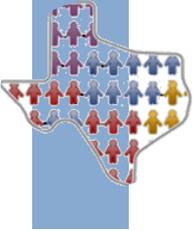


Political Parties in Texas Part I

The Democrats are the party of government activism, the party that says government can make you richer, smarter, taller and get the chickweed out of your lawn. Republicans are the party that says government doesn't work, and then get elected and prove it.

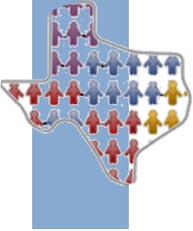
PJ O'Rourke



Political Parties

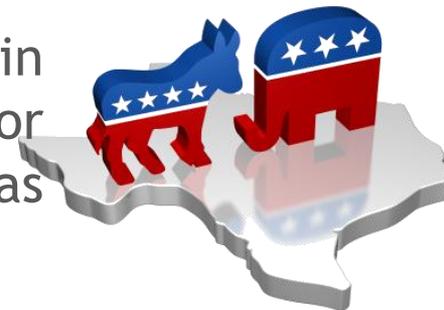
- A **political party** is a group of individuals who join together to seek public office in order to influence public policy.
- Political parties are different from interest groups in that political parties attempt to win control of the machinery of government by nominating candidates for elected office to run under the party label.
- Parties are replete with tensions between principle and pragmatism, division and unity, vision and mere distribution of the spoils.
- **Parties in Texas fail to perform many of the functions that make parties useful elsewhere** and thus it is more realistic to view them as loose confederations of citizens, interest groups and office-holders temporarily cooperating because of occasional ideological agreement and parallel interests.

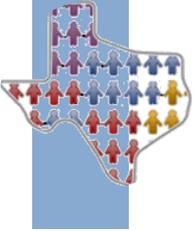




One-Party vs. Two-Party Systems

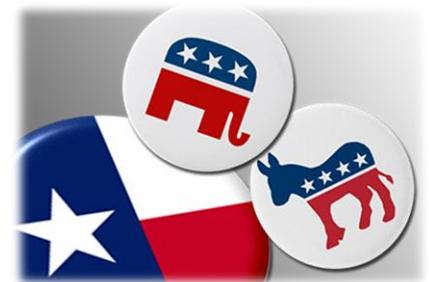
- **party system**: the relative positions of dominance of the major parties and their long-term constituencies
- **Two-party systems**, such as that of the US at the national level, promote debate on policy issues and provide a forum for emerging minorities and emerging issues.
- **Political participation** (including voter turnout) is generally greater in a two-party system than in a one-party system.
- **One-party systems** promote only limited debate on policy issues and make party labels worthless.
- Because those sharing the Democratic label in Texas were neither ideologically homogeneous nor committed to the party, one-party politics was really no-party politics.

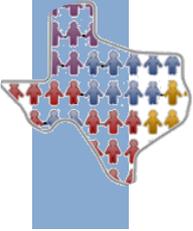




The Functions of Texas Political Parties

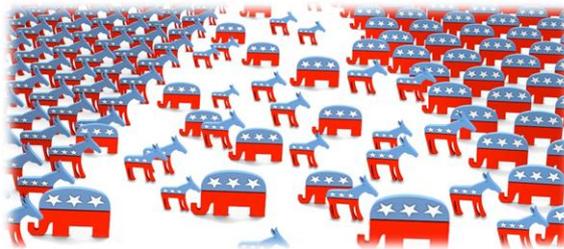
- **win elections** and thus gain the opportunity to exercise **control over public policy**
- provide a **label** under which candidates may run and with which voters may identify
- **recruit and train candidates** for campaigns
- assist in **getting out the vote**
- assist in **raising money** for candidates' campaigns and in helping candidates with **legal requirements**
- provide the **means for Texans to participate and have input** at various levels of the political system

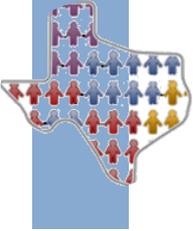




The Functions of Texas Political Parties

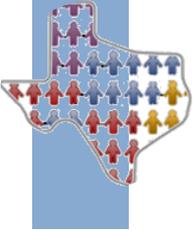
- **organize societal interests**
- engage citizens in a continuing political dialogue by helping to **structure and present the issues** of the day
- help **organize the government** once officials have been elected
- **communicate to leaders** the interests of individuals and groups
- **structure political conflict and debate**, sometimes by screening out the demands of minority groups lacking political clout
- **bind government vertically** among the various levels of the political system, **and horizontally** across the nation





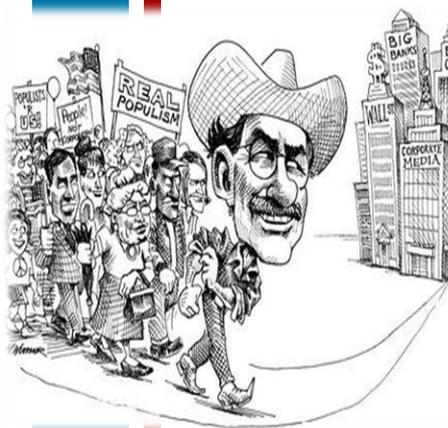
Ideological Elements of Texas Political Parties

- While Texas political parties have historically undergone profound transformation, the ideological elements of the state's politics have remained remarkably stable.
- Texas ideology is a combination of three main philosophical concepts: classical liberalism, social conservatism and populism.
 - **classical liberalism**: came from independent-minded Mexicans who had experienced intense struggles against the Catholic Church and the Spanish monarchy ... places primary political value on political arrangements that allow for the fullest exercise of individual liberty as long as the liberties of others aren't unreasonably restricted ... Often opposes the use of government to attain social objectives. Relies on private initiatives or the free market to determine the best outcomes.

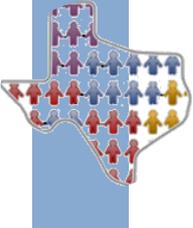


Ideological Elements of Texas Political Parties

- **social conservatism**: brought by Southerners who migrated to Texas between independence and the Civil War ... derives from the classical conservatism of feudal Europe, embraces traditional hierarchical social relations and opposes social change ... Supports the use of government to reinforce traditional social relations. Values established traditions that encompass religion and respects traditional authority figures such as business, military and religious leaders.

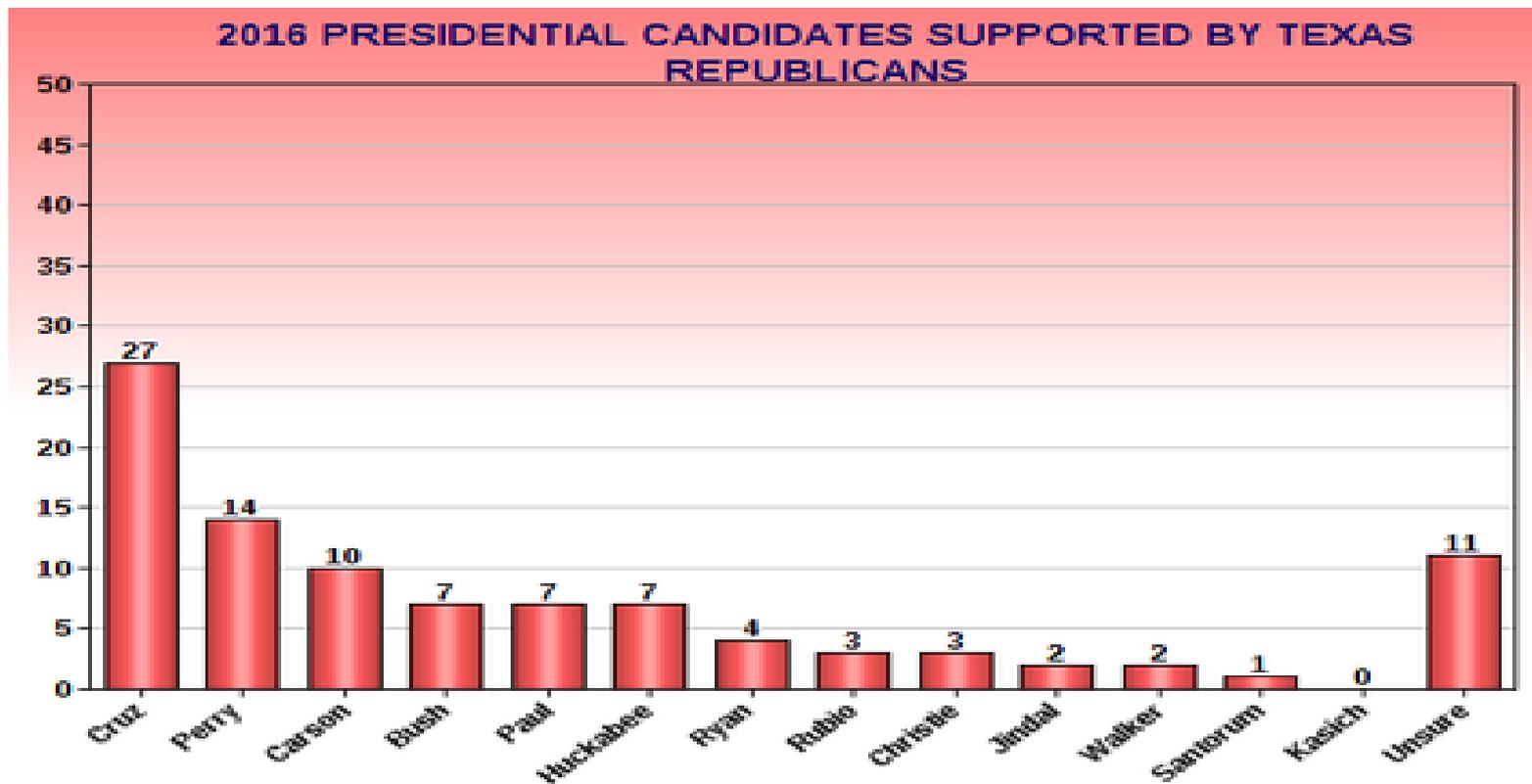


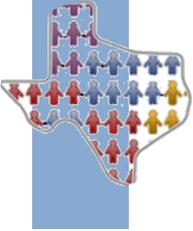
populism: imported by Jacksonian Democrats ... concerned primarily with the well being of ordinary people and emphasizes popular will as the chief virtue ... Politically, it tends to support involvement of the government in regulating society and the economy. Also tends to be socially conservative and so may support very different political positions.



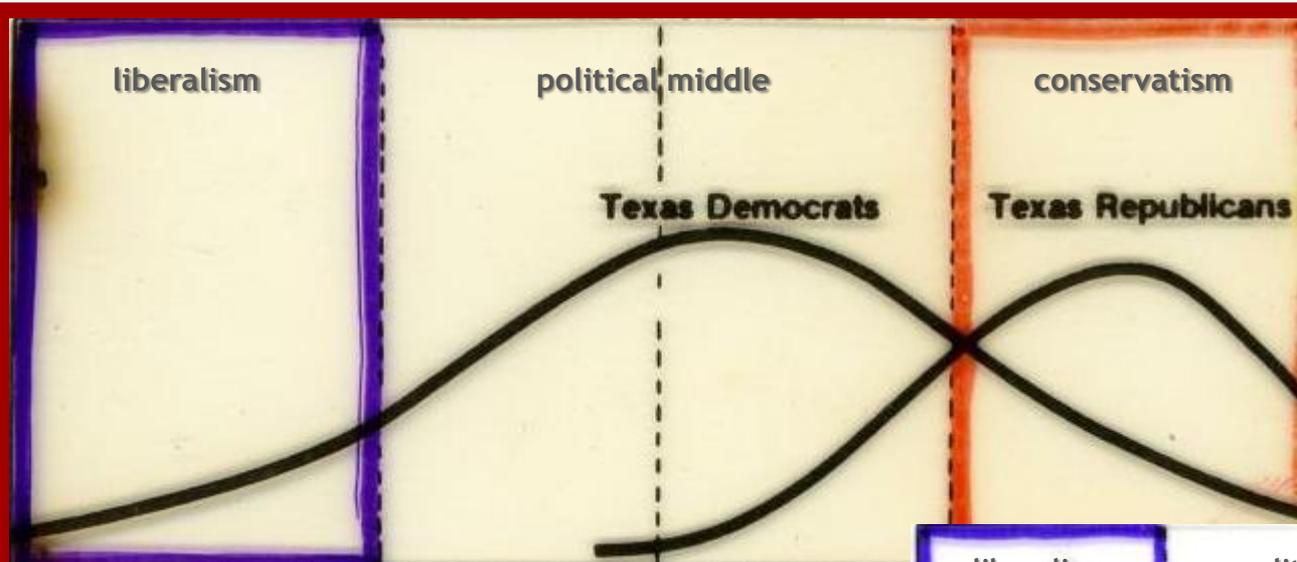
Ideological Elements of Texas Political Parties

Being a right-wing extremist might hurt a political candidate in many states -- but in Texas it is an advantage. The graph shows the favorite 2016 presidential candidate choices of Texas Republicans. Note that the most extreme candidates do the best among Texas Republicans.



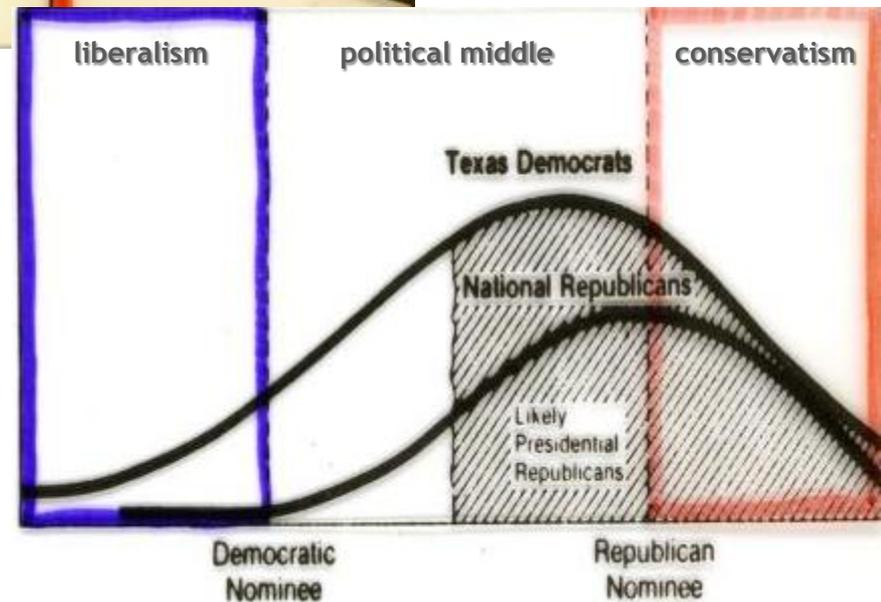


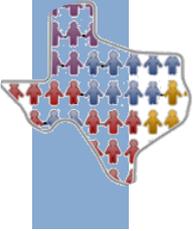
Ideological Elements of Texas Political Parties



Compare Texas Democrats to Texas Republicans ideologically.

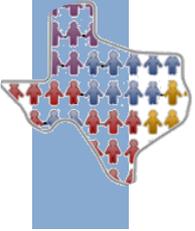
Compare Texas Democrats to national Republicans ideologically.





Ideological Elements and Political Socialization

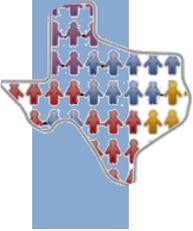
- The process of political socialization explains how the attitudes and values of the conservative political culture that dominates Texas are transmitted from one generation to another.
- **Political socialization** is the process by which we teach and learn our political knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values and habits of behavior.
- The basic agents of political socialization are **family, school, church** and the **media**.
- Basic political orientations are difficult to alter, thus **the ideas of Texas citizens change slowly**.



Ideological Elements and Political Socialization

- Studies have shown that Texas schools tend generally to **educate children to passivity** rather than to democratic participation.
- When the two major parties differ on public policy issues, Texans often side with the party favoring their **interests** regardless of whether their political ideology is in line with the party's.

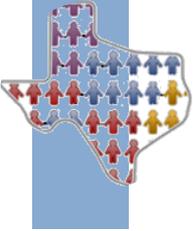




The Party System

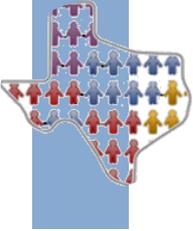
- Throughout most of its history, the US has had a **two-party system**: the division of voter loyalties between two major political parties, resulting in the near exclusion of minor parties from seriously competing for a share of political power.
- However, **many states** have experienced periods of **one-party dominance**.
 - For nearly a century after the Civil War, the Democratic Party dominated southern politics.
 - Political conflicts still occurred in the south, but they took place within the Democratic Party between factions divided over issues or personalities.
 - A **party faction** is an identifiable subgroup within a political party.





History of the Texas Party System: Statehood and Reconstruction

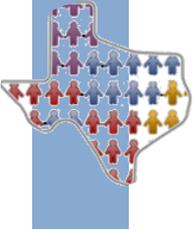
- [Vote Smart Texas Political Parties](#)
- [Political Party Strength in Texas, 1845-2017](#)
- Although **no parties existed in Texas prior to statehood**, Sam Houston's dominance of Texas politics led to the formation of pro- and anti-Houston factions which debated policy issues.
- Texas entered the Union with Democratic party support as a slave state and so **most Texans identified with the Democrats**.
- When the Civil War ended, Texas was put under military rule during Reconstruction and subjected to restrictions that prohibited former Confederate officers (usually white Democrats) from engaging in political activity, paving the way for **Republican Party control of state government** and high numbers of black office holders.



History of the Texas Party System: Democratic One-Party Dominance

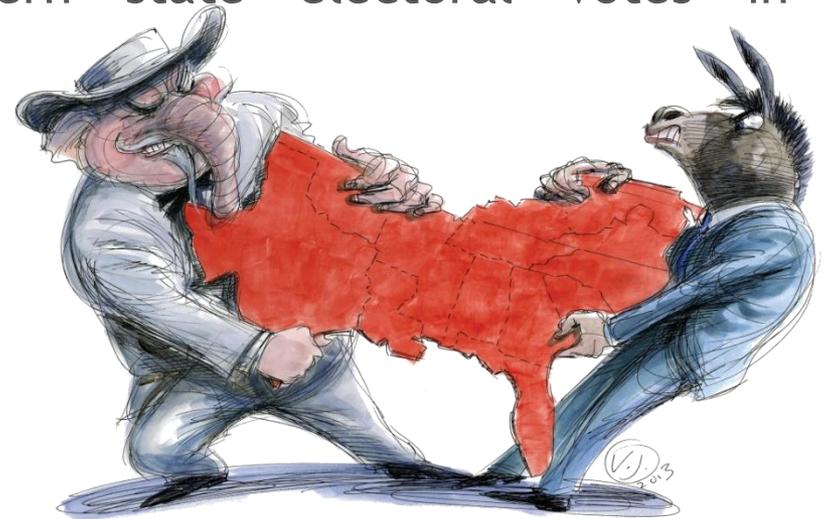
- Most Texans' identification of the Republicans with the abolition of slavery and Reconstruction policies made Texas a **solid one-party Democratic state after Reconstruction**.
- The defeat of Republican Governor EJ Davis in 1873 began a period of Democratic Party dominance that would continue until the 1990s.
- The **Grand Old Party** (GOP), as the Republican Party was known, fell into disrepute.
- Texas Democrats won nearly every state-wide race, most seats in Congress and the state legislature, and an overwhelming number of local and judicial contests.

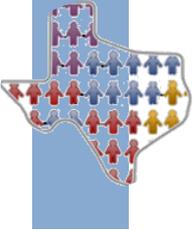




History of the Texas Party System: Democratic One-Party Dominance

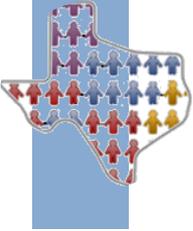
- **Large landowners and industrialists controlled the Texas Democratic Party.** The public policies they favored reflected a political philosophy of conservatism and they sought to preserve the political, economic and social institutions of society against abrupt change.
- The dominance of the Democrats not only in Texas but also throughout the South led to the term **Solid South**: the Democratic sweep of southern state electoral votes in presidential election years.





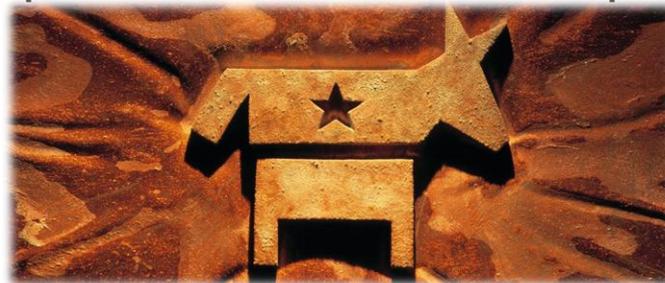
History of the Texas Party System: Factionalism

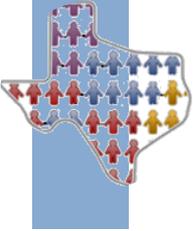
- In the late 1800s, the **Populists** attracted Texas Democratic voters and activists on reform issues, aggravating divisions in the dominant Democratic Party.
- By the 1930s, an identifiable **liberal faction** emerged to challenge the conservative dominance of the Texas Democratic Party. This faction favored a political philosophy of liberalism and they sought to change the political, economic or social institutions of society to foster the development of the individual.
- For most of the period from the 1930s to the 1970s, a minority of reformists/liberals in the Democratic Party contended with a majority of **conservatives and moderates**, who generally **retained control of the party organization and of most elected offices**.



History of the Texas Party System: Factionalism

- The primary electoral contests between conservative Democrats and liberal Democrats led to **factionalism** within the Democratic Party during the next several decades of Texas politics.
- Conservatives were generally opposed to most government economic regulation and government spending, while favoring low taxes and traditional values.
- Liberal Democrats favored government regulation, high levels of government spending on social programs, and a more active role for state government in the fields of education, job training, health care and public assistance to the poor.



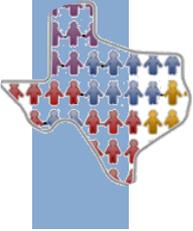


History of the Texas Party System: Factionalism

- Conservative and Liberal Democratic factions drew support from different social and economic sectors of the state.
- All of the infighting notwithstanding, **allegiance remained overwhelmingly Democratic among Texas voters.**
- Beginning in 1928, Texas **voted Republican in national elections on occasion.**
- By the 1950s, the Texas Democratic Party encapsulated such a wide range of views that **the party label had begun to lose its meaning.**

Allan Shivers organized the Democrats for Nixon and joined with a very strong Republican party organization that hoped to duplicate its successes of 1952 and 1956. Both candidates considered Texas' twenty-four electoral votes crucial to their victory.



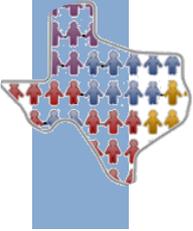


History of the Texas Party System: Transition

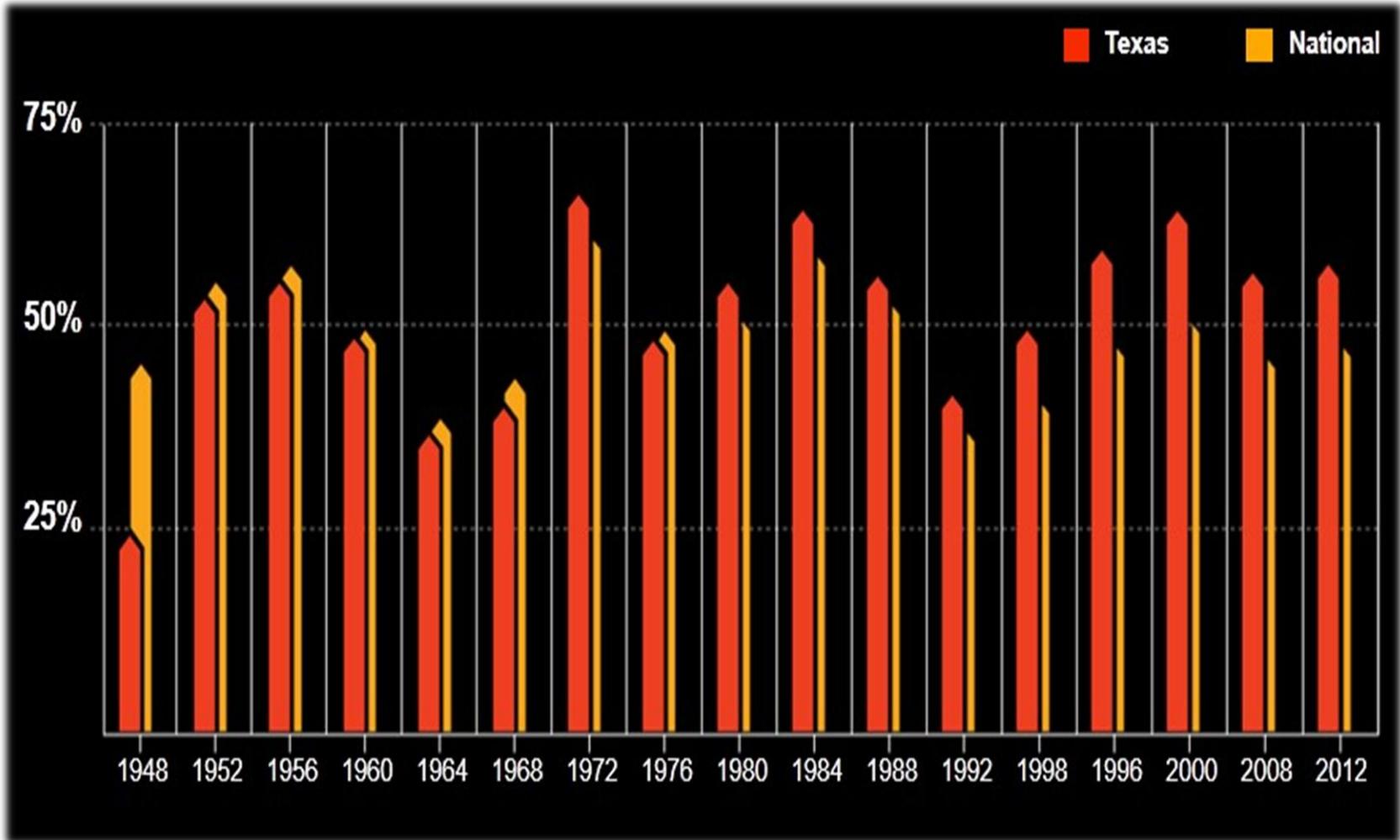
- The period running from the early 1950s through the late 1970s was a time of transition for party politics in Texas, particularly with the coming to life of the Texas Republican Party.
- For a long time, **conservative Democrats would vote Democrat at the local level and Republican at the national level.**
- **Conservative voters begin to defect from the Democratic Party and join the GOP** in the 1950s and 1960s.
- The presidential candidacy of General Dwight **Eisenhower** brought a flood of new faces to the Republican camp, many of which were former Democrats.

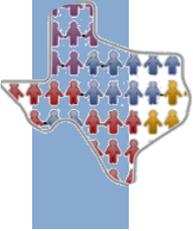
1956 REPUBLICAN PLATFORM

1. Provide federal assistance to low-income communities
2. Protect Social Security
3. Provide asylum for refugees
4. Extend minimum wage
5. Improve unemployment benefit system so it covers more people
6. Strengthen labor laws so workers can easily join a union
7. Assure equal pay for equal work regardless of sex



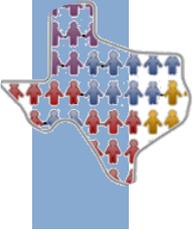
Republican Share of the Presidential Vote





History of the Texas Party System: Transition

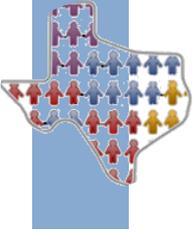
- In 1961, Republican Senator John **Tower** first **broke the Democrats' monopoly in state-wide elections.**
- Liberal Democrats voted for Tower largely as a protest vote against his Democratic opponent, whom they viewed as insufficiently liberal. They wanted to teach conservative Democrats a lesson.
- Tower won with 51% of the vote. The victory **gave the Texas Republican Party credibility and emboldened conservative Democrats to back Republicans** in other races.
- Texas Republicans built their party throughout the 1960s and 1970s and successfully elected candidates to the US Congress, the Texas legislature and local government.



History of the Texas Party System: Reemergence of the Republican Party

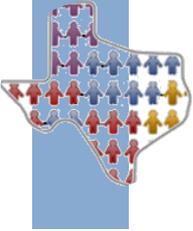
- There are several **reasons that account for the rise of the GOP** as a significant electoral force in Texas.
- The **legacy of the Civil War finally began to diminish in importance**, especially for younger Texans.
- Support from liberal activists and African Americans for **civil rights** loosened the allegiance of conservative white voters, activists and contributors to the Democratic Party.
- Many conservative white Democrats became disenchanted with what they saw as an **increasingly liberal national Democratic Party**.





History of the Texas Party System: Reemergence of the Republican Party

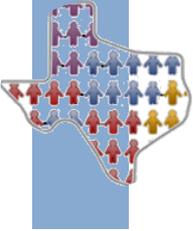
- There are several **reasons that account for the rise of the GOP** as a significant electoral force in Texas.
 - Highway construction and residential development patterns **increased the suburbanized population** throughout the nation, including Texas.
 - The Texas Republican Party benefited from the **migration of conservative white-collar workers from outside the South**, as the economy diversified from oil and agriculture to service industries, aerospace and, in some local areas, digital communications technology.
 - When the liberal Democrats **drove the conservatives out of the party**, they lost their base in a conservative state.



History of the Texas Party System: Reemergence of the Republican Party

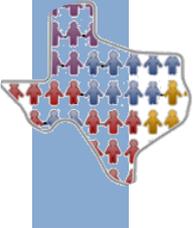
- There are several **reasons that account for the rise of the GOP** as a significant electoral force in Texas.
 - **split-ticket voting**: choosing a different party's candidates for different offices ... Split ticket voters in Texas traditionally have been likely to vote Republican for national offices and Democrat for state-level offices.
 - **Changes in party organizing and campaigning**, including the shift to more expensive methods of campaigning, helped level the competitive landscape between the larger Texas Democratic Party and the better-funded Texas Republican Party.
 - [How Texas Shifted From Blue to Red](#) (See animated graphic at top of page.)





History of the Texas Party System: A Two-Party State

- The 1978 election of Bill **Clements** as the first Republican governor in more than a century signaled the emergence of a competitive two-party system in Texas.
- Not until the 1984 Republican landslide was the Democrats' hold over Texas broken at the local level.
 - **critical election**: an election in which voters and interest groups make long-term changes in their party preferences
- Texas became a **two-party state** with electoral struggles between Democrats and Republicans for control of state-wide offices and the state legislature.
- From 1978 to 1994, Texas party politics was more competitive than ever before. The period was also associated with the rise in strength of the Republican Party.



Republican Share of Offices Held

Texas statewide offices

100%



Texas House

66%



Texas Senate

61.3%



Texas delegation to U.S. House

71.9%



1974

1978

1982

1986

1990

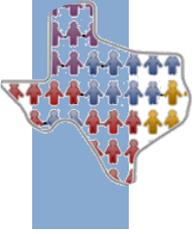
1994

1998

2002

2006

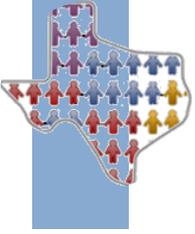
2010



History of the Texas Party System: A Two-Party State

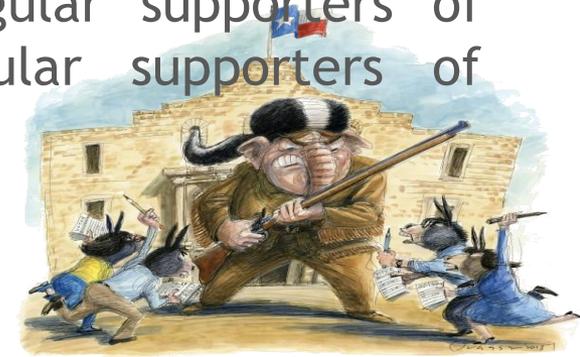
- The state election of 1994 was a watershed as Republicans defeated an incumbent Democratic governor, retained a second US Senate seat, pulled almost even in the state senate and won hundreds of local offices.
- Rise of GOP in Texas has lessons for Dems

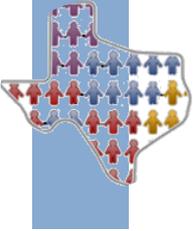




History of the Texas Party System: Political Realignment

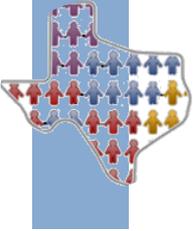
- During the last two decades of the twentieth century Texas went through a political realignment.
 - **realignment**: a shift in the make-up and fortunes of the dominant parties
- The Democrats' *Dream Team* for state elections in 2002 failed to return Democrats to power. The Republican Party won most state-wide offices and captured control of the legislature, both the Senate and the House.
- Survey research in 2002 indicated that 47% of Texas voters described themselves as more-or-less regular supporters of Republicans, while only 39% were regular supporters of Democrats.





History of the Texas Party System: Dominance of the Republican Party

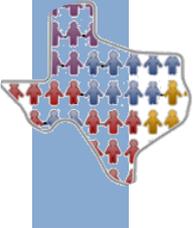
- By 2004 Texas could just barely be considered a two-party state with Republicans holding every state-wide elective office, both US Senate positions and a majority of the state senate.
- By 2006, Republican candidates were widely supported at the polls. After that year's elections, both US senators, 19 of Texas' members of the US House of Representatives and the majority of both the Texas Senate and House of Representatives were Republicans.
- **Whenever a single party becomes dominant in a state, factions within the party appear.** Parties need to keep these factional disputes under control, or risk losing voters to the other party.
 - Despite the difficulties of getting on the ballot, the 2006 gubernatorial election had two independent candidates, Carole Keeton Strayhorn and "Kinky" Friedman.



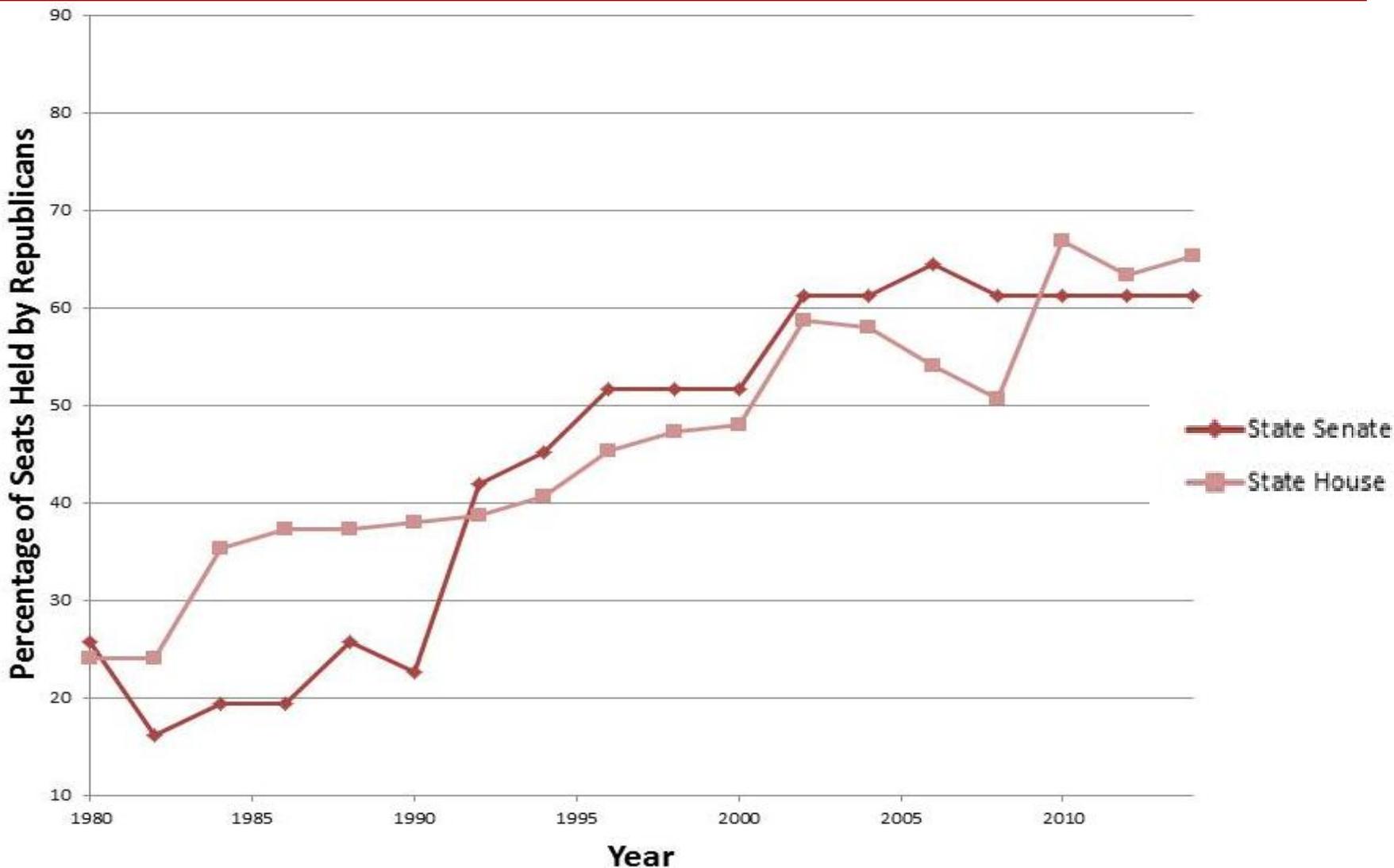
History of the Texas Party System: Dominance of the Republican Party

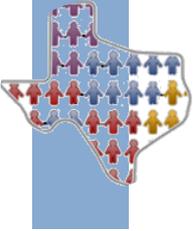
- In the 2010 elections, Republicans temporarily lost control of the Texas House of Representatives.
- Republicans now control all state-wide offices, both houses of the state legislature, and both US Senate seats. They also have commanding control of the Texas delegation to the US House of Representatives.
- In addition, for the last decade, the GOP has won every race for the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.
- Thomas Carsey and Jeffrey Harden found that Texas ranked as the 7th most conservative state among the 50 states on ideology in both 2000 and 2004. In 2006, Texas ranked as the 9th most conservative.





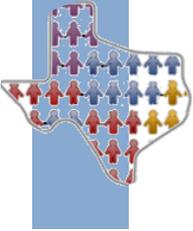
Percentage of Texas Legislature Controlled by Republicans





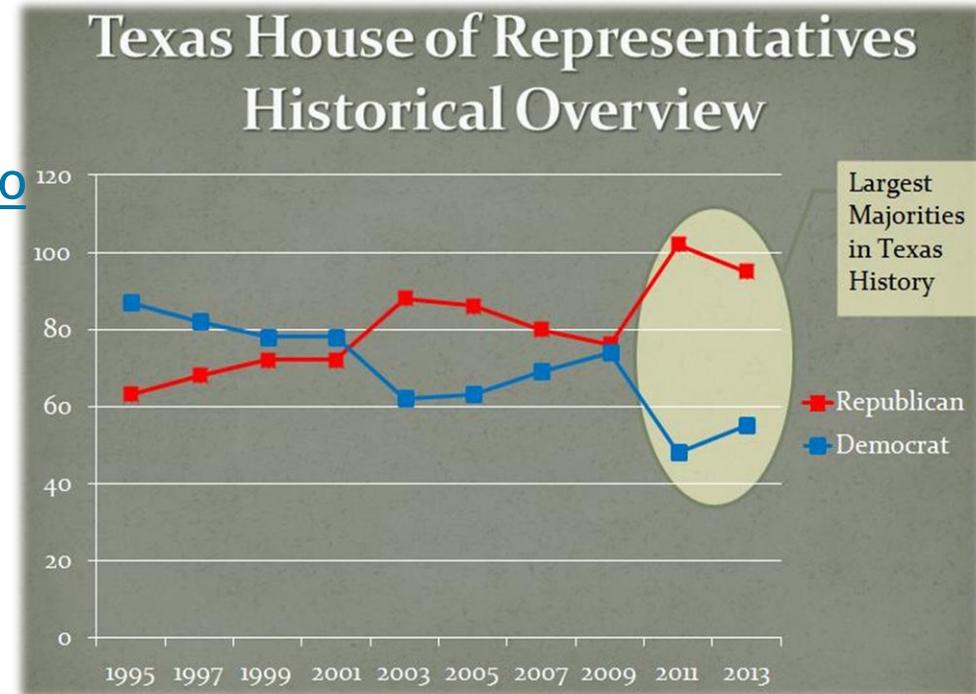
History of the Texas Party System: Dominance of the Republican Party

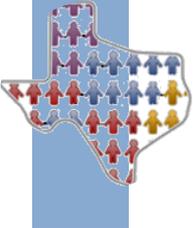
- As conservative as Texas is today, **Republicans are still not as dominant as Democrats were** in the first half of the last century.
- Not surprisingly, Texas politics is not as simple as Democrats vs. Republicans. Although Republicans hold strong majorities in both houses, the governorship and every other state-wide office, there are **serious ideological divides** within the party.
- One of those divisions is between **social conservatives and business-oriented conservatives**.
- Recently, **the Tea Party** has pushed the Texas Republican Party farther to the right and risks endangering the support of more moderate Texas Republicans.



History of the Texas Party System: Dominance of the Republican Party

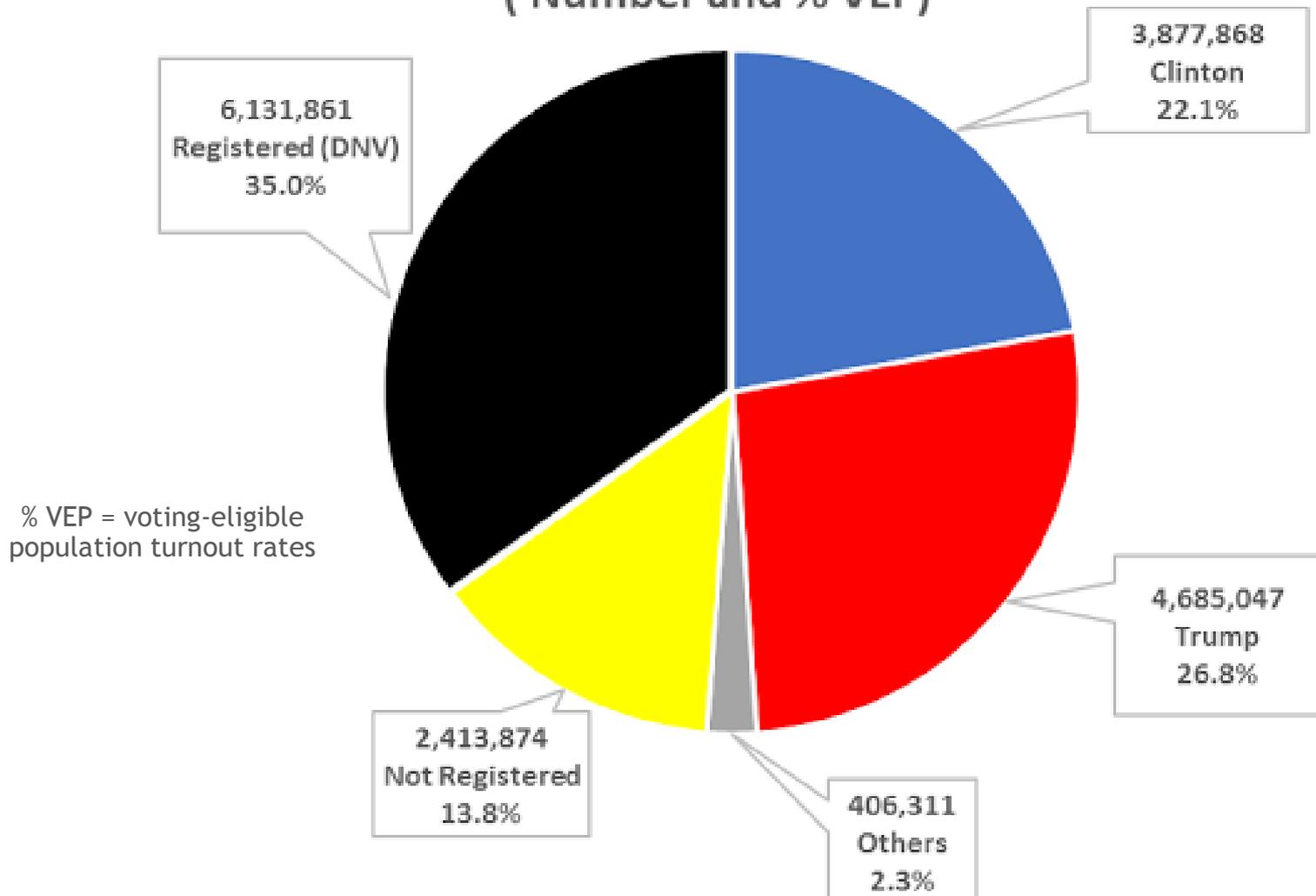
- However, **Republican voters in Texas are less divided** today than Democrats were in the 1950s, and the Texas Republican Party is **much better funded** than the Texas Democratic Party.
- The Republican Party is likely to maintain its hold on state government for at least the near future.
- The Grand Old Divide
- Analysis: A Test of the Two Republican Parties in Texas

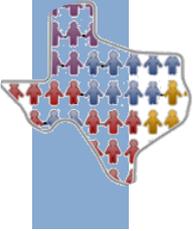




How Texans Did / Did Not Vote in 2016

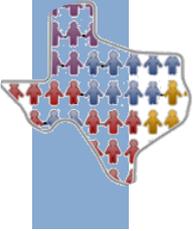
(Number and % VEP)





History of the Texas Party System: Democratic Resurgence?

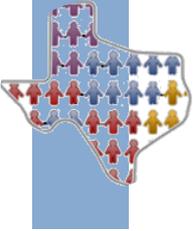
- The Democratic Party has been **hurt by a weak minority turnout** and it continues to be **divided between conservatives and liberals**.
- Demographic changes, however, could help restore the party to power ... if minority groups emerge to become the majority in the state's population and if they turn out in increasing numbers.
- Demographically, an estimated 20% of registered voters in Texas are Hispanic, a change that has made Hispanic voters a more influential group.



History of the Texas Party System: Democratic Resurgence?

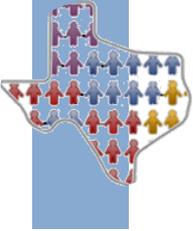
- Republican leaders recognize the need to extend their party's appeal to minority voters but have not yet been successful.
- **Millennials** (those born in the early 1980s through the mid-1990s to early 2000s) make up a growing percentage of the Texas population and vote about two to one Democratic.
- Can Democrats Reconquer the Lone Star State?
- The GOP Should Be Worried About Texas





History of the Texas Party System: Third Parties

- There have been many third parties in Texas, the most noteworthy of which was the **Populist Party**, which existed from the 1880s to the 1910s and played a significant role both in the state and at the national level. Like most third parties, it did not survive, although some of its positions were adopted by the major parties.
- Among the other parties that have run candidates in Texas are the **Prohibitionists**, **Socialists**, **Communists**, **States Righters** and the **American Independence Party**.
- Dallas billionaire H. Ross Perot founded the **Reform Party** in the early 1990s.

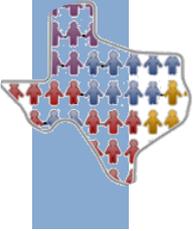


History of the Texas Party System: Third Parties

- In the late 1990s and early 2000s the two most vigorous third parties were the **Greens**, who were on the liberal end of the political spectrum, and the **Libertarians**, the consistent anti-government party.
- Mexican Americans in Texas have organized a number of political groups intended to improve the lot of Spanish-speaking Texans.
- In the 1970s, Mexican Americans established **La Raza Unida**, a true political party.
- *La Raza Unida* won some local elections in Texas before ceasing to exist in the early 1980s following personal and factional feuding within the party and FBI infiltration for alleged radicalism.

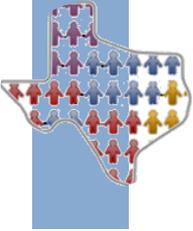


Unidos No Nos Venceran
(United we will not be defeated.)



History of the Texas Party System: Third Parties

- Mexican Americans are now represented not by a political party but by several interest groups, including **LULAC** and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (**MALDEF**).
- They are also represented by two organizations within the Democratic Party, **Mexican-American Democrats** (MAD) and **Tejano Democrats**.
- A recent increase in registered Hispanic voters who identify themselves as Democrats has resulted in Democratic wins in urban areas such as Dallas County and Harris County.



continued in Political Parties in Texas Part II

