

SCOTUS



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Datasets used from Kaggle.com: <https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/wustl/supreme-court> and
<https://www.kaggle.com/datasets/harshitagpt/us-presidents>

Ideologies

The Supreme Court Database Online Codebook defines liberal ideologies as supporting (list not complete):

- ❑ Civil liberties
- ❑ Children/juveniles
- ❑ Native Americans
- ❑ Females
- ❑ Underdogs
- ❑ Unions
- ❑ Federal Power



The Supreme Court Database Online Codebook defines conservative ideologies as supporting:

- ❑ The reverse of liberal ideologies

2022 Decisions - cause for concern?

June 24, 2022

DOBBS v. JACKSON WOMEN'S HEALTH ORG.

*Abortion no longer a constitutional right

June 23, 2022

NEW YORK ST. RIFLE & PISTOL ASSOC. V. BRUEN

*New York residents do not need a special reason to carry a handgun

June 27, 2022

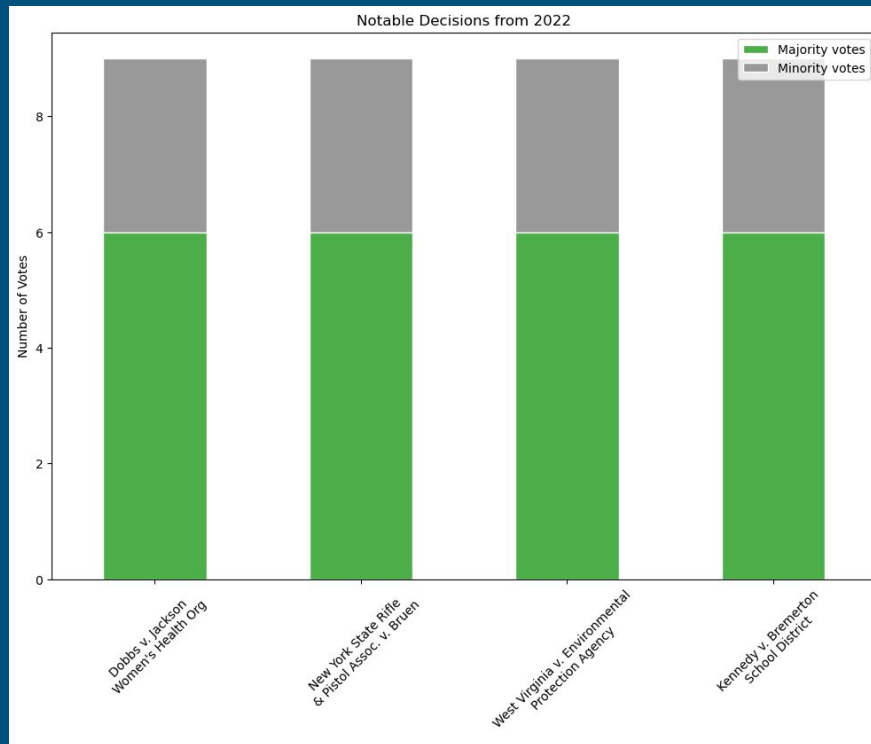
KENNEDY v. BREMERTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

*High school athletics coach has a constitutional right to lead a prayer on the field after the game

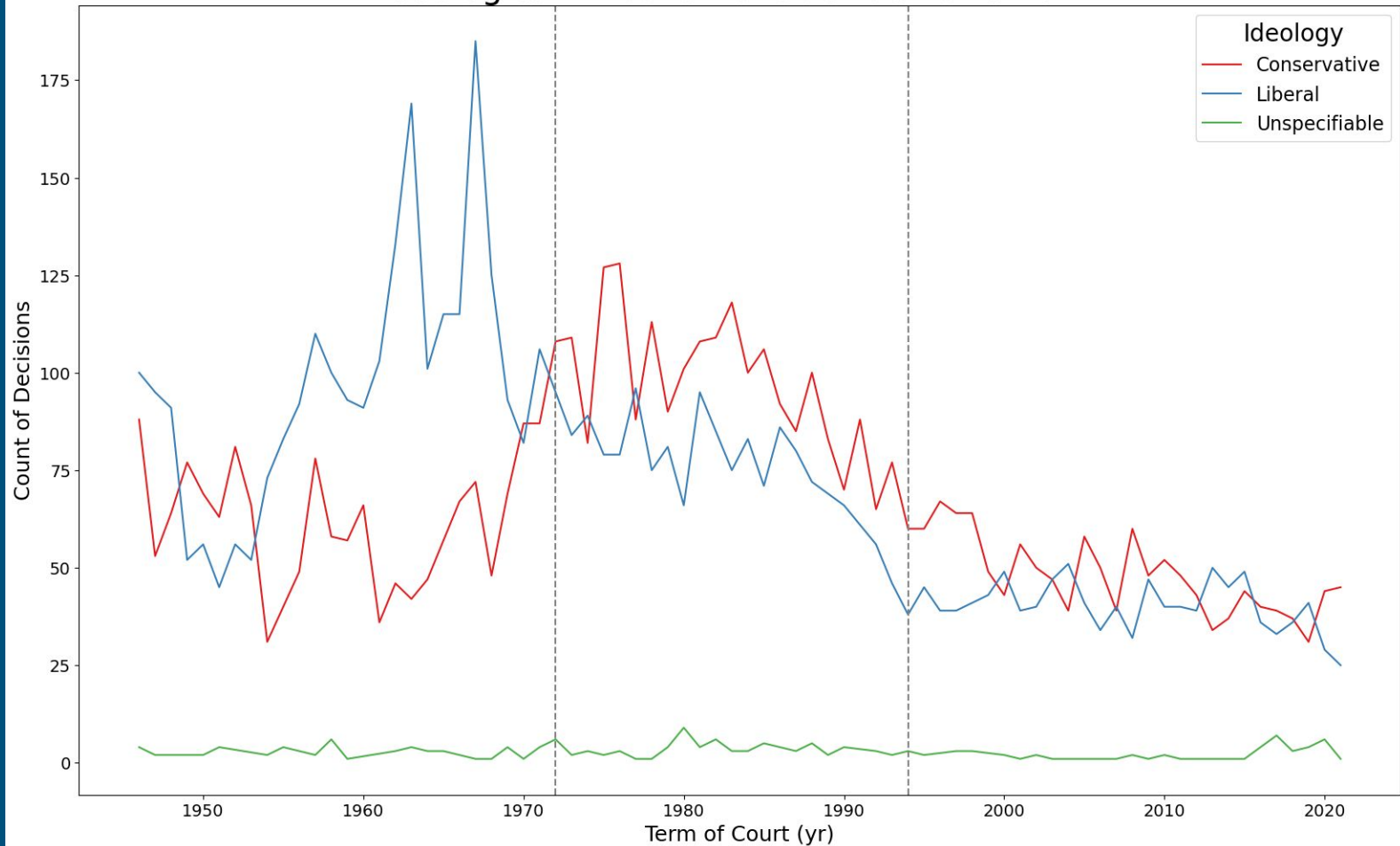
June 30, 2022

WEST VIRGINIA v. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

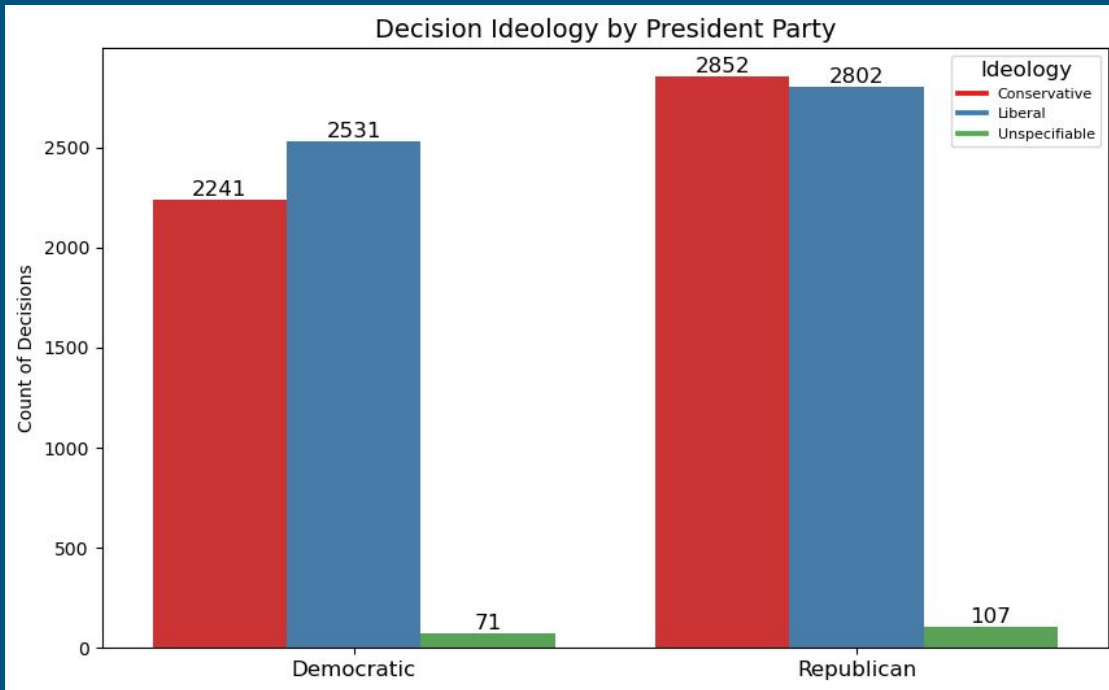
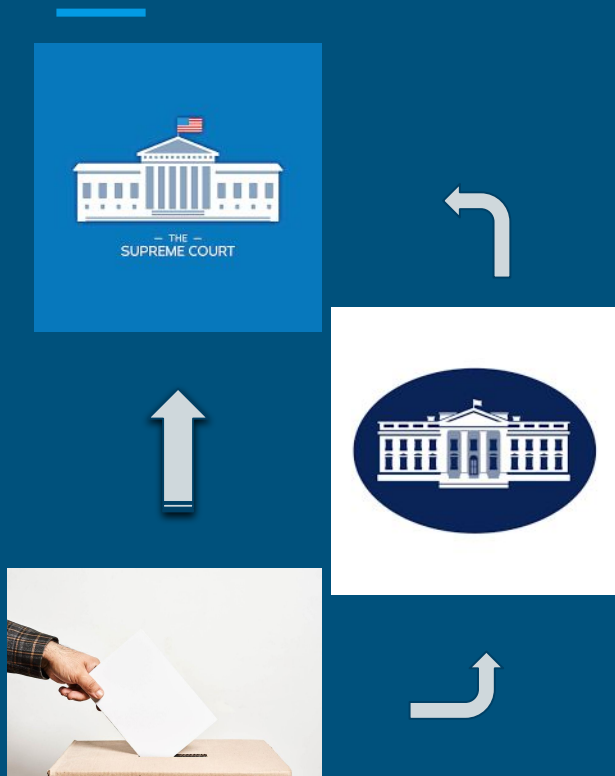
*Limits EPA authority to regulate carbon dioxide outputs from power plants



Ideological Direction of SCOTUS 1946-2022

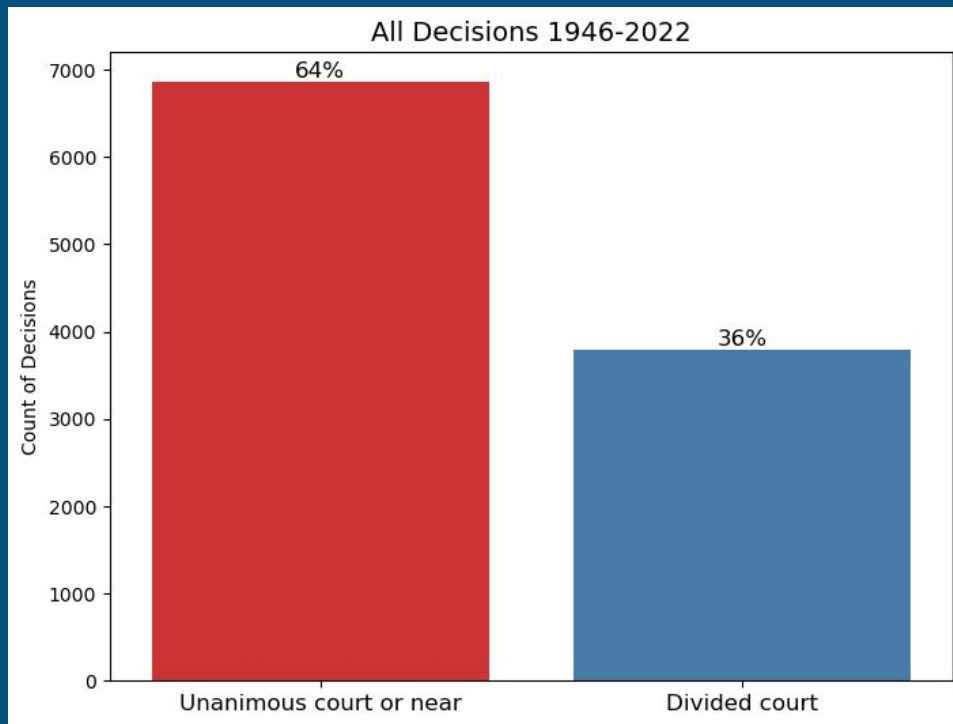


Why does SCOTUS' ideology shift over time?

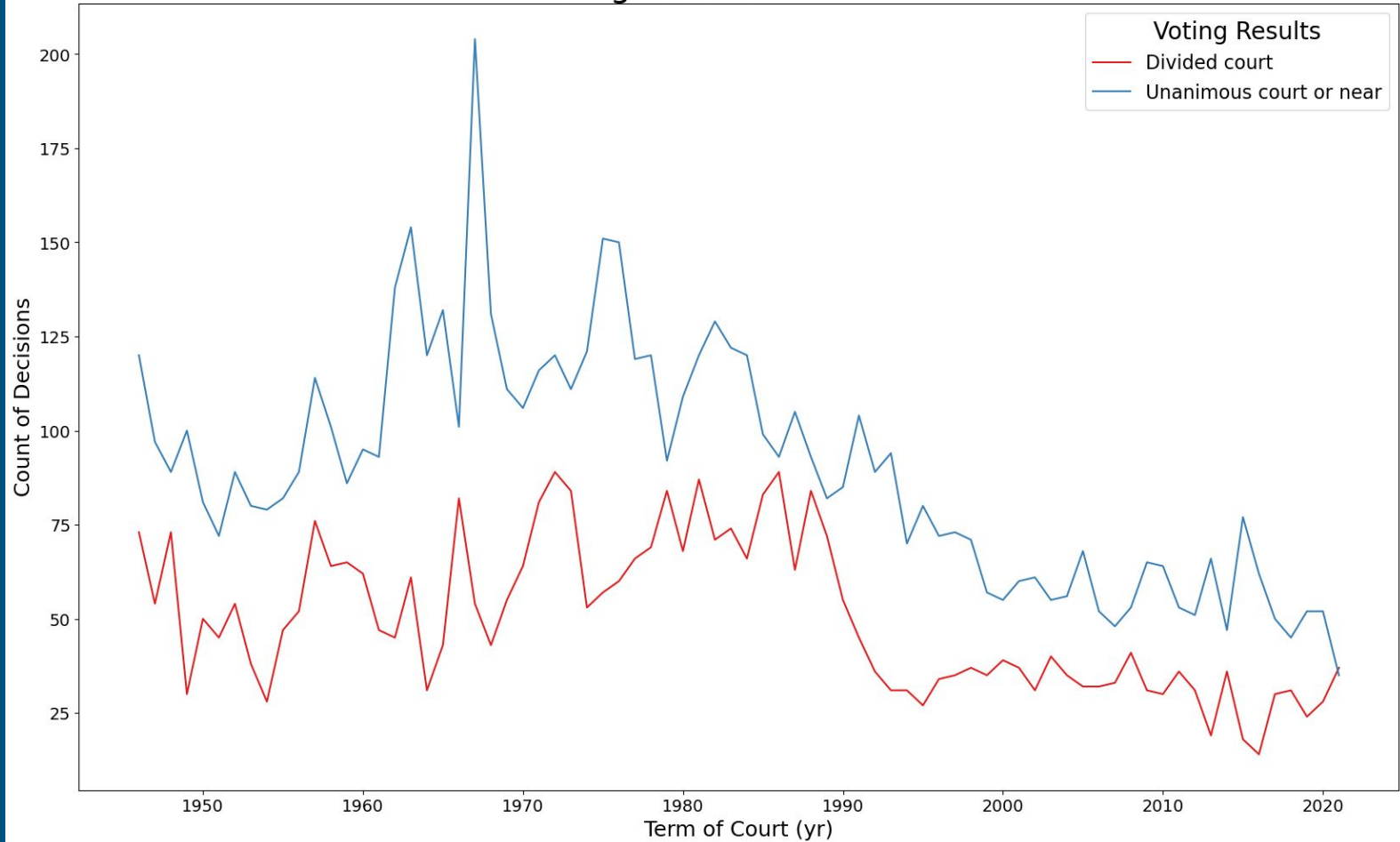


Vote Counts

- ❑ Full court = 9 judges
- ❑ One vote majority required
- ❑ Judge(s) may choose to not vote
- ❑ Even votes, *e.g.*, 4-4 mean the prior court's ruling stands
- ❑ What is the optimal vote result??



Voting Results 1946-2022



Conclusion

- ❑ While we strive for a “neutral” court, the Supreme Court is forced to make ideological judgments in most of their decisions
- ❑ When the US President is a Democrat there is a slight increase in liberal decisions made by the Supreme Court, and vice versa
- ❑ However, the ideologies shift over time, but since the early 1970’s the Supreme Court has tended to hand down more conservative-leaning decisions
- ❑ Given this, the data does not support the claim that we have the most conservative Supreme Court in history...yet
- ❑ When we consider the uniformity of the court by reviewing the vote count of their decisions, there is indication that we have one of the most ideologically-divided Supreme Courts in history

Learnings & Future Improvements

- ❑ 59 columns = too much data for one presentation
- ❑ Coded columns both a good thing and a challenge for the analysis
- ❑ While the data was interesting, the type of data did not support a diverse array of graphs (*ie.*, no continuous data that could be plotted)
- ❑ Accessibility can be improved in graphs