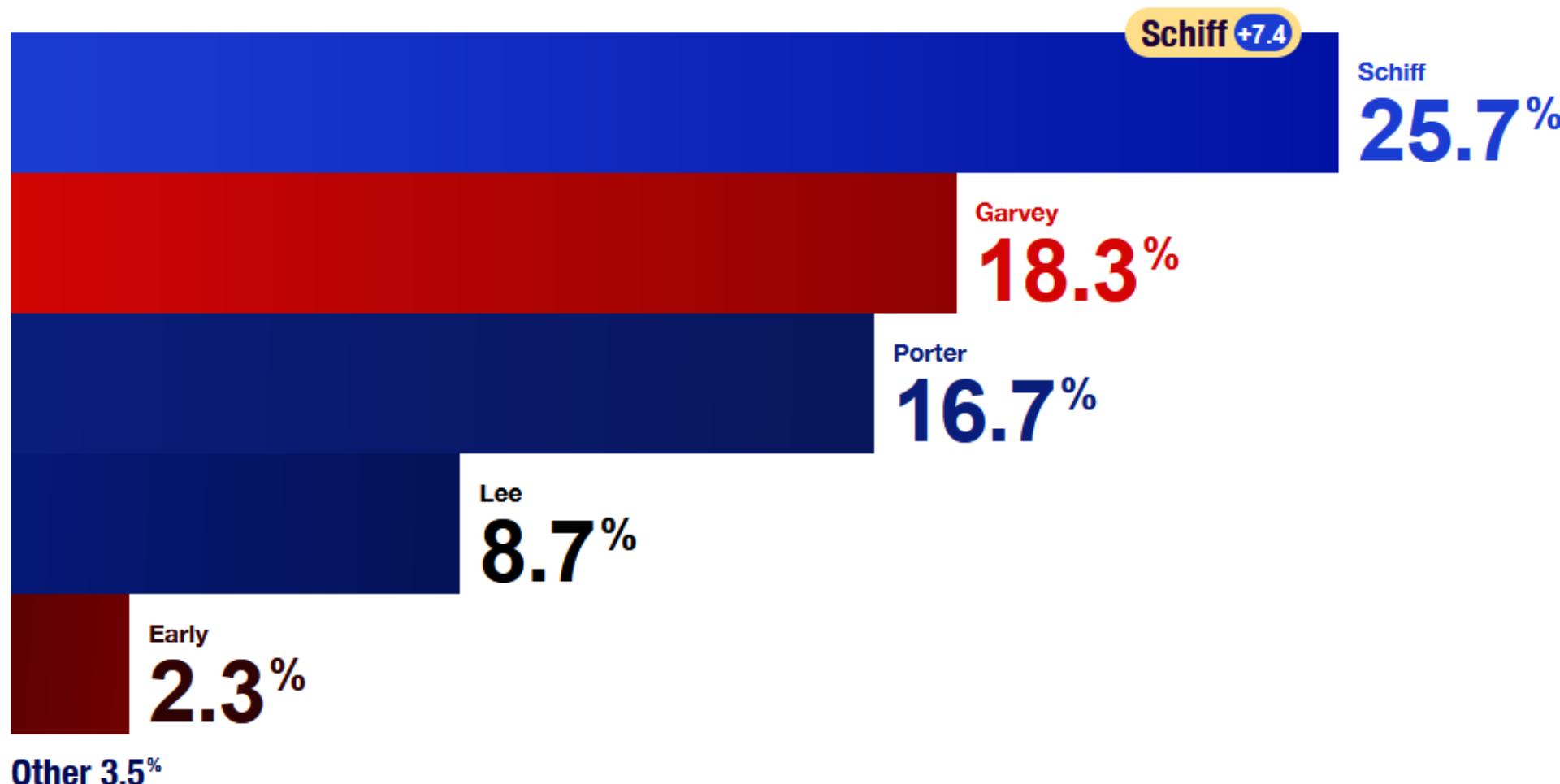
# The Gloves Are Decidedly Off



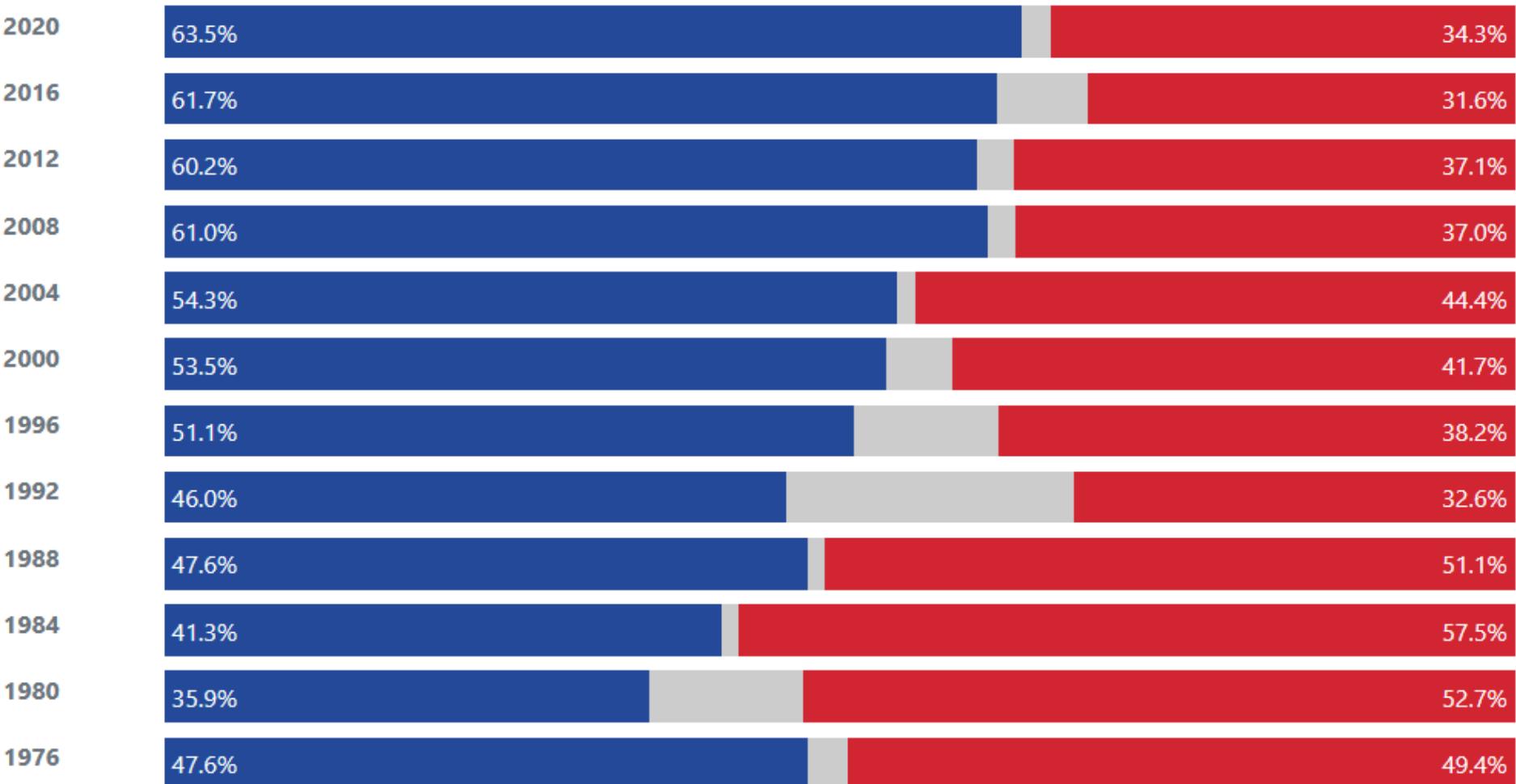
# Key Ballot Measures

- There is one (1) ballot measure on the March ballot
  - Proposition 1: borrow \$6.4 billion, change mental health law
- Expect many more in Nov, including:
  - \$18 minimum wage
  - Repealing PAGA
  - Referendum on SB 1137, which regulates oil/gas wells
  - Repeal Costa Hawkins
  - Increase income tax for 10 years for pandemic prevention
  - Repeal Proposition 8 (2008)
  - End local voter approval requirement for public housing projects
  - Three different measures to lower/raise supermajority requirements at various levels
- We will talk about these at a later date! Expect polling on them on Monday.

# U.S. Senate Race Polling



# California Used to Be Competitive in Presidential Races



# Key November Congressional Races

- There are nine **swing** House seats
  - CA-9 (Stockton): Josh Harder (D)
  - CA-13 (San Joaquin): John Duarte (R)
  - CA-22 (Fresno): David Valadao (R)
  - CA- 27 (Palmdale): Mike Garcia (R)
  - CA-40 (OC): Young Kim (R)
  - CA-41 (Palm Springs): Ken Calvert (R)
  - CA-45 (Garden Grove): Michelle Steel (R)
  - CA-47 (Irvine): OPEN (currently Katie Porter, D)
  - CA-49 (N. San Diego): Mike Levin (D)
- More on these at the end of the semester!

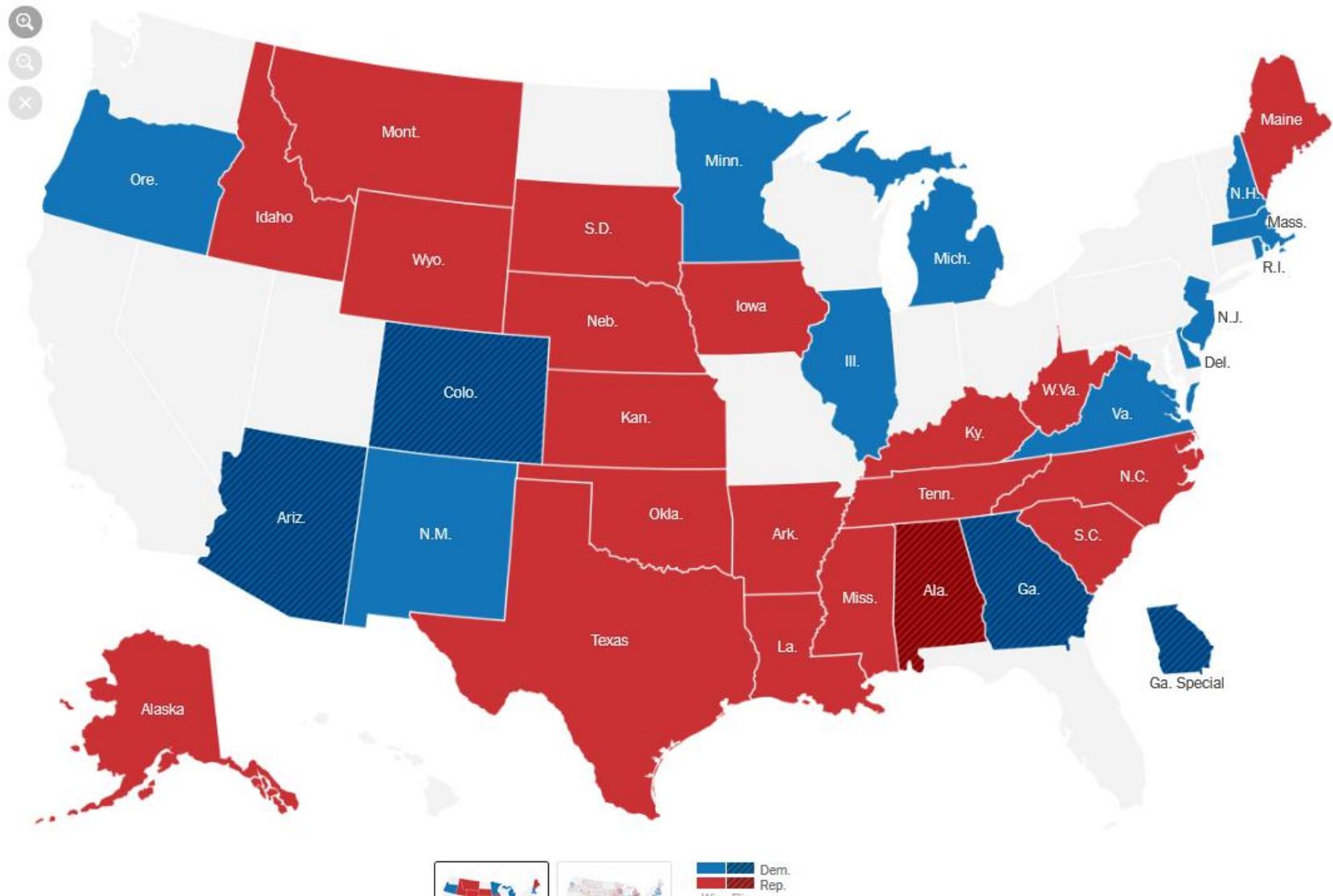
# The 2024 National Landscape

# What Happened in 2020?

	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
116 <sup>th</sup> Senate	45	53	2 (Dem caucus)
117 <sup>th</sup> Senate	<b>48</b>	50	<b>2 (Dem caucus)</b>
116 <sup>th</sup> House	<b>232</b>	197	0
117 <sup>th</sup> House	<b>222</b>	213	0

- Democrats **gained** three seats in the Senate
- Democrats **lost** 13 seats in the House
- It is unusual for the president-elect's party to lose House seats

# 2020 Senate Races

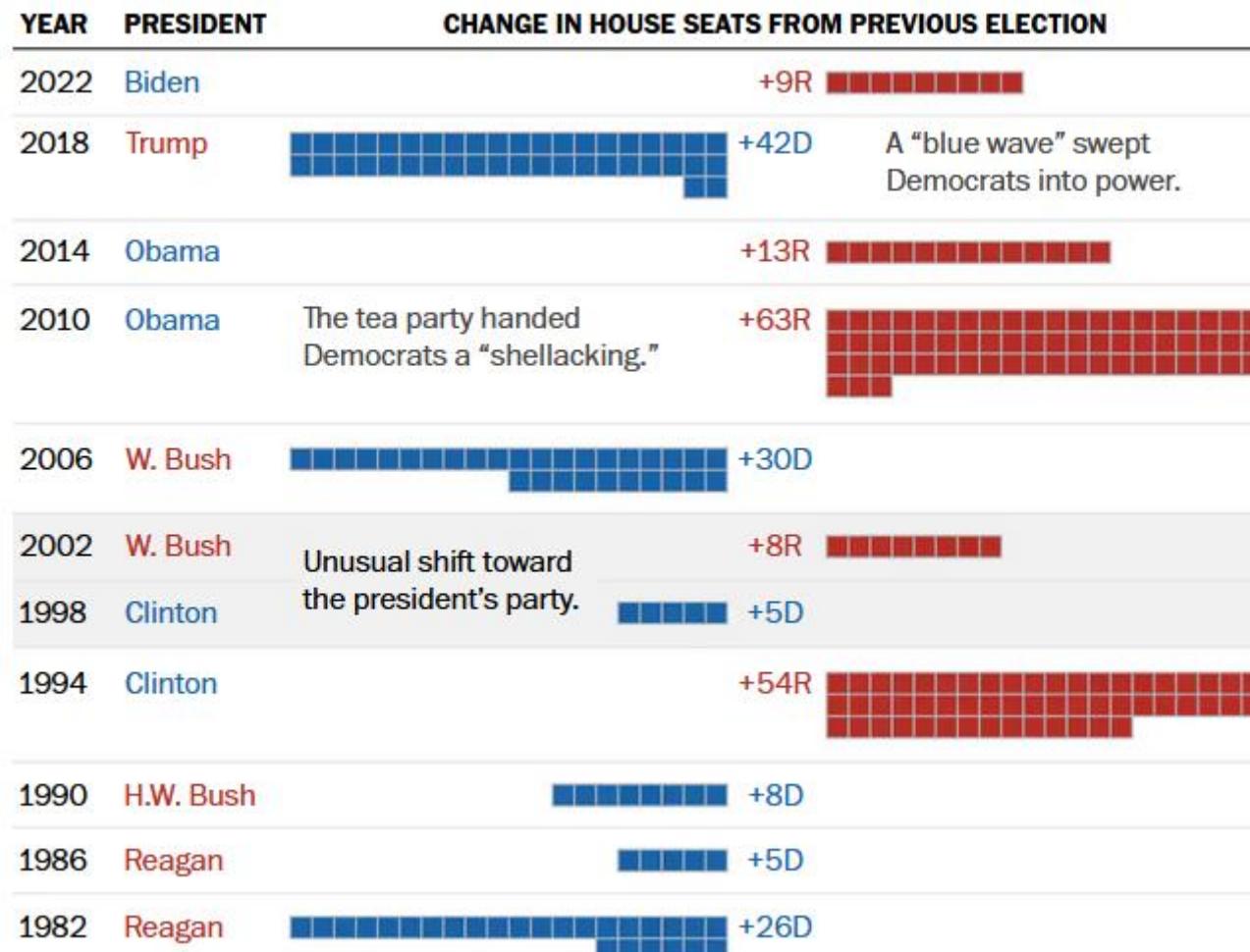


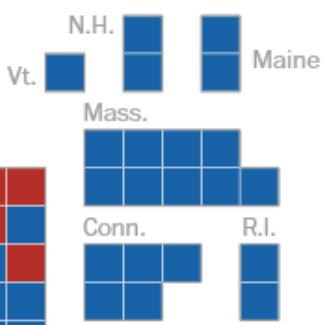
# What Happened in 2022?

	Democrats	Republicans	Independents
117 <sup>th</sup> Senate	48	50	2 (Dem caucus)
118 <sup>th</sup> Senate	49	49	2 (Dem caucus)
117 <sup>th</sup> House	220	212	0
118 <sup>th</sup> House	213	222	0

- Democrats **gained** one seat in the Senate
- Democrats **lost** 9 seats in the House
- Neither result was as predicted

# An Unusually Small Swing



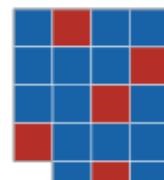


Republicans won ■ 222 districts, while Democrats won □ 213 districts.

Alaska

Wash.

Ore.



Calif.

Hawaii



Idaho  
Mont.

Nev.  
Utah

Ariz.

S.D.  
N.D.

Neb.  
Kan.

Colo.

N.M.

Tex.

La.

Minn.  
Wis.

Iowa  
Ill.

Kan.  
Okl.

Mo.  
Ark.

Mich.

Ind.

Tenn.

Miss.

Each box is one district

Each box is one district

La.

Pa.

Ohio

Ky.

W.Va.

Va.

Ala.

Ga.

S.C.

Fla.

N.Y.

Ind.

Ohio

Pa.

N.J.

W.Va.

N.C.

S.C.

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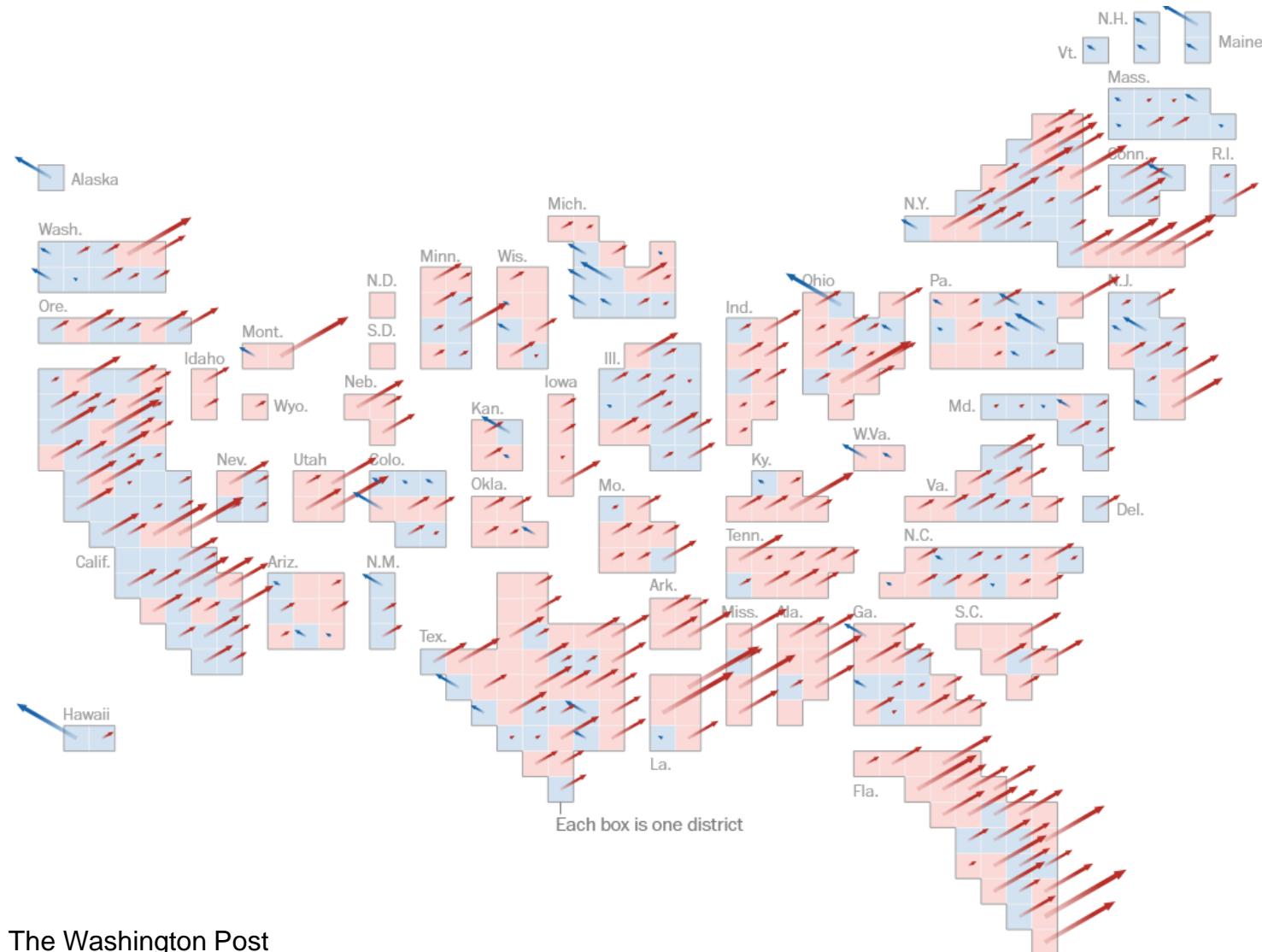
Pa.

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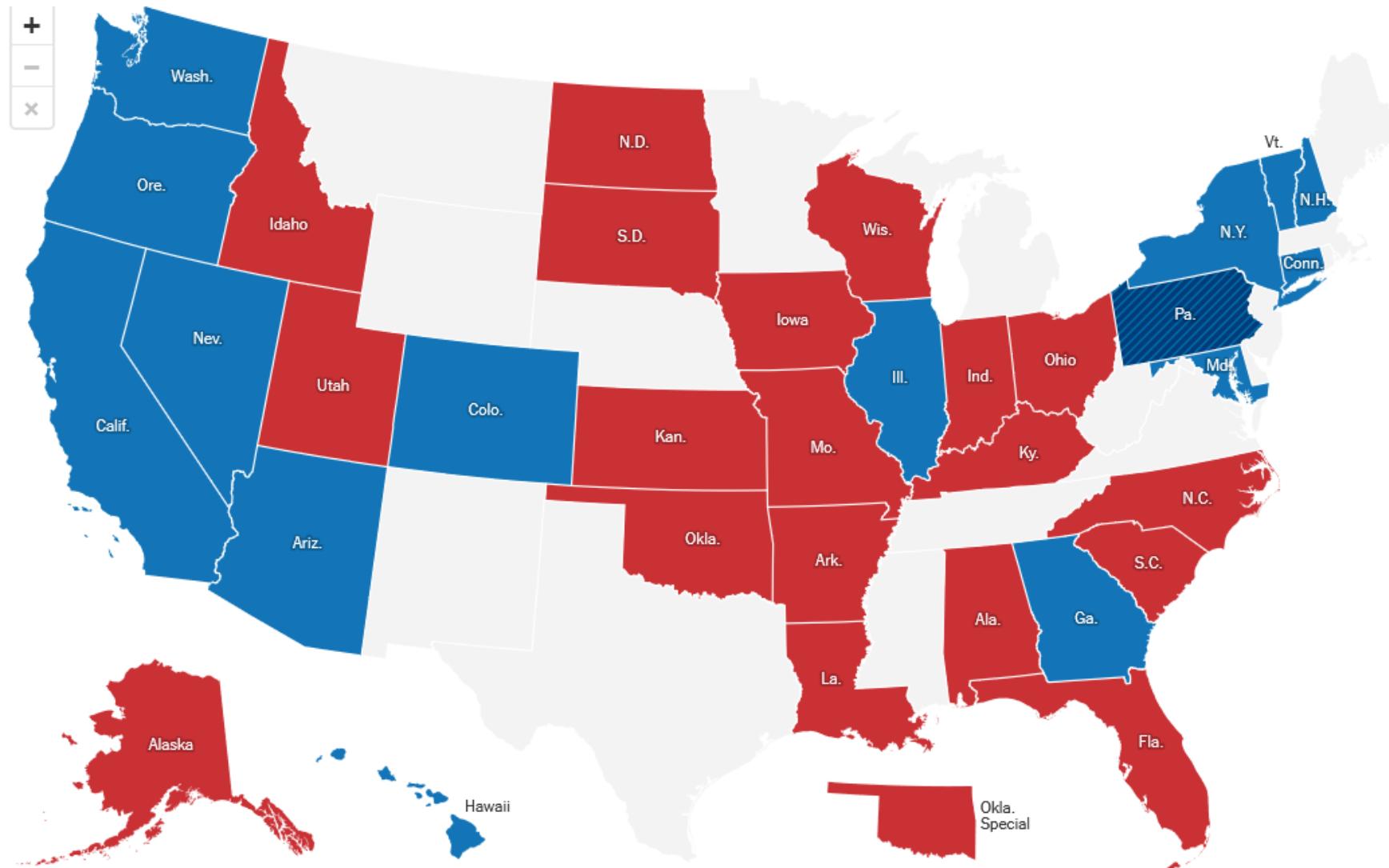
Pa.

Pa.

# 2022 House Races



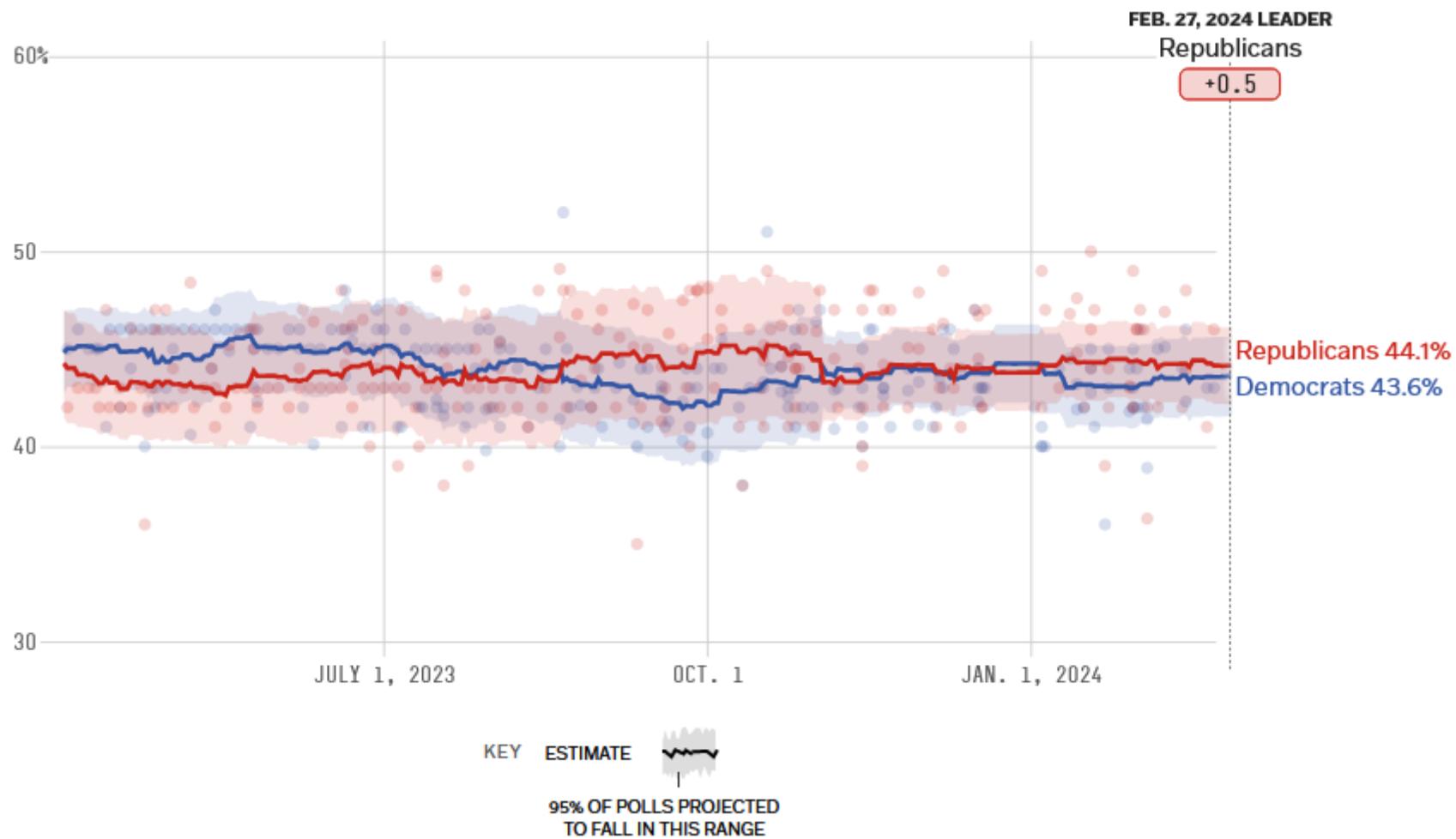
# 2022 Senate Races



# Predicting 2024's Congressional Outcome

- Republicans won the House popular vote by 3 points in 2022...
  - ... and won a 9-seat majority
- Democrats won the House popular vote by 3 points in 2020...
  - ... and won a 9-seat majority
- How does it look now?

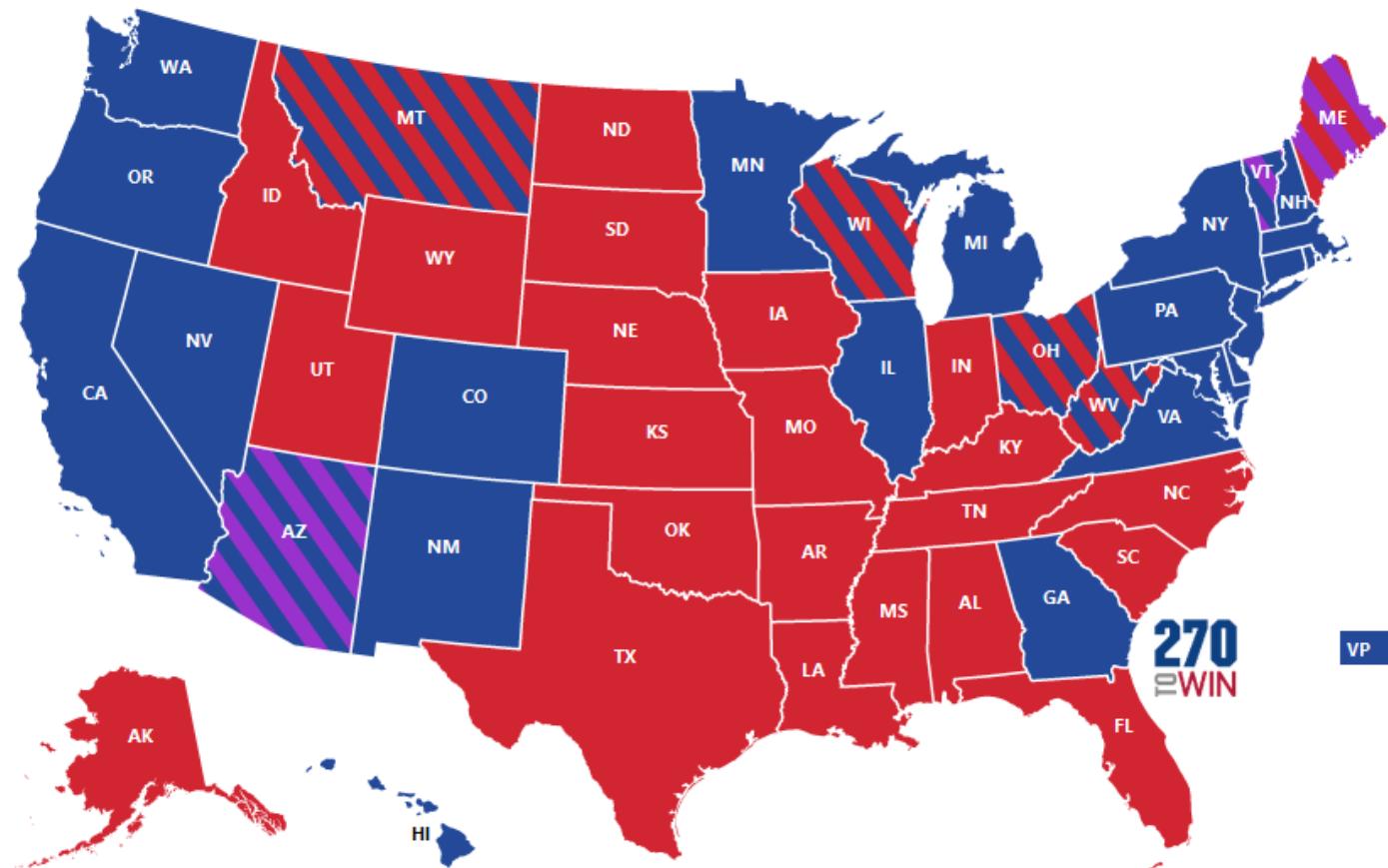
# An Early Look at Congress



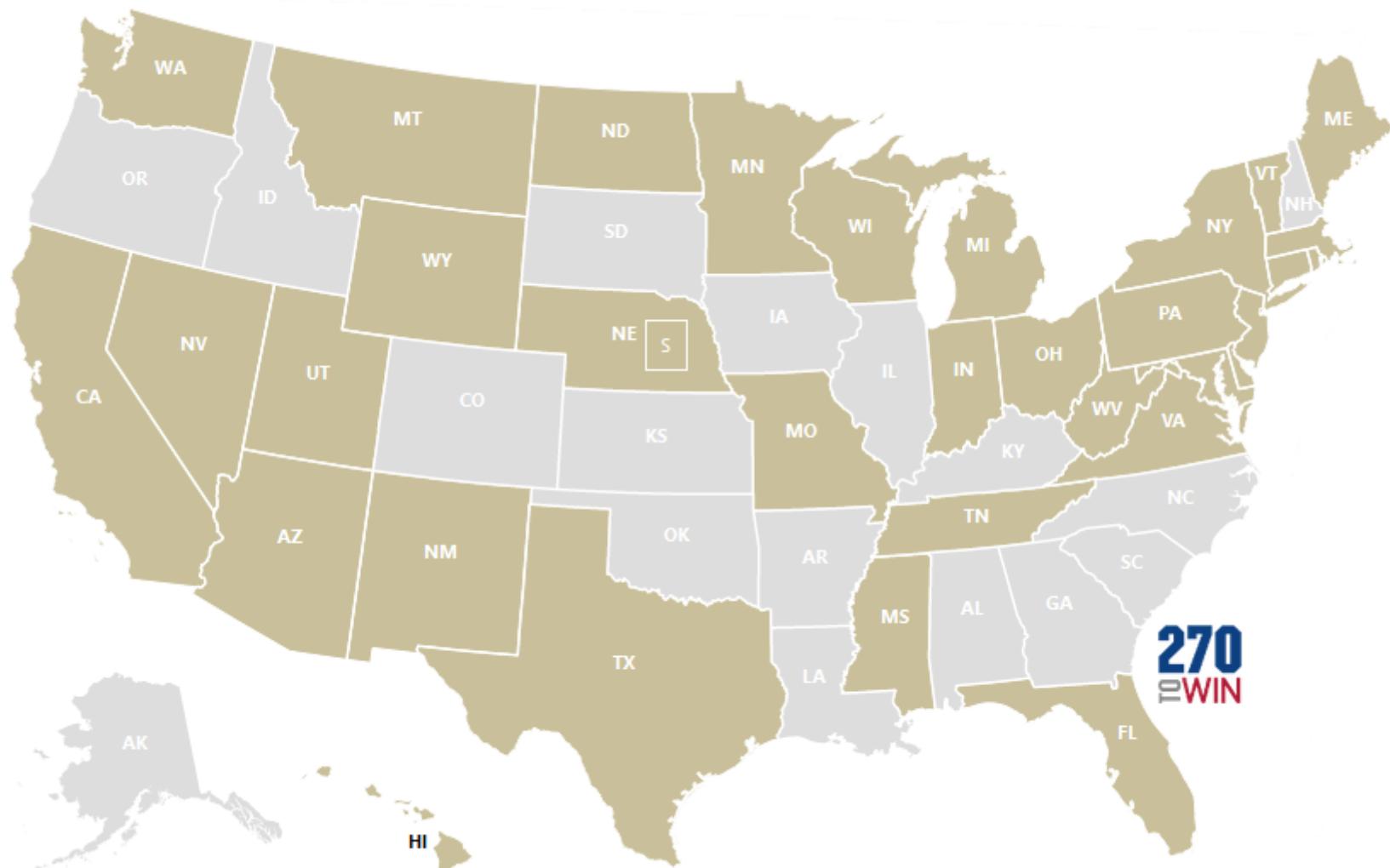
# How About the Senate?

- The seats up for election this year were last voted on in 2018
  - A good year for which party?
- Democratic candidates won several “purple” seats that year
- As such, we would expect that there would be a lot of vulnerable Democrats
- That is certainly part of the story... but not all

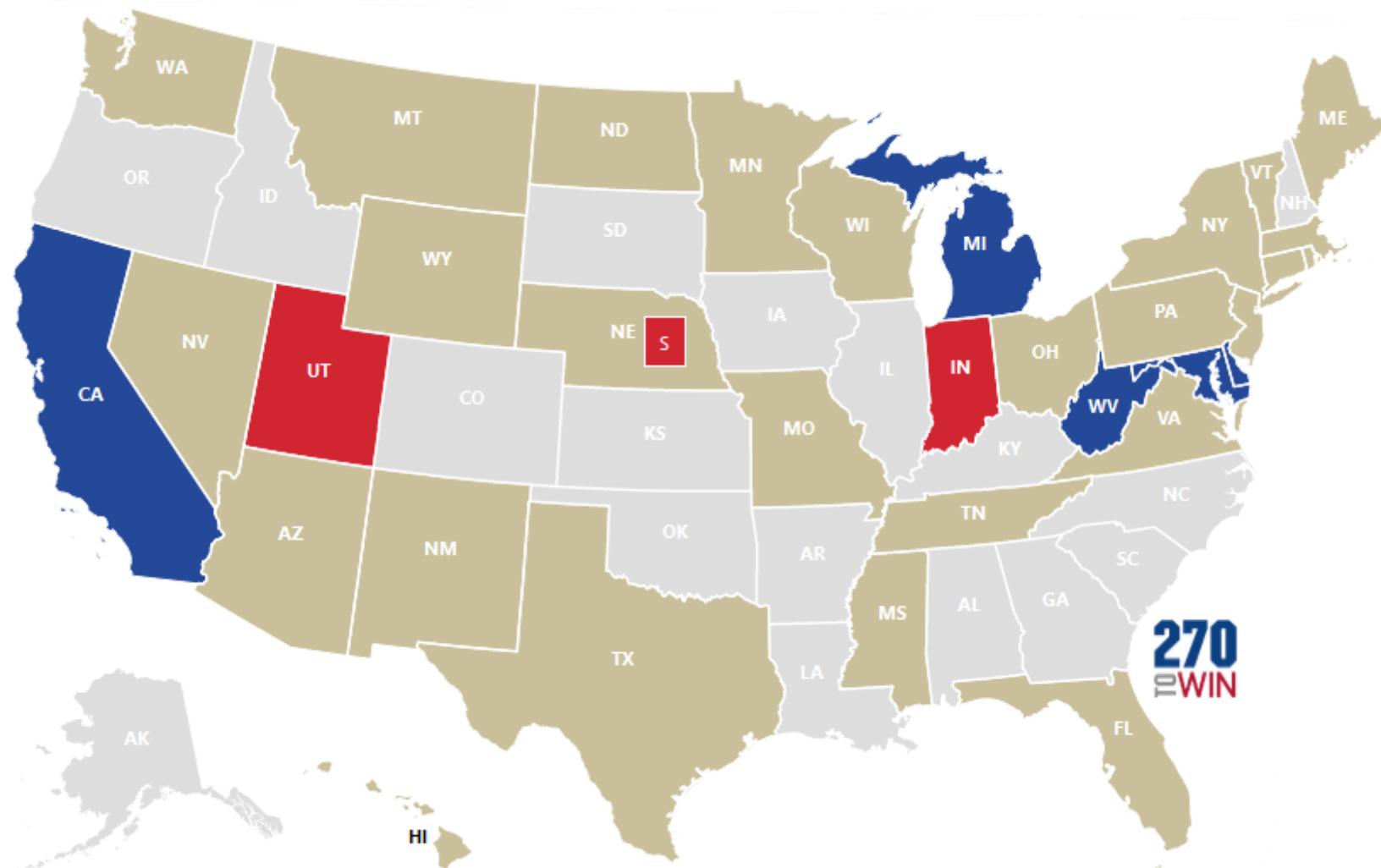
# The Current Senate



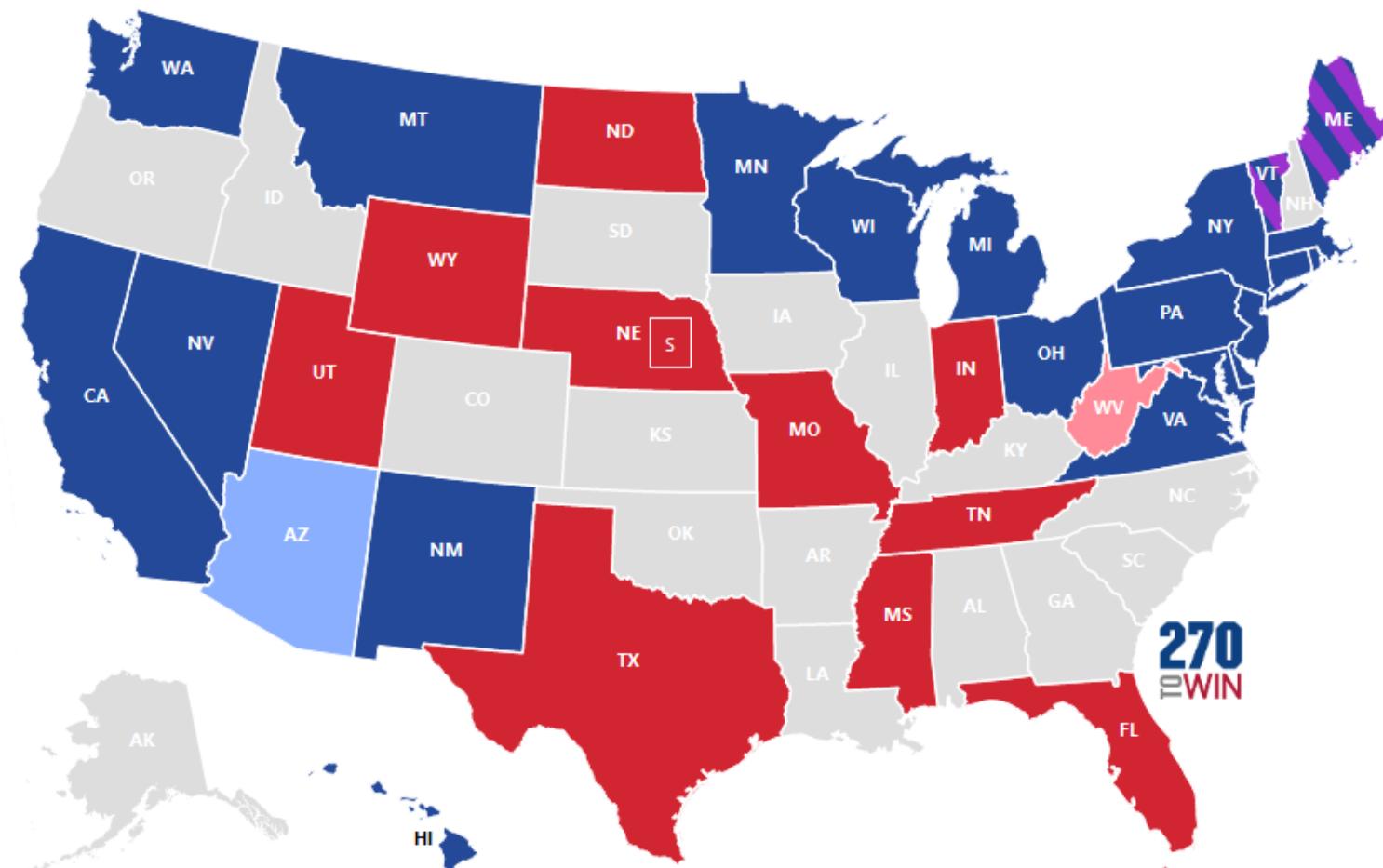
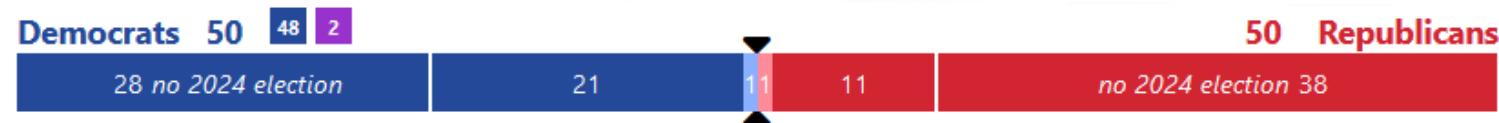
# 34 Seats Up For Election...



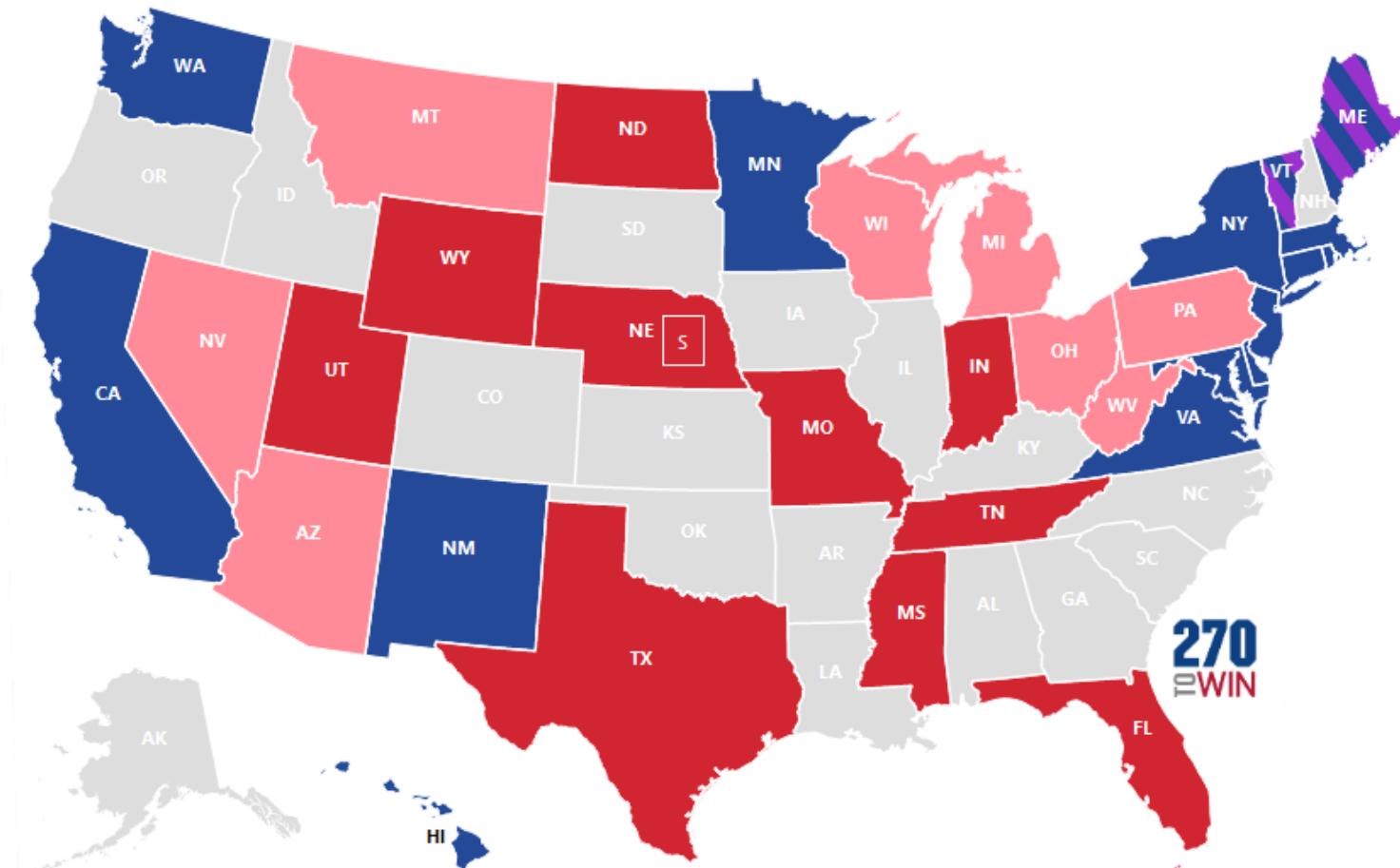
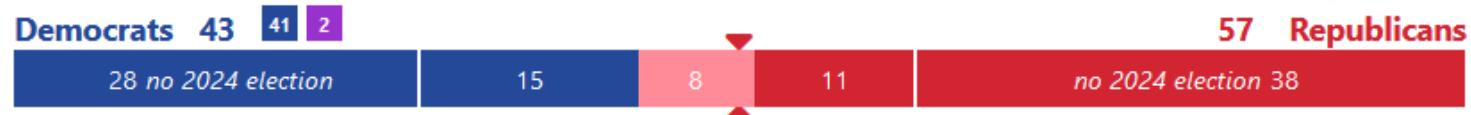
# These 8 Seats Have No Elected Incumbent Seeking Reelection



# A Realistic Best-Case Scenario for Democrats



# A Red Wave

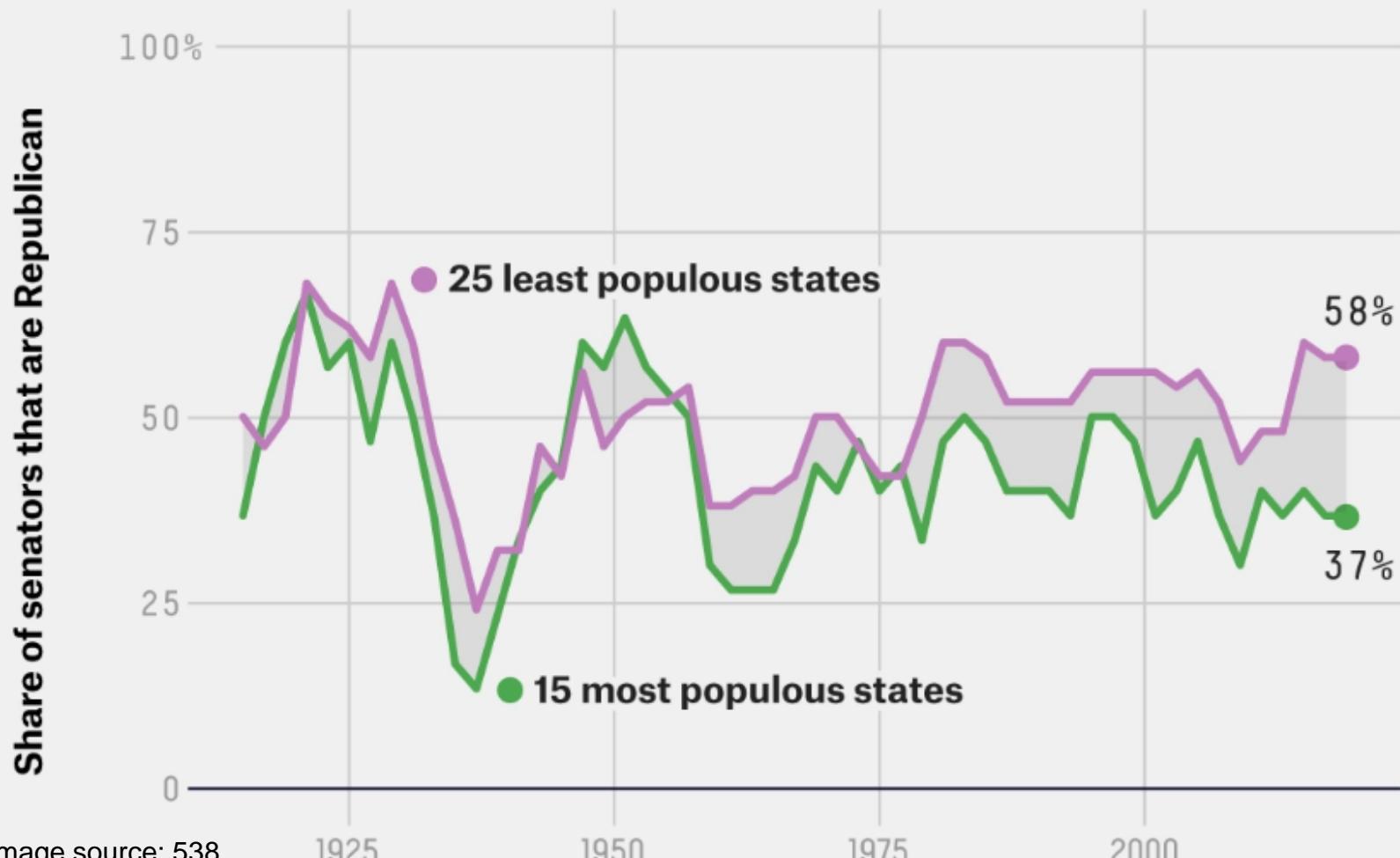


# Why Is the Senate So Uncertain?

- Why Is the upside in the Senate so much higher for the GOP?
- Only 1/3 of seats up – and more purple state Democratic incumbents
- The Senate significantly benefits the Republican Party
- The Senate represents states **not** people
- The Senate is malapportioned
- Small states are much more Republican than the country as a whole

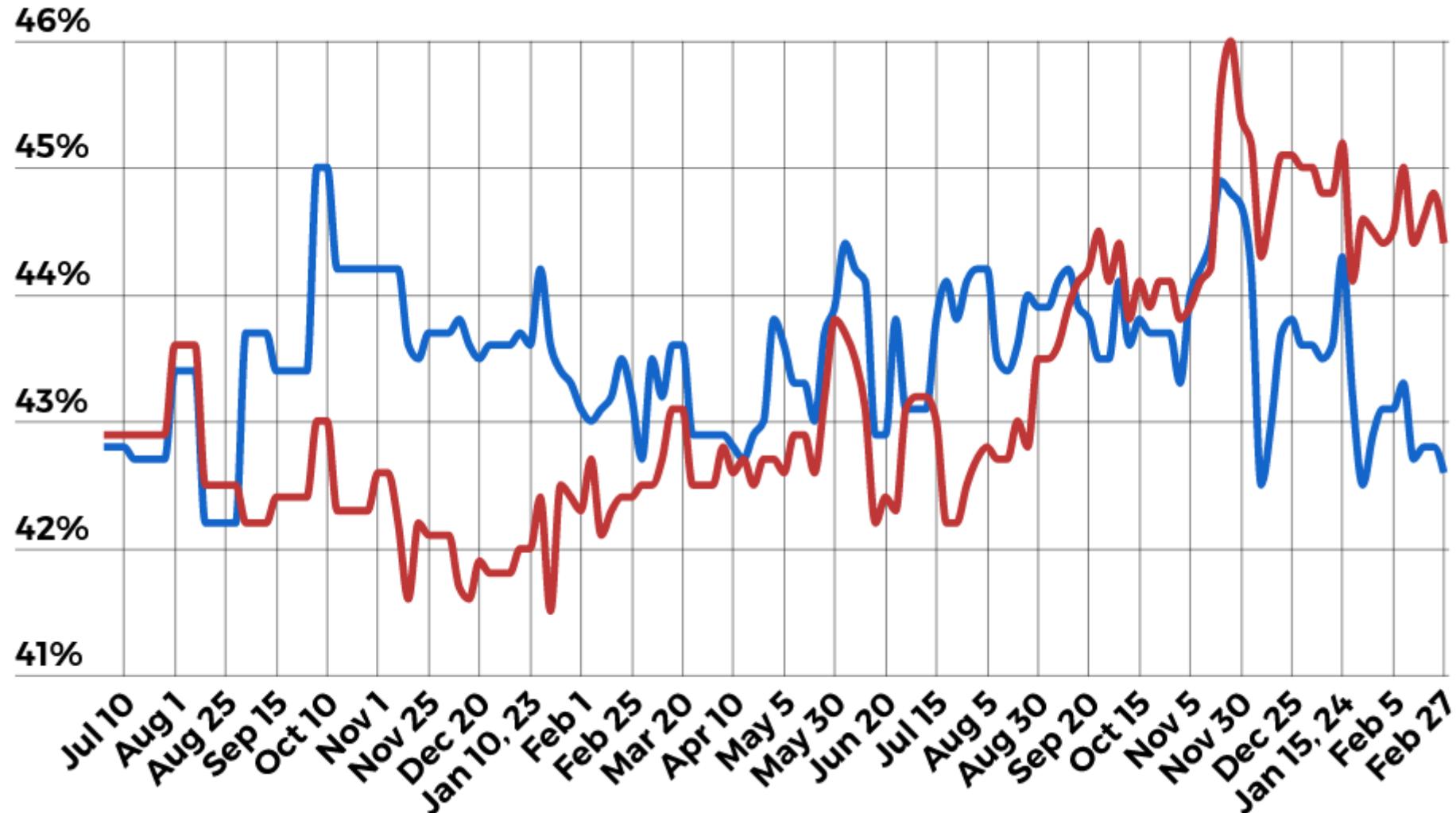
## Republicans have an advantage in small states

Share of senators that are Republican in the 15 most populous states and the 25 least populous states

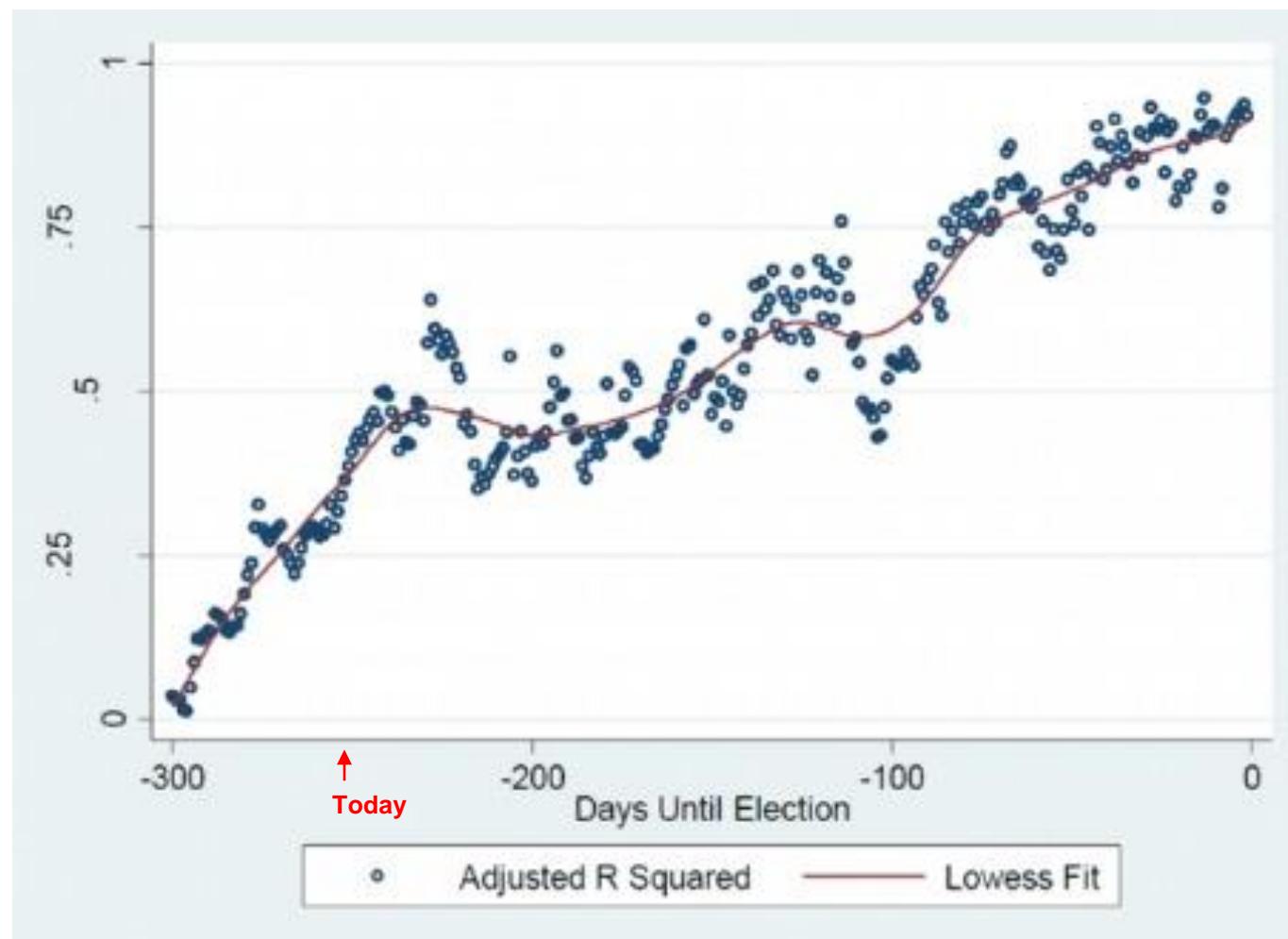


# Race for the White House

# An Early Look at the Presidential Election



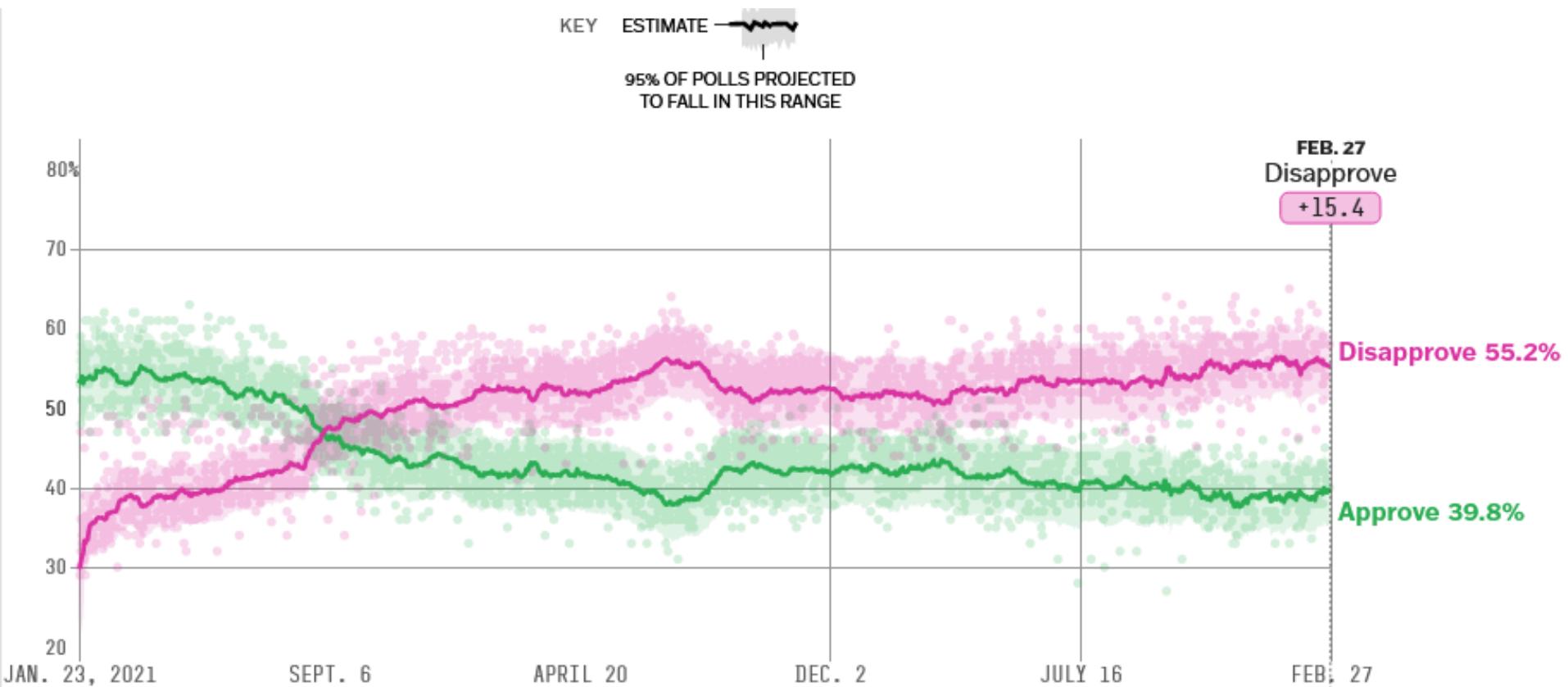
# How Useful Are Early Polls?



# Predicting 2024

- It's hard to predict elections this early
- What do we know?
- Incumbent presidents generally have an advantage
- Presidential approval matters
- The state of the economy matters

# Biden's Approval Ratings



## Fundamentals don't lie

1

United States, presidential elections, incumbent party's share of the major-party vote, by year

Incumbent seeking re-election • Yes ● No

Average presidential  
net job approval\*

Vote share, %



*Figure 1*

## Predicting the Vote from Quarter 15 Perceived Current Business Conditions, 1980–2008



Quarter 15 is the third quarter of the election year. The business conditions question was: "Would you say that at the present time business conditions are better or worse than they were a year ago?" The scale is (percent better – percent worse) + 100.

# The Electoral College *Currently* Favors Republicans

## Biden needs a popular vote cushion

Probability of winning the Electoral College based on various popular vote outcomes, according to the FiveThirtyEight presidential forecast as of Nov. 1

POPULAR VOTE MARGIN	TRUMP	BIDEN	269-269 TIE
Biden +6 to +7	<1%	>99%	<1%
Biden +5 to +6	3	97	<1
Biden +4 to +5	10	89	2
Biden +3 to +4	30	67	3
Biden +2 to +3	57	41	2
Biden +1 to +2	75	23	2
TIE to Biden +1	89	10	1
TIE to Trump +1	98	2	<1
Trump +1 to +2	>99	<1	<1

# Why? Educational Polarization Among Whites

Table 1: Net party identification by education and race, 1980-2020

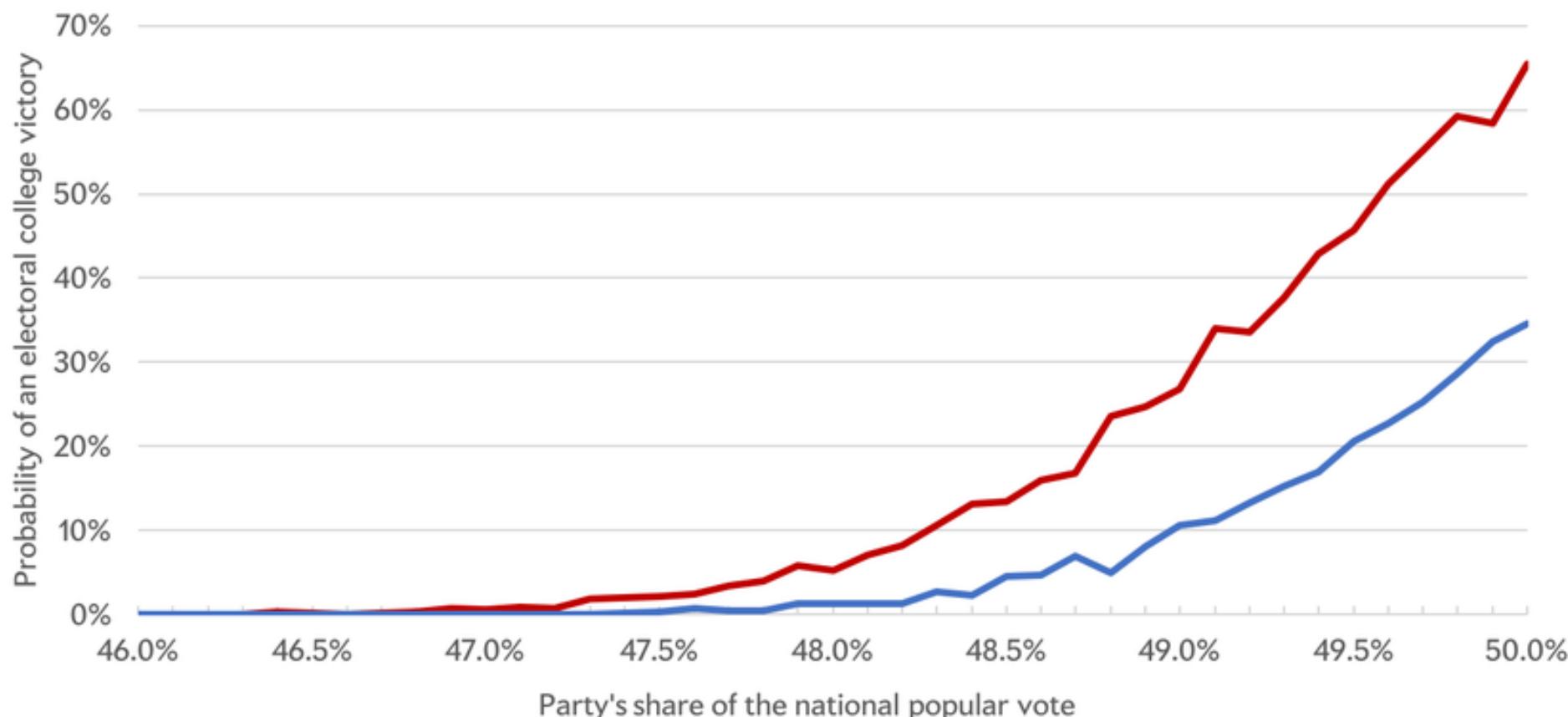
Group	1980-1988	1992-2000	2004-2012	2016-2020	Change
White College	-12.2	-8.7	-10.6	+2.5	+14.7
White Non-College	+2.2	+5.9	-7.4	-23.7	-25.9
Black College	+77.2	+76.2	+83.0	+77.9	+0.7
Black Non-College	+68.7	+70.1	+79.4	+73.2	+4.5
Other College	+19.7	-0.7	+29.4	+25.5	+5.8
Other Non-College	+32.4	+28.8	+30.5	+26.9	-5.5

**Note:** Net party identification measured by difference between percentage of Democrats and percentage of Republicans, including leaning independents. In order to ensure adequate numbers of nonwhite respondents, the data are grouped into 4 electoral eras: 1980-1988, 1992-2000, 2004-2012, and 2016-2020.

**Source:** American National Election Studies Cumulative File

## Republicans have a much higher chance of winning the electoral college while losing the popular vote

- Probability of a Republican winning the electoral college while losing the popular vote
- Probability of a Democrat winning the electoral college while losing the popular vote



Estimates are drawn from election simulations based on the presidential races from 1988 through 2016. From Geruso, Spears, and Talesera, Inversions in US Presidential Elections: 1836-2016." NBER, 2019.

# Considering the Coalitions...

- The Democratic Party's coalition is great at winning the popular vote in presidential elections
- The Republican Party's coalition is great at winning presidential elections with a minority of the popular vote
- Despite a 4.5% popular vote win, Biden wins the pivotal swing state of WI by only 0.6%
- Without COVID-19 and the associated economic crisis, Trump would have likely won reelection with a similar coalition as his 2016 victory

# Q&A