



# The Next Great Migration

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## The Rise of Independent Voters

by Jeremy Gruber and John Opdycke



2020

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# Foreword

by Danny Ortega

We stand at a critical moment for the Latino community and our country. As I write this introduction, four weeks before the 2020 presidential election, most newspapers in the country are talking about how Biden and Trump are doing with Latino voters. The general tone of most pieces, most analysis, is one of confusion and bewilderment. "Nobody seems to know why Latinos are currently so unpredictable" is a common theme. We are the fastest growing voting bloc in the country but our political identity is still largely unknown.

That's because too many pundits are unable to recognize what's been unfolding right before their eyes. Latinos are going independent. We're refusing to fall in line with the political parties. We vote for Democrats and Republicans, but increasingly don't belong to either of them. I've been noticing that change here in Phoenix. More and more young voters are choosing to register "no party." 60% of Latinos in America today are under the age of 35, and we are the largest minority group among millennials. Over 50% of Latino millennials are independent. It's time to listen to what our young people are telling us.

In 2015, I helped design and implement a "deep-dive" survey of Latino voters in Arizona. We surveyed 1,500 Latino voters. Democrats, Republicans and independents. What we found should have been front-page news. It should have been required reading for every political pundit, strategist, political scientist, and activist in the country. It should have catalyzed a national conversation about the need for new politics for a new millennium. Instead, it was ignored. Here's what we found:

- 90% of Latinos feel their community needs new strategies and methods of empowerment.
- 93% support changes to the electoral system that would foster more loyalty and accountability to the voters and less control by the political parties.
- 81% of Latinos believe they should not be exclusively loyal to any political party.
- 75% of Latinos support changing the electoral system to allow for nonpartisan primaries.

We rightly speak out against voter suppression tactics aimed at Latinos that make voting inconvenient or confusing, or identification requirements that create

unnecessary hurdles in the name of preventing fabricated concerns over voter fraud. However, these barriers, while serious, pale compared to the impact closed, partisan primaries are having on Latino political participation. Partisan primaries are the biggest form of voter suppression that there is in this country because people are not allowed to vote for whom they want. People are forced to vote for who the parties want them to vote for and it is time we change that.

I've heard people say all too often, "Why vote in general elections, if the people that won in the primaries are going to win anyway?" and they are right! How can we possibly argue that more Latinos need to get out to vote when they know the system is rigged and the results predetermined for them? Consider the devastating impact on future voting by Latinos if we allow this to continue.

My party, the Democratic Party, recently had a vote to decide whether to allow independents to participate in the 2019 presidential selection primary. At this meeting, most of the delegates over 40 voted no, and most of the delegates under 40 voted yes. The no's prevailed, and a million Arizona independents, including hundreds of thousands of Latinos, were told that their voices don't matter. Yet many of my fellow Democrats remain confused as to why Latinos don't automatically vote Democratic, as Ruy Texiera and John Judis and other "demographics are destiny" prognosticators insist will happen.

There is a political sea-change taking place in Arizona and across the country. The rise of independent affiliation in the Latino community and across every demographic is massive, and it is politically significant. This report rightly recognizes what's right before all our eyes. It's an important report that shouldn't be ignored.



**Danny Ortega** is an attorney and longtime advocate for community empowerment. He is the former Board Chair of UnidosUS (formerly National Council of La Raza), the largest Latino nonprofit advocacy and civil rights organization in the country. He also serves on the Board of Directors of La Raza Development Fund, the Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Los Abogados Hispanic Bar Foundation and formerly on the Board of Directors of the Cesar Chavez Foundation.



# Foreword

by David Holt

It is taken as gospel in American politics today that our hyper partisan political culture is a result of a polarized electorate. I would argue that this is actually not the case. Rather it is the inevitable byproduct of a partisan political process, which too often presents voters with polarizing choices. You don't have to take my word for it, look to cities like Oklahoma City, where I serve as mayor. In Oklahoma City, we hold nonpartisan, open elections. When it is time to choose our leaders, every voter is invited to participate, every candidate must face every voter, and without partisanship candidates are allowed to build coalitions across the political spectrum.

Oklahoma City is a purple city. It's in a red state but it voted for the Democratic nominee for Governor by 12 points in 2018 and elected its first Democratic member of Congress since the 1970s in that same election. I am known to be a registered Republican, but earlier that same year I was elected with 78 percent of the vote. I openly campaigned and currently serve in a nonpartisan fashion, inviting a broad spectrum of voices and crafting policy outcomes that reflect consensus. In 2019, we passed a billion dollar tax package to fund 16 transformational projects in our city with a record 72 percent support. This is how the political process is supposed to work.

Americans are justifiably frustrated and angry with the dysfunctional state of our politics. A growing number of Americans want to see Oklahoma City's successful governance model replicated across the country. They recognize that something is seriously wrong with our system for electing public officials and they want to see us set aside the things that divide us. The rise of registered independent voters, a national trend affecting liberal and conservative areas of the country alike, is connected to this desire to recreate politics along these lines. In open elections like those in Oklahoma City, we create a dynamic where every candidate and every voter are on equal terms. That approach yields consensus results that push a community forward, because we see each other as complex humans, not ideologues, and we can work across artificial divisions. Why shouldn't the rest of the country enjoy the good governance we do in Oklahoma City?

Before I was elected Mayor of Oklahoma City, I served as a Republican State Senator from 2010 until 2018. I ran for Senate in a partisan system. My only task was to win a closed Republican primary, as the general election was a foregone conclusion in my district. That required that I favor the partisans in my own party in order to be elected and stay in office. Across the country, people who want to run for office from both parties must swear allegiance to the party platform and a set of partisan principles. Those inclined to collaborate across the aisle are susceptible to primary challenges. Ask any elected official honest enough to speak the truth. Most politicians in America today worry about one thing above all others. Being primaried. It confines us, limits us and restrains our ability to work for our districts.

I speak from experience that non-partisan and partisan systems have a profound impact on the people elected to serve. Open systems foster collaboration and bridge building in the service of finding solutions. Closed systems foster zero-sum game competition and partisan rivalry. That's why as Senator I introduced a sweeping package of non-partisan electoral proposals, and it's why I sing the praises of the nonpartisan system in Oklahoma City.

Independent voters are the canary in the coal mine. They sense the problem with partisan politics before everyone else. And they are growing in numbers that make them impossible to ignore. We need to listen to them and even more importantly, respect them by making them equal partners in our democratic experiment. This report is an important step in that direction.



**David Holt** has been the Mayor of Oklahoma City since 2018, and for his first year in office was the youngest mayor of a U.S. city over 500,000. A Republican, Holt is also Oklahoma City's first Native American mayor. He served in the Oklahoma Senate from 2010 to 2018.

# Executive Summary

*We hope this report will stimulate inquiry, debate and scholarship on how best to structure our political process as growing numbers of Americans reject party affiliation.*



- Thirty states combine voter registration with political party registration. Twenty states have nonpartisan voter registration.
- We analyzed the data in the thirty partisan voter registration states. We found party membership declining in almost every state, with independent voters currently constituting the largest or second largest group of registered voters in half the states in the country. With current rates of growth, that will soon include every state.
- Political scientists, analysts and pundits have dismissed this trend because they have focused solely on how independent voters vote.
- We demonstrate that the rise of independent voters is significant. Registered independent voters are subjected to legal, political and administrative bias and exclusion. We demonstrate that independents are afforded second-class status because they do not choose to enroll in a private political party, and that this matrix of legal/administrative restrictions harms these voters as well as our democratic process.
- We suggest three interrelated structural electoral reforms to account for the rise of independent voters.
  1. Eliminate party registration as a component of voter registration.
  2. Adopt nonpartisan primary elections.
  3. Restructure the Federal Election Commission.
- Finally, much more analytical research on this emerging trend is needed.

# Introduction

The United States is going through a political realignment. Unlike past realignments, which involved the emergence, repositioning, and/or obsolescence of entire political parties, the accelerating national trend of the last thirty years is voter disaffiliation from the Democratic and Republican Parties.

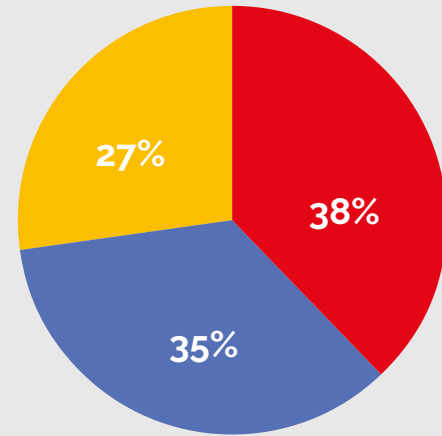
Simply put, the American people are leaving the political parties and registering independent. This has important legal, administrative, and political implications as independent voters are systematically disenfranchised and discriminated against by an electoral system that continues to privilege party affiliation.

Coverage of this trend has been limited and underdeveloped at best. Some acknowledge the influence of independents, arguing that they “clearly hold the balance of electoral power in the contemporary United States”<sup>1</sup> and decide outcomes, from “electing Barack Obama in 2008 (including in the primary against Hillary Clinton), delivering the GOP congressional majority in 2010, electing Donald Trump in 2016, and giving Democrats control of the House in 2018.”<sup>2</sup>

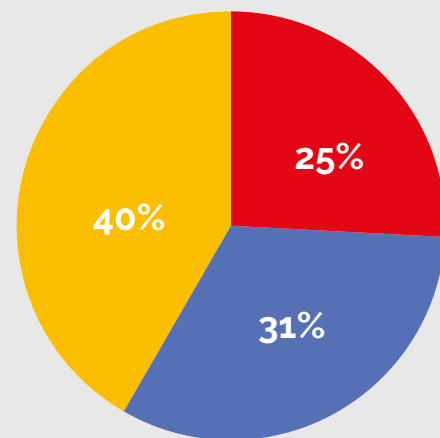
But most journalists, political scientists and pundits prefer to re-categorize independent voters (labeled disparagingly as *unaffiliated*, *NPA*, *do not declare*, *other* or *none* by different state election authorities) as “party leaners,” which ignores that in contemporary bipartisan politics, most voters have only two choices at the ballot box and have no discernible ability to otherwise express themselves. That framing also effectively nullifies the significance (or potential significance) of rapidly declining party membership and stifles honest and creative study of the growing numbers of American voters registering to vote outside the political parties. Most importantly, it fails to address the fact that the American electoral system discriminates against registered independent voters in a variety of contexts.

## PARTY AFFILIATION 2004 VS 2020

● Republican ● Democrat ● Independent



November 2004



May 2020

Source: Gallup Poll<sup>3</sup>

When independent voters are discussed, the term is often presented as attitudinal. Even within that limited lens, the growth of self-identified independent voters is significant. See, for example, Gallup's tracking from 2004 to 2020 (chart above).

Pew Research's report on millennials<sup>4</sup> (chart p. 7) is particularly striking as millennials have recently passed baby boomers as the largest group of voters in the country by age. It suggests a sea-change in how younger American voters view political affiliation.<sup>5</sup>



**Open Primaries Education Fund looked at the data.**

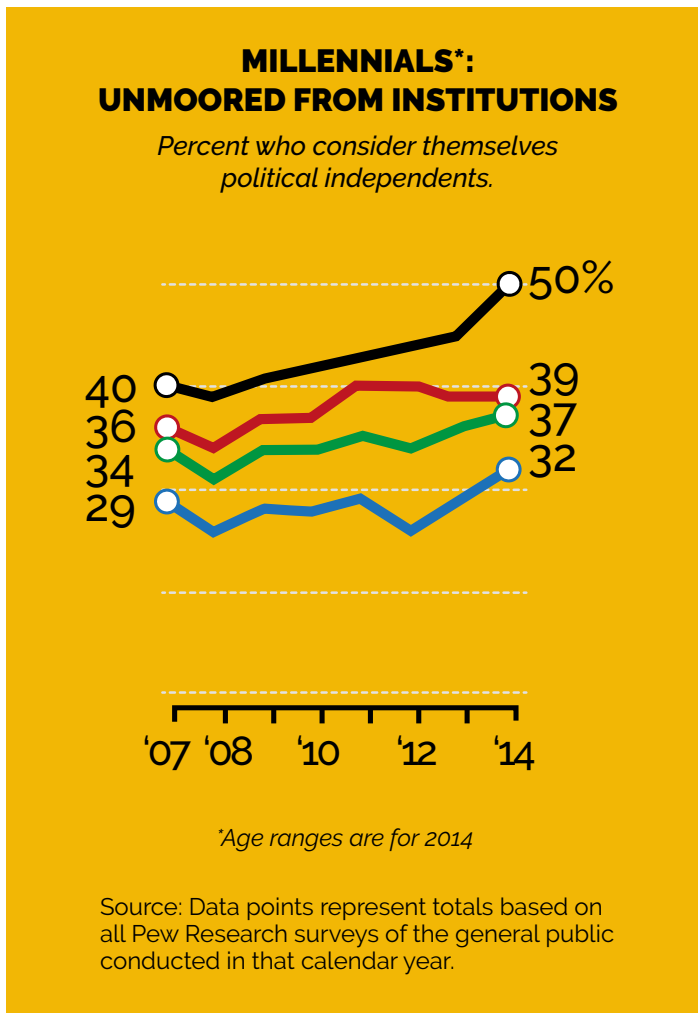
We analyzed actual voter registration records in the United States-as compared to self-identification surveys- in the thirty states that employ partisan voter registration.<sup>8</sup> What we found is striking.

In the thirty states where voters have the option to join a political party when they register to vote (twenty states do not register voters by party), party registration is declining, and voter registration outside the parties is surging. Independent voters are currently the largest or second largest group of registered voters in half the states in the country. At current rates of growth, independent voters will become the largest or second largest group of registered voters in 24 of the 30 states that offer registration by party by 2035.

***“ The ‘Party Leaner’ paradigm fails to address the fact that the American electoral system discriminates against registered independent voters in a variety of contexts.”***

We are in the midst of a realignment of voter affiliation in the United States, with party affiliation declining as the rise of independent voters continues unabated. Few, if any, discussions of this trend have explored it in terms of actual voter registration. Registering to vote as an independent is not simply an aspirational act, it is an actual choice by citizens to position themselves outside of the major political parties. A more accurate narrative of our times, therefore, is not the rise of partisanship, but rather the rise of the independent voter in response to it.<sup>9</sup>

Is this important? We argue yes. Registering to vote as an independent has real world consequences that vary state to state. There are legal implications for millions of voters' access to the franchise.



Indeed, surveys on voters of color -particularly young voters-have found significant movement away from the parties and towards identifying as independent voters. The Joint Center found 30 percent of African Americans between 18 and 25 years old and 24 percent between 26 and 35 years old identify as independents. Their research notes: "The increased political independence of young African Americans is a cause for political concern because they lack political choices."<sup>6</sup> A 2012 Gallup survey found that a majority of U.S. Hispanics identify as political independents.<sup>7</sup>

While a valuable barometer, the focus on self-identified independent voters continues to perpetuate the bias that such labeling is purely aspirational, that self-identified independents are really partisans who, when asked, offer that singular American streak of rugged individualism. Seen in this light, the growth of independent voters can be more easily dismissed as peripheral to the analysis of electoral outcomes and policy debates, including discussions of structural electoral reform.





Many states deny registered independent voters full and equal access to tax-payer funded primaries, where close to 70% of election outcomes are determined.<sup>10</sup> The drawing of electoral districts is often based on party registration. Registered party members are privileged over registered independent voters in terms of election administration and campaign finance regulations. How our elected leaders govern and how democratic institutions and agencies are structured are all based on a presumption that the American people are formally aligned with one party or the other, as they were 50 years ago. That framing is increasingly obsolete.

In PART I of this report, we trace the history of voter registration, party affiliation and primary elections in the United States.

In PART II of this report, we highlight voter registration trends across the country.

In PART III of this report, we offer analysis and recommendations on ways to respond to the growth of independent voters and highlight the need for additional scholarship.

In PART IV of this report, we offer an appendix with an in-depth look at all thirty states with partisan voter registration-as a group and individually- including current and projected registration data and graphs.

We hope that this report provokes journalists, political scientists and anyone who cares about democratic elections in the United States to acknowledge that the growth of independent voters is real, significant, and worthy of serious and continued exploration.



# PART I: Voter Registration and Elections

***“ ...in both the North and the South, voter registration systems often served a more insidious purpose: they were used to keep eligible citizens from voting. ”***

**—Professor Daniel P. Tokaji**

When the U.S. Constitution was ratified, there was no such thing as voter registration. No registered voters cast a ballot for any of the founding fathers. The concept didn't exist. Instead, those with the right to vote (white male property owners at the time) went to the local courthouse and publicly cast their vote out loud. Known as “*viva voce*” or voice voting, this conspicuous form of public voting was the law in most states through the early 19th century and Kentucky kept it up as late as 1891. As voters arrived at the courthouse, a judge would have them swear on a Bible that they were who they said they were and that they hadn't already voted. Once sworn in, the voter would call out his name to the clerk and announce his chosen candidates in each race.<sup>11</sup>

Even when voter lists did arrive in the early nineteenth century, they were limited to a handful of states, and adding eligible names to the rolls was the government's responsibility. It would be more than a century before every state adopted a statewide voter registration system. As the population increased, voter registration became necessary to create efficiencies and minimize corruption.

But almost immediately, registration also became a tool to legally block voters from the polls. Indeed, although the ostensible purpose of personal registration laws was to prevent perceived widespread fraud, reformers themselves admitted that many of these requirements were wholly ineffective against, or in certain instances actually facilitated, fraud.<sup>12</sup>

In 1836, Pennsylvania lawmakers set up the state's first registration system, which relied on assessors to collect information door-to-door. The law applied to Philadelphia—and nowhere else. “Although the proclaimed goal of the law was to reduce fraud...” opponents insisted that its real intent was to reduce the participation of the poor, who were frequently not home when assessors came by.<sup>13</sup> Other registration systems, reflecting the nativist sentiments of the times, targeted Catholics and immigrants for exclusion.

The political system during this period was strongly party- oriented. Voter registration and party affiliation were intertwined. The potential electorate was “extremely fully” mobilized, partly as a result of the rigidity and intensity of party competition.<sup>14</sup> The dominant political figure of the period was the party boss. Elections were party affairs. Pre-printed party ballots listing candidates were often distributed well before Election Day. These ballots identified the partisan preferences of the voters who carried them and virtually eliminated privacy of the ballot.<sup>15</sup> During this period of intense partisanship there was little support in American political culture for the individualist who made decisions based on her own ideas for the common good.

Those first registration systems were not just among the earliest forms of voter suppression—they became a blueprint for Jim Crow. After the Civil War, literacy tests, poll taxes and residency requirements targeted Black voters. As the Constitution left the determination of a voter's qualifications to the individual states to decide,



Signing of the United States Constitution with George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Alexander Hamilton (left to right in the foreground), Painting by Howard Chandler Christy.

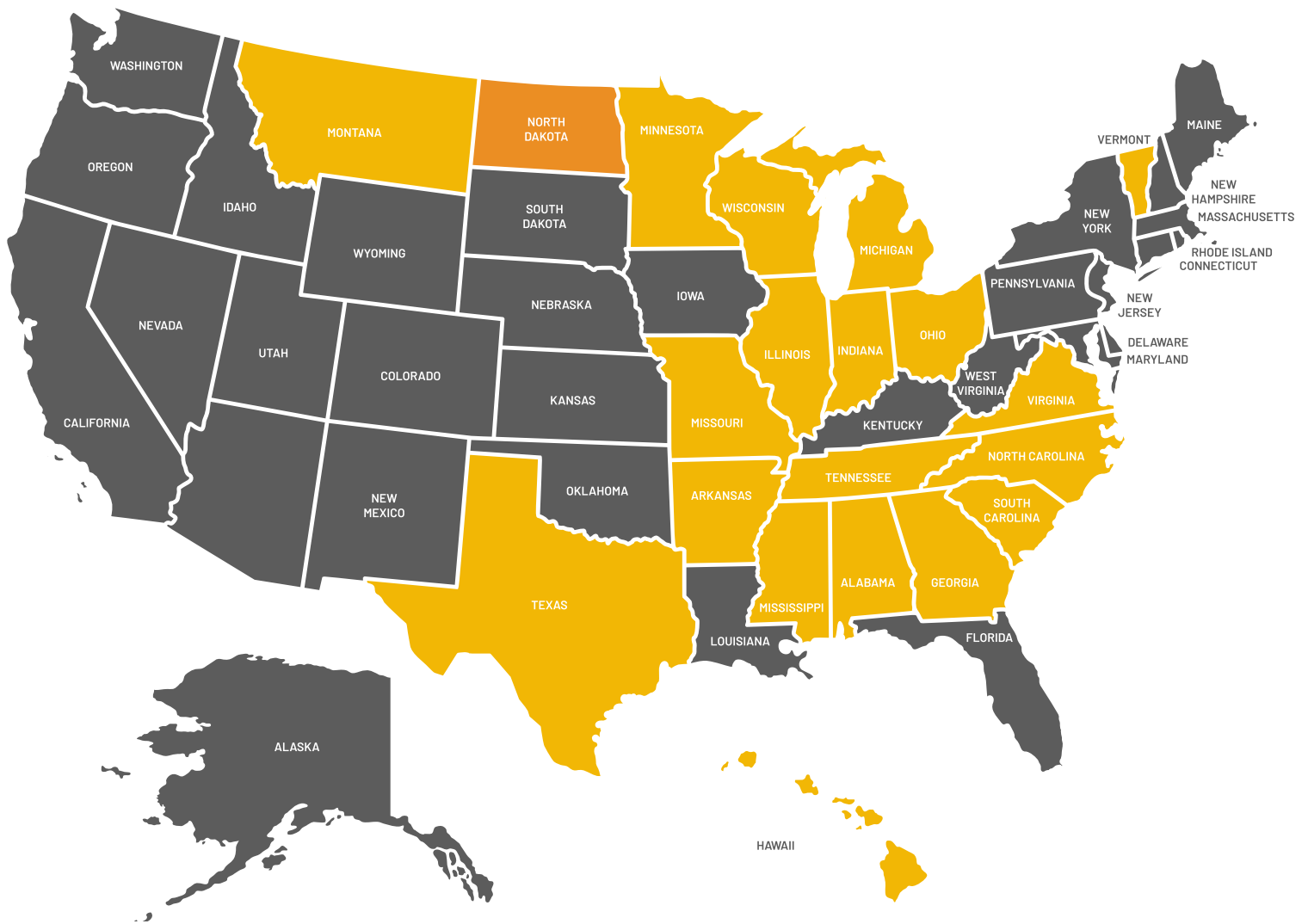
state governments had a keen interest in playing politics with all aspects of voter registration.

As Professor Daniel P. Tokaji describes it:

*There can be little doubt that machine politics and attendant corruption made registration desirable and even necessary, especially in more heavily populated areas. At the same time, in both the North and the South, voter registration systems often served a more insidious purpose: they were used to keep eligible citizens from voting. Although white Democrats' disfranchisement of southern blacks is the most notorious example, it is also clear that northern Republicans sometimes manipulated voter registration rules to disenfranchise Democratic-leaning immigrants and working people. Voter registration has thus been a means not only of promoting election integrity, but also of impeding eligible citizens' access to the ballot.<sup>16</sup>*

By the early twentieth century most states had voter registration laws, but the controversies they created only continued. Today, restricting the terms and requirements of registration is one of the most common forms of voter suppression. Restrictions can include requiring documents to prove citizenship or identification, onerous penalties for voter registration drives, limiting the window of time in which voters can register or even outright purges of voter registration rolls.

Less often discussed, but far more widespread, is the use of voter registration to restrict voting in publicly funded primary elections. Thirty states tie voter registration to a declaration of party affiliation, while twenty states do not require that voters affiliate with a party as part of the voter registration process<sup>17</sup> (holding partisan primaries where every voter-Republican, Democrat and independent-gets to choose a ballot).



**States That Combine Voter Registration with a Declaration of Party Affiliation**

- ALASKA
- ARIZONA
- CALIFORNIA
- COLORADO
- CONNECTICUT
- DELAWARE
- FLORIDA
- IDAHO. IOWA
- KANSAS
- KENTUCKY
- LOUISIANA
- MAINE
- MARYLAND
- MASSACHUSETTS
- NEBRASKA
- NEVADA
- NEW HAMPSHIRE
- NEW JERSEY
- NEW MEXICO
- NEW YORK
- NORTH CAROLINA
- OKLAHOMA
- OREGON
- PENNSYLVANIA
- RHODE ISLAND
- SOUTH DAKOTA
- UTAH
- WEST VIRGINIA
- WYOMING

**States With Nonpartisan Voter Registration**

- ALABAMA
- ARKANSAS
- GEORGIA
- HAWAII
- ILLINOIS
- INDIANA
- MICHIGAN
- MINNESOTA
- MISSISSIPPI
- MISSOURI
- MONTANA
- NORTH CAROLINA
- OHIO
- SOUTH CAROLINA
- TENNESSEE
- TEXAS
- VERMONT
- VIRGINIA
- WISCONSIN.

**No Voter Registration**

- NORTH DAKOTA

The history of the divide between states with partisan and nonpartisan voter registration is complex and specific to each state. Often it was based on overt or de facto political advantage. Many of the states with nonpartisan voter registration are in the Southern United States and at the time registration was adopted there was only one party that mattered—the Democratic party. During

Reconstruction, one could be targeted with physical violence for even aligning with Republicans, seen as Northern carpetbaggers who stood for everything the South despised.

Ironically, today, after pre-clearance rollbacks of the Voting Rights Act over the past few years, nonpartisan voter registration is under attack by a now dominant Republican party intent on using

partisan registration as a way of keeping voters of color out of the primary election ballot box.<sup>18</sup>

## Primary Elections and Voter Empowerment

During the Progressive Era, which lasted from roughly 1890-1920, the people's desire for reform in the election process led to the establishment of primary elections. Prior to that period of time, the candidate selection process was run almost exclusively by unelected party leaders- party bosses who ran local politics from the proverbial smoke-filled back rooms- with the electorate's first and only opportunity to impact the election process left to the general election.<sup>19</sup>

With an eye to making the process of presidential nominations more democratic, Progressive reform efforts focused initially on making the delegate and candidate selection processes more transparent and inclusive. One of the earliest efforts was made by

Wisconsin Governor Robert La Follette whose frustration with the backroom politics in the 1904 elections led him to draft legislation that allowed Wisconsin voters more say over convention delegate selection.

Subsequent states followed suit, so that by 1916, 25 of the 48 states had presidential primaries and stricter rules binding delegates to popular election results.

Following World War II, primaries proliferated across the remaining states and by the early 1960's had become ubiquitous.

As the power of party bosses waned, voters became empowered to connect more closely with candidates for office. With the advent of television and radio, populist-minded candidates could get their

message directly to the voters and circumnavigate the influences of party bosses. This meant that lesser known candidates stood a chance at prevailing in the state primaries over more senior candidates with greater clout among party insiders and support from special interests.

The American system of primary elections worked, because most Americans were members of one of the two major political parties and had access to them as a result of the overlap between voter and party registration. From 1940 to 1960, independent voters hovered between 15% and 20% of all registered voters. In 1961, 80% of Americans were members of either the Democrat or Republican parties.<sup>20</sup>

Democratic party membership reached its height in 1964 at 51% and has been declining ever since. Republican party membership grew to a high of 31% in 1990 and has since declined. In their place, the nation has witnessed an explosion of registered independent voters.





# Part II

## Voter Registration Trends:

### The Rise of Independent Voters

Today, we are witnessing nothing less than a major realignment of political affiliation in the United States. Membership in the two major parties is on a long decline, while independent voters are the fastest growing group of registered voters in the country.

Independent voters are now the largest or second largest group of voters in half the states that require registration by party. This growth is across all regions of the United States and taking place in states dominated by one major political party and in states where the parties are at parity.<sup>21</sup>

ALASKA	MASSACHUSETTS
CONNECTICUT	NEW HAMPSHIRE
COLORADO	NEW JERSEY
IOWA	RHODE ISLAND
MAINE	

**States where registered independent voters account for the largest group of voters in the state**

OREGON	IDAHO
KANSAS	NORTH CAROLINA
CALIFORNIA	UTAH

**States where registered independent voters account for the second largest group of voters in the state**

The growth of registered independent voters is continuing year after year. At current rates of growth, independent voters will become the largest or second largest group of registered voters in 24 of the 30 states that require registration by party by 2035.<sup>22</sup>

ALASKA	MASSACHUSETTS
ARIZONA	NEW HAMPSHIRE
COLORADO	NORTH CAROLINA
FLORIDA	OREGON
IOWA	RHODE ISLAND

**States where registered independent voters are projected to become the largest group of voters in the state by 2035**

CALIFORNIA	NEW MEXICO
CONNECTICUT	NEW YORK
DELAWARE	MAINE
KANSAS	MARYLAND
LOUISIANA	SOUTH DAKOTA
NEBRASKA	UTAH
NEVADA	WYOMING

**States Where Registered Independent Voters are Projected to Become the Second Largest Group of Voters in the State by 2035**

## Decline of State Parties

Meanwhile, party registration in both major parties is declining. In the 30 states with partisan registration, sixteen states are seeing a long term decline of membership in both major political parties or a decline in one major party and stagnating growth in the other.<sup>23</sup>

ALASKA	NEVADA
ARIZONA	NEW MEXICO
FLORIDA	NORTH CAROLINA
MARYLAND	OREGON
MASSACHUSETTS	

**States where membership in both major parties is in decline**

COLORADO	NEBRASKA
IOWA	NEW HAMPSHIRE
KANSAS	PENNSYLVANIA
MAINE	

**States where membership in one major party is in decline and the other has stagnated**

Meanwhile, another ten states are seeing a long term decline in membership of one major party.

CALIFORNIA	DELAWARE
CONNECTICUT	NEW YORK

**States where Republican Party is in decline**

KENTUCKY	SOUTH DAKOTA
LOUISIANA	WEST VIRGINIA
OKLAHOMA	WYOMING

**States where Democratic Party is in decline**

## Increased Membership

Only four states are seeing a modest increase in membership in both major parties.<sup>24</sup>

IDAHO	RHODE ISLAND
NEW JERSEY	UTAH

**States where party membership in both major parties is increasing**

Where are all these voters going? Quite simply, they are rejecting the two major parties and registering independent. The rates of growth are significant. Consider two very different states in distinct parts of the country- Florida and Nevada:



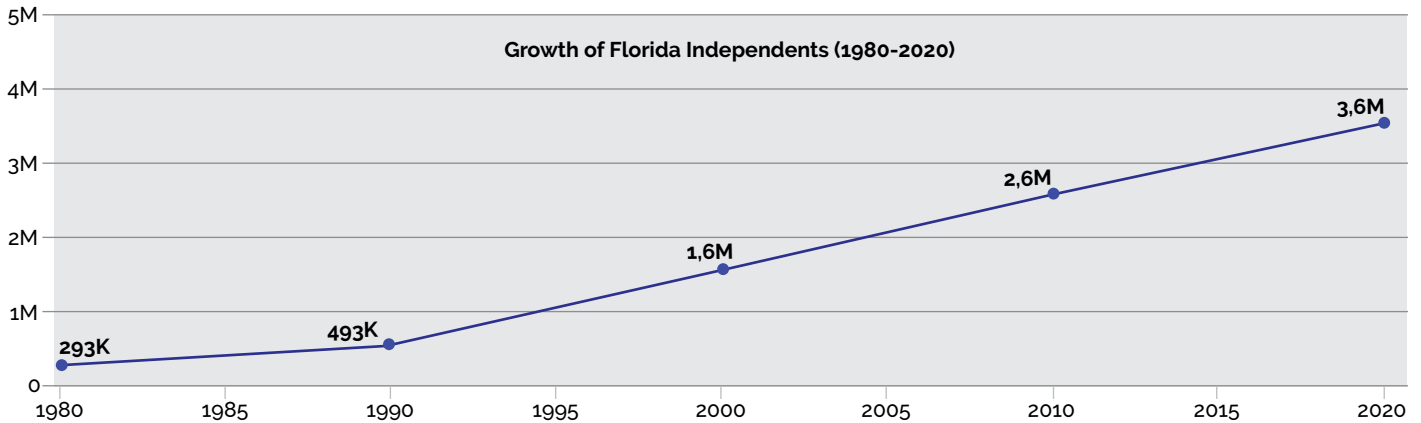
## Florida

In 1980, there were over 3 million registered members of the Democratic party (64% of all voters) and 1.4 million Republicans (30% of all voters) in the state of Florida. There were fewer than three hundred thousand independent voters. Independent voters accounted for 6% of all voters. Since then, the growth of registered independent voters has been sizable as registered party membership has decreased as a percentage of the electorate.

There are over 3.6 million, or 26% of registered independent Florida voters today. Meanwhile, there are

slightly over 5 million Democrats (37% of the electorate) and slightly less than 5 million Republicans (35% of the electorate).<sup>25</sup> The number of independent voters is increasing at an average yearly rate of .58%.

At that average rate of growth, by 2035 the number of independent voters is projected to increase nearly 8% to surpass both major parties as the largest group of registered voters in the state at 34% of the electorate. Democratic party voters are expected to decline to 33% of the electorate, while Republican voters are expected to decline to 32% of the electorate.



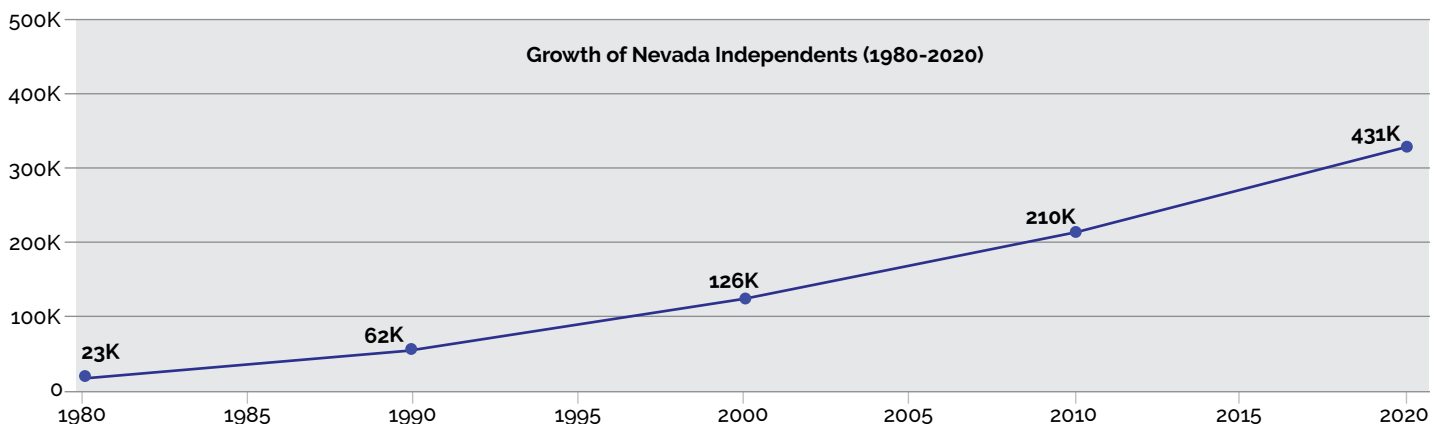
## Nevada

In 1980, there were 159,000 Democrats (53% of voters) and 115,000 Republicans (39% of voters) in the state of Nevada. There were fewer than 23,000 independent voters. Independent voters accounted for 8% of all voters. Since then, registered independent voters have become an increasingly larger percentage of the electorate, while party membership has declined.

There are over 431,000, or 23% of registered independent Nevada voters today. There are 713,000 registered Democrats (38% of the electorate) and

591,000 registered Republicans (32% of the electorate).<sup>26</sup> The number of independent voters is increasing at an average yearly rate of 53%.

At that average rate of growth, by 2035 the number of independent voters is projected to increase 8% to surpass the Republican party as the second largest group of registered voters in the state at 31% of the electorate. The Democratic party is expected to slightly contract to 36% of the electorate, while Republican party membership is expected to decline to a low of 24% of all registered voters.



# Part III

## Analysis

The United States stands unique among industrialized countries in requiring personal registration that places the onus on the voter to maintain her eligibility to vote. That is particularly so, as the U.S. system of voter registration maintains the requirements of voter registration in tandem with partisan membership in a private political party. That combination, in particular, lends itself to manipulation by partisan interests and has fostered a matrix of laws and regulations governing voter access, outreach, and campaign finance regulations that discriminate against registered independent voters and privileges party affiliation.

Studies have found that many registration requirements continue to contribute to voter suppression; estimating that up to a quarter of the voting-eligible population in the United States are not registered to vote as a result, a percentage that represents "at least 51 million eligible U.S. citizens."<sup>27</sup>

Partisan registration itself has forced state governments, whose primary interest is ostensibly to increase voter participation, into de facto advocates for party membership by warning current and potential voters that failure to register with a party as part of their voter registration requirements will lead to restrictions at the ballot box. See, for example, a Washoe County, Nevada elections administrator questions and answer page:

### ***Why do I have to choose a party affiliation when I register to vote?***

Nevada has a "closed primary" system in which only registrants who are members of a specific political party (major parties only) are eligible to vote for the candidate of that party for partisan offices in the

Primary Elections. By choosing to be a "Nonpartisan" or affiliated with one of the minor political parties, a registrant is restricted to voting only for candidates for nonpartisan offices and the questions that appear on their Primary Election Ballot.

Remember, in a General Election, all voters are eligible to vote on all candidates, races and questions that appear on their ballot, regardless of their or a candidate's party affiliation.<sup>28</sup>

This type of warning to voters is standard practice among state and county election administrators. They infect all get out the vote NGO activity as well. See, for example, the California League of Women Voters voter registration guidelines<sup>29</sup>:

### ***How to choose a political party when registering to vote:***

When you sign up to vote, you can join a political party. A political party is a group of people who share the same ideas about how the government should be run and what it should do. They work together to win elections. You can also choose not to join any of the political parties and still be a voter. There is no cost to join a party.

- Choose a political party that has the same general views you do. For example, some political parties think that government should do more for people. Others feel that government should make it easier for people to do things for themselves.
- If you do not want to join a political party, mark that box on your voter registration form. This is called "no party preference." Know that if you do, you may have limited choices for party candidates in Presidential primary elections.





Partisan registration has created a forced bias among state governments that goes far beyond how states message how to register, it pervades how the states administer the electoral process itself. In New York, for example, poll workers must be registered members of one of the two major parties. Independent voters cannot work the polls.<sup>30</sup> In Arizona, and a number of other states, unlike Republicans and Democrats who can register once to vote by mail, registered independents have to request a mail-in ballot for each election.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps most egregious, much of the “fair” redistricting debate hinges on the notion that districts be drawn with an eye not to representing every voter fairly, but to representing each party and its voters fairly.<sup>32</sup> Contrast such an approach with an emerging focus of some reformers on instituting nonpartisan voter-centric redistricting commissions.<sup>33</sup>

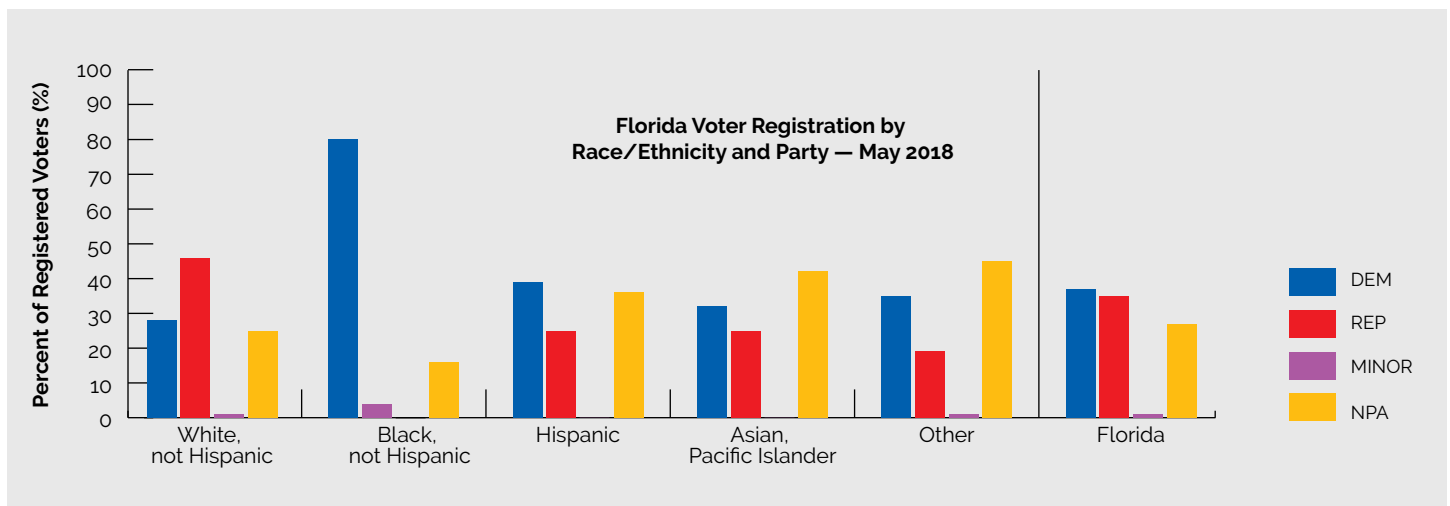
Of course, one of the great ironies of the current focus of American political discourse on party voters, at the exclusion of independents, is just how little it means to actually be a member of a party. There are no required meetings to attend, no pledges to sign, no mandatory activities to participate in whatsoever. For all but the most partisan party voters, access to primary elections is the only meaningful benefit of such a choice. It raises the very question of how many registered party voters are independent voters forced to associate with a party in order to gain access to the franchise. How many registered party voters actually “lean” independent?

Despite all the institutionalized hurdles to becoming an independent voter in America today, such voters are soon to become the largest or second largest group of voters

***“It raises the very question of how many registered party voters are independent voters forced to associate with a party in order to gain access to the franchise. How many registered party voters actually ‘lean’ independent?”***

in almost every state. Less and less voters are feeling compelled to adjust their personal ideologies to a two party partisan framework. The fact that the gap between party affiliated voters and independent voters is closing is significant. It suggests, perhaps, not just disaffection with the parties but a belief that what the parties do is not that important. Above all else, it makes one thing clear. The current American system of registering voters by party affiliation and allowing only party members to vote in publicly funded primary elections is no longer serving a significant portion of the electorate.

Neither the Republican nor the Democratic Parties have shown any interest in giving up some of their control to rebalance the electoral system to match this current reality or build bridges to the growing majority of independent voters in this country. In fact, both Parties have seemed more interested in fighting for the diminishing number of party voters and either demanding independent voters join their party for access to the franchise or simply ignoring them altogether. They happily and shamefully continue to





support the use of taxpayer dollars to run primary elections that exclude an increasingly large segment of the taxpaying public.

That includes a growing number of voters of color, who have historically been targeted by voter suppression tactics and, by virtue of registering independent, have been disenfranchised by both parties in equal measure. In closed primary states like Florida, for example, 42% of Asians, 36% of Hispanics and 16% of black voters are registered independent (chart p. 17).<sup>34</sup>

In real numbers that adds up to over a million voters of color in Florida alone who are discriminated against because of their voter registration status.<sup>35</sup>

Certainly some party reluctance to relinquish control of the electoral system can be attributed to the fact that partisan registration is not a private act. Parties and candidates get records of voters' party affiliation directly from state lists, often along with additional data, through systems that partisan legislatures have created over the years. It's an easy way for them to target and message their supporters with the help of state governments. Over a dozen states offer political parties privileged access to such data, even if it's otherwise not publicly accessible. Some states go so far as sending such data directly to the parties as standard business without even requiring it be requested.<sup>36</sup> Other states preference party interaction with registered members in other ways. California, for example, has created a campaign finance exemption that allows political parties to spend unlimited sums on member communications programs to support or oppose candidates and ballot measures by

communicating directly with registered party members.<sup>37</sup> Such practices may benefit the political parties, but they have nothing to do with the security or efficiency of the electoral process. Our democratic system continues to suffer as a result. Indeed, studies have found that partisan voter registration is contributing to partisan identification, attitude and behavior.<sup>38</sup>

Imagine hearing of a country where tens of millions of voters are excluded from full participation. A country where half the registered voters are paying for elections they are excluded from. You'd probably say "I'm glad that's not us." But that is us. That is the reality of electoral politics in America today.

The history of voting in the U.S. has been the recognition that in order to create a more perfect union, access to the ballot box must be extended in equal terms to every American. In order to operate democratically, our system of elections in America must evolve to meet the realities of current and future American voter affiliation. It must offer independent voters full and fair access to all aspects of the franchise. As long as the status quo continues, confidence in politics and governance will only continue to decline.

## Recommendations

We suggest three simple and interrelated solutions to address the inequality experienced by independent voters in America today:

1. **Eliminate party registration as part of the voter registration process.** Twenty states already register voters without party affiliation. Requiring registration



with party affiliation does nothing to address the given reasons for voter registration such as efficiency and combating fraud. Combining voter registration with party affiliation forces state governments to be cheerleaders for private associations, and prioritizes party voters over independent voters. It invites partisan manipulation to advantage certain voters over others in elections. Non-partisan registration, on the other hand, treats all citizens equally. Party membership becomes a private, not a governmental function. Party membership and election administration should be distinct.

- 2. Adopt nonpartisan primary elections for state and federal candidates below President.** Three states-California, Washington and Nebraska- already use nonpartisan elections. They are the norm at the municipal level, where 85% of municipalities already use nonpartisan elections.<sup>39</sup> Nonpartisan primary elections let every voter vote. They allow all voters-the growing numbers of independent voters, along with party voters-equal access to the franchise in publicly funded elections.
- 3. Restructure the Federal Election Commission (FEC).** The FEC is the nation's protector of election integrity. The six members of the Commission are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. By law, no more than three Commissioners can represent the same political party, and at least four votes are required for any official Commission action. This structure was created to encourage

nonpartisan decisions, but it has led to stalemate and inaction as successive Presidents from both major parties have used the enabling language to exclusively nominate registered partisans from the two major parties. The FEC must be reformed in a way that preserves safeguards against partisan abuse of the Commission's power and fairly represents the electorate. That includes:

- a)** Change the Commission's structure to require registered independents be represented in equal numbers with each major party. Independent Commissioners should not have been affiliated with nor worked for one of the two major parties in the five years preceding their appointment. The Commission Chairmanship should be rotated to include such independents.
- b)** Change the number of Commissioners to an odd number. Every other regulatory commission has an odd number of Commissioners to ensure that it can do its job effectively. To maintain parity, that would require either reducing the number of Commissioners to 3, or increasing it to 9.
- c)** Establish a blue-ribbon nonpartisan advisory panel to help vet potential Commission nominees. The panel should have representation from both major parties and registered independents in equal numbers. These experts would recommend candidates, which the president would draw from when selecting a final slate of appointees.





## Additional Scholarship

There has been very little research on independent voters and the structural impediments to their full and equal participation in American elections. Absent such, it's little surprise that their growth as a percentage of the electorate and the resulting impact on American politics has been so little understood and undervalued. We believe the following areas of study require additional research.

- The history of partisan versus nonpartisan voter registration in America. How do other countries conduct voter registration and party membership? What is the effect of nonpartisan voter registration versus partisan voter registration on the political culture?
- How do the voter suppression tactics used against independent voters of color interact with other forms of voter suppression targeting minorities?
- A full accounting of the matrix of laws and regulations governing voter access, outreach, campaign finance etc. that discriminate against registered independent voters. This includes how state and local election authorities operate.
- Why are a handful of states seeing party membership increase as compared to the norm? Is partisan manipulation, such as Idaho's experience in closing its primary, a key to understanding this counter-trend?
- Should the changing demographics of voter affiliation inform the conversation regarding the need to reform gerrymandering?
- How is Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) impacting voter registration trends?
- How many registered party members "lean" independent? If party membership and its attendant privileges were separated from voter registration, what effect might that have on accelerating the growth of registered independent voters?

## Conclusion

As voter registration by party decreases, we are quickly entering the era of the independent voter. In almost every state in the country, the numbers of independent voters are increasing significantly. They are the largest or second largest group of voters in half the states in the country. In a few short years, they will be the largest or second largest group of voters in almost every state.

Yet, independent voters continue to face an election system designed for a bygone era; one in which they barely existed. It's a system that grants them unequal, second-class status and privileges party affiliation in many aspects of the franchise. This is most acutely felt in primary elections. Nine states do not allow independent voters to participate in any primary elections. Many more states restrict participation to certain races at the exclusion of others.<sup>49</sup> The entire framework of electoral politics in America today either ignores outright or systematically discriminates against independent voters.

We have reached a tipping point that can no longer be ignored. Discrimination against independent voters in the administration of public elections in the United States cannot be sustained without continuing to damage the very nature of our democratic system. If we are to begin to create an electoral system that treats every American equally, we must eliminate party membership as part of the voter registration process, adopt widespread use of nonpartisan primary elections, and restructure the Federal Election Commission to represent all voters equally. The evolution of political institutions in America demands equal treatment of all voters. Then, and only then, will representative democracy be possible.

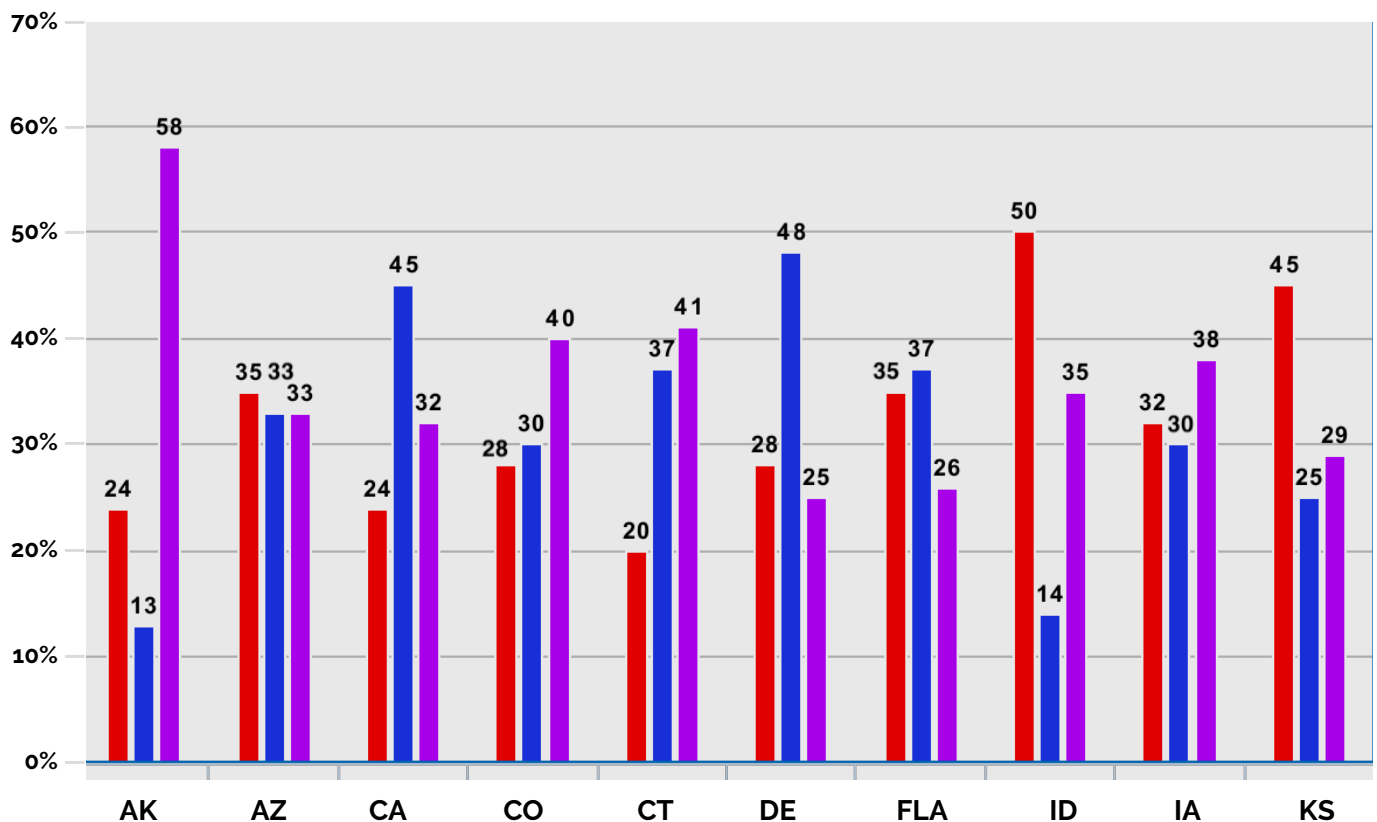


# Appendix A

## Voter Registration Comparison

### 1 2020 State Registration % by Party

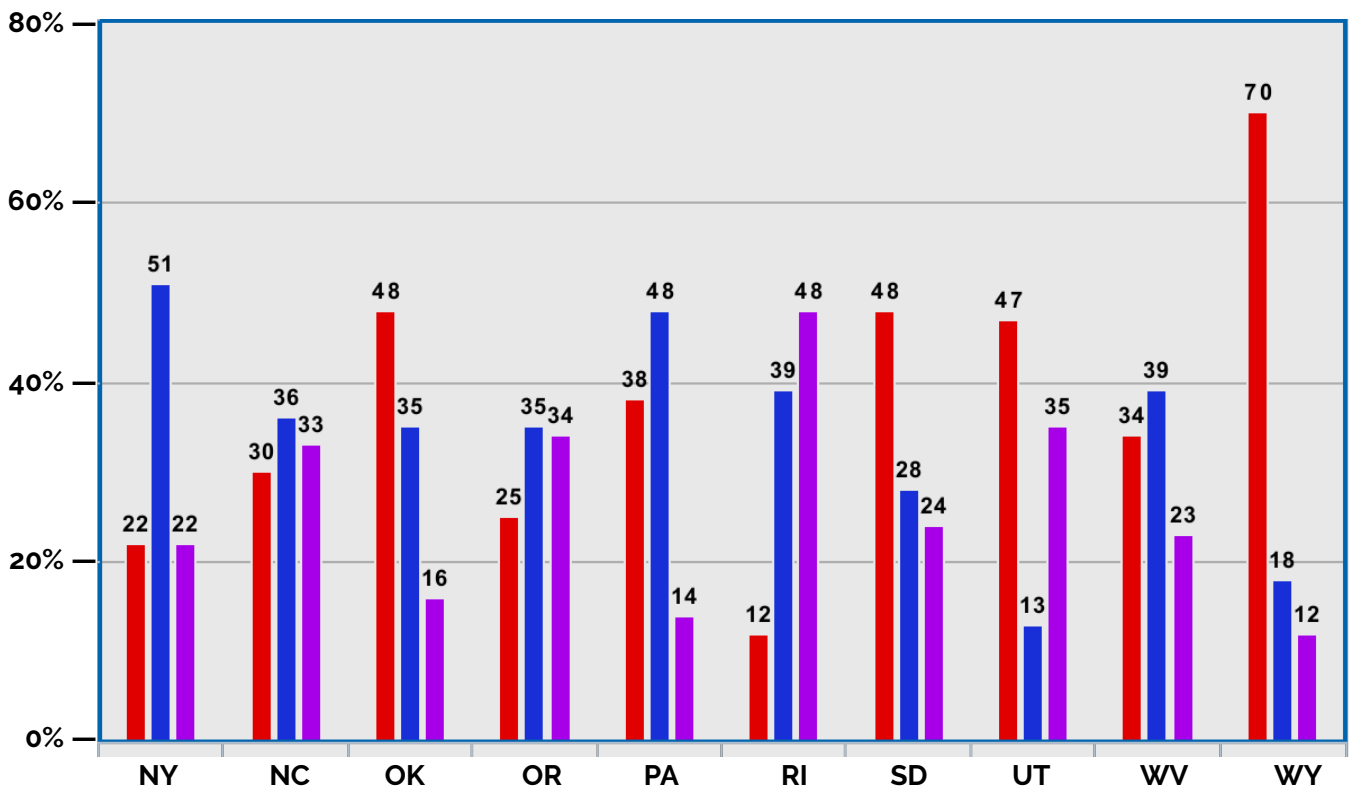
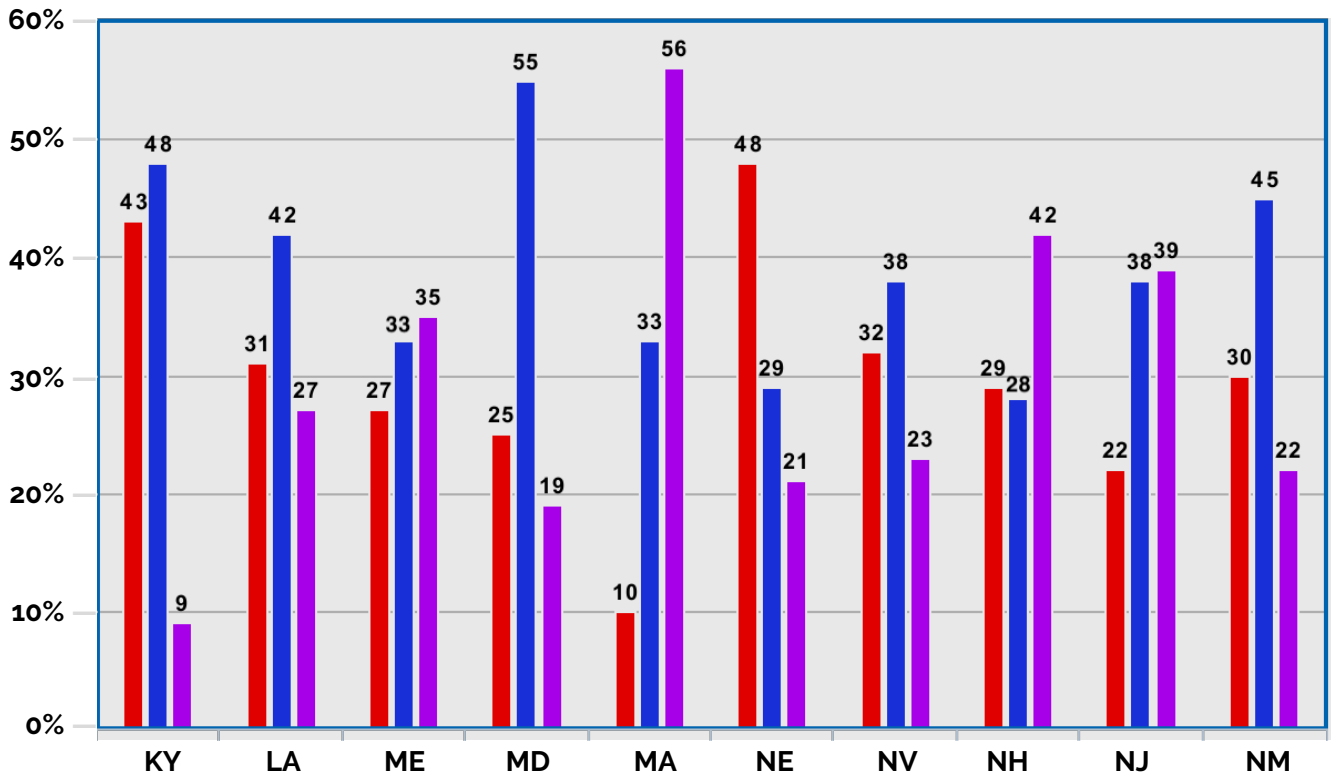
- Registered Republican
- Registered Democrat
- Registered Independent



# 2020 State Registration

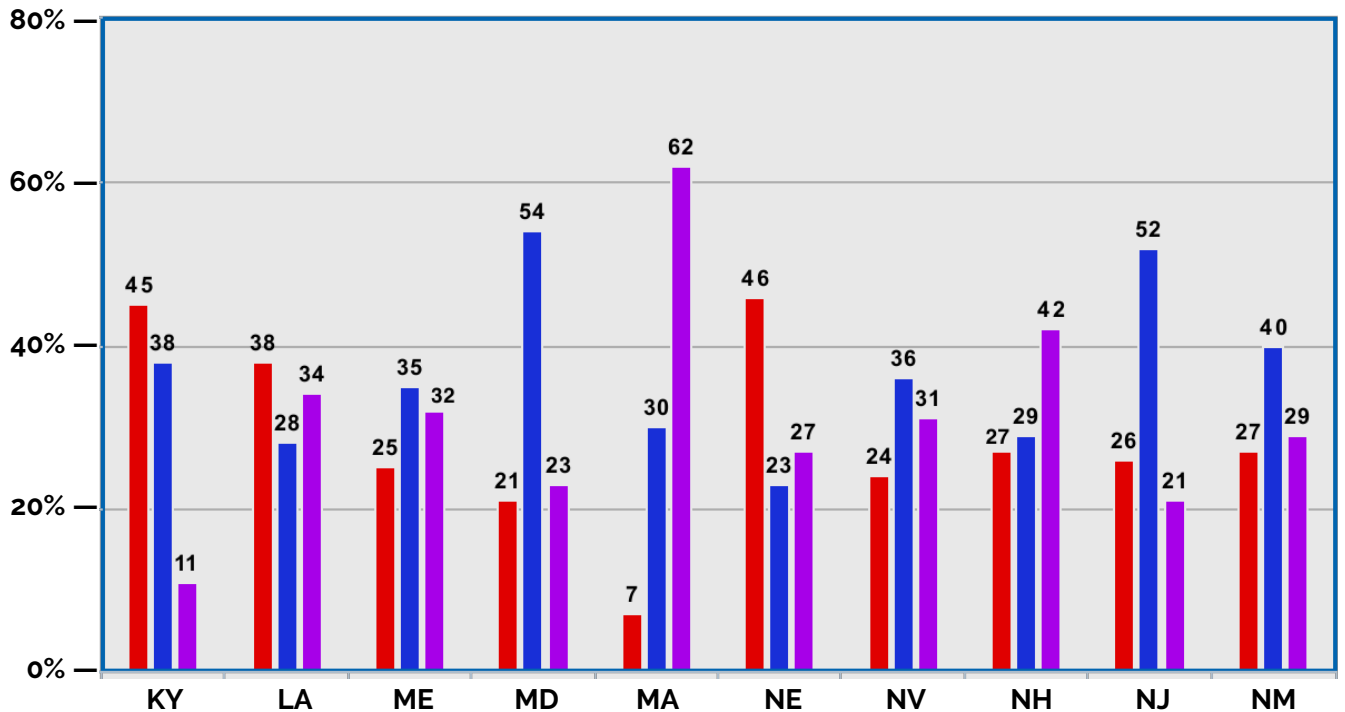
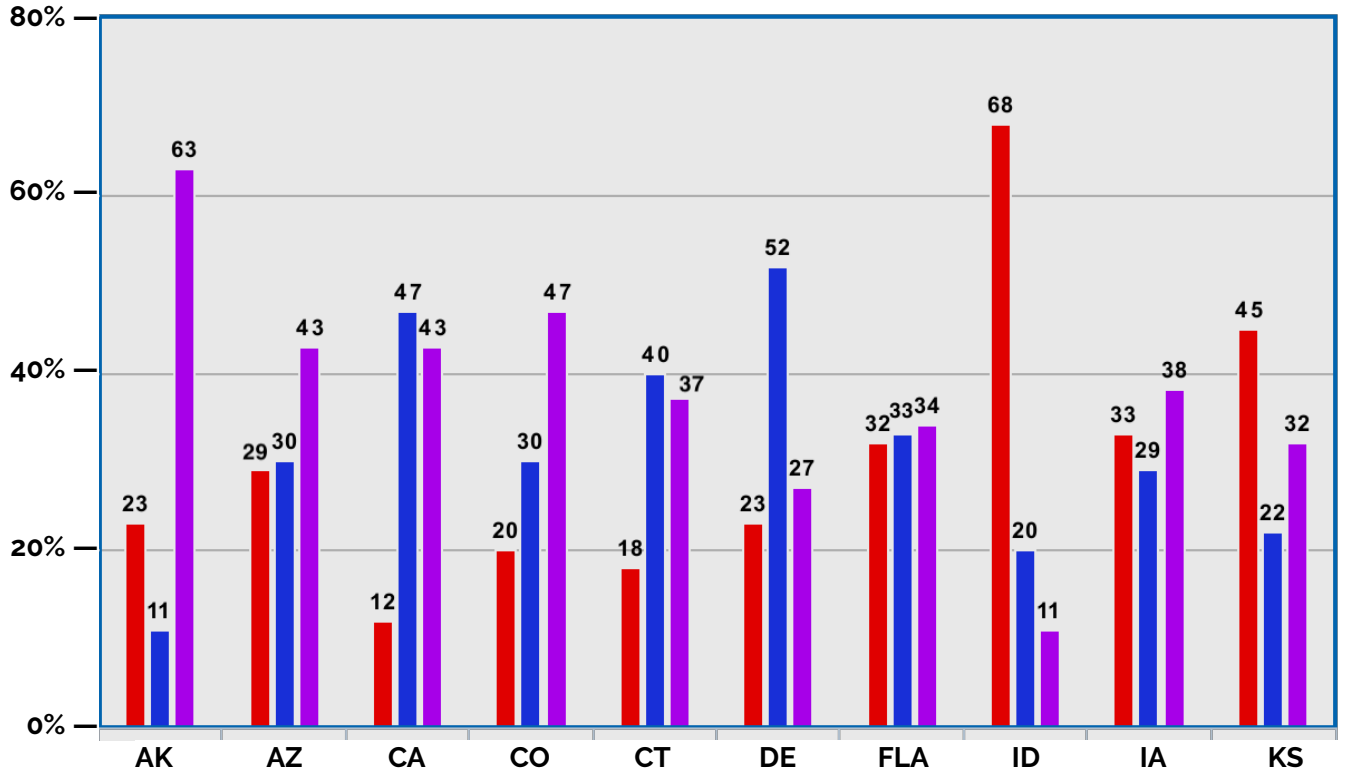
% by Party (continued)

- Registered Republican
- Registered Democrat
- Registered Independent



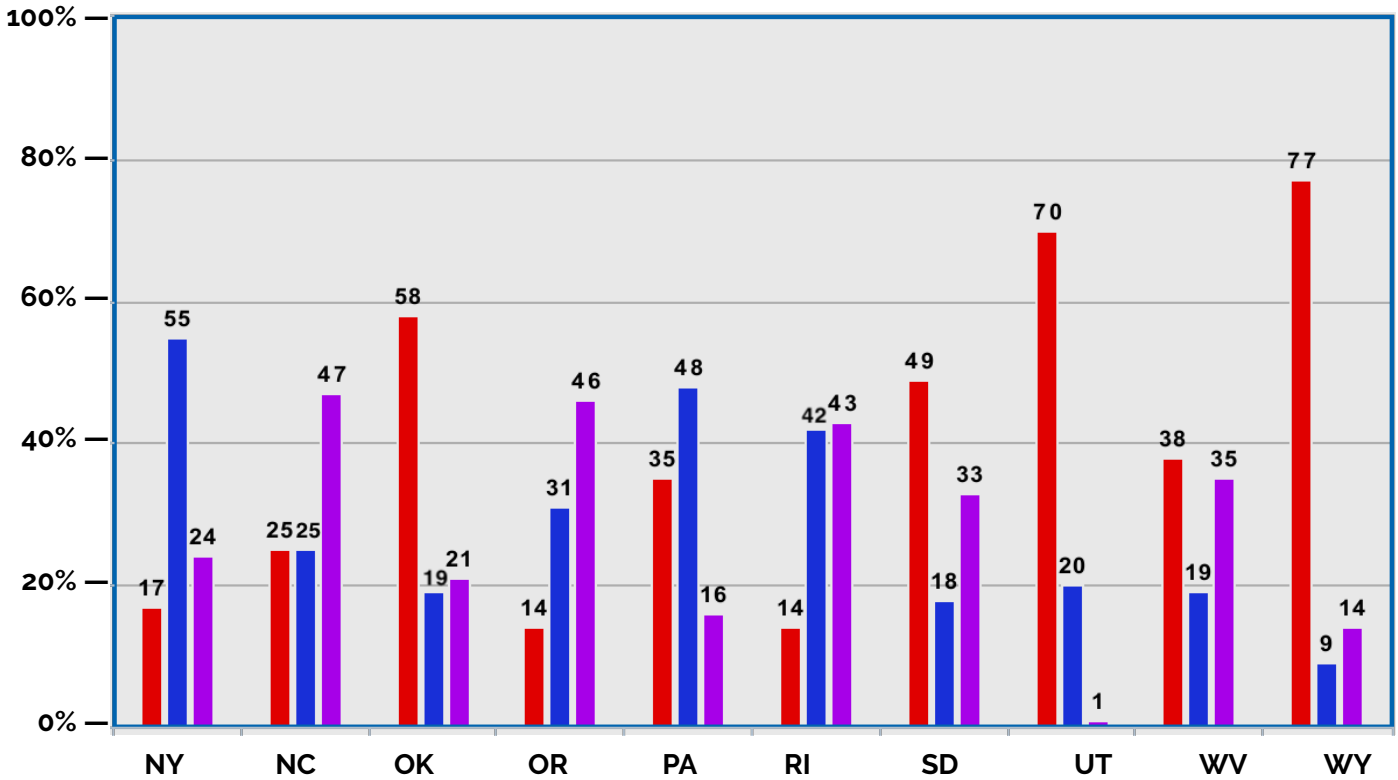
## ② Projected State Registration % by Party

- Registered Republican
- Registered Democrat
- Registered Independent

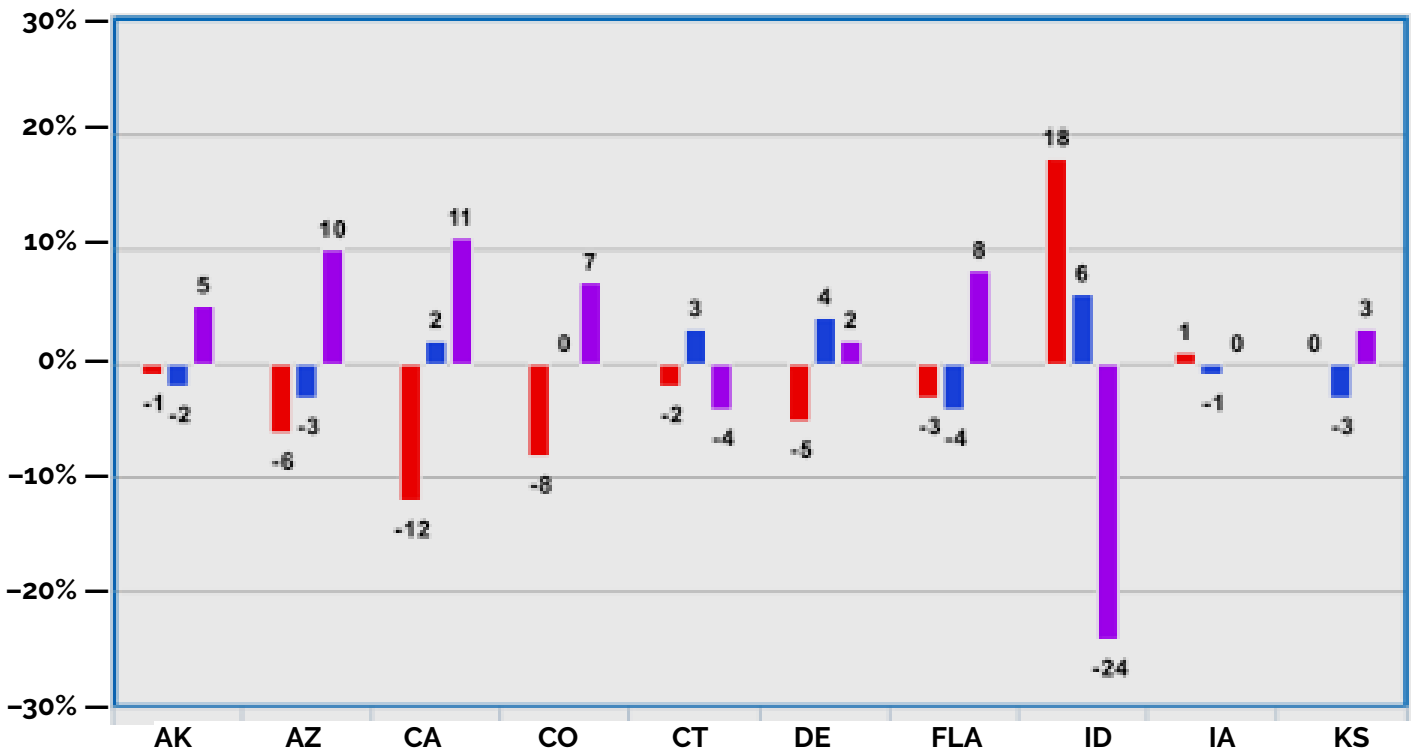


## ② Projected State Registration % by Party (continued)

- Registered Republican
- Registered Democrat
- Registered Independent

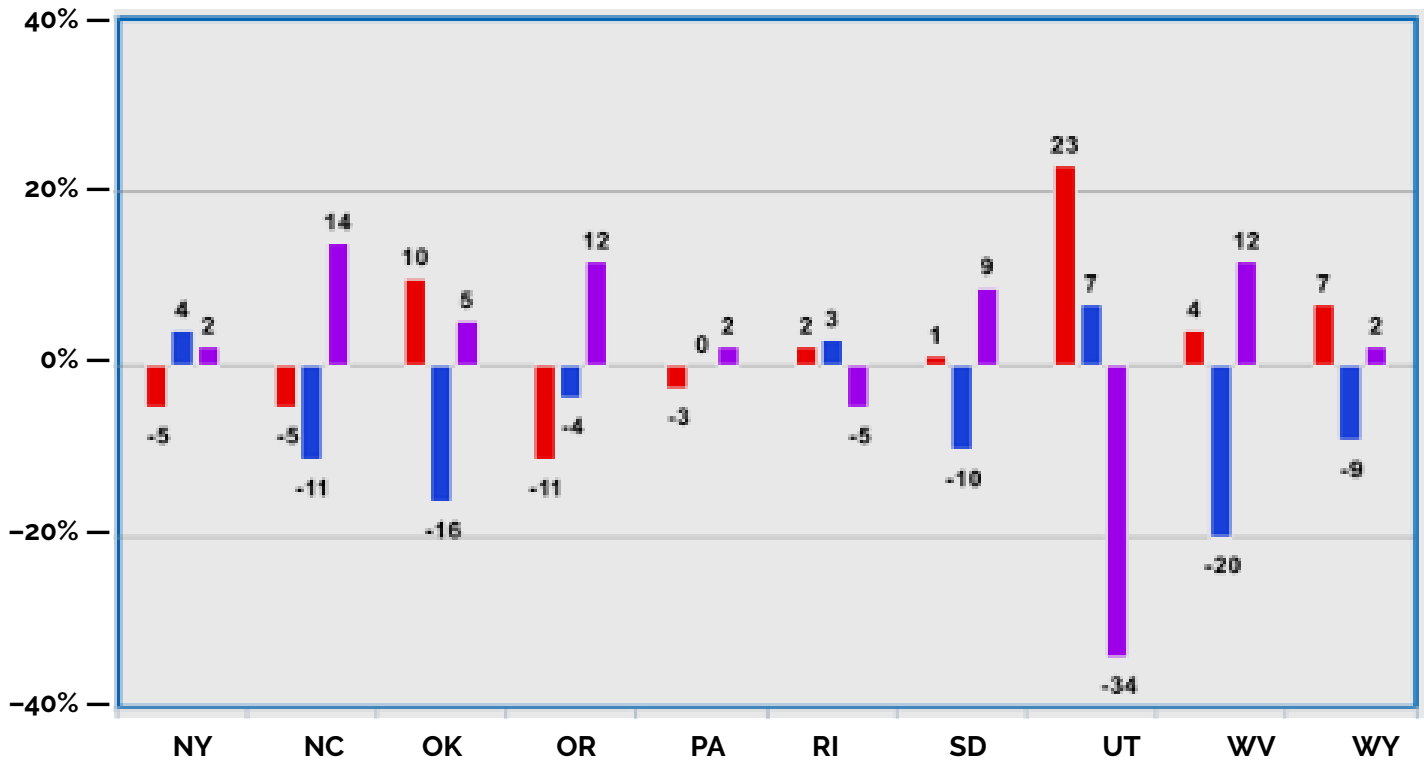
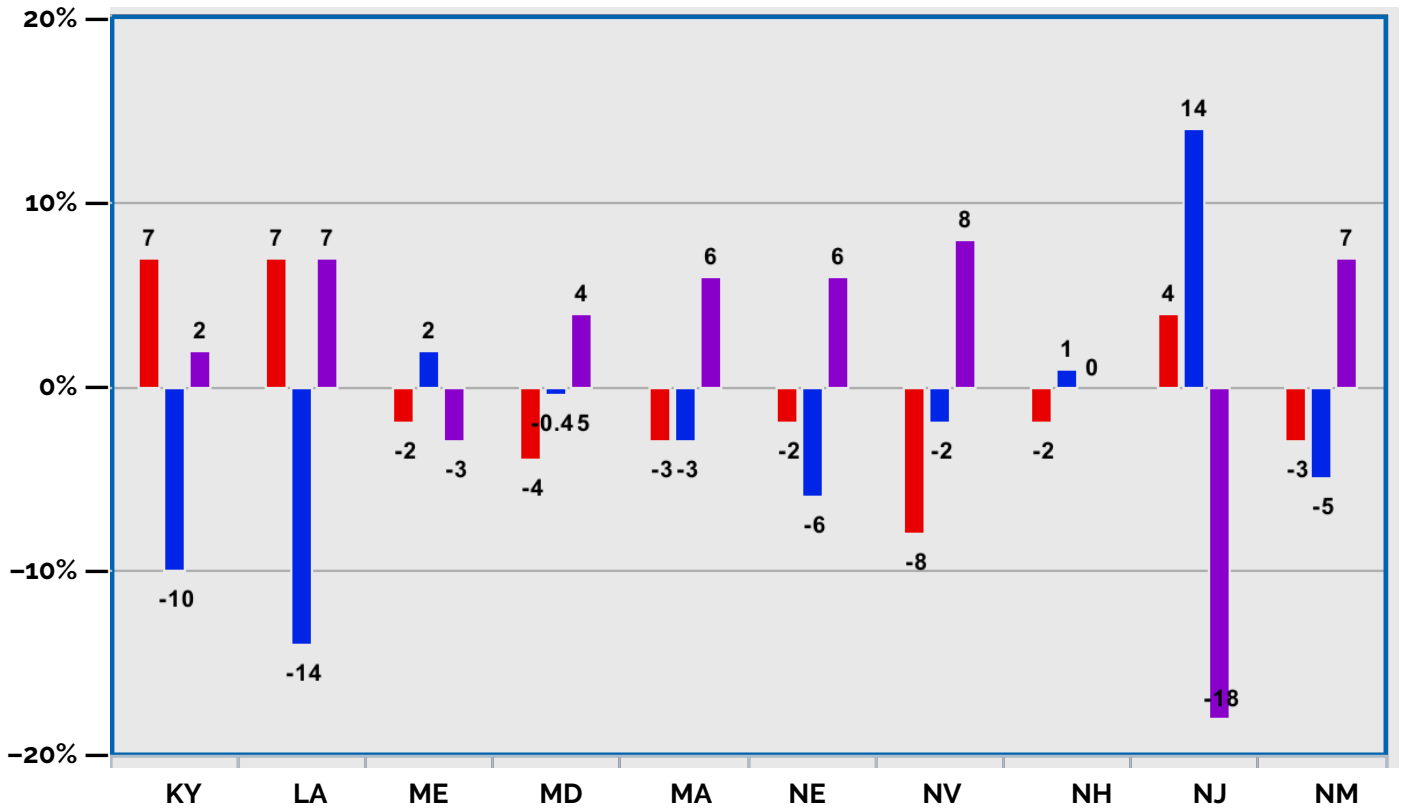


## ③ Growth Rate Projection by Party





## Growth Rate Projection by Party (continued)



# Appendix B

## Voter Registration by State





# Alaska

- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

2005 (1/2005)	Republican: 118,524 (25%)
	Democrats: 72,105 (15%)
	3rd Parties: 34,010 (7%)
	Nonpartisan/Undeclared: 252,175 (53%)
	<b>Total: 476,814</b>
2010 (1/2010)	Republican: 126,692 (26%)
	Democrats: 75,806 (16%)
	3rd Parties: 30,495 (6%)
	Nonpartisan/Undeclared: 255,797 (52%)
	<b>Total: 488,790</b>

2015 (1/2015)	Republican: 136,951 (27%)
	Democrats: 71,037 (14%)
	3rd Parties: 26,202 (5%)
	Nonpartisan/Undeclared: 279,279 (54%)
	<b>Total: 513,469</b>
2020 (5/2020)	Republican: 139,216 (24%)
	Democrats: 76,248 (13%)
	3rd Parties: 27,692 (5%)
	Nonpartisan/Undeclared: 329,997 (58%)
	<b>Total: 573,153</b>

## Alaska Voters by Party Registration

### 2005-2020

Republicans have gone from 25% of the electorate to 24% of the electorate.

**A 1% decrease in 15 years, 0.067% annually**

Democrats have gone from 15% of the electorate to 13% of the electorate.

**A 2% decrease in 15 years, 0.13% annually**

3rd Parties have gone from 7% of the electorate to 5% of the electorate.

**A 2% decrease in 15 years, 0.13% annually**

Nonpartisans/Undeclared have gone from 53% of the electorate to 58% of the electorate.

**A 5% increase in 15 years, 0.33% annually**

### Projected Numbers

#### 2020-2035

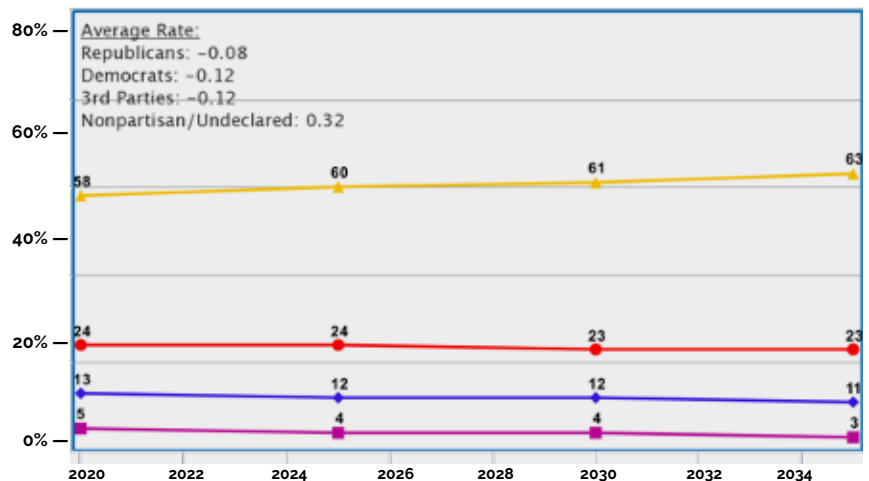
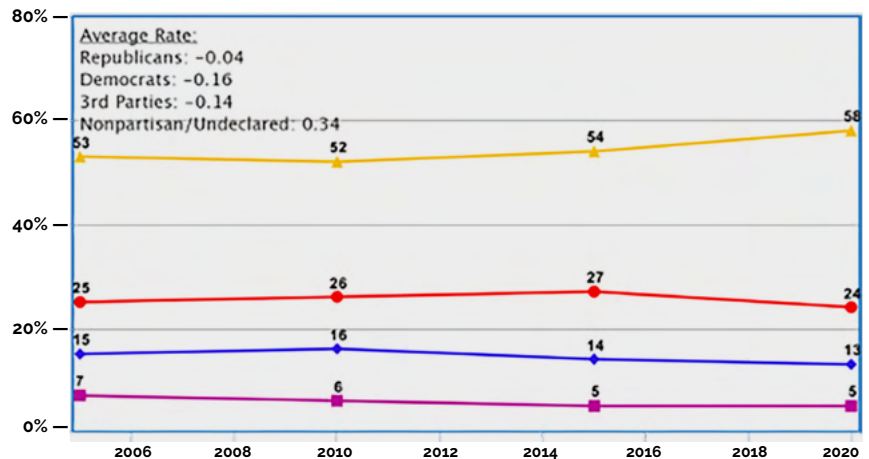
Republicans: 1% decrease in 15 years from 24% to **23% of the electorate**

Democrats: 2% decrease in 15 years from 13% to **11% of the electorate**

3rd Parties: 2% decrease in 15 years from 5% to **3% of the electorate**

Nonpartisans/Undeclared: 5% increase in 15 years from 58% to **63% of the electorate**

● REPUBLICANS    ◆ DEMOCRATS    ■ 3RD PARTIES    ▲ NON-PARTISAN/UNDECLARED





# Arizona

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

2004 (1/2004)	Rep	Republicans: 921,242 (41%)
	Dem	Democrats: 793,567 (36%)
	Other	Other/3rd Parties: 506,605 (23%)
	<b>Total: 2,221,414</b>	
2008 (1/2008)	Rep	Republicans: 1,019,442 (39%)
	Dem	Democrats: 859,738 (33%)
	Other	Other/3rd Parties: 715,237 (28%)
	<b>Total: 2,594,397</b>	

2015 (1/2015)	Rep	Republicans: 1,113,991(34%)
	Dem	Democrats: 933,883 (29%)
	Other	Other/3rd Parties: 1,198,840 (37%)
	<b>Total: 3,247,175</b>	
2020 (4.2020)	Rep	Republicans: 1,370,887 (35%)
	Dem	Democrats: 1,277,242 (33%)
	Other	Other/3rd Parties: 1,281,131 (33%)
	<b>Total: 3,929,260</b>	

## Arizona Voters by Party Registration

Republicans have gone from 41% of the electorate to 35% of the electorate.

**A 6% decrease in 16 years, 0.38% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 36% of the electorate to 33% of the electorate.

**A 3% decrease in 16 years, 0.19% annually.**

Other/3rd Parties have gone from 23% of the electorate to 33% of the electorate

**A 10% increase in 16 years, 0.63% annually.**

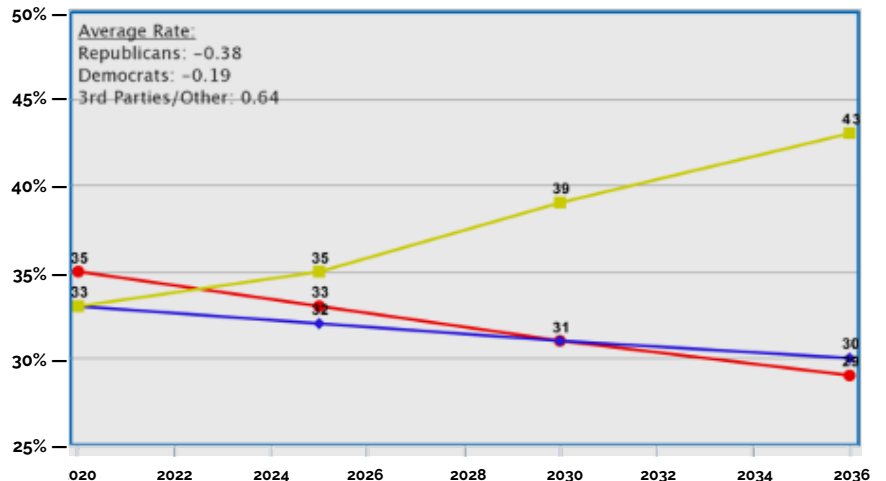
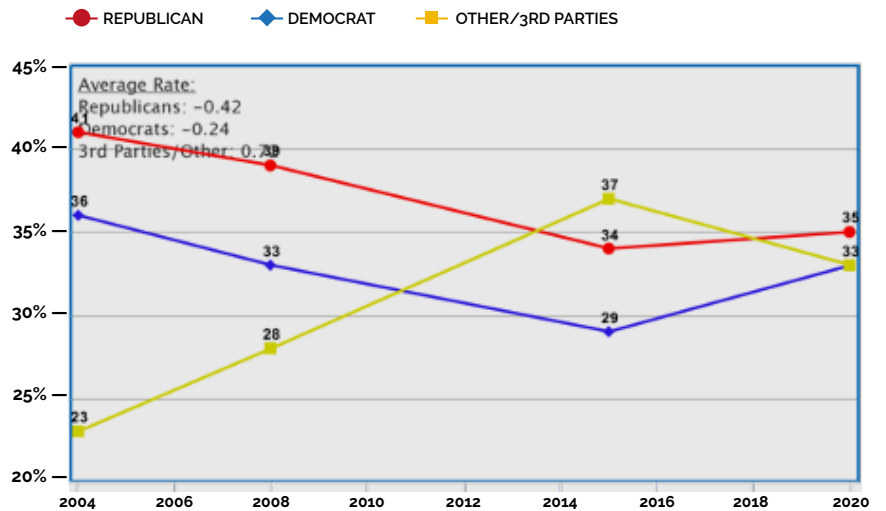
## Projected Numbers

### 2020-2036

Republicans: 6% decrease from 35% to **29% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 3% decrease from 33% to **30% of the electorate.**

Other/3rd Parties: 10% increase from 33% to **43% of the electorate.**



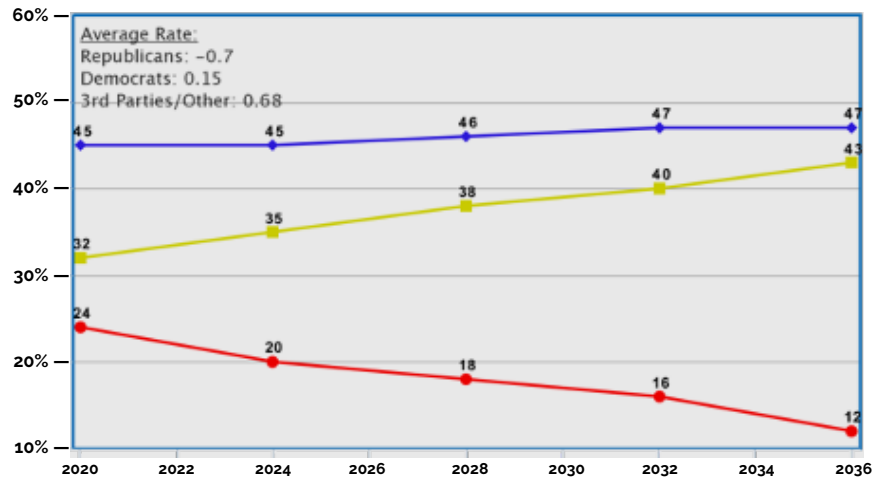
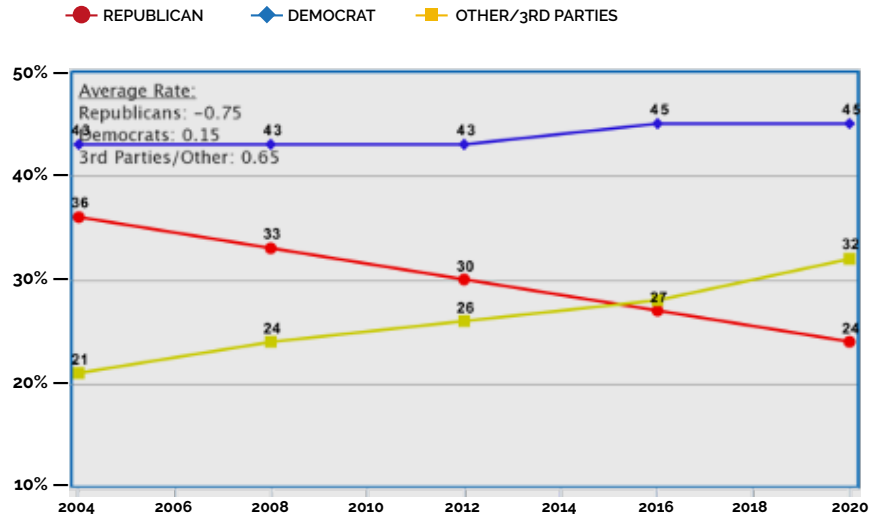




# California

- Independent voters currently second largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party increase in membership and Republican Party in decline

2004 (2/2004)	Republicans: 5,364,832 (36%)
	Democrats: 6,518,631 (43%)
	Other/3rd Parties: 3,207,697 (21%)
	<b>Total: 15,091,160</b>
2008 (2/2008)	Republicans: 5,229,425 (33%)
	Democrats: 6,749,406 (43%)
	Other/3rd Parties: 3,733,922 (24%)
	<b>Total: 15,712,753</b>
2012 (5/2012)	Republicans: 5,186,492 (30%)
	Democrats: 7,442,921 (43%)
	Other/3rd Parties: 4,524,286 (26%)
	<b>Total: 17,153,699</b>
2016 (5/2016)	Republicans: 4,888,771 (27%)
	Democrats: 8,029,130 (45%)
	Other/3rd Parties: 4,997,152 (28%)
	<b>Total: 17,915,053</b>
2020 (2/2020)	Republicans: 4,937,986 (24%)
	Democrats: 9,361,582 (45%)
	Other/3rd Parties: 6,360,951 (32%)
	<b>Total: 20,660,519</b>



## California Voters by Party Registration

Republicans have gone from 36% to 24% of the electorate in 16 years. **A decrease of 12% in 16 years, 0.75% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 43% to 45% of the electorate in 16 years. **An increase of 2% in 16 years, 0.13% annually.**

Other/3rd parties have gone from 21% to 32% of the electorate in 16 years. **An increase of 11% in 16 years, 0.69% annually.**

## 2020-2036 Projections

Republicans: 12% decrease from 24% to **12% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 2% increase from 45% to **47% of the electorate.**

Other/3rd parties: 11% increase from 32% to **43% of the electorate.**

# Colorado



- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic Party stagnant and Republican Party in decline

2005	Republicans: 1,085,921 (36%)
	Democrats: 913,024 (30%)
	3rd parties: 11,777 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 986,668 (33%)
<b>Total: 2,997,390</b>	
2010	Republicans: 838,658 (35%)
	Democrats: 802,409 (34%)
	3rd Parties: 13,455 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 729,933 (31%)
<b>Total: 2,384,465</b>	

2015	Republicans: 955,100 (33%)
	Democrats: 898,492 (31%)
	3rd Parties: 41,632 (1%)
	Unaffiliated: 1,031,371 (35%)
<b>Total: 2,908,595</b>	
2020 (4/2020)	Republicans: 967,304 (28%)
	Democrats: 1,049,517 (30%)
	3rd Parties: 57,365 (2%)
	Unaffiliated: 1,379,585 (40%)
<b>Total: 3,453,771</b>	

## Colorado Voters by Party Registration

Republicans have gone from 36% to 28% of the electorate in 15 years.

**A decrease of 8% in 15 years, 0.53% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 30% to 30% of the electorate in 15 years.

**No change in percentage in 15 years.**

3rd Parties have gone from less than 1% to 2% of the electorate in 15 years.

**An increase of 1.5% in 15 years, 0.1% annually**

Unaffiliated voters have gone from 33% to 40% of the electorate in 15 years.

**An increase of 7% in 15 years, 0.47% annually.**

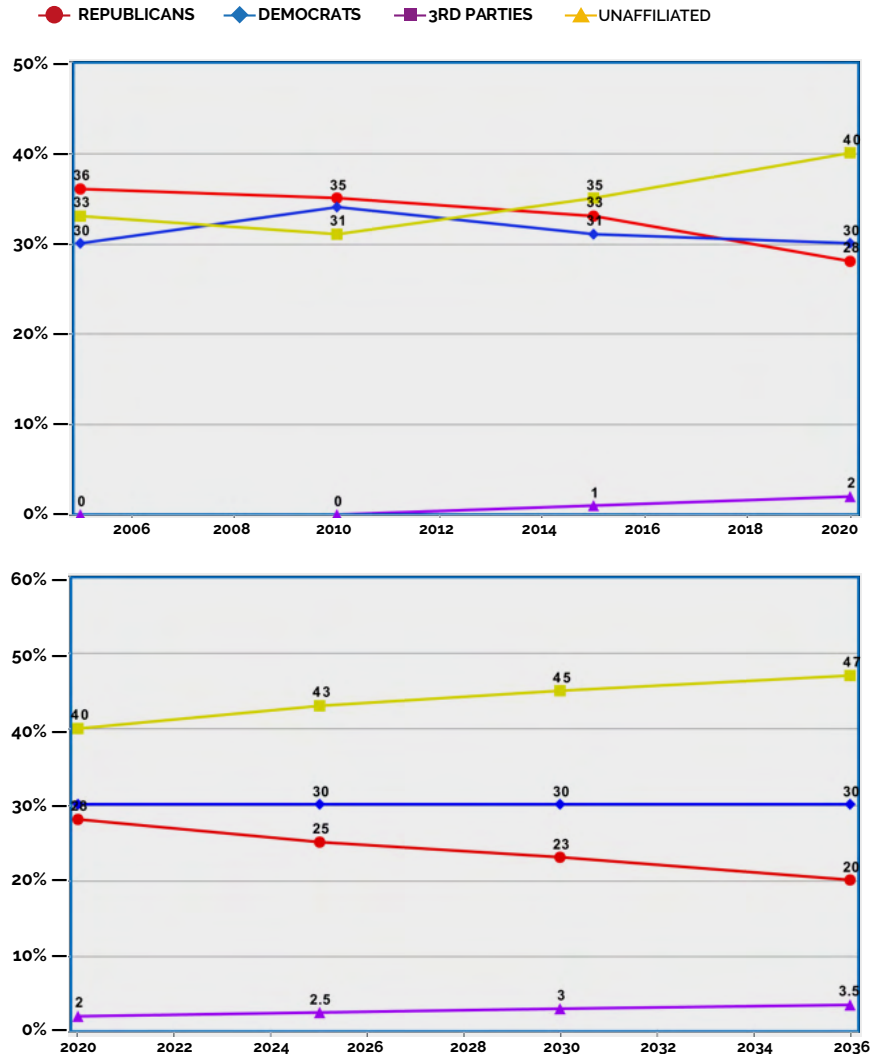
## Projected Numbers

Republicans: 8% decrease 28% to **20% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 0% increase/decrease from 30% to **30% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: 1.5% increase from 2% to **3.5% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated: 7% increase from 40% to **47% of the electorate.**





# Connecticut

- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party increase membership and Republican Party in decline

2005 (10/2005)	Republicans-453,715 (22%)
	Democrats-699,502 (34%)
	3rd Parties- 4,387 (less than 1%, 0.02%)
	Unaffiliated-929,005 (45%)
	<b>Total: 2,086,609</b>
2010 (10/2010)	Republicans-438,473 (20%)
	Democrats-794,512 (37%)
	3rd Parties-13,594 (less than 1%, 0.06%)
	Unaffiliated voters-904,054 (42%)
	<b>Total: 2,150,633</b>

2015 (10/2015)	Republicans-429,301 (20%)
	Democrats-776,886 (36%)
	3rd Parties-22,493 (1%)
	Unaffiliated -900,609 (42%)
	<b>Total: 2,357,733</b>
2019 (10/2019)	Republicans-486,911 (20%)
	Democrats-872,481 (37%)
	3rd Parties-36,692 (1.5%)
	Unaffiliated- 979,453 (41%)
	<b>Total: 2,375,537</b>

## Connecticut Voters by Party Registration

Republicans have gone from 22% to 20% of the electorate.

**A 2% decrease in 14 years, 0.13% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 34% to 37% of the electorate.

**A 3% increase in 14 years, 0.2 annually.**

3rd parties have gone from less than 1% to 1.5% of the electorate. A 1.5% increase in 14 years, 0.12 annually

**A 1.5% increase in 14 years to 3%.**

Unaffiliated voters have gone from 45% to 41% of the electorate.

**A 4% decrease in 14 years, 0.27% annually.**

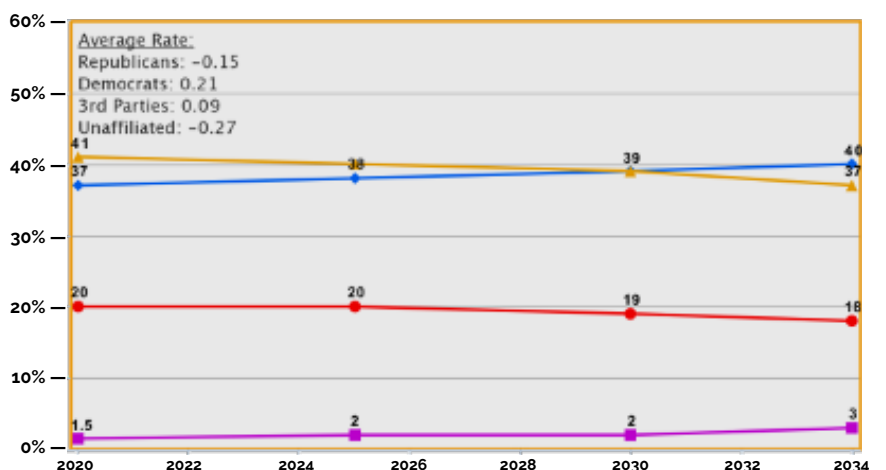
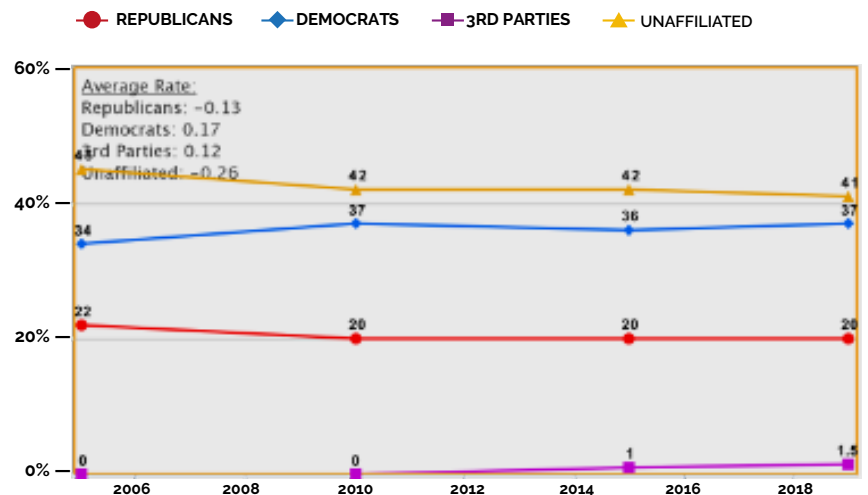
## 2020-2034 Projections

Republicans: 2% decrease in 14 years to 18%

Democrats: 3% increase in 14 years to 40%

3rd Parties: 1.7% increase in 14 years to 3%

Unaffiliated: 4% decrease in 14 years to 37%

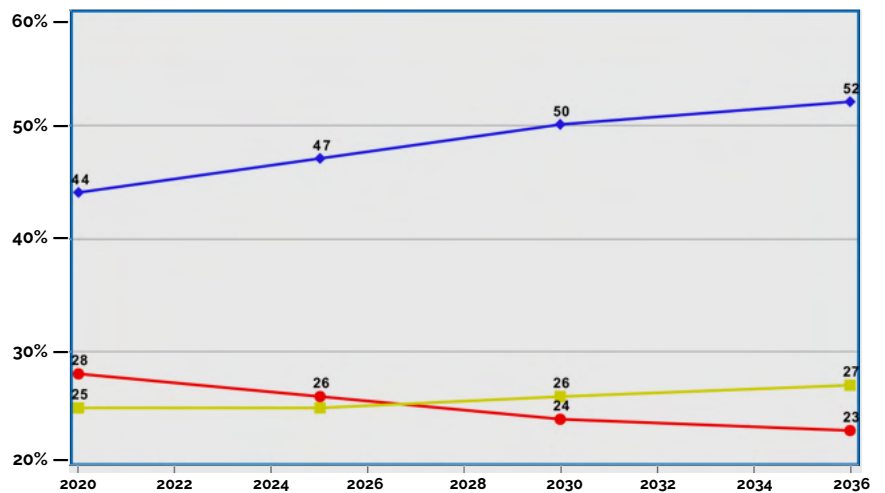
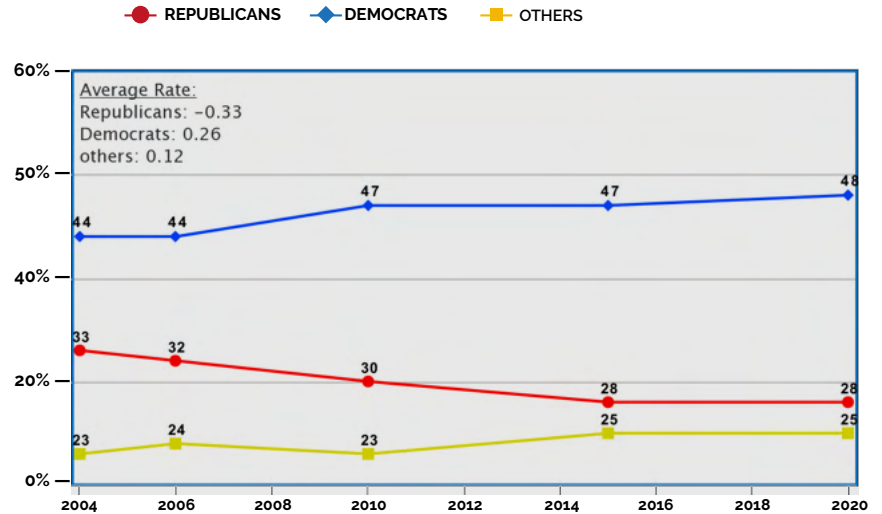




# Delaware

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party increase membership and Republican Party in decline

2004	Republicans: 181,510 (33%)
	Democrats: 240,999 (44%)
	Others: 128,475 (23%)
	<b>Total: 550,984</b>
2006	Republicans: 178,655 (32%)
	Democrats: 246,149 (44%)
	Others: 132,932 (24%)
	<b>Total: 557,736</b>
2010	Republicans: 180,479 (30%)
	Democrats: 287,821 (47%)
	Others: 143,167 (23%)
	<b>Total: 611,467</b>
2015	Republicans: 180,451 (28%)
	Democrats: 305,532 (47%)
	Others: 158,319 (25%)
	<b>Total: 644,302</b>
2020 (5/2020)	Republicans: 199,654 (28%)
	Democrats: 343,337 (48%)
	Others: 177,750 (25%)
	<b>Total: 720,741</b>



## Delaware Voters by Party Registration

Republicans have gone from 33% to 28% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 5% in 16 years, 0.31% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 44% to 48% of the electorate.

**An increase of 4% in 16 years, 0.25% annually.**

Others have gone from 23% to 25% of the electorate.

**An increase of 2% in 16 years, 0.13% annually.**

## 2020-2036 Projections

Republicans: 5% decrease from 28% to **23% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 4% increase from 48% to **52% of the electorate.**

Others: 2% increase from 25% to **27% of the electorate.**





# Florida

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

2005 (1/2005)	Republicans—3,957,839 (38%)
	Democrats—4,314,023 (41%)
	3rd Parties—304,140 (3%)
	No Party Affiliation—1,897,857 (18%)
	<b>Total: 10,473,859</b>
2010 (1/2010)	Republicans—3,973,772 (36%)
	Democrats—4,645,338 (42%)
	3rd Parties—353,725 (3%)
	No Party Affiliation—2,114,837 (19%)
	<b>Total: 11,087,672</b>

2015 (1/2015)	Republicans—4,182,825 (35%)
	Democrats—4,619,316 (39%)
	3rd Parties—355,189 (3%)
	No Party Affiliation—2,831,524 (24%)
	<b>Total: 11,988,854</b>
2020 (2/2020)	Republicans—4,832,285 (35%)
	Democrats—5,115,768 (37%)
	3rd Parties—152,175 (1%)
	No Party Affiliation—3,630,535 (26%)
	<b>Total: 13,730,763</b>

## 2005-2020

The Republican Party has gone from 38% of electorate to 35% of electorate. **A decrease of 0.2% annually or 3% in 15 years.**

The Democratic Party has gone from 41% of electorate to 37% of electorate. **A decrease of 0.27% annually or 4% in 15 years**

Third parties have gone from 3% of the electorate to 1% of the electorate. **A decrease of 0.12% annually or nearly 2% in 15 years.**

No Party Affiliation voters have gone from 18% of the electorate to 26% of the electorate. **An increase of 0.58% annually or nearly 8% in 15 years.**

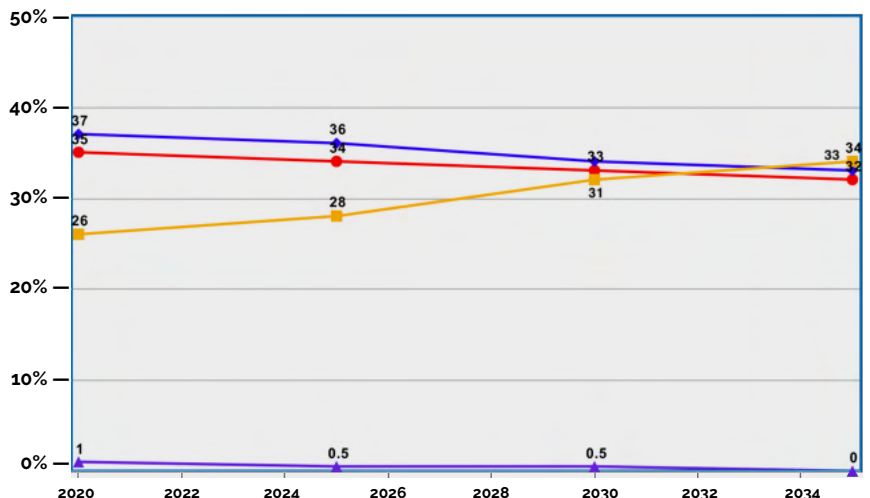
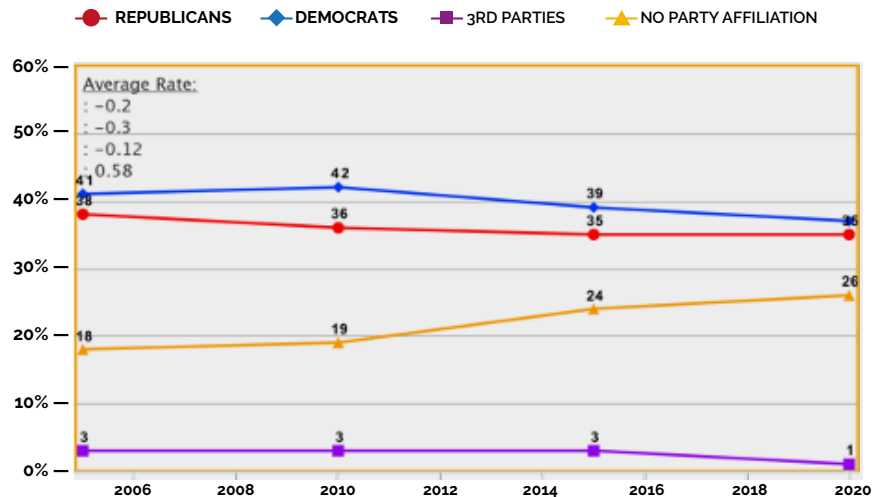
## 2020-2035 Projections

Republicans: 3% decrease to **32% of the electorate**

Democrats: 4% decrease to **33% of the electorate**

Minor parties: 2% decrease to less than **1% of the electorate.**

No Party Affiliation: 8% increase to **34% of the electorate.**





# Idaho \*

- Independent voters currently second largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected third largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties increasing membership

2013	Republicans: 240,852 (32%)
	Democrats: 56,664 (8%)
	3rd Parties: 5,088 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 440,590 (59%)
<b>Total: 743,194</b>	
2015	Republicans: 295,956 (39%)
	Democrats: 68,461 (9%)
	3rd Parties: 6,537 (1%)
	Unaffiliated: 389,593 (51%)
<b>Total: 760,647</b>	

2018	Republicans: 396,940 (50%)
	Democrats: 88,626 (11%)
	3rd Parties: 9,427 (1%)
	Unaffiliated: 306,158 (38%)
<b>Total: 801,151</b>	
2020 (4/2020)	Republicans: 449,562 (50%)
	Democrats: 125,291 (14%)
	3rd Parties: 11,319 (1%)
	Unaffiliated: 309,539 (35%)
<b>Total: 895,714</b>	

## Idaho Voters by Party Registration

Republicans have gone from 32% to 50% of the electorate.

**An increase of 18% in 7 years, 2.57% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 8% to 14% of the electorate.

**An increase of 6% in 7 years, 0.86% annually.**

3rd Parties have gone from less than 1% to 1% of the electorate.

**An increase of 1% in 7 years, 0.14% annually.**

Unaffiliated have gone from 59% to 35% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 24% in 7 years, 3.43% annually**

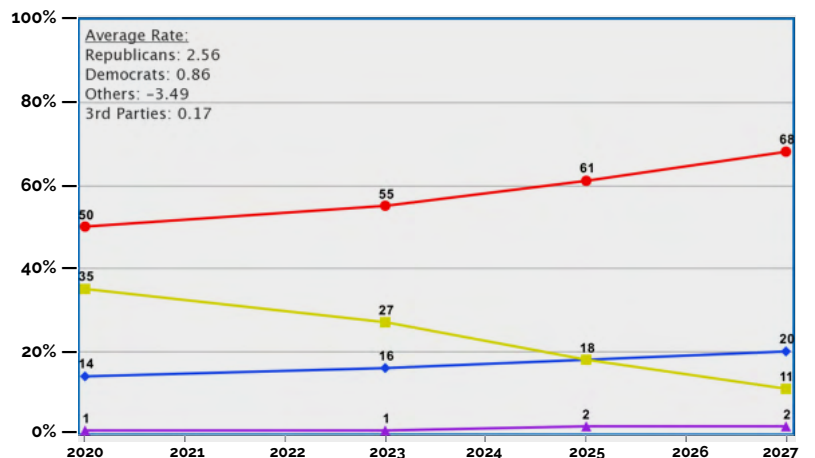
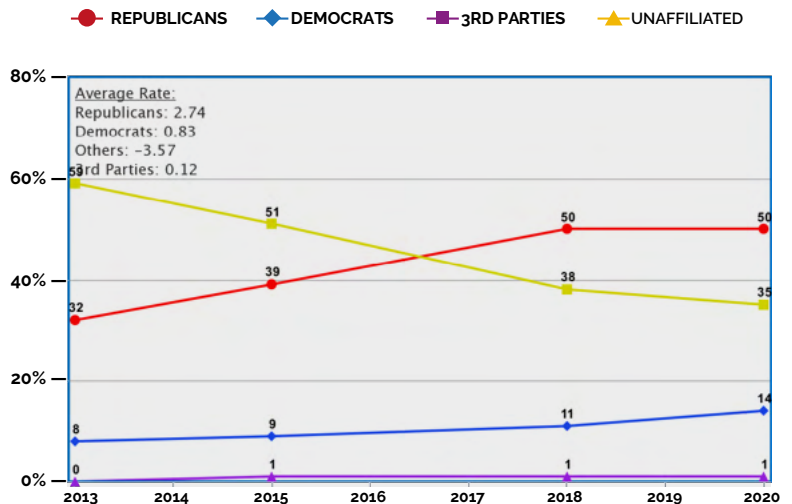
## 2020-2027 Projections

Republicans: increase in 18% from 50% to **68% of the electorate.**

Democrats: increase in 6% from 14% to **20% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: increase of 1% from 1% to **2% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated: decrease in 24% from 35% to **11% of the electorate.**



\*DATA BEFORE 2013 UNAVAILABLE



# Iowa

- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties both stagnant

2005	Republicans: 615,042 (31%)
	Democrats: 610,824 (31%)
	No Parties/other: 756,117 (38%)
<b>Total: 1,981,983</b>	
2010	Republicans: 578,171 (29%)
	Democrats: 682,242 (35%)
	No Party/Other: 711,603 (36%)
<b>Total: 1,972,016</b>	

2015	Republicans: 623,465 (32%)
	Democrats: 603,469 (31%)
	No Party/Other: 726,317 (37%)
<b>Total: 1,953,251</b>	
2020 (1/2020)	Republicans: 639,969 (32%)
	Democrats: 614,519 (30%)
	No Party/Other: 762,717 (38%)
<b>Total: 2,017,205</b>	

## 2005-2020

Republicans have gone from 31% to 32% of the electorate.

**An increase of 1% in 15 years, 0.07% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 31% to 30% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 1% in 15 years, 0.07% annually.**

No Party/Other have gone from 38% to 38% of the electorate.

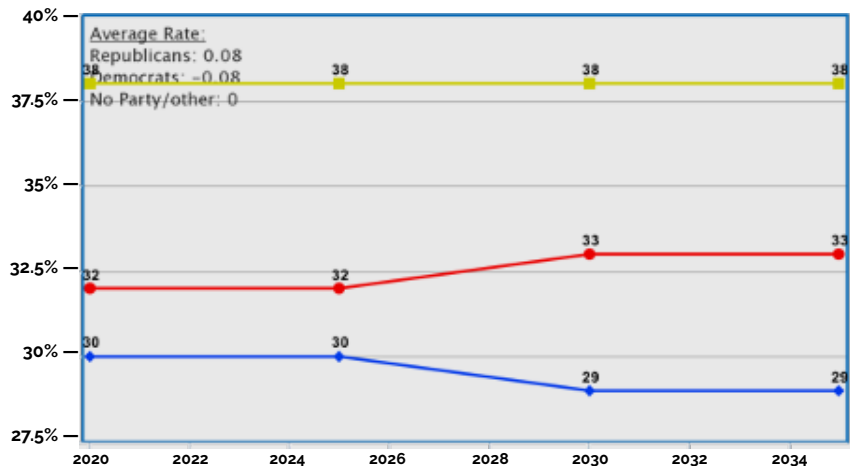
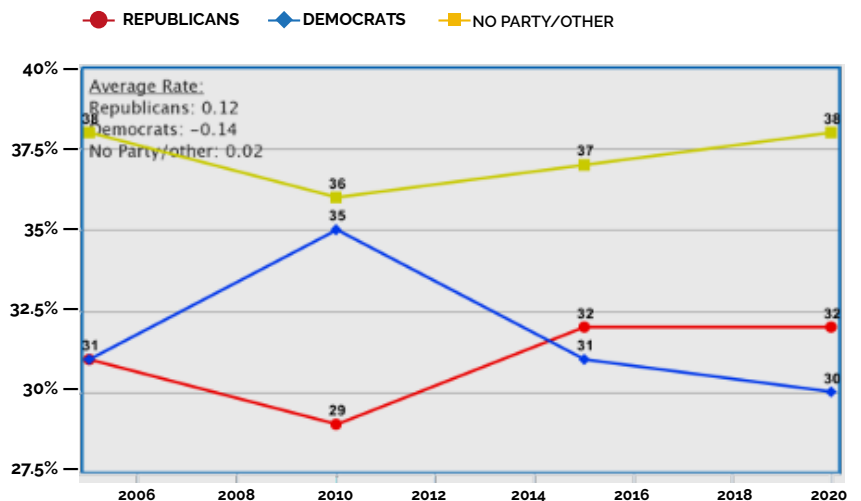
**No change in 15 years.**

## 2020-2035 Projections

Republicans: 1% increase from 32% to **33% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 1% decrease from 30% to **29% of the electorate.**

No Party/Other: No change, remains at **38% of the electorate.**

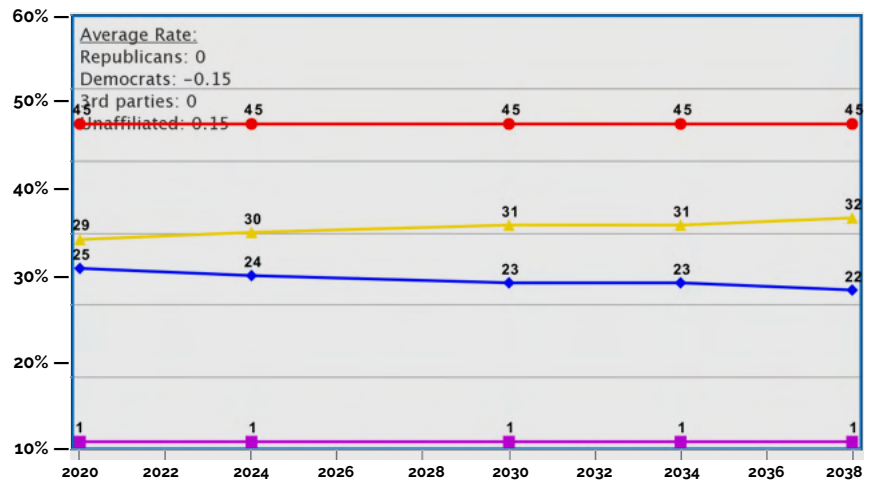
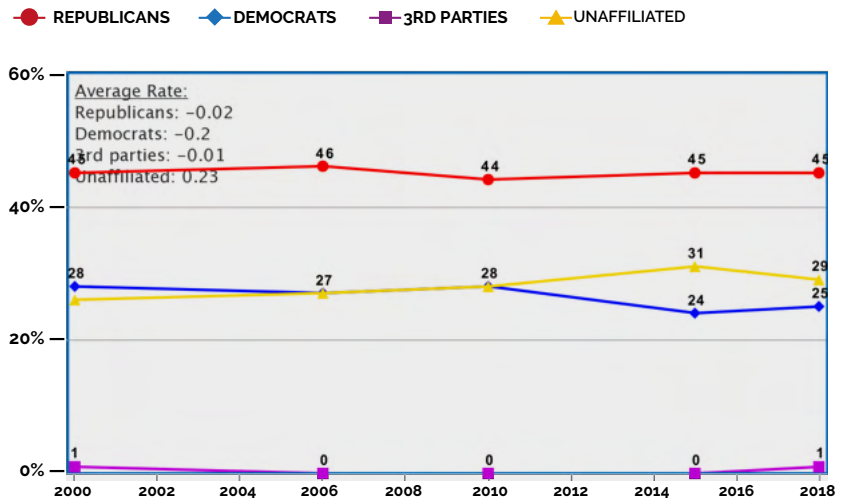




# Kansas

- Independent voters currently second largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party in decline and Republican Party stagnant

210/2000	Republicans: 735,435 (45%)
	Democrats: 449,445 (28%)
	3rd Parties: 14,560 (1%)
	Unaffiliated: 424,183 (26%)
	<b>Total: 1,623,623</b>
10/2006	Republicans: 760,745 (46%)
	Democrats: 438,327 (27%)
	3rd Parties: 10,494 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 440,372 (27%)
	<b>Total: 1,649,938</b>
2010	Republicans: 740,947 (44%)
	Democrats: 468,190 (28%)
	3rd Parties: 10,887 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 481,497 (28%)
	<b>Total: 1,701,521</b>
2015	Republicans: 760,159 (45%)
	Democrats: 408,601 (24%)
	3rd Parties: 13,181 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 523,596 (31%)
	<b>Total: 1,705,537</b>
5/2020	Republicans: 812,009 (45%)
	Democrats: 457,493 (25%)
	3rd Parties: 17,020 (1%)
	Unaffiliated: 532,009 (29%)
	<b>Total: 1,818,531</b>



## Kansas Voters by Party Registration

Republicans have remained at 45% of the electorate.  
**No change in 18 years.**

Democrats have gone from 28% to 25% of the electorate.  
**A 3% decrease in 18 years, 0.17% annually.**

3rd Parties have gone from less than 1% to 1% of the electorate.  
**Almost no change in 18 years.**

Unaffiliated voters have gone from 26% to 29% of the electorate.  
**A 3% increase in 18 years, 0.17% annually.**

## 2020-2038 Projections

Republicans: No change—remain at **45% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 3% decrease from 25% to **22% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: No change—remain at **1% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated: 3% increase from 29% to **32% of the electorate.**





# Kentucky

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected third largest group of voters
- Democratic Party in decline and Republican Party increase in membership

2004	Republicans: 996,663 (36%)
	Democrats: 1,615,349 (58%)
	Other/Independents/3rd Parties: 182,273 (7%)
	<b>Total: 2,794,286</b>
2010	Republicans: 1,044,872 (37%)
	Democrats: 1,618,011 (57%)
	Other/Independents/3rd Parties: 189,113 (7%)
	<b>Total: 2,851,996</b>

2015	Republicans: 1,259,542 (39%)
	Democrats: 1,685,054 (53%)
	Other/Independents/3rd Parties: 257,253 (8%)
	<b>Total: 3,201,849</b>
3/2020	Republicans: 1,484,062 (43%)
	Democrats: 1,679,132 (48%)
	Other/Independents/3rd Parties: 306,716 (9%)
	<b>Total: 3,469,910</b>

## 2004-2020

Republicans have gone from 36% to 43% of the electorate.

**An increase of 7% in 16 years, 0.44% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 58% to 48% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 10% in 16 years, 0.63% annually.**

Other/Independents/3rd Parties have gone from 7% to 9% of the electorate.

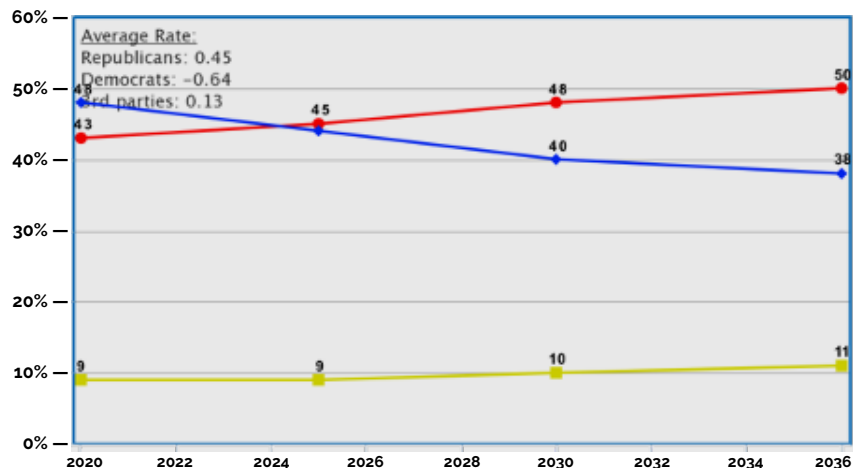
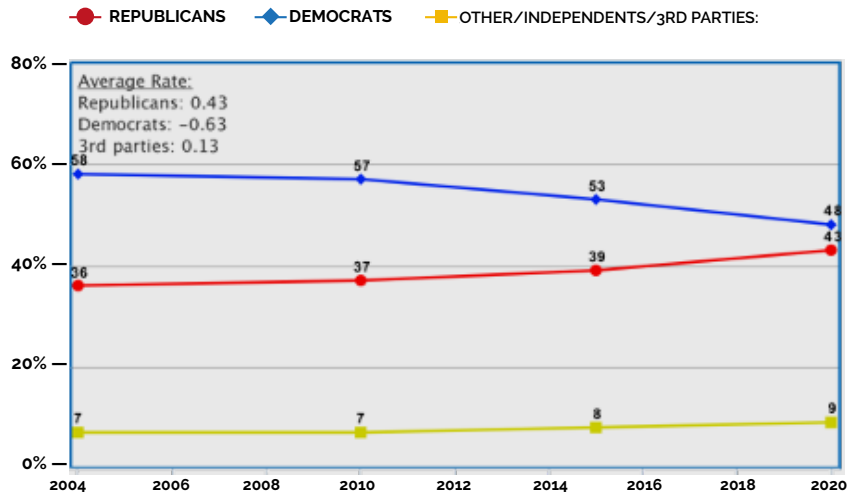
**An increase of 2% in 16 years, 0.13% annually.**

## 2020-2036 Projections

Republicans: 7% increase from 43% to **50% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 10% decrease from 58% to **48% of the electorate.**

Other/Independent/3rd Party: 2% increase from 9% to **11% of the electorate.**





# Louisiana

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party in decline and Republican Party increase in membership

4/2005		Republicans: 642,896 (24%)
		Democrats: 1,484,847 (56%)
		Other: 528,471 (20%)
	<b>Total: 2,656,214</b>	
1/2010		Republicans: 748,558 (26%)
		Democrats: 1,506,736 (52%)
		Other: 659,149 (23%)
	<b>Total: 2,914,443</b>	

1/2015		Republicans: 804,686 (28%)
		Democrats: 1,342,640 (47%)
		Other: 731,742 (25%)
<b>Total: 2,879,068</b>		
1/2020		Republicans: 930,495 (31%)
		Democrats: 1,256,701 (42%)
		Other: 793,673 (27%)
<b>Total: 2,980,869</b>		

## 2005-2020

Republicans have gone from 24% to 31% of the electorate.

**An increase of 7% in 15 years, 0.47% annually**

Democrats have gone from 56% to 42% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 14% in 15 years, 0.93% annually.**

Others have gone from 20% to 27% of the electorate.

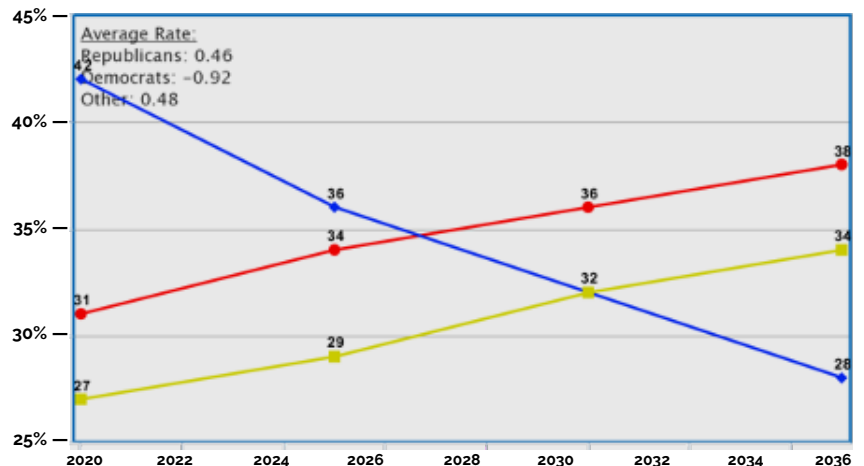
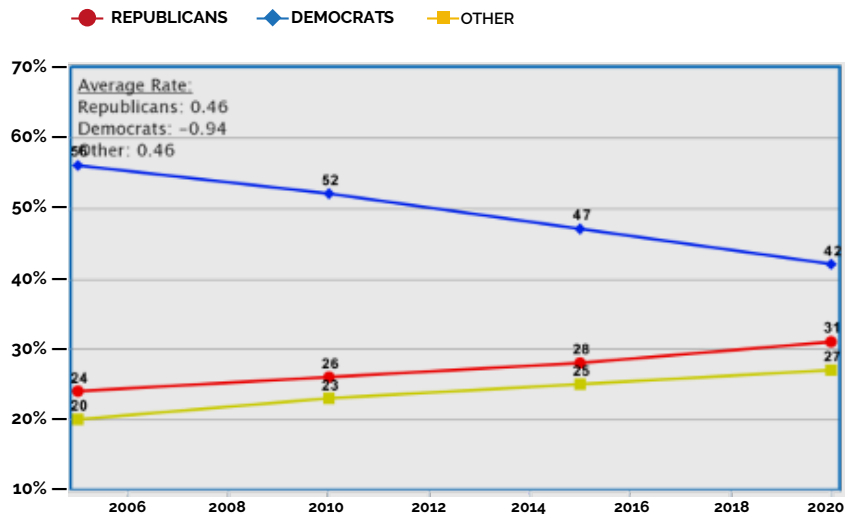
**An increase of 7% in 15 years, 0.47% annually.**

## 2020-2035 Projections

Republicans: 7% increase from 31% to **38% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 14% decrease from 42% to **28% of the electorate.**

Others: 7% increase from 27% to **34% of the electorate.**

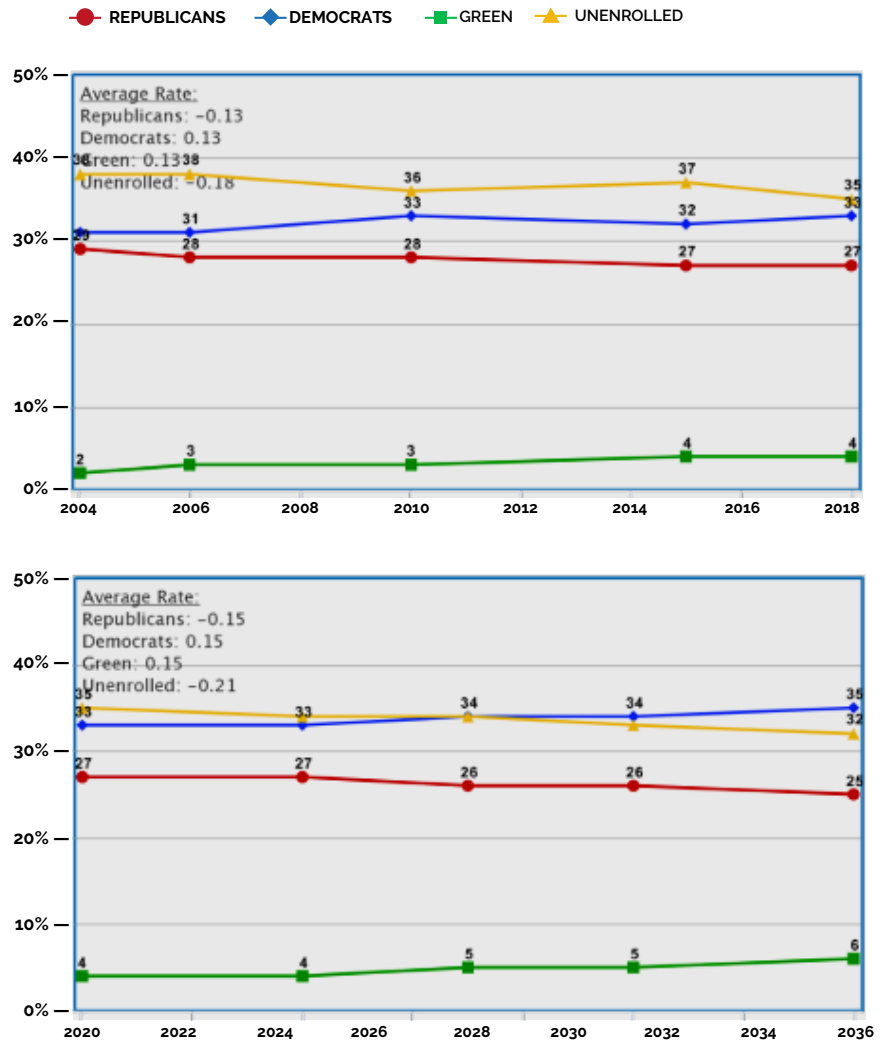




# Maine

- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Republican Party decline and Democratic Party increase membership

1/2004	Republicans: 274,727 (29%)
	Democrats: 297,831 (31%)
	Green: 19,006 (2%)
	Unenrolled: 365,921 (38%)
	<b>Total: 957,485</b>
2006	Republican: 279,641 (28%)
	Democrat: 309,525 (31%)
	Green: 29,347 (3%)
	Unenrolled: 375,235 (38%)
	<b>Total: 993,748</b>
2010	Republican: 274,517 (28%)
	Democrat: 325,669 (33%)
	Green: 32,868 (3%)
	Unenrolled: 349,978 (36%)
	<b>Total: 983,033</b>
2015	Republican: 263,392 (27%)
	Democrat: 309,100 (32%)
	Green: 40,359 (4%)
	Unenrolled: 365,130 (37%)
	<b>Total: 978,146</b>
2018	Republicans: 287,955 (27%)
	Democrat: 348,657 (33%)
	Green: 43,801 (4%)
	Unenrolled: 368,284 (35%)
	<b>Total: 1,054,952</b>



## 2004-2018

Republicans have gone from 29% to 27% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 2% in 14 years, 0.14% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 31% to 33% of the electorate.

**An increase of 2% in 14 years, 0.14% annually.**

Green party has gone from 2% to 4% of the electorate.

**An increase of 2% in 14 years, 0.14% annually.**

Unenrolled have gone from 38% to 35% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 3% in 14 years, 0.21% annually**

## 2018-2036 Projections

Republicans: 2% decrease from 27% to **25% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 2% increase from 33% to **35% of the electorate.**

Green: 2% increase from 4% to **6% of the electorate.**

Unenrolled: 3% decrease from 35% to **32% of the electorate.**



# Maryland

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

8/2006	■	Republicans—868,201 (29%)
	■	Democrats—1,664,311 (55%)
	■	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties—12,271 (>1%)
	■	Unaffiliated—458,785 (15%)
		<b>Totals: 3,003,568</b>
11/2010	■	Republicans—925,614 (27%)
	■	Democrats—1,957,279 (56%)
	■	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties—57,118 (1%)
	■	Unaffiliated—528,274 (15%)
		<b>Total: 3,468,287</b>

11/2016	■	Republicans—1,014,307 (26%)
	■	Democrats—2,150,795 (55%)
	■	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties—60,163 (2%)
	■	Unaffiliated—674,825 (17%)
		<b>Total: 3,900,090</b>
2/2020	■	Republicans—1,012,400 (25%)
	■	Democrats—2,222,555 (55%)
	■	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties—60,401 (1%)
	■	Unaffiliated—762,594 (19%)
		<b>Total: 4,057,950</b>

## 2006-2020

The Republican party has gone from 29% of the electorate to 25% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 4% over 14 years, 0.27% annually**

The Democratic party has gone from 55% of the electorate to 55% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 0.45% over 14 years, 0.03% annually.**

Third parties have gone from less than 1% of the electorate to 1% of the electorate.

**An increase of 1.35% over 14 years, 0.09% annually.**

Unaffiliated voters have gone from 15% of the electorate to 19% of the electorate.

**An increase of 4% over 14 years, 0.27% annually.**

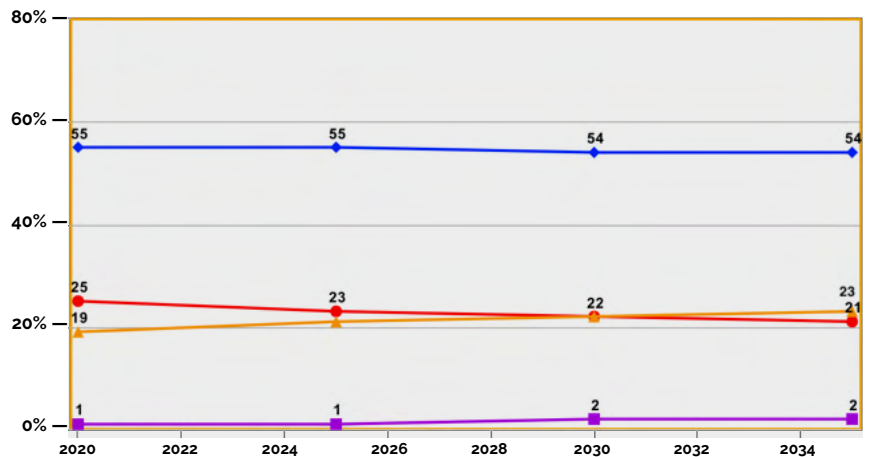
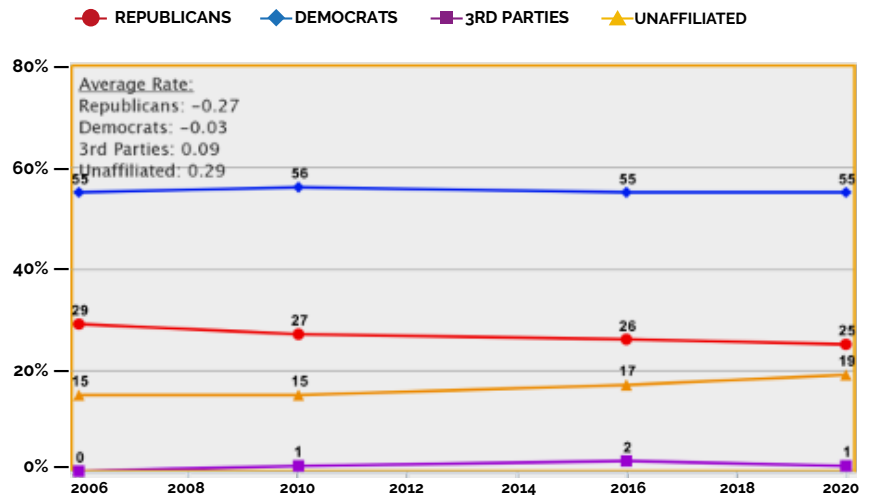
## 2020-2034 Predictions

Republicans: 4% decrease over 15 years from 25% to **21% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 0.45% decrease over 15 years from 55% to **54% of the electorate**

3rd Parties: 1.35% decrease over 15 years from 1% to **2% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated voters: 4% increase over 15 years from 19% to **23% of the electorate.**



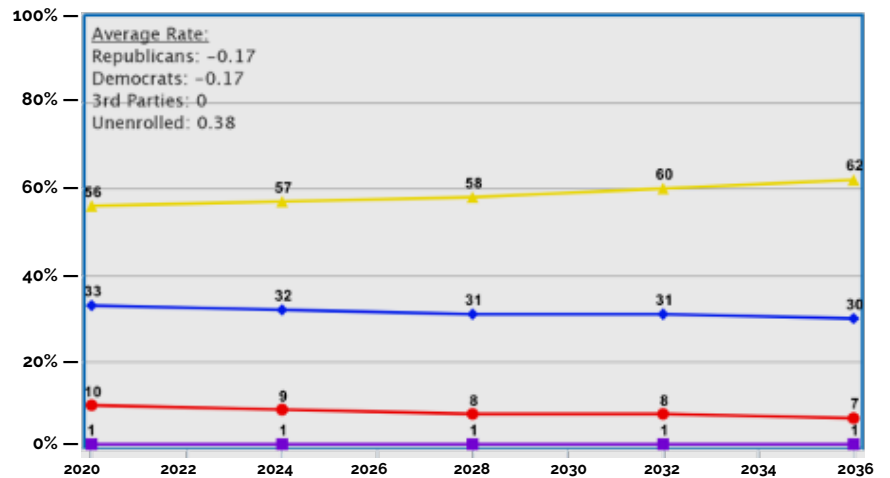
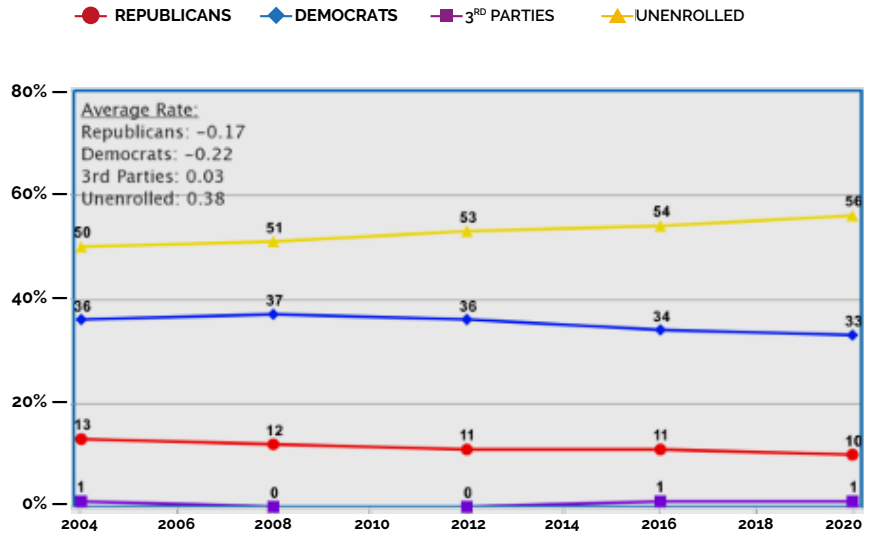




# Massachusetts

- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

2/2004	Republicans: 512,396 (13%)
	Democrats: 1,410,388 (36%)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties: 37,368 (1%)
	Unenrolled: 1,944,209 (50%)
	<b>Total: 3,904,361</b>
10/2008	Republicans: 490,259 (12%)
	Democrats: 1,559,464 (37%)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties: 28,887 (less than 1%)
	Unenrolled: 2,141,878 (51%)
	<b>Total: 4,220,488</b>
10/2012	Republicans: 484,099 (11%)
	Democrats: 1,551,693 (36%)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties: 23,776 (less than 1%)
	Unenrolled: 2,283,273 (53%)
	<b>Total: 4,342,841</b>
10/2016	Republicans: 484,508 (11%)
	Democrats: 1,549,828 (34%)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties: 52,817 (1%)
	Unenrolled: 2,447,821 (54%)
	<b>Total: 4,534,974</b>
2/2020	Republicans: 462,586 (10%)
	Democrats: 1,491,600 (33%)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties: 63,057 (1%)
	Unenrolled: 2,564,076 (56%)
	<b>Total: 4,581,319</b>



## 2004-2020

Republicans have gone from 13% to 10% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 3% in 16 years, 0.19% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 36% to 33% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 3% in 16 years, 0.19% annually.**

3<sup>rd</sup> Parties have gone from 1% to 1% of the electorate.

**They have stayed the same in 16 years.**

Unenrolled have gone from 50% to 56% of the electorate.

**An increase of 6% in 16 years, 0.38% annually.**

## 2020-2036 Projections

Republicans: 3% decrease from 10% to **7% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 3% decrease from 33% to **30% of the electorate.**

3<sup>rd</sup> Parties: remain the same at **1% of the electorate.**

Unenrolled: 6% increase from 56% to **62% of the electorate.**



# Nebraska

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party in decline and Republican Party stagnant

2004	Republicans: 540,707 (50%)
	Democrats: 374,952 (35%)
	3rd parties: 6,566 (less than 1%)
	Nonpartisan: 157,830 (15%)
<b>Total: 1,073,489</b>	
2/2010	Republicans: 542,106 (48%)
	Democrats: 383,518 (34%)
	Nonpartisan: 205,288 (18%)
	<b>Total: 1,130,912</b>

1/2015	Republicans: 550,455 (49%)
	Democrats: 347,937 (31%)
	Nonpartisan: 229,610 (20%)
	<b>1,133,966</b>
5/2020	Republicans: 581,548 (48%)
	Democrats: 358,500 (29%)
	3rd Parties: 15,329 (1%)
	Nonpartisan: 261,262 (21%)
<b>Total: 1,216,639</b>	

## 2004-2020

Republicans have gone from 50% to 48% of the electorate.

**A 2% decrease in 16 years, 0.125% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 35% to 29% of the electorate.

**A 6% decrease in 16 years, 0.38% annually.**

3rd parties have gone from less than 1% to 1% of the electorate

**A 1% increase in 16 years, 0.06% annually.**

Nonpartisans have gone from 15% to 21% of the electorate.

**A 6% increase in 16 years, 0.38% annually.**

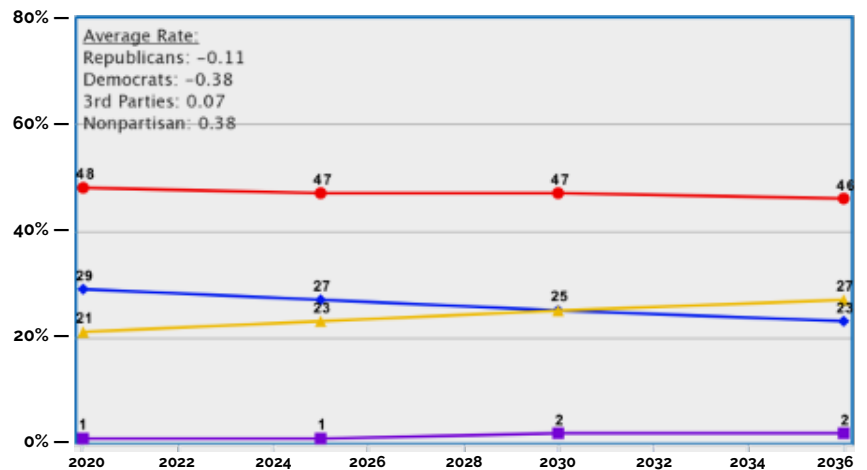
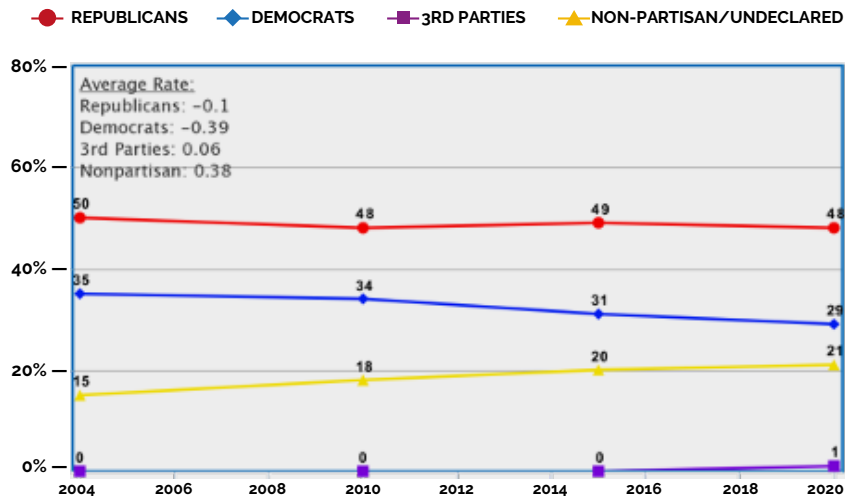
## 2020-2036 Projections

Republicans: 2% decrease to **46% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 6% decrease to **23% of the electorate.**

3rd parties: 1% increase to **2% of the electorate.**

Nonpartisans: 6% increase to **27% of the electorate.**





# Nevada

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

1/2005	Republicans—445,523 (40%)
	Democrats—443,382 (40%)
	Nonpartisan—167,106 (15%)
	3rd parties—47,778 (4%)
	<b>Total: 1,103,789</b>
1/2010	Republicans—468,245 (35%)
	Democrats—579,750 (44%)
	Nonpartisan—209,779 (16%)
	3rd parties—74,668 (5%)
	<b>Total: 1,332,442</b>

1/2015	Republicans—475,326 (33%)
	Democrats—571,144 (40%)
	Nonpartisan—280,809 (20%)
	3rd Parties—93,637 (7%)
	<b>Total: 1,420,916</b>
2/2020	Republicans—590,801 (32%)
	Democrats—713,269 (38%)
	Nonpartisan—431,250 (23%)
	3rd Parties—118,509 (6%)
	<b>Total: 1,853,829</b>

## 2005-2020

The Republican party has gone from 40% of the electorate to 32% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 8% in 15 years, 0.53% annually.**

The Democratic Party has gone from 40% of the electorate to 38% of the electorate

**A decrease of 2% in 15 years, 0.13% annually.**

Third parties have gone from 4% of the electorate to 6% of the electorate.

**An increase of 2% in 15 years, 0.13% annually.**

Nonpartisans have gone from 15% of the electorate to 23% of the electorate.

**An increase of 8% in 15 years, 0.53% annually.**

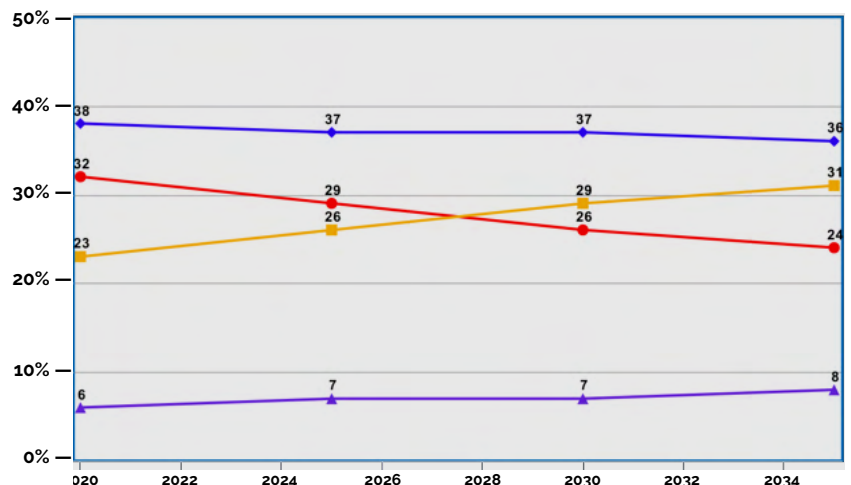
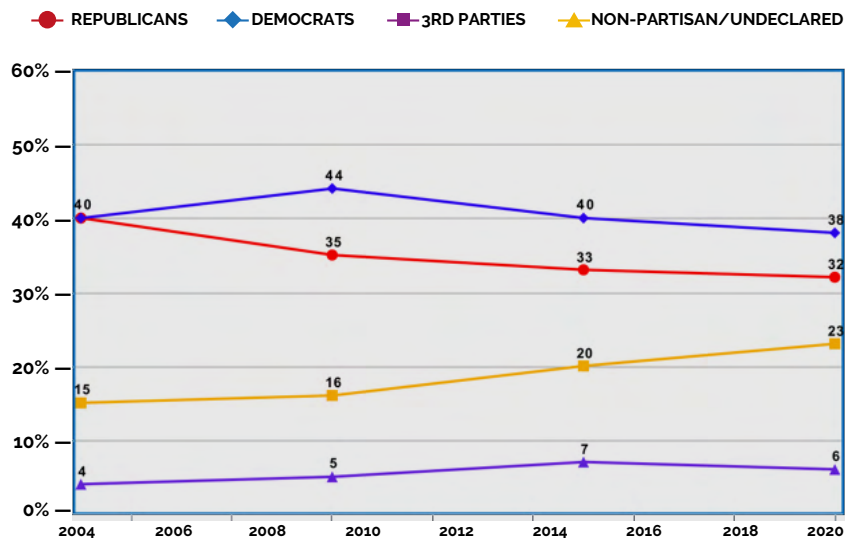
## 2020-2035 Projections

Republicans: 8% decrease from 32% to **24% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 2% decrease from 38% to **36% of the electorate.**

3rd parties: 2% increase from 6% to **8% of the electorate.**

Nonpartisans: 8% increase from 23% to **31% of the electorate.**

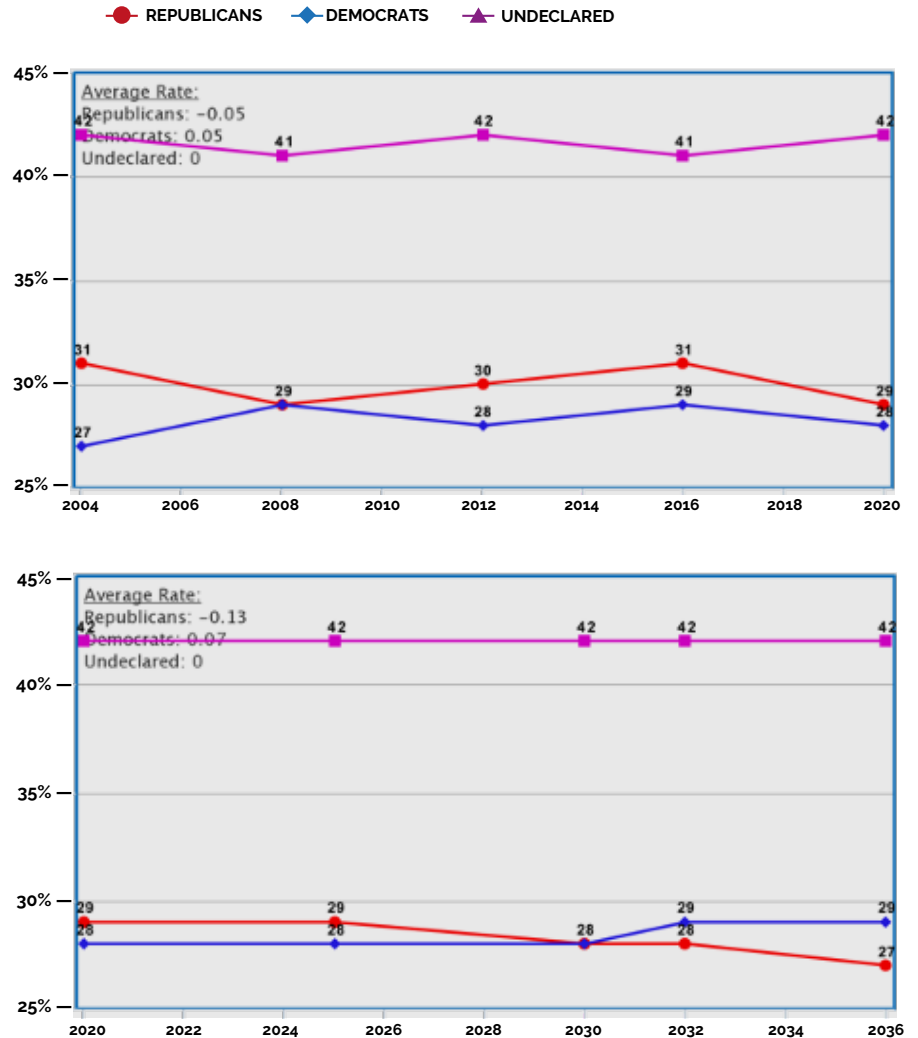




# New Hampshire

- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic Party stagnant and Republican Party in decline

11/2004	Republicans: 267,141 (31%)
	Democrats: 228,395 (27%)
	Undeclared: 360,325 (42%)
	<b>Total: 855,861</b>
11/2008	Republicans: 280,507 (29%)
	Democrats: 282,421 (29%)
	Undeclared: 395,600 (41%)
	<b>Total: 958,528</b>
11/2012	Republicans: 273,675 (30%)
	Democrats: 250,358 (28%)
	Undeclared: 381,924 (42%)
	<b>Total: 905,957</b>
11/2016	Republicans: 308,808 (31%)
	Democrats: 288,808 (29%)
	Unenrolled: 409,786 (41%)
	<b>Total: 1,007,402</b>
2/2020	Republicans: 288,464 (29%)
	Democrats: 276,385 (28%)
	Unenrolled: 415,871 (42%)
	<b>Total: 980,720</b>



## 2004-2020

Republicans have gone from 31% to 29% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 2% in 16 years, 0.13% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 27% to 28% of the electorate.

**An increase of 1% in 16 years, 0.06% annually.**

Unenrolled have stayed the same at 42% of the electorate.

**No change in 16 years.**

## 2020-2036 Projections

Republicans: 2% decrease from 29% to **27% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 1% increase from 28% to **29% of the electorate.**

Unenrolled: Stays the same at **42% of the electorate.**



# New Jersey

- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected third largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties both increasing membership

2005	Republicans: 893,854 (18%)
	Democrats: 1,157,177 (24%)
	3rd Parties: 21,236 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 2,760,558 (57%)
<b>Total: 4,832,825</b>	
2010	Republicans: 1,056,279 (20%)
	Democrats: 1,752,561 (33%)
	3rd Parties: 2,803 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 2,436,343 (46%)
<b>Total: 5,247,986</b>	

2015	Republicans: 1,058,277 (20%)
	Democrats: 1,747,551 (32%)
	3rd Parties: 4,816 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 2,605,919 (48%)
<b>Total: 5,416,563</b>	
2020	Republicans: 1,347,640 (22%)
	Democrats: 2,343,456 (38%)
	3rd Parties: 78,682 (1%)
	Unaffiliated: 2,404,558 (39%)
<b>Total: 6,174,326</b>	

## 2005-2020

Republicans have gone from 18% to 22% of the electorate.

**A 4% increase in 15 years, 0.27% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 24% to 38% of the electorate.

**A 14% increase in 15 years, 0.93% annually.**

3rd Parties have gone from less than 1% to 1% of the electorate.

**Roughly a 1% increase in 15 years, 0.07% annually.**

Unaffiliated have gone from 57% to 39% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 18% in 15 years, 1.2% annually**

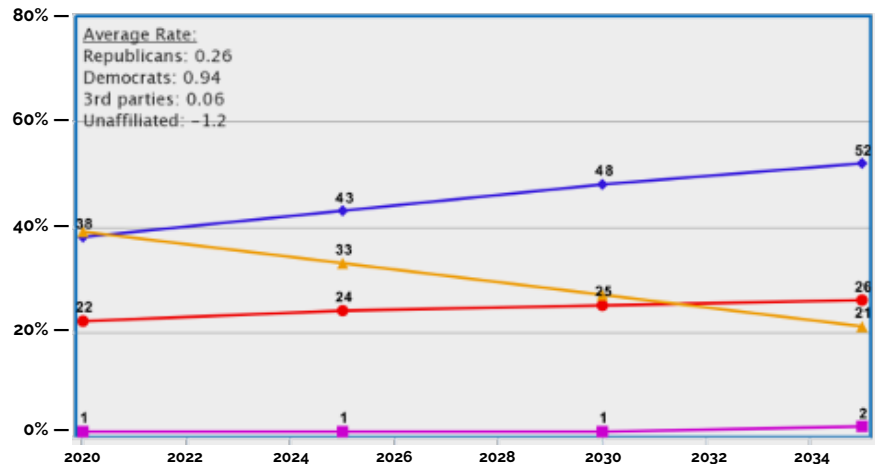
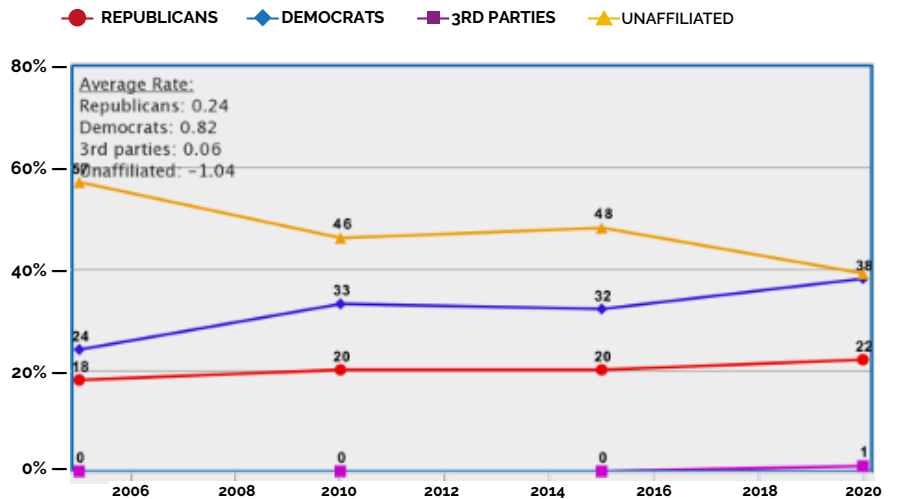
## 2020-2035 Projections

Republicans: 4% increase from 22% to **26% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 14% increase from 38% to **52% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: 1% increase from 1% to **2% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated: 18% decrease from 39% to **21% of the electorate.**







# New Mexico

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

6/2006	Republicans—353,462 (33%)
	Democrats—532,578 (50%)
	Minor Parties—26,380 (2%)
	DTS (decline to state)—161,787 (15%)
	<b>Total 1,074,207</b>
5/2010	Republicans—357,935 (32%)
	Democrats—565,488 (50%)
	DTS—175,120 (15%)
	Minor Parties—32,059 (3%)
	<b>Tota 1,130,602</b>

1/2015	Republicans—402,238 (31%)
	Democrats—600,314 (46%)
	DTS—248,995 (19%)
	Minor Parties—39,817 (3%)
	<b>Total 1,291,364</b>
1/2020	Republicans—386,872 (30%)
	Democrats—580,999 (45%)
	DTS—286,771 (22%)
	Minor Parties—24,311 (2%)
	<b>Total 1,278,953</b>

## 2006-2020

Republicans have gone from 33% of the electorate to 30% of the electorate.

**A 3% decrease in 14 years, 0.21% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 50% of the electorate to 45% of the electorate.

**A 5% decrease in 14 years, 0.36% annually.**

Decline to state have gone from 15% of the electorate to 22% of the electorate.

**A 7% increase in 14 years, 0.5% annually.**

Minor parties have gone from 2% of the electorate to 2% of the electorate.

**0% increase/decrease in 14 years.**

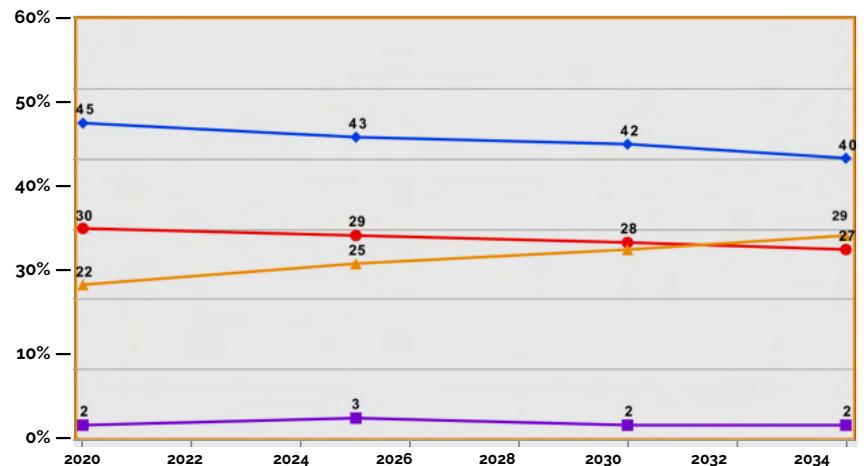
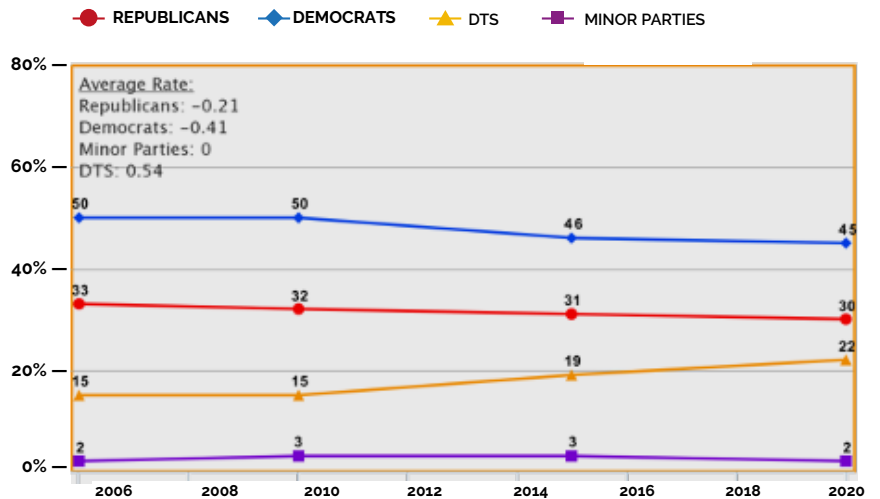
## 2020-2034 Projection

Republicans: 3% decrease in 14 years from 30% to **27% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 5% decrease in 14 years from 45% to **40% of the electorate**

Minor Parties: 0% increase/decrease in 14 years from 2% to **2% of the electorate.**

DTS: 7% increase in 14 years from 22% to **29% of the electorate.**





# New York:

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party increases membership and Republican Party in decline

11/2005	Republicans—3,142,581 (27%)
	Democrats—5,471,770 (47%)
	3rd parties—670,394 (6%)
	Unaffiliated—2,334,392 (20%)
<b>Total: 11,619,137</b>	
11/2010	Republicans—2,920,366 (25%)
	Democrats—5,853,921 (50%)
	3rd Parties—642,279 (5%)
	Unaffiliated—2,390,178 (20%)
<b>Total: 11,806,744</b>	

11/2015	Republicans—2,719,330 (23%)
	Democrats—5,778,460 (49%)
	3rd Parties—718,283 (6%)
	Unaffiliated—2,487,495 (21%)
<b>Total: 11,701,568</b>	
2/2020	Republicans—2,843,692 (22%)
	Democrats—6,563,866 (51%)
	3rd parties—741,883 (6%)
	Unaffiliated—2,822,102 (22%)
<b>Total: 12,971,543</b>	

## 2005-2020

The Republican party has gone from 27% of the electorate to 22% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 5% over 15 years, 0.34% annually.**

The Democratic Party has gone from 47% of the electorate to 51% of the electorate.

**An increase of 4% over 15 years, 0.22% annually.**

3rd Parties have gone from 6% of the electorate to 6% of the electorate.

**An increase of 0.3% over 15 years, 0.02% annually.**

Unaffiliated voters have gone from 20% of the electorate to 22% of the electorate.

**An increase of 2% over 15 years, 0.14% annually.**

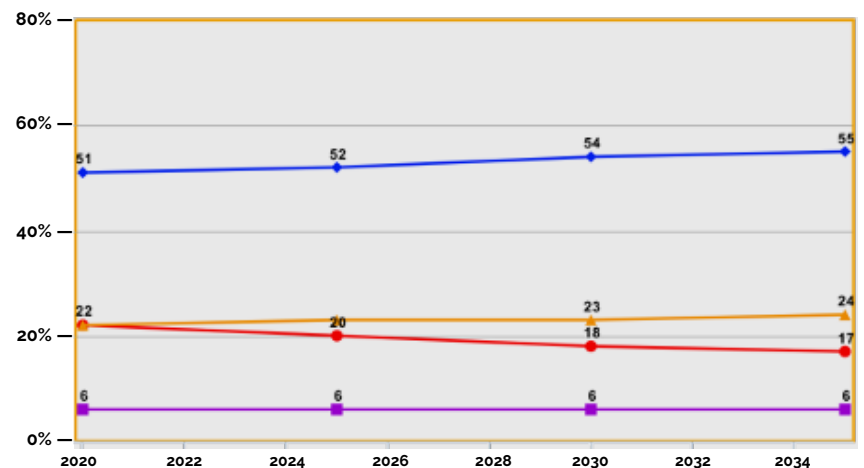
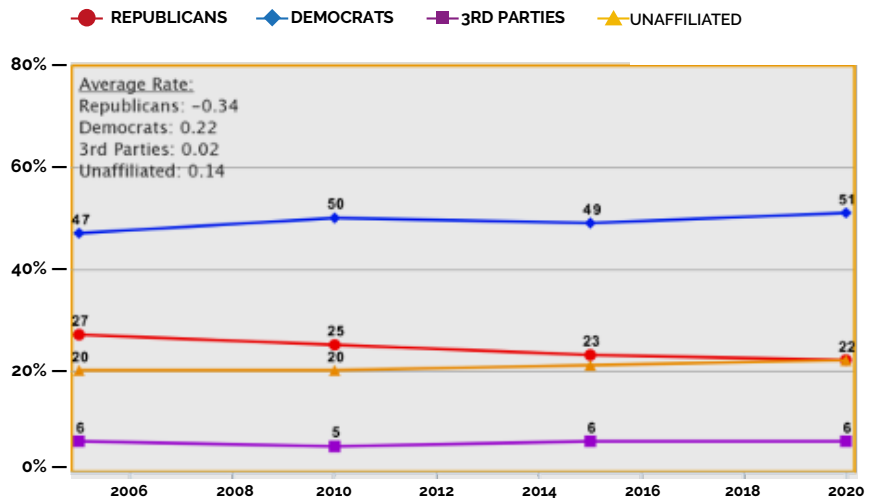
## 2035 Predictions

Republicans: 5% decrease from 22% to **17% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 4% increase from 51% to **55% of electorate.**

Unaffiliated: 2% increase from 22% to **24% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: 0.3% increase to remain around **6% of the electorate.**





# North Carolina

- Independent voters currently second largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

11/2005	Republicans: 1,912,003 (35%)
	Democrats: 2,584,307 (47%)
	3rd Parties: 13,025 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 1,025,463 (19%)
<b>Total: 5,534,798</b>	
11/2010	Republicans: 1,958,503 (32%)
	Democrats: 2,769,324 (45%)
	3rd Parties: 9,252 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 1,463,624 (24%)
<b>Total: 6,200,703</b>	

11/2015	Republicans: 1,951,039 (30%)
	Democrats: 2,628,225 (41%)
	3rd Parties: 27,479 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 1,797,769 (28%)
<b>Total: 6,404,512</b>	
2/2020	Republicans: 2,089,896 (30%)
	Democrats: 2,529,491 (36%)
	3rd Parties: 45,279 (less than 1%)
	Unaffiliated: 2,318,904 (33%)
<b>Total: 6,983,570</b>	

## 2005-2020

Republicans have gone from 35% to 30% of the electorate.

**A 5% decrease in 15 years, 0.33% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 47% to 36% of the electorate.

**An 11% decrease in 15 years, 0.73% annually.**

3rd Parties have grown slightly but stayed less than 1% of the electorate.

Unaffiliated voters have gone 19% to 33% of the electorate.

**A 14% increase in 15 years, 0.93% annually.**

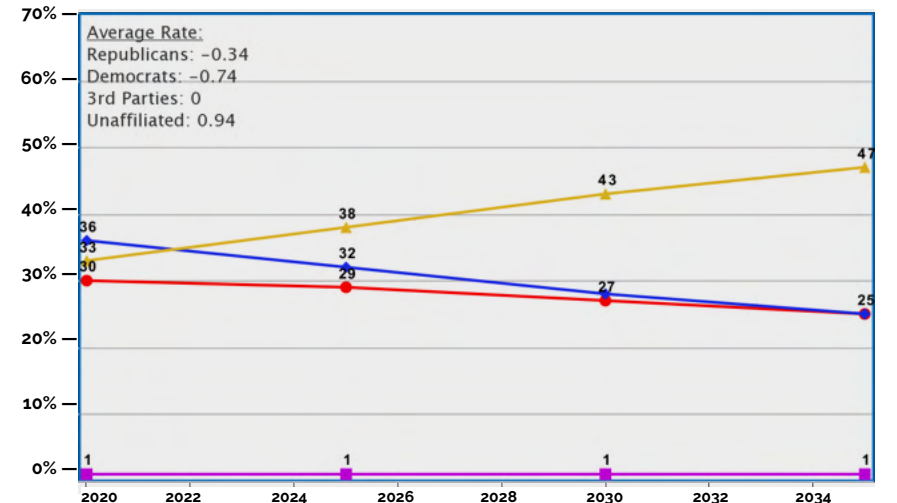
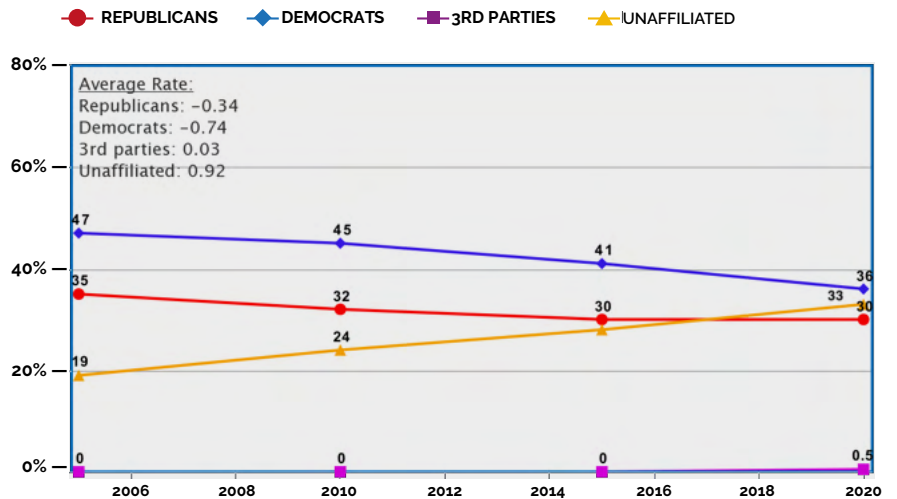
## 2035 Predictions

Republicans: 5% decrease from 30% to **25% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 11% decrease from 36% to **25% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: increase slightly from less than 1% to **1% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated: 14% increase from 33% to **47% of the electorate.**





# Oklahoma

- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected third largest group of voters
- Democratic Party in decline and Republican Party increase in membership

2005	Republicans: 822,131 (38%)
	Democrats: 1,100,263 (51%)
	Independent: 227,163 (11%)
	3rd Party: 0 (0%)
	<b>Total: 2,149,557</b>
2010	Republicans: 813,158 (40%)
	Democrats: 999,855 (49%)
	Independent: 225,607 (11%)
	3rd Party: 0 (0%)
	<b>Total: 2,038,620</b>

2015	Republicans: 886,153 (44%)
	Democrats: 882,686 (43%)
	Independent: 261,429 (13%)
	3rd Party: 9 (less than 1%)
	<b>Total: 2,030,277</b>
2020	Republicans: 1,008,569 (48%)
	Democrats: 738,256 (35%)
	Independent: 332,111 (16%)
	3rd Party: 11,171 (less than 1%)
	<b>Total: 2,090,107</b>

## 2005-2020

Republicans have gone from 38% to 48% of the electorate.

**A 10% increase in 15 years, 0.67% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 51% to 35% of the electorate.

**A 16% decrease in 15 years, 1.07% annually.**

Independents have gone from 11% to 16% of the electorate

**A 5% increase in 15 years, 0.33% annually.**

3rd parties have grown slightly but remained under 1% of the electorate.

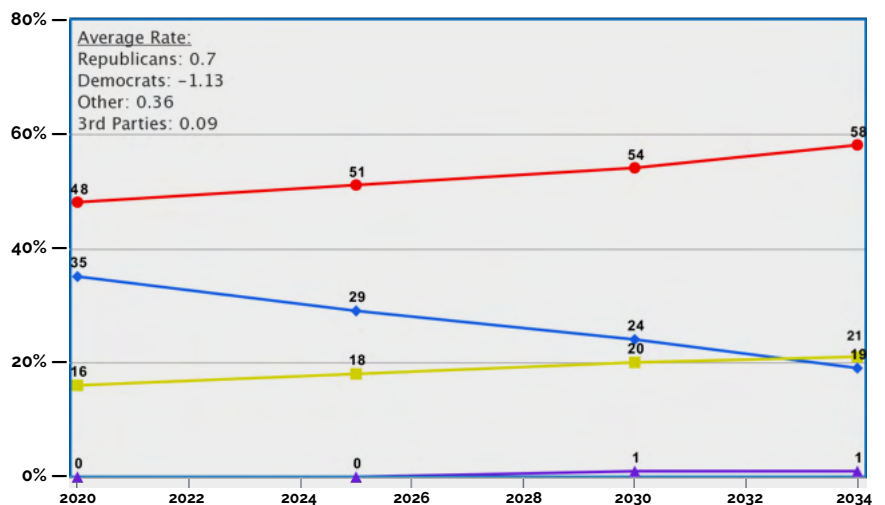
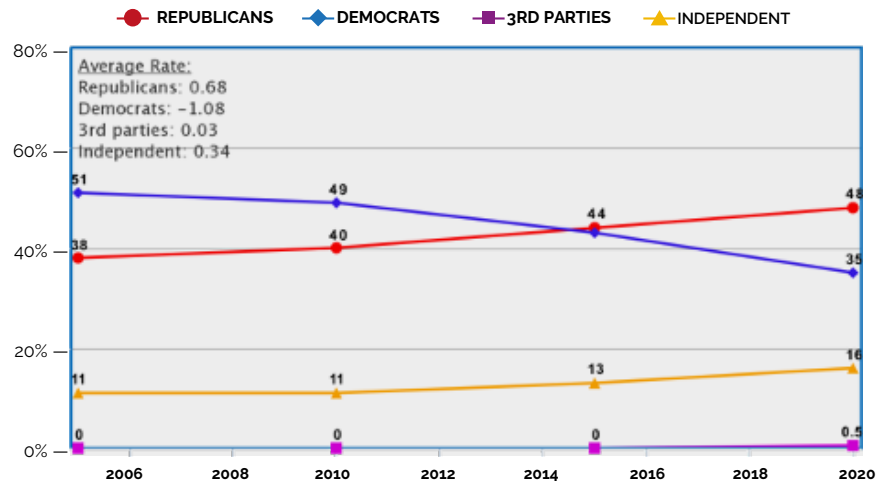
## 2035 Predictions

Republicans: 10% increase from 48% to **58% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 16% decrease from 35% to **19% of the electorate.**

Independents: 5% increase from 16% to **21% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: 1% increase from less than 1% to **slightly over 1% of the electorate.**





# Oregon

- Independent voters currently second largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties in decline

1/2005	Republicans—754,183 (36%)
	Democrats—815,887 (39%)
	Third parties—71,023 (3%)
	Non-affiliated—465,575 (22%)
	<b>Total: 2,106,668</b>
1/2015	Republicans—659,843 (32%)
	Democrats—877,197 (43%)
	Third parties—103,076 (5%)
	Non-Affiliated—413,216 (20%)
	<b>Total: 2,053,332</b>

1/2015	Republicans—654,056 (30%)
	Democrats—826,272 (38%)
	Third parties—174,095 (8%)
	Non-Affiliated—536,407 (24%)
	<b>Total: 2,190,830</b>
2/2020	Republicans—703,765 (25%)
	Democrats—984,555 (35%)
	Third Parties—184,204 (6%)
	Non-Affiliated—962,502 (34%)
	<b>Total: 2,835,026</b>

## 2005-2020

The Republican party has gone from 36% of the electorate to 25% of the electorate.

**An 11% decrease in 15 years, 0.7% annually**

The Democratic party has gone from 39% of the electorate to 35% of the electorate.

**A 4% decrease in 15 years, 0.3% annually**

Third Parties have gone from 3% of the electorate to 6% of the electorate.

**A 3% increase in 15 years, 0.2% annually**

Non-Affiliated have gone from 22% of the electorate to 34% of the electorate.

**A 12% increase in 15 years, 0.8% annually**

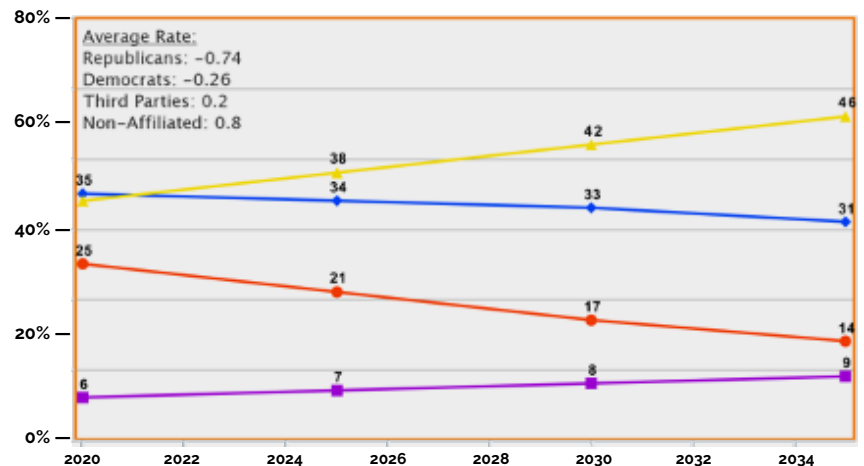
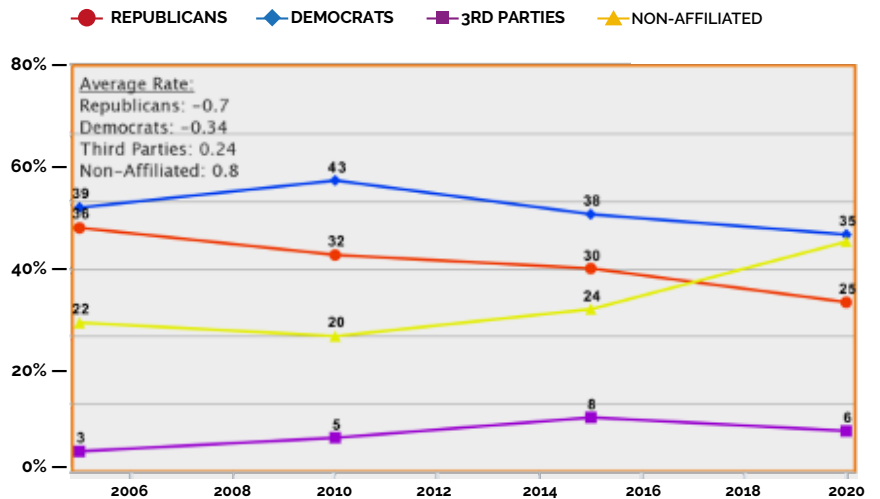
## 2035 Projection

Republicans: 11% decrease from 25% to **14% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 4% decrease from 35% to **31% of the electorate.**

Third parties: 3% increase from 6% to **9% of the electorate.**

Non-Affiliated: 12% increase from 34% to **46% of the electorate.**







# Pennsylvania:

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected third largest group of voters
- Republican Party in decline, Democratic Party stagnant

11/2005	Republicans—3,292,656 (41%)
	Democrats—3,841,429 (48%)
	Other/3rd Parties—939,252 (12%)
	<b>Total: 8,073,337</b>
11/2010	Republicans—3,132,039 (37%)
	Democrats—4,311,203 (51%)
	Other/3rd Parties—1,035,267 (12%)
	<b>Total: 8,478,509</b>

11/2015	Republicans—2,980,464 (37%)
	Democrats—3,973,115 (49%)
	Other Parties/Nonaffiliated—1,119,596 (14%)
	<b>Total: 8,073,175</b>
3/2020	Republicans—3,261,250 (38%)
	Democrats—4,069,447 (48%)
	Other Parties/No Affiliation—1,218,517 (14%)
	<b>Total: 8,549,214</b>

## 2005-2020

Republicans have gone from 41% to 38% of the electorate.

**A decrease of 3% in 15 years, 0.2% annually**

Democrats have gone from 48% of the electorate to 48% of the electorate.

**No increase/decrease in 15 years.**

Other parties/No Party Affiliation has gone from 12% to 14% of the electorate.

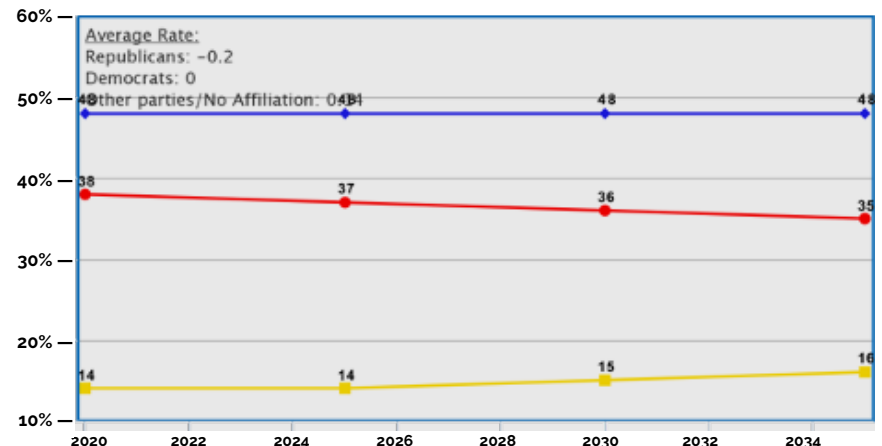
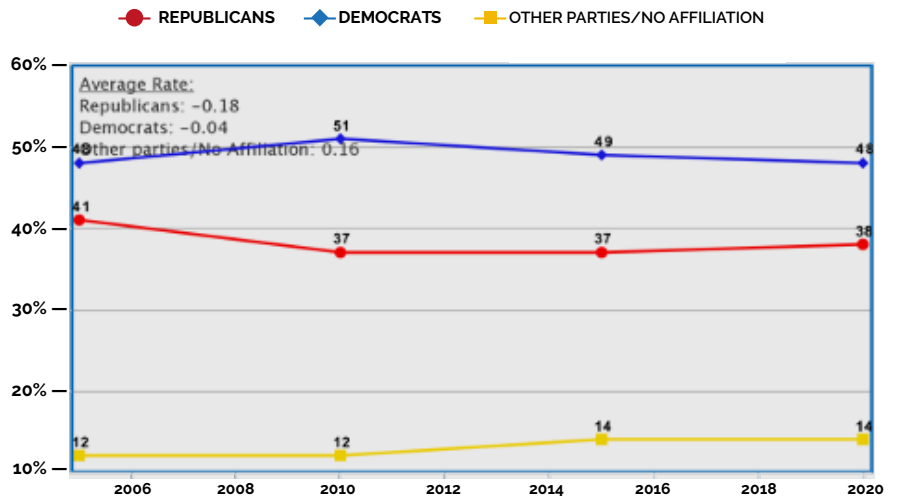
**An increase of 2% in 15 years, 0.13% annually.**

## 2020-2035 Projection

Republicans: 3% decrease from 38% to **35% of the electorate**

Democrats: remain at 48% of the electorate

Other Parties/NPA's: 2% increase from 14% to **16% of the electorate.**





# Rhode Island

- Independent voters currently largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties both increase membership

2/2005	Republicans: 66,954 (10%)
	Democrats: 234,298 (36%)
	Unaffiliated: 339,937 (53%)
	<b>Total: 642,171</b>
1/2010	Republicans: 72,772 (10%)
	Democrats: 287,370 (41%)
	Unaffiliated: 335,120 (48%)
	<b>Total: 695,454</b>

2/2015	Republicans: 76,297 (10%)
	Democrats: 294,466 (40%)
	Unaffiliated: 361,262 (49%)
	<b>Total: 734,092</b>
5/2020	Republicans: 97,023 (12%)
	Democrats: 311,922 (39%)
	Unaffiliated: 380,955 (48%)
	<b>Total: 789,900</b>

## 2005-2020

Republicans have gone from 10% to 12% of the electorate.

**A 2% increase in 15 years, 0.13% annually**

Democrats have gone from 36% to 39% of the electorate.

**A 3% increase in 15 years, 0.2% annually.**

Unaffiliated have gone from 53% to 48% of the electorate.

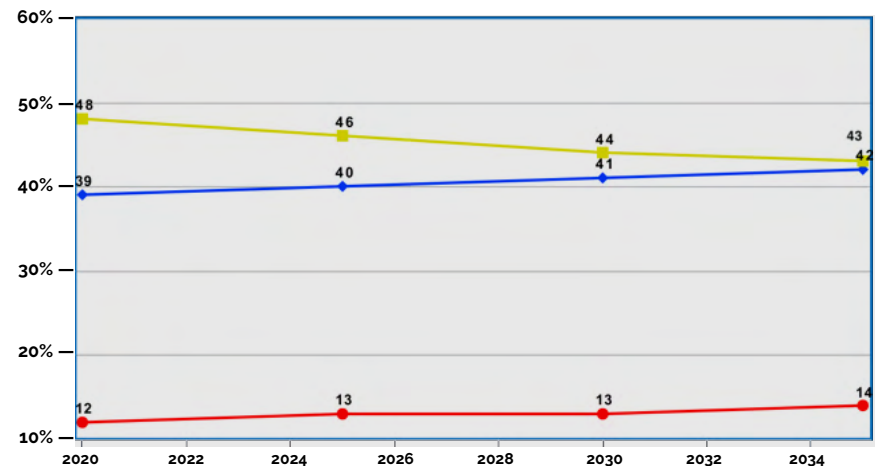
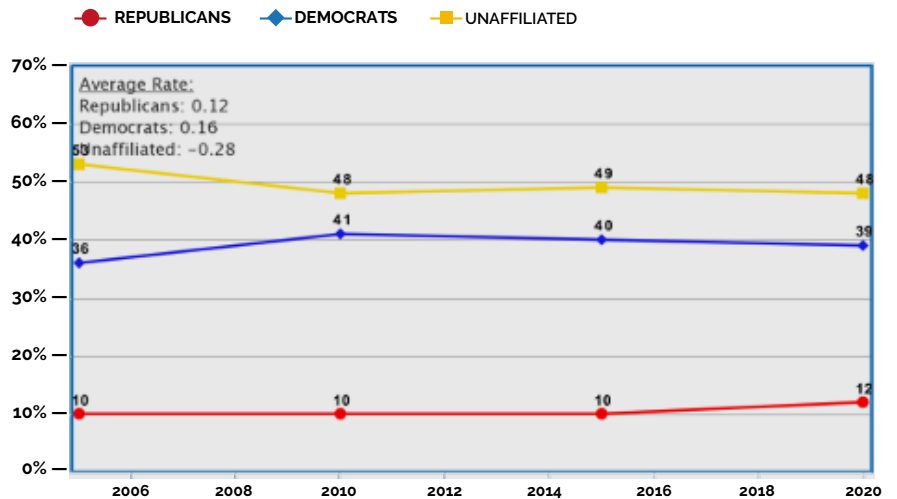
**A 5% decrease in 15 years, 0.3% annually.**

## 2020-2035 Projections

Republicans: 2% increase from 12% to **14% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 3% increase from 39% to **42% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated: 5% decrease from 48% to **43% of the electorate.**





# South Dakota

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party in decline and Republican Party increasing membership

<b>2006</b>		Republicans: 240,101 (47%)
		Democrats: 190,905 (38%)
		NPA/Independent: 74,608 (15%)
	<b>Total: 505,614</b>	
<b>12/2010</b>		Republicans: 238,804 (46%)
		Democrats: 194,549 (37%)
		NP/Independent: 86,799 (17%)
	<b>Total: 520,152</b>	

<b>12/2015</b>		Republicans: 238,642 (46%)
		Democrats: 169,135 (33%)
		NP/Independent: 108,923 (21%)
	<b>Total: 516,700</b>	
<b>12/2020</b>		Republicans: 260,630 (48%)
		Democrats: 154,394 (28%)
		NP/Independent: 130,311 (24%)
	<b>Total: 548,626</b>	

## 2006-2020

Republicans have gone from 47% to 48% of the electorate.

**A 1% increase in 14 years, 0.07% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 38% to 28% of the electorate.

**A 10% decrease in 14 years, 0.71% annually.**

NP/Independents have gone from 15% to 24% of the electorate.

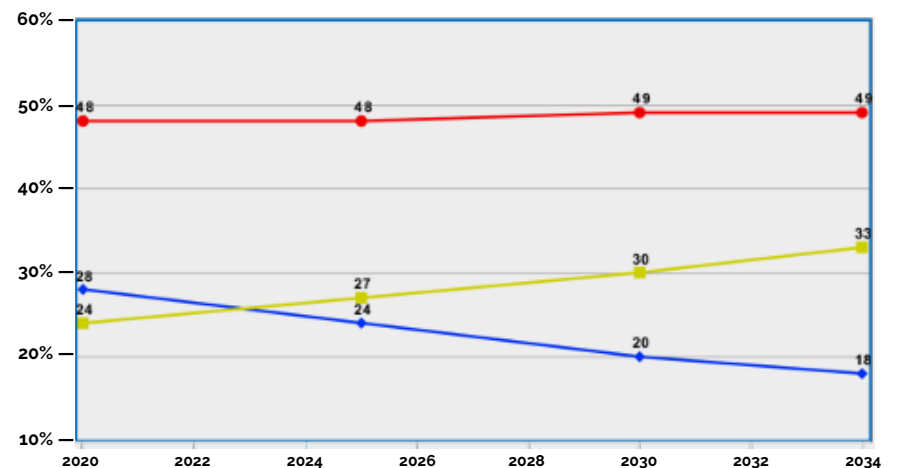
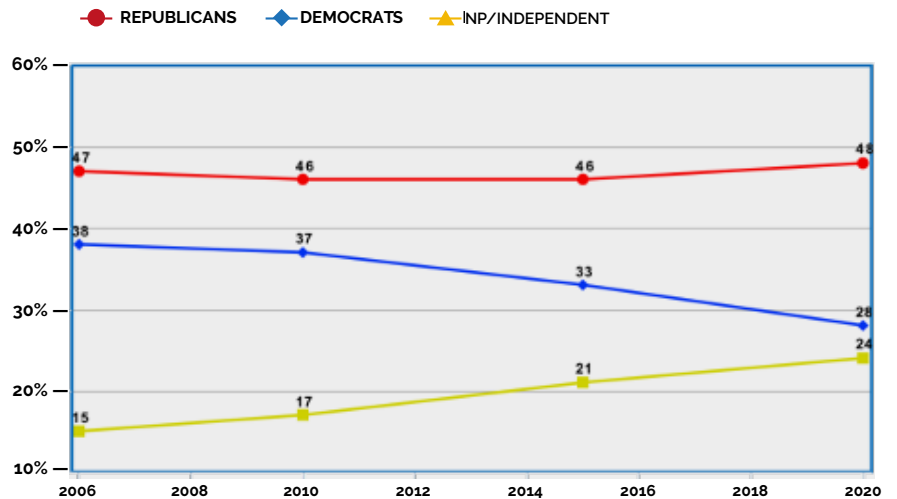
**A 9% increase in 14 years, 0.64% annually.**

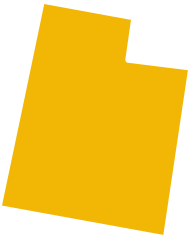
## 2020-2034 Projections

Republicans: 1% increase from 48% to **49% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 10% decrease from 28% to **18% of the electorate.**

NP/Independents: 9% increase from 24% to **33% of the electorate.**





# Utah

- Independent voters currently second largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected 4th largest group of voters
- Democratic and Republican Parties both slight increase in membership

2004	Republicans: 317,186 (24%)
	Democrats: 81,312 (6%)
	Unaffiliated: 909,986 (69%)
	3rd parties: 19,758 (1%)
	<b>Total: 1,328,242</b>
2010	Republicans: 613,969 (40%)
	Democrats: 136,423 (9%)
	Unaffiliated: 775,126 (51%)
	3rd parties: 6,989 (less than 1%)
	<b>Total: 1,532,507</b>

1/2016	Republicans: 580,842 (47%)
	Democrats: 113,447 (9%)
	Unaffiliated: 507,879 (42%)
	3rd Parties: 20,750 (2%)
	<b>Total: 1,222,918</b>
5/2019	Republicans: 682,585 (47%)
	Democrats: 185,957 (13%)
	Unaffiliated: 511,609 (35%)
	3rd Parties: 63,532 (4%)
	<b>Total: 1,443,683</b>

## 2004-2019

Republicans have gone from 24% to 47% of the electorate.

**A 23% increase in 15 years, 1.53% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 6% to 13% of the electorate.

**A 7% increase in 15 years, 0.47% annually.**

Unaffiliated have gone from 69% to 35% of the electorate.

**A 34% decrease in 15 years, 2.3% annually.**

3rd parties have gone from 1% to 4% of the electorate.

**A 3% increase in 15 years, 0.2% annually.**

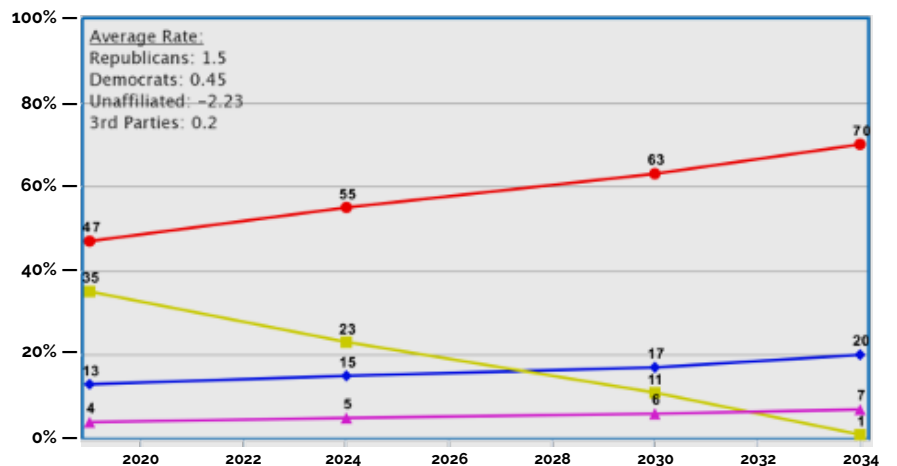
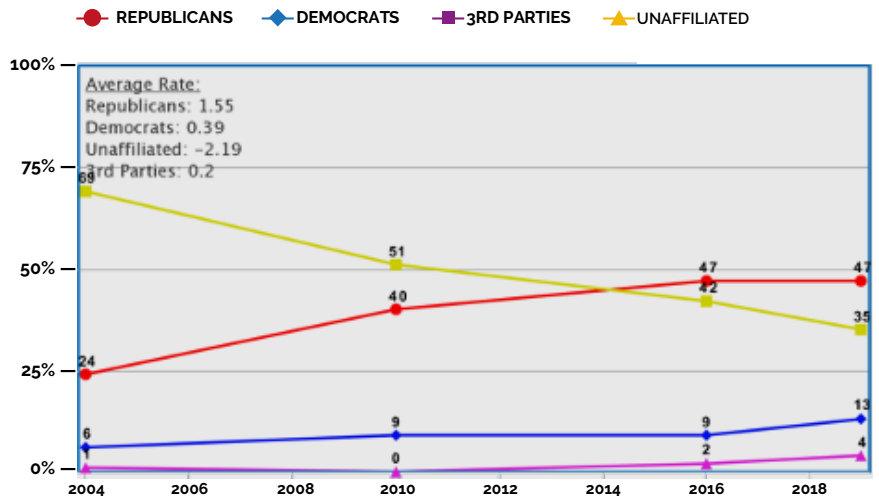
## 2020-2034 Projections

Republicans: 23% increase from 47% to **70% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 7% increase from 13% to **20% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated: 34% decrease from 35% to **1% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: 3% increase from 4% to **7% of the electorate.**





# West Virginia

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party in decline and Republican Party increase in membership

2004	■	Republicans: 309,396 (30%)
	■	Democrats: 614,597 (59%)
	■	No Party: 114,915 (11%)
	■	3rd Parties: 1,270 (less than 1%)
		<b>Total: 1,040,178</b>
2010	■	Republicans: 350,357 (29%)
	■	Democrats: 656,689 (54%)
	■	No Party: 207,857 (17%)
	■	3rd Parties: 2,582 (less than 1%)
		<b>Total: 1,217,485</b>

12/2016	■	Republicans: 398,959 (31%)
	■	Democrats: 569,091 (45%)
	■	No Party: 267,182 (21%)
	■	3rd Parties: 40,009 (3%)
		<b>Total: 1,275,241</b>
4/2020	■	Republicans: 420,238 (34%)
	■	Democrats: 477,238 (39%)
	■	No Party: 281,207 (23%)
	■	3rd Parties: 47,624 (4%)
		<b>Total: 1,226,307</b>

## 2004-2020

Republicans have gone from 30% to 34% of the electorate, **a 4% increase in 16 years, 0.25% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 59% to 39% of the electorate, **a 20% decrease in 16 years, 1.25% annually.**

No party has gone from 11% to 23% of the electorate, **a 12% increase in 16 years, 0.75% annually.**

3rd parties have gone from 0% to 4% of the electorate, **a 4% increase in 16 years, 0.25% annually.**

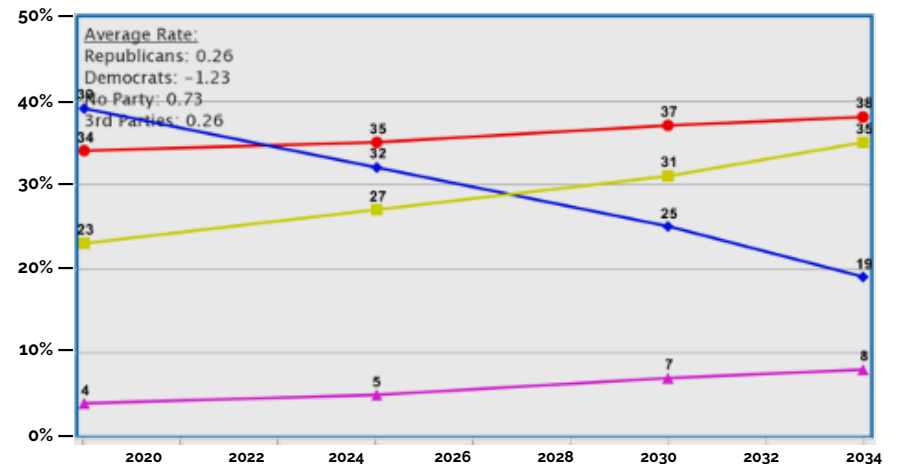
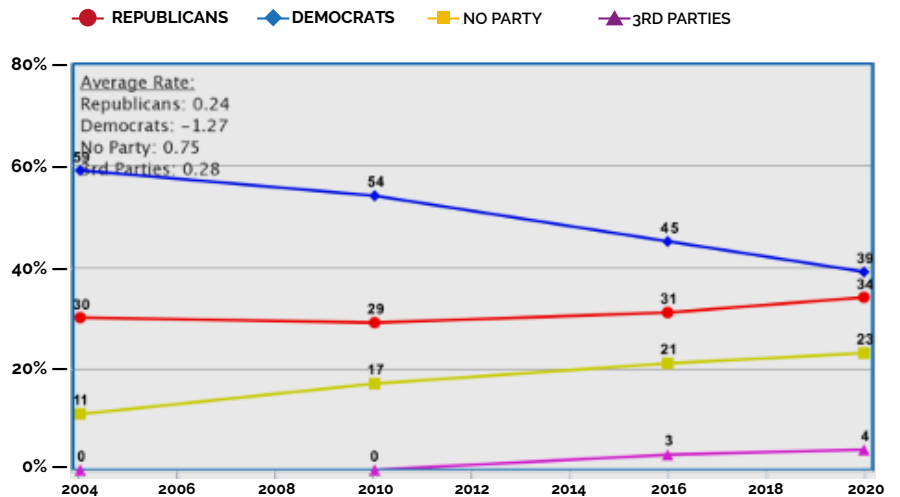
## 2020-2036 Projections

Republicans: 4% increase from 34% to **38% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 20% decrease from 39% to **19% of the electorate.**

No Party: 12% increase from 23% to **35% of the electorate.**

3rd Parties: 4% increase from 4% to **8% of the electorate. the electorate.**





# Wyoming

- Independent voters currently third largest group of voters
- Independent voters projected second largest group of voters
- Democratic Party in decline and Republican Party increase in membership

2004	Republicans: 146,328 (63%)
	Democrats: 62,385 (27%)
	Unaffiliated/3rd Parties: 23,683 (10%)
	<b>Total: 232,396</b>
2012	Republicans: 142,564 (67%)
	Democrats: 46,552 (22%)
	Unaffiliated/3rd Parties: 22,663 (11%)
	<b>Total: 211,779</b>

2016	Republicans: 139,955 (69%)
	Democrats: 39,050 (19%)
	Unaffiliated/3rd Parties: 22,632 (11%)
	<b>Total: 201,637</b>
2020	Republicans: 156,428 (70%)
	Democrats: 40,472 (18%)
	Unaffiliated/3rd Parties: 25,995 (12%)
	<b>Total: 222,895</b>

### 2004-2020

Republicans have gone from 63% to 70% of the electorate.

**A 7% increase in 16 years, 0.44% annually.**

Democrats have gone from 27% to 18% of the electorate.

**A 9% decrease in 16 years, 0.56% annually.**

Unaffiliated/3rd Parties have gone from 10% to 12% of the electorate.

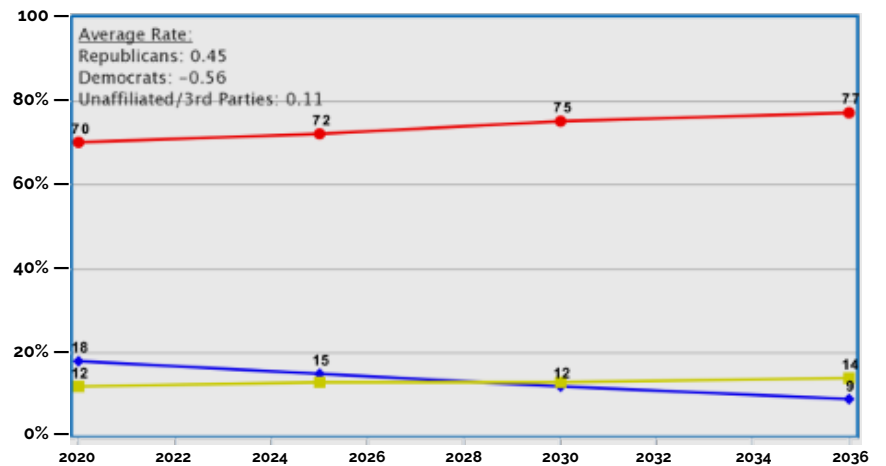
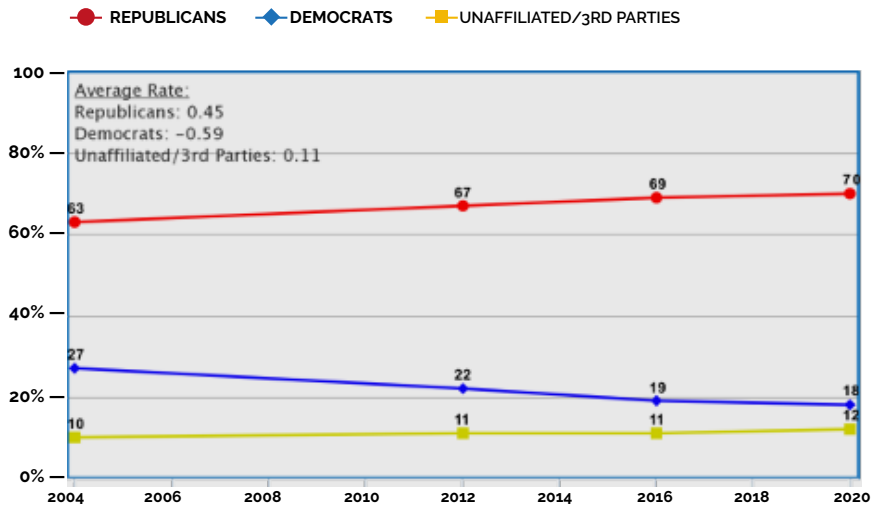
**A 2% increase in 16 years, 0.125% annually.**

### 2020-2036 Projections

Republicans: 7% increase from 70% to **77% of the electorate.**

Democrats: 9% decrease from 18% to **9% of the electorate.**

Unaffiliated/3rd Parties: 2% increase from 12% to **14% of the electorate.**



# About the Authors



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Jeremy Gruber is the Senior Vice President at Open Primaries Education Fund. He is a lawyer, writer, and public policy advocate who has helped enact over 60 state, federal and international laws and regulations. These include the successful passage

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Gruber has testified before the U.S. Congress, the FDA, and numerous state, federal and international legislative and regulatory bodies. He has appeared in the New York Times, Wall St. Journal, CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, MSNBC and many other media outlets. He recently co-authored a law review on the legal implications of the rise of independent voters entitled: Let All Voters Vote: Independents and the Expansion of Voting Rights in the United States.

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## **John Opdycke**

John Opdycke, president of the Open Primaries Education Fund, is one of the country's leading experts on primary elections and primary election reform. He has appeared on Fox News, MSNBC, Al Jazeera, PBS, and NBC and his written

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# Endnotes

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