

# Five Things You Need to Know About 2024

January 2024



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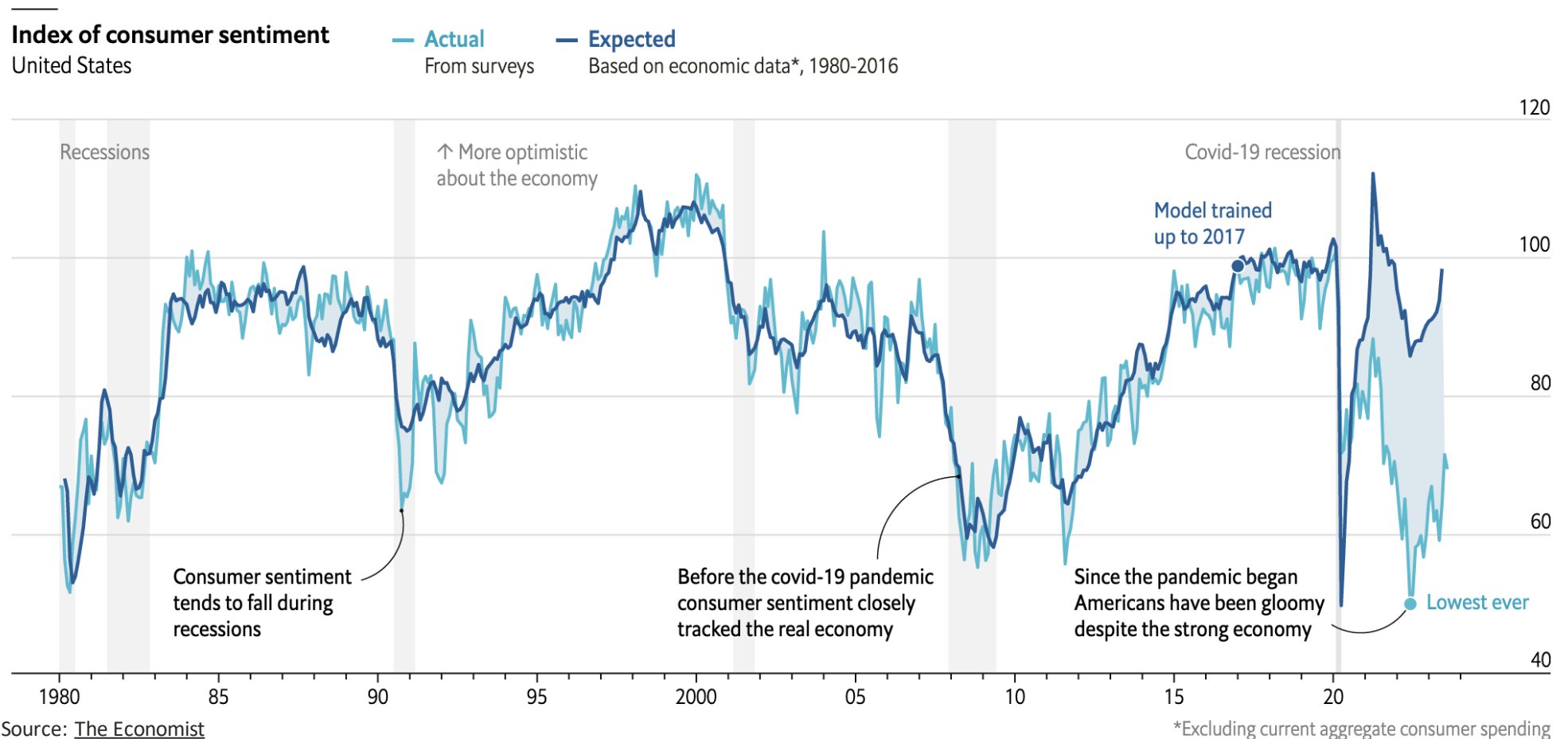
- ❑ Is it the economy, stupid? Indicators are up, but voters don't seem to care.
- ❑ It's time we admitted it: polling isn't a crystal ball.
- ❑ Campaigns raise more money than ever, but what are they getting?
- ❑ Demographic changes *should* help Democrats, but we've all heard that song before.
- ❑ In a year, we'll probably look back and realize how little we knew.

Is it the economy, stupid? Indicators are up, but voters don't seem to care.

# Economic conditions are helpful for predicting re-election – but not perfect.

President	Overall Job Growth Over 1 <sup>st</sup> Term	Job Growth Last Year of 1 <sup>st</sup> Term	GDP Last Year of 1 <sup>st</sup> Term	DPI Change Over Last Year of 1 <sup>st</sup> Term	Consumer Sentiment 1 <sup>st</sup> Term Average	OVERALL	Predicted the election?
<b>Carter (D)</b> 1977-1980 <b>Lost</b>	13%	3%	-0.3%	0.75	74.4	-	<b>YES</b>
<b>Reagan (R)</b> 1981-1984 <b>Won</b>	4.7%	1%	7.2%	6.68	80.8	+	<b>YES</b>
<b>Bush 41 (R)</b> 1989-1992 <b>Lost</b>	1.7%	3.8%	3.5%	3.98	82.3	+	<b>NO</b>
<b>Clinton (D)</b> 1993-1996 <b>Won</b>	9.7%	4%	3.8%	3.10	90.2	+	<b>YES</b>
<b>Bush 43 (R)</b> 2001-2004 <b>Won</b>	-0.5%	3.7%	4.2%	3.20	90.4	+	<b>YES</b>
<b>Obama (D)</b> 2009-2012 <b>Won</b>	0.3%	2%	4.0%	2.74	70.5	+	<b>YES</b>
<b>Trump (R)</b> 2017-2020 <b>Lost</b>	-2.7%	-1%	3.5%	6.39	93.2	+	<b>NO</b>

# Since COVID, voters' impressions of the economy have become decoupled from economic measures.



# Economic numbers are improving, but perceptions aren't.



## GDP

GDP is up: GDP increased at an annual rate of **4.9%** in Q3 2023



## Biden's Ratings

**59%** of Americans disapprove of Biden's handling of the economy



## Inflation

Inflation is down: the inflation rate cooled to **3.1%** in November 2023



## Views of Economy

**72%** of Americans are dissatisfied with the state of the U.S. economy



## Unemployment

Unemployment is down: the economy added **199,000 jobs** in November 2023

**It's time we admitted it: polling isn't  
a crystal ball.**

## **We want polling to be:**

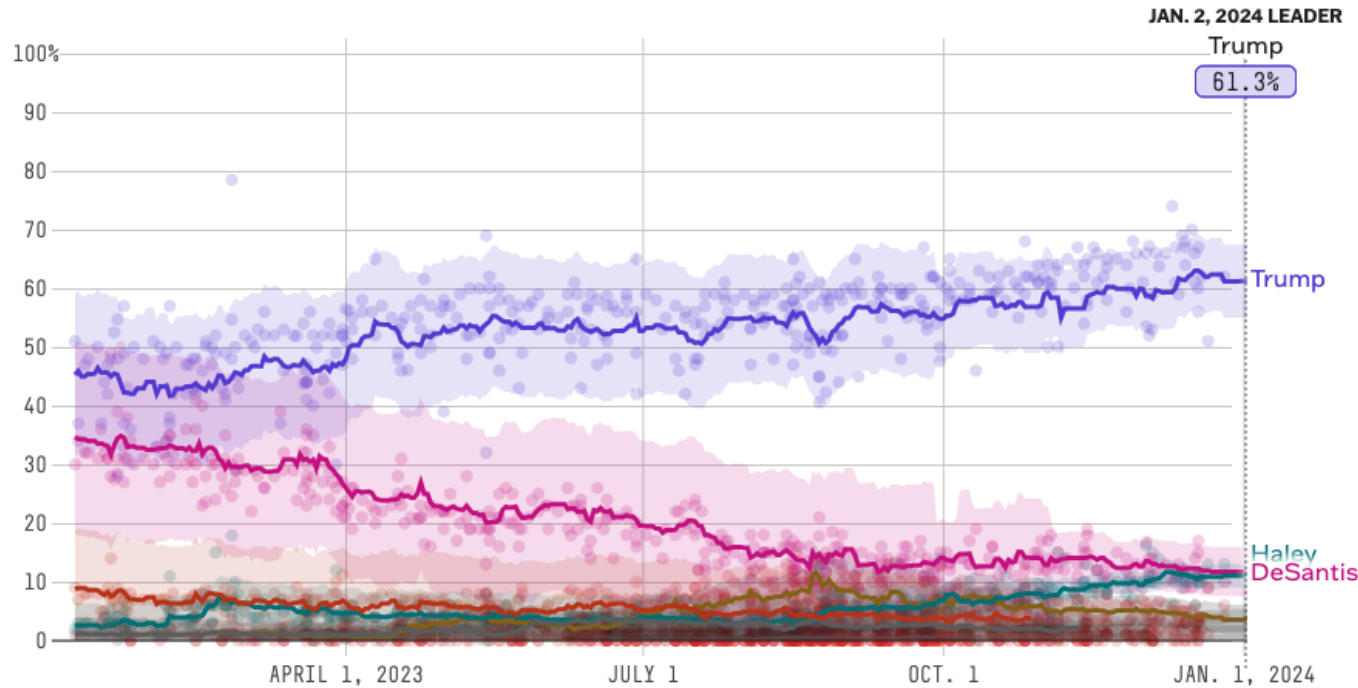
**A precise barometer to properly assess races, distribute campaign resources and calibrate our emotions.**

## **What polling really is:**

**A challenged tool that can predict a blowout, but is barely better than a coin flip for a close race.**



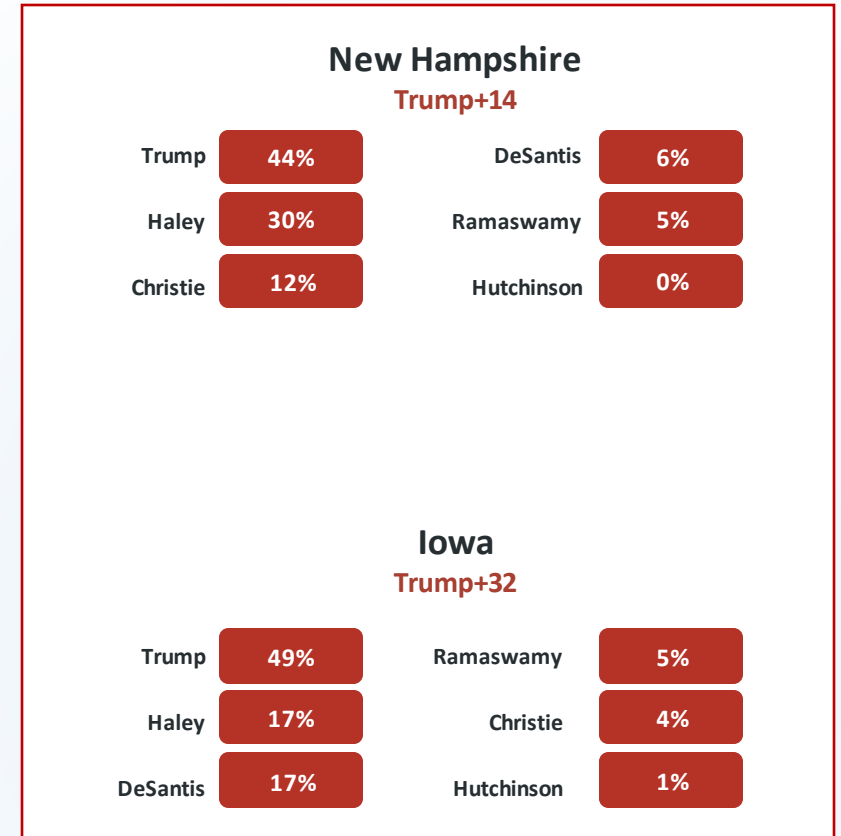
# Nationally, Trump is dominating the Republican primary field – it's a blowout.



Average as of Jan. 2, 2024

Trump	61.3%	Haley	11.4%	DeSantis	11.3%	Ramaswamy	3.9%
Christie	3.7%	Hutchinson	0.6%				

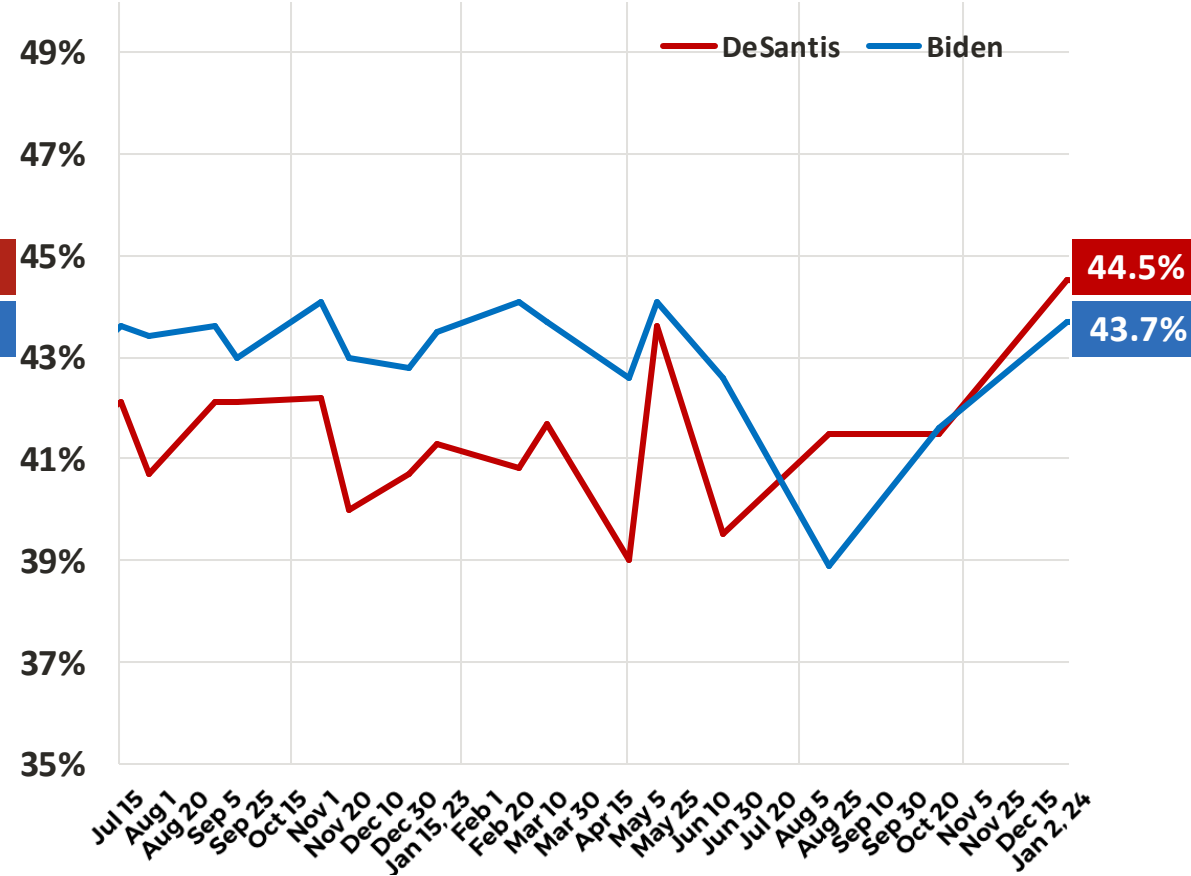
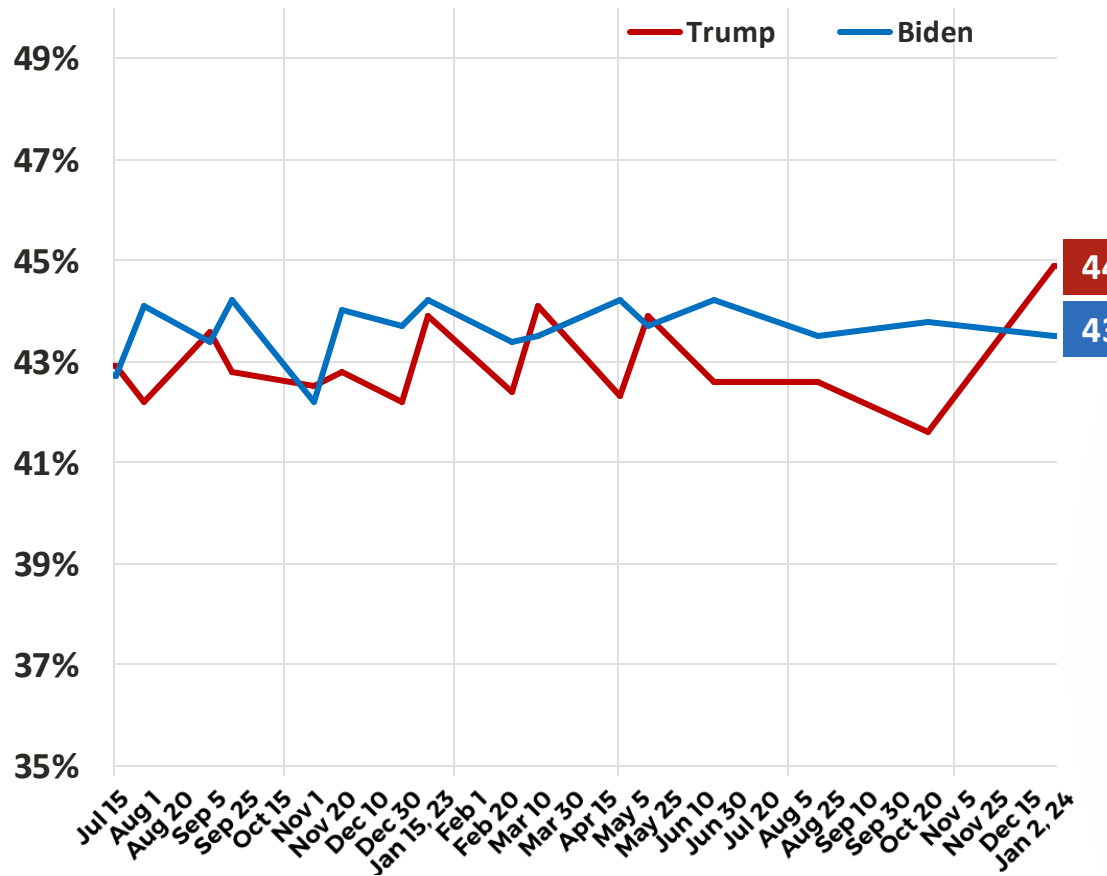
KEY ESTIMATE 95% OF POLLS PROJECTED TO FALL IN THIS RANGE



**Primary leaders at this stage have lost, but none with as strong a lead as Trump has over the field.**

Election Year	Primary Candidate with Polling Lead	Date	Lead Candidate %	Lead Gap	Official Party Nominee
2024	Trump	January 2024	62%	+49% lead over Haley	TBD
2020	Biden	January 2020	29%	+6% lead over Sanders	Biden
2016	Trump	January 2016	36%	+16% lead over Cruz	Trump
2016	H.R. Clinton	January 2016	64%	+34% lead over Sanders	H.R. Clinton
2012	Romney	January 2012	29%	+12% lead over Gingrich	Romney
2008	Huckabee	January 2008	25%	+5% lead over Giuliani	McCain
2008	H.R. Clinton	January 2008	33%	+4% lead over Obama	Obama
2004	Dean	January 2004	23%	+5% lead over Gephardt	Kerry
2000	G.W. Bush	January 2000	59%	+41% lead over McCain	G.W. Bush
2000	Gore	January 2000	59%	+29% over Bradley	Gore

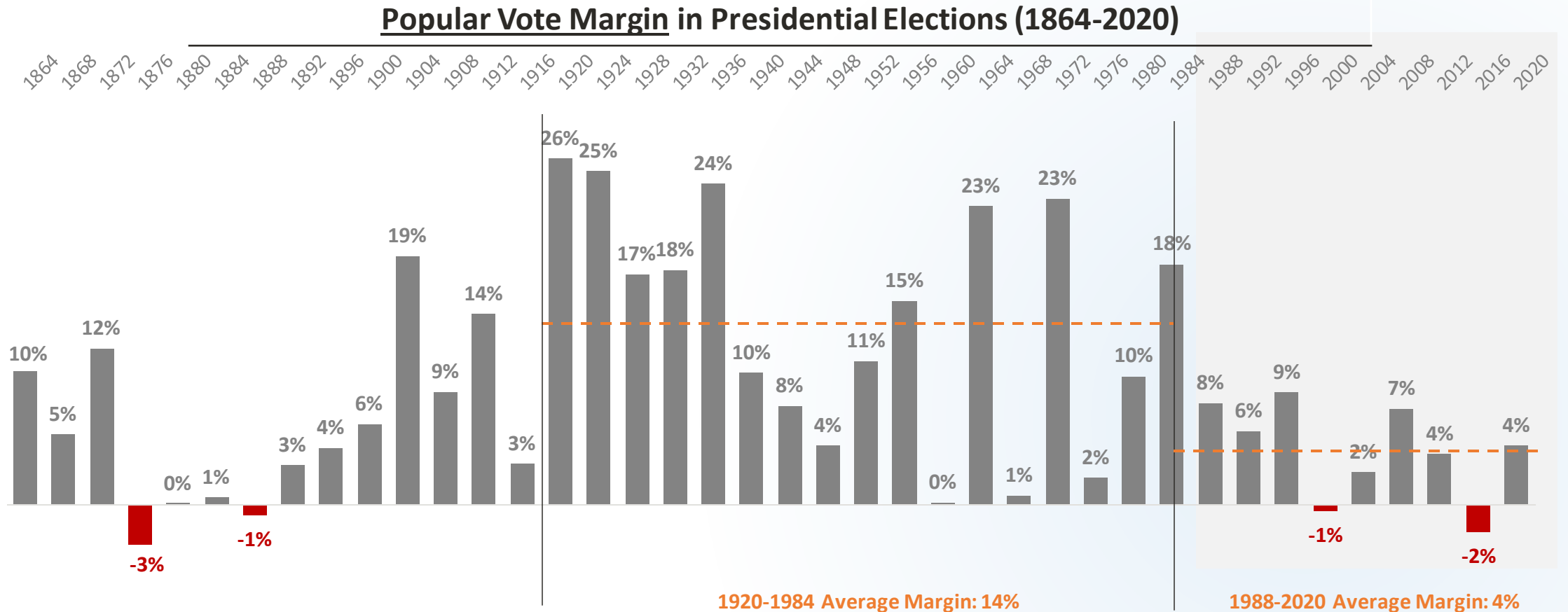
# In the general election, all signs point to a close, unpredictable race.



Source: [RaceToTheWH](https://www.racetothewhite.com)



But we don't need polls to tell us the general election will be close – it's the new normal.



# Will we ever learn? 2016 and 2020 taught us a valuable lesson – pollsters struggle with close races.

State	2016 Final Poll	2016 Result	2016 Polling Bias	State	2020 Final Poll	2020 Result	2020 Polling Bias
National	Clinton +3.2	Clinton +2.1	1.1	National	Biden +7.2	Biden +3.6	3.6
Wisconsin	Clinton +6.5	Trump +0.7	7.2	Ohio	Trump +1.0	Trump +8.2	7.2
Iowa	Trump +3.0	Trump +9.5	6.5	Iowa	Trump +2.0	Trump +8.2	6.2
Ohio	Trump +3.5	Trump +8.1	4.6	Wisconsin	Biden +6.7	Biden +0.7	6.0
Michigan	Clinton +3.4	Trump +0.3	3.7	Texas	Trump +1.3	Trump +5.8	4.5
New Mexico	Clinton +5.0	Clinton +8.3	3.3	Florida	Biden +0.9	Trump +3.4	4.3
Nevada	Trump +0.8	Clinton +2.4	3.2	Minnesota	Biden +4.3	Biden +7.2	2.9
North Carolina	Trump +1.0	Trump +3.7	2.7	Michigan	Biden +4.2	Biden +2.7	1.5
Pennsylvania	Clinton +1.9	Trump +0.7	2.6	Georgia	Trump +1.0	Biden +0.3	1.3
Colorado	Clinton +2.9	Clinton +4.9	2.0	North Carolina	Trump +0.2	Trump +1.3	1.1
Maine	Clinton +4.5	Clinton +2.9	1.6	Pennsylvania	Biden +1.2	Biden +0.8	0.4

And pollsters got the same states wrong each time.

# Some say the polls in 2022 were the most accurate since 1998, but other signs point to problems.

Republicans failed to have the “red wave” that many pundits and politicians expected during the 2022 midterms.

## Were polls better?

Some were more accurate...

... and some high-profile races were well-captured.

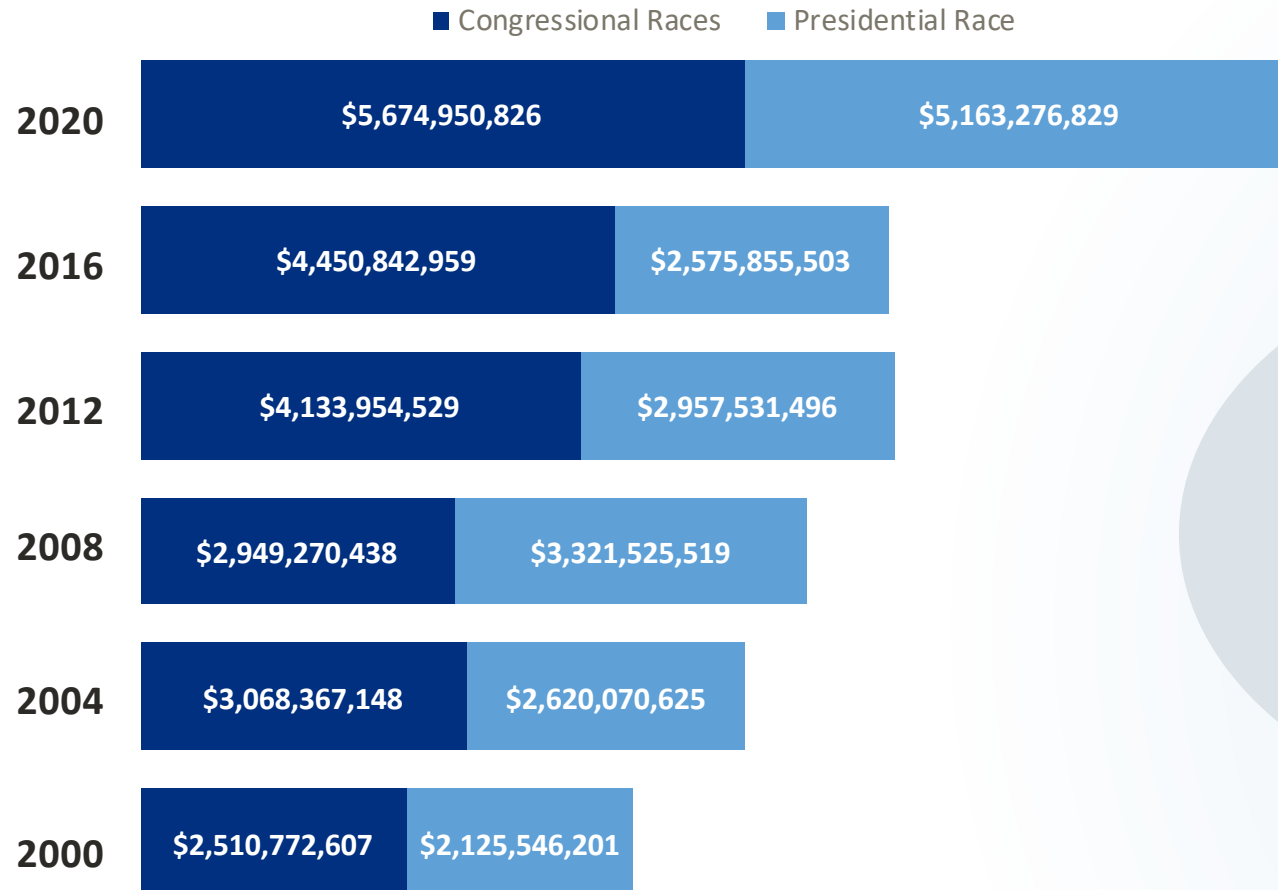
But did the polls do better, or did Democratic overperformance match current poll issues?

The volume of “fly-by-night” polling outfits increased, and there will be more in 2024.

Campaigns raise more money than ever, but **what are they getting?**

# The floodgates have opened...

## Total Cost of U.S. Elections



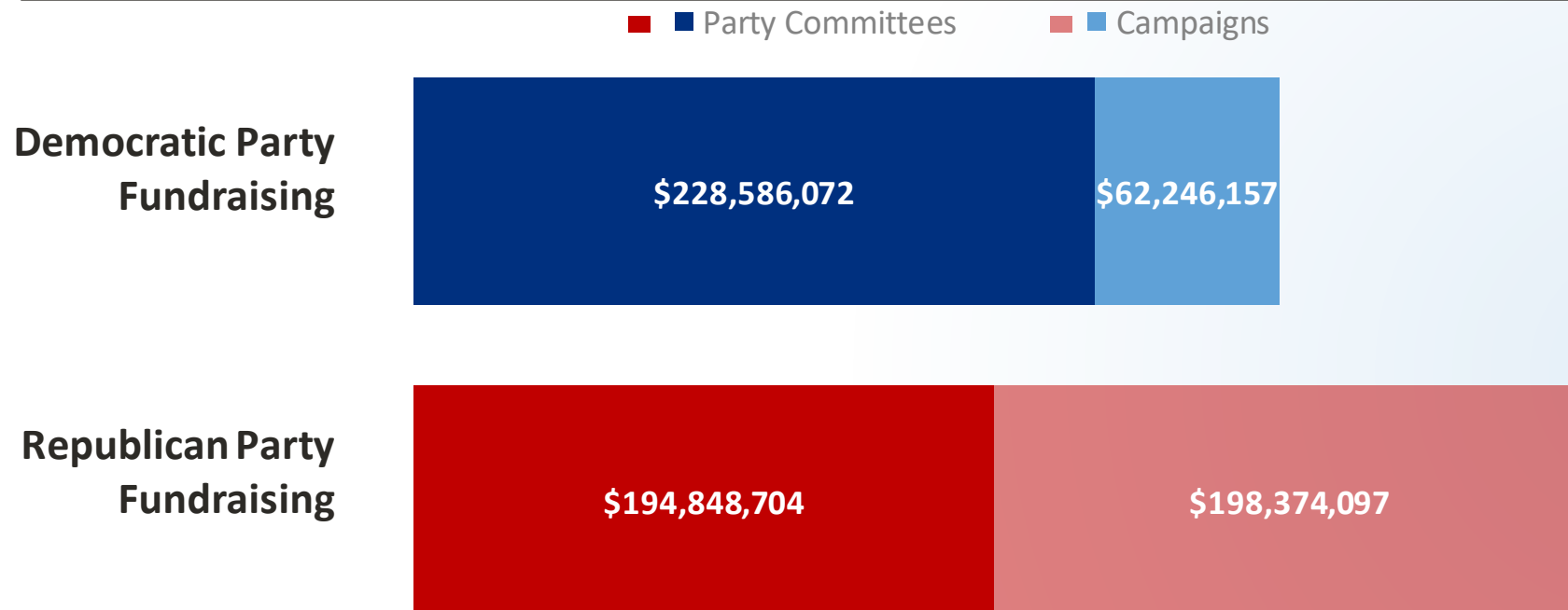
**“Political ad spending is projected to reach new heights by the end of the 2024 election cycle, eclipsing \$10 billion in what would amount to the most expensive two years in political history.”**

NBC News/AdImpact



# In 2023 Dem committees have outraised the GOP, while GOP presidential campaigns are driving campaign contributions.

2024 Party Committee and Campaign Fundraising through September 30, 2023



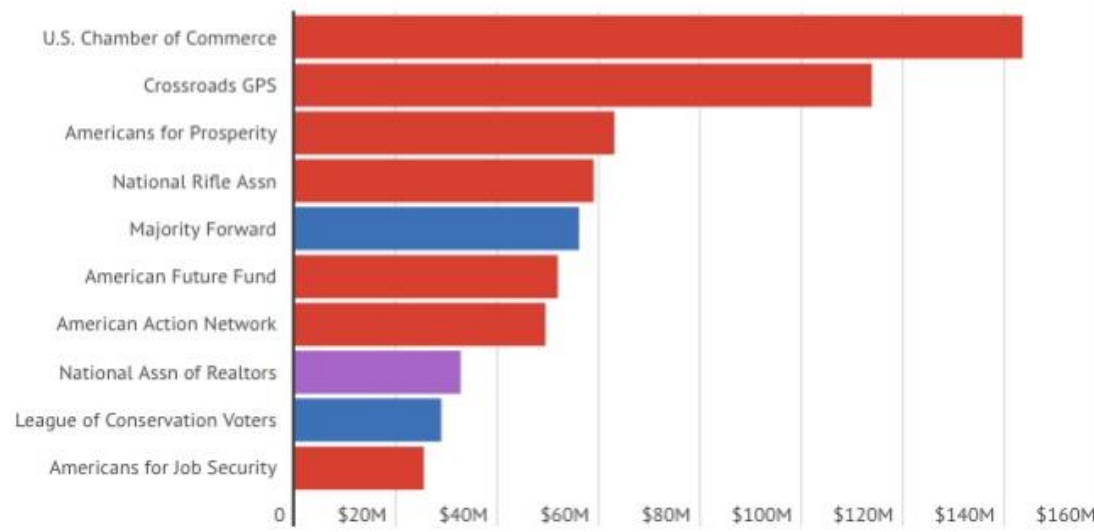
Source: Ballotpedia [Committee Fundraising](#); [Campaign Fundraising](#)

# Dark money has been stronger on the right, but Democrats are making up ground and have the small donor advantage.

## Top Spending Dark Money Groups (2010-2020)



The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, backed by powerful corporations, is the outside spender among dark money groups since 2010.



Poll highlights Democrats' grassroots donor advantage

“Donors gave \$4.3 billion through ActBlue in the 2020 election cycle, as well as \$2.2 billion in the 2022 midterms, according to FEC reports. ActBlue's GOP counterpart, WinRed, reported \$2.2 billion in 2020 and \$1.8 billion in 2022.”

# What we're seeing: once above a certain threshold, dollar advantages may not matter.

Many high-profile defeated candidates raised substantially more money.

Race	Candidates	Difference in Money Raised	Winner
Arizona Senate 2022	Mark Kelly (D) \$89.2 million Blake Masters (R) \$14.8 million	Kelly +\$74.4 million	Kelly +4.9%
South Carolina Senate 2020	Jaime Harrison (D) \$130 million Lindsey Graham (R) \$74 million	Harrison +\$56 million	Graham +10.3%
Georgia Senate 2020	Jon Ossoff (D) \$153.6 million David Perdue (R) \$102.3 million	Ossoff +\$51.3 million	Ossoff +1.2%
Maine Senate 2020	Sara Gideon (D) \$74.5 million Susan Collins (R) \$30.0 million	Gideon +\$44.5 million	Collins +8.6%
Florida Senate 2022	Val Demings (D) \$79.5 million Marco Rubio (R) \$50.3 million	Demings +\$29.2 million	Rubio +16.2%
Iowa Senate 2020	Theresa Greenfield (D) \$55.6 million Joni Ernst (R) \$30.3 million	Greenfield +\$25.3 million	Ernst +6.0%
Pennsylvania Senate 2022	John Fetterman (D) \$75.1 million Mehmet Oz (R) \$50.9 million	Fetterman +\$24.2 million	Fetterman +4.9%
North Carolina Senate 2022	Cheri Beasley (D) \$38.4 million Ted Budd (R) \$14.2 million	Beasley +\$24.2 million	Budd +3.2%
Kentucky Senate 2020	Amy McGrath (D) \$71.5 million Mitch McConnell (R) \$50.6 million	McGrath +\$20.9 million	McConnell +19.6%
Georgia 14 <sup>th</sup> District 2022	Marcus Flowers (D) \$16.6 million Marjorie Taylor Greene (R) \$12.5 million	Flowers +\$4.1 million	Greene +31.8%

# The marginal value of spending advantages in Presidential elections appears to be small.

Presidential Races				
Election	Republican Candidate	Democratic Candidate	Winner	Margin of Victory
2020 Presidential	<b>Donald Trump* (R)</b> <b>\$1.96 billion</b>	Joe Biden (D) \$1.69 billion	<b>Biden</b>	4.5% <i>(of popular vote)</i>
2016 Presidential	Donald Trump (R) \$957.6 million	<b>Hillary Clinton (D)</b> <b>\$1.4 billion</b>	<b>Trump</b>	2.0%
2012 Presidential	Mitt Romney (R) \$1.0 billion	<b>Barrack Obama* (D)</b> <b>\$1.1 billion</b>	<b>Obama</b>	3.9%

Note: Incumbents have a \*; candidate who raised more money is bolded.

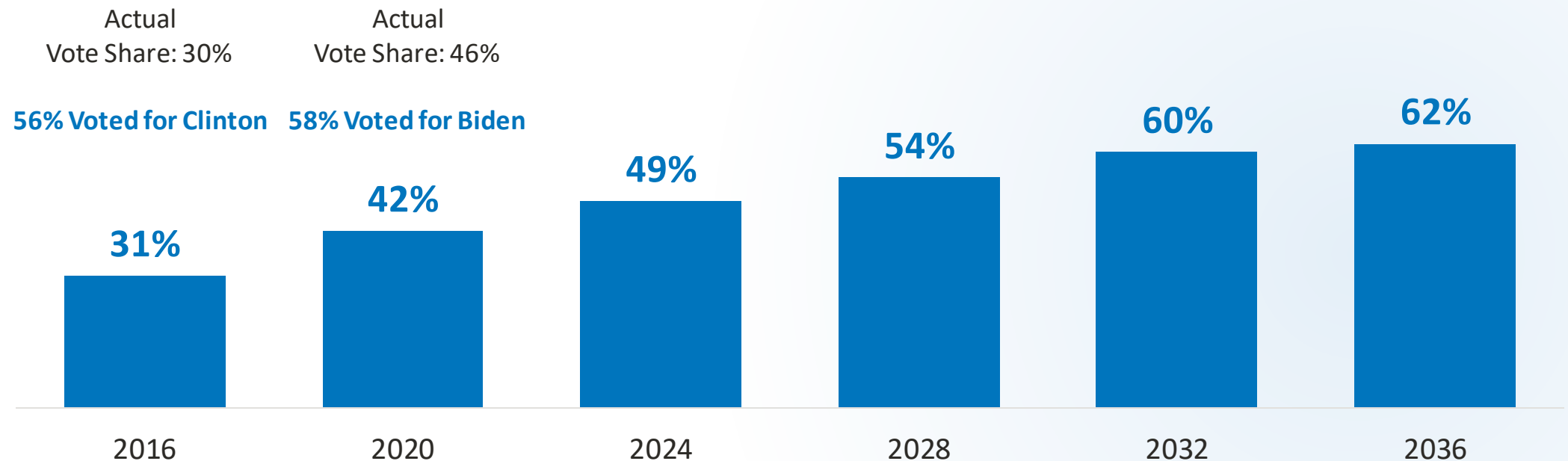
Demographic changes *should* help Democrats, but we've all heard that song before.

# Younger voters are poised to upend politics – millennials and Gen Z will be a majority of voters by 2028.

America's youngest voters have tended to vote overwhelmingly Democratic since 2016.

In the 2020 election, NBC exit polls suggested that 65% of 18–24-year-olds voted for Biden – more than any other age group.

## Percentage of Millennial (born 1981-1996) and Gen Z (born 1997-2012) Eligible Voters



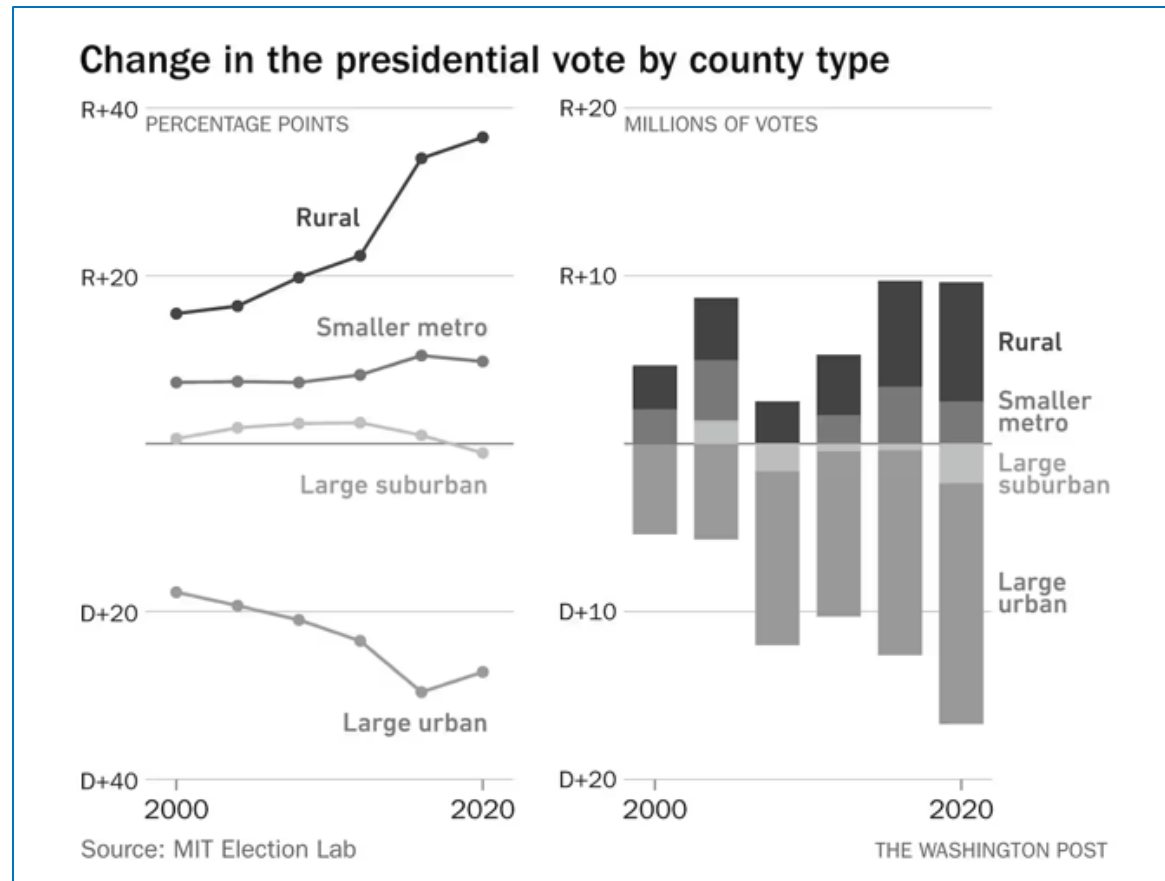
Sources: [The Brookings Institute](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Catalist](#)

# But predictions of future Democratic dominance rarely pan out.

Year		Prediction	Outcome
<u>1990</u>	<b>NATIONAL AFFAIRS</b>	“One of the most enduring...phenomena of modern American political life is the persistence of firm Democratic Party House majorities...”	<b>Gingrich Revolution</b>
<u>2002</u>	<b>THE EMERGING DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY</b>	“The most dynamic and fastest-growing areas of the country are cultivating a new wave of Democratic voters...”	<b>Bush Re-Election</b>
<u>2012</u>	<b>THE NEW REPUBLIC</b>	“Barack Obama’s reelection is evidence of a Democratic realignment that dates back almost two decades.”	<b>GOP Midterm Romp</b>
<u>2016</u>	<b>The Washington Post</b>	“Clinton retains a significant structural advantage... college-educated white women are Hillary Clinton’s firewall.”	<b>Trump Election</b>



# Most recently, rural voters have made up the gap for the GOP as Trump dramatically increased GOP votes.



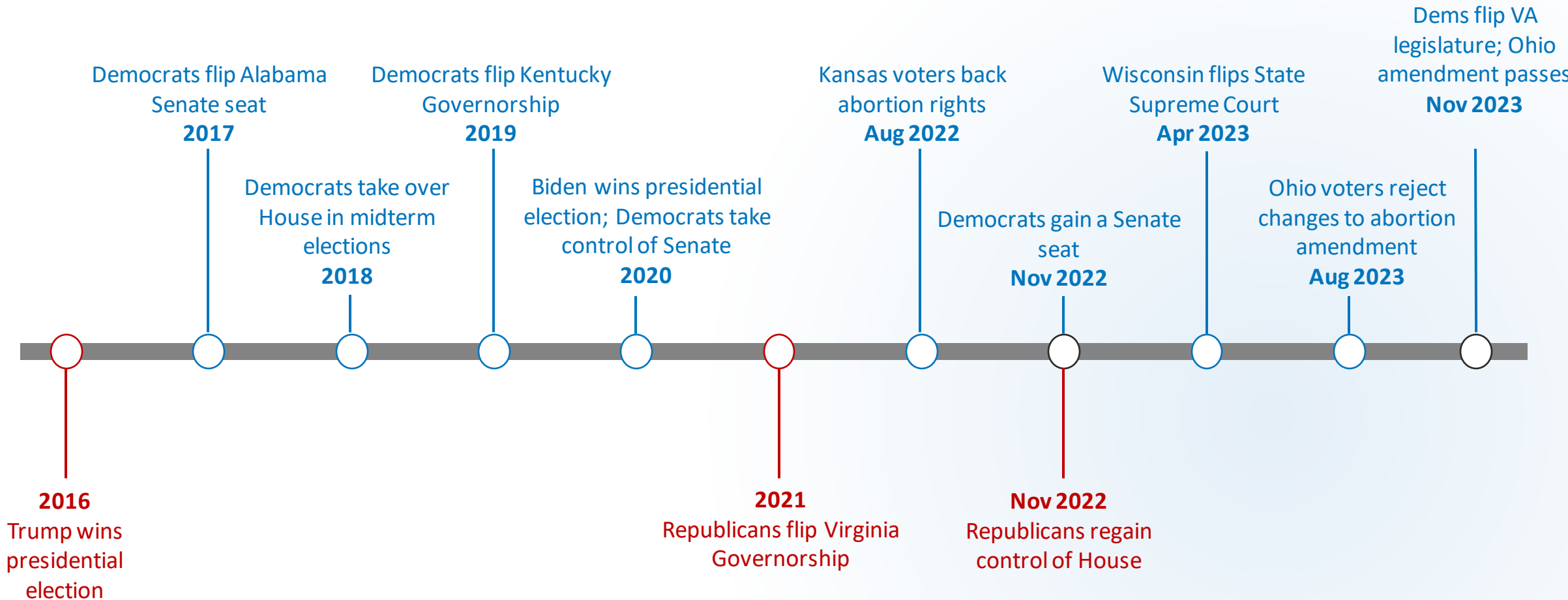
Rural areas have outsized importance in the math for Senate control and Electoral College votes...

....and no single demographic group has shifted as dramatically (in either direction) over the past 20 years.

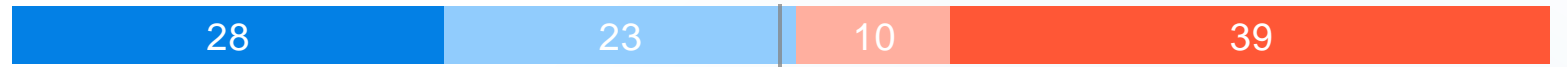


In a year, we'll probably look back  
and realize **how little we knew.**

# The tea leaves: Democrats have done better than the GOP in “nationalized” elections since 2016.

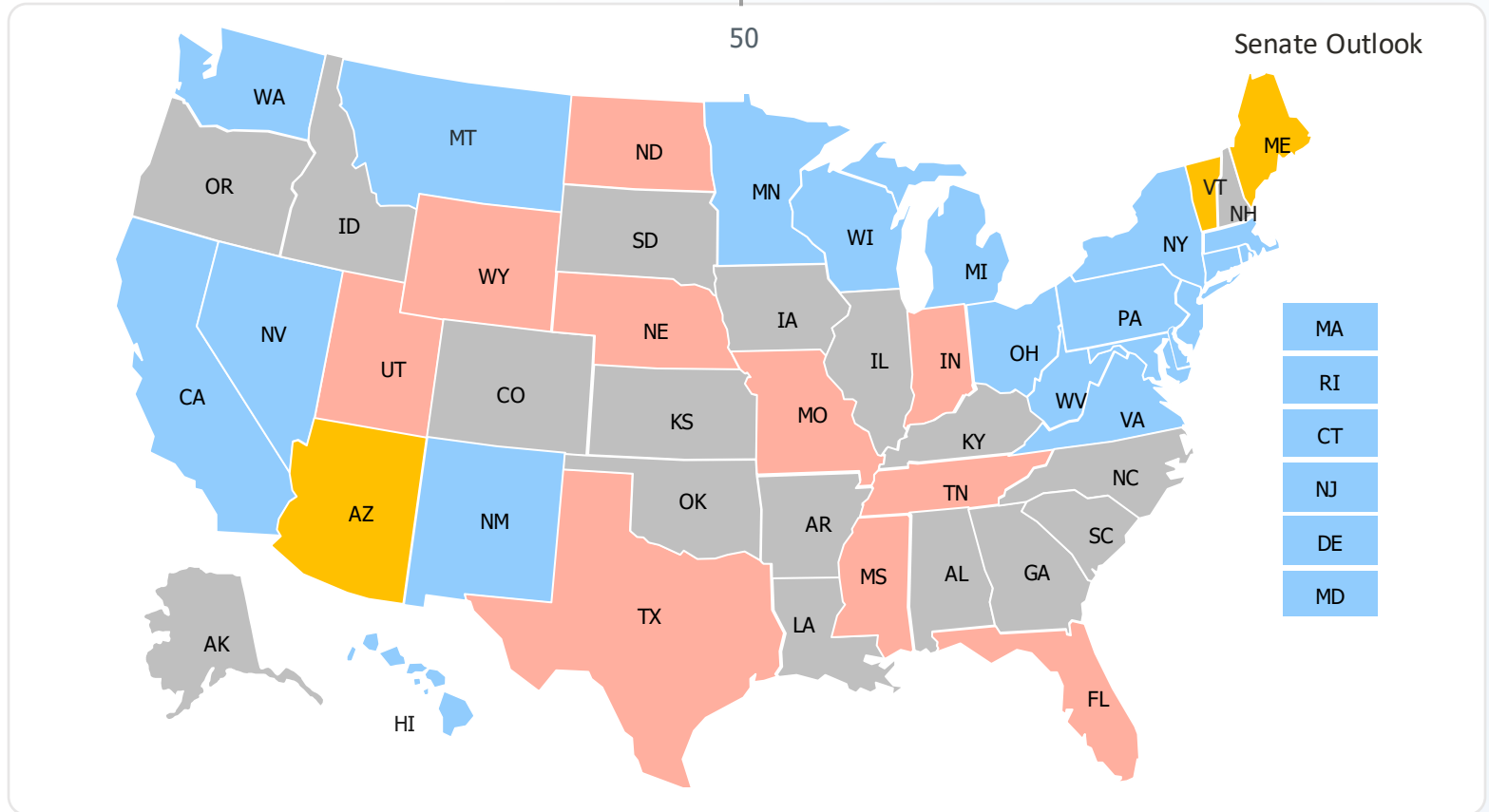


# The Senate sits on the razor's edge, and Democrats have more seats at stake.



Year	2018	2020	2022	2024
D seats up*	26	12	14	23
R seats up	9	23	21	10
Post-election change	R+2	D+3	D+1	??

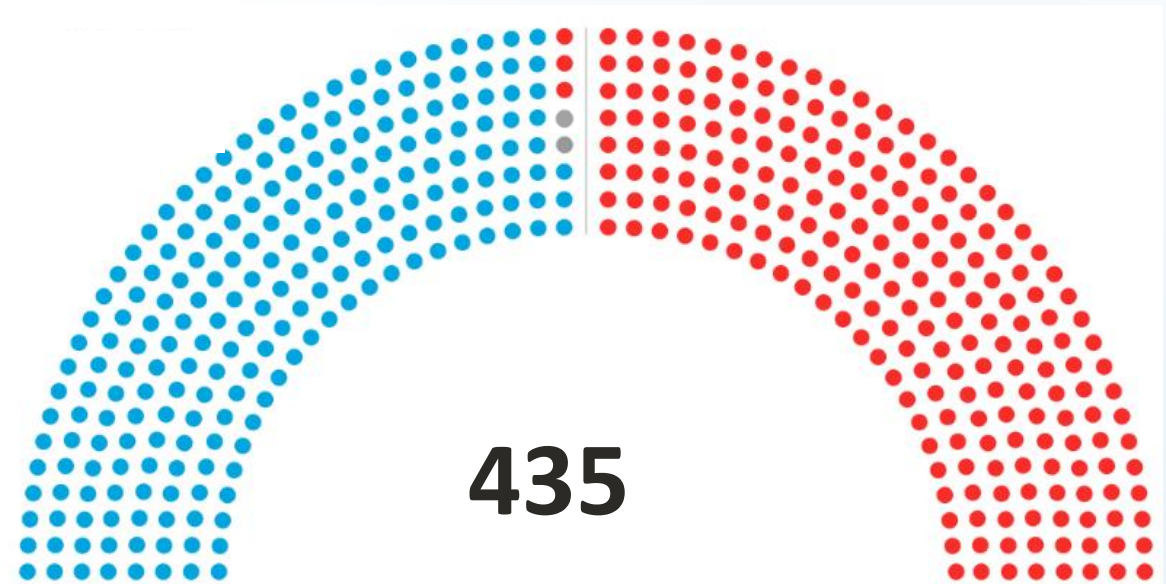
**Critical swing states to watch:**  
 AZ, MI, NV, OH, PA, WI.



# The GOP's Ozempic House majority: It keeps getting slimmer.

- There are **10 Democrats** and **14 Republicans** in “toss-up” races.
- This includes several Members of Congress who represent “crossover districts.”
  - **3 Democrats in Trump-won districts.**
  - **10 Republicans in Biden-won districts.**
- The Santos expulsion and McCarthy retirement have shrunk the majority to near-zero.

House of Representatives 118<sup>th</sup> Congress



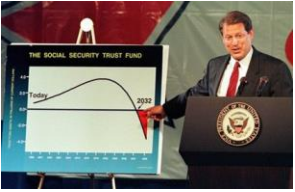


**Balance of Power**

**213 Democrats**  
**220 Republicans**  
 (2 vacancies)

# Don't forget...the last FIVE Presidents have started with unified control of Congress.

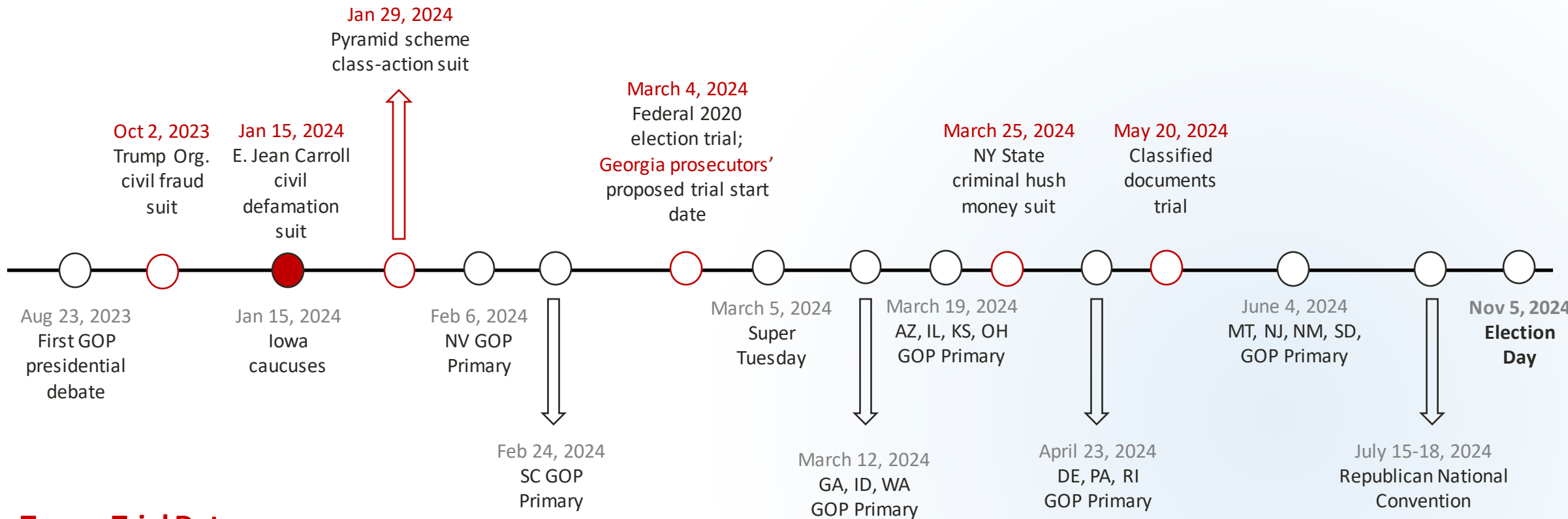
Year	Presidency	President's Party	Senate Control	House Control	Unified Control?
1992	Clinton	D	56 D – 44 R	268 D – 167 R	YES
2000	G.W. Bush	R	51 R – 49 D	223 R – 212 D	YES
2008	Obama	D	60 D – 40 R	257 D – 178 R	YES
2016	Trump	R	52 R – 48 D	241 R – 194 D	YES
2020	Biden	D	50 D – 50 R	222 D – 213 R	YES

# Presidential elections are defined by events well into the election year.

Presidential Election Year	Narrative/Event	Candidates	Presidential
2000	<p>"Lock Box"</p> 	Bush Gore	<b>Bush</b>
2004	<p>"Swift Boats" Ad</p> 	Bush Kerry	<b>Bush</b>
2008	<p>Financial Crash</p> 	McCain Obama	<b>Obama</b>

Presidential Election Year	Narrative/Event	Candidates	Presidential
2012	<p>"Binders Full of Women"</p> 	Romney Obama	<b>Obama</b>
2016	<p>"But Her Emails"</p> 	Trump Clinton	<b>Trump</b>
2020	<p>"Bleach;" COVID</p> 	Trump Biden	<b>Biden</b>

# Never before have we had a likely nominee winding their way through the courts.



## Trump Trial Dates Key GOP Campaign Events

Source: [WaPo](#)



# Confusion in the House and the whole world's falling apart – and we're still a year away.



**February 24,  
2022**

Russia invades Ukraine,  
with no end in sight



**October 7,  
2023**

Hamas attacks Israel,  
resulting in war in the  
Middle East



**October 25,  
2023**

Mike Johnson is elected  
Speaker, but GOP House  
turmoil continues



# What might be the 2024 story when we look back...

Issue	Why
Abortion	It drove many elections in 2022, statewide referenda, and specials
Trump's legal troubles	It may have improved his standing among Republicans, but might alienate supporters he needs
Economic shock	From Middle East oil to high interest rates, there is potential for a hard landing
Candidate health scare	Biden and Trump would be the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> oldest major party nominees
Third, fourth or even fifth "party" candidates	Voters are angrier than ever – could this be a replay of 1992?

# Let's Talk

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