

MR. POGREBA, PARKER SCHOOL

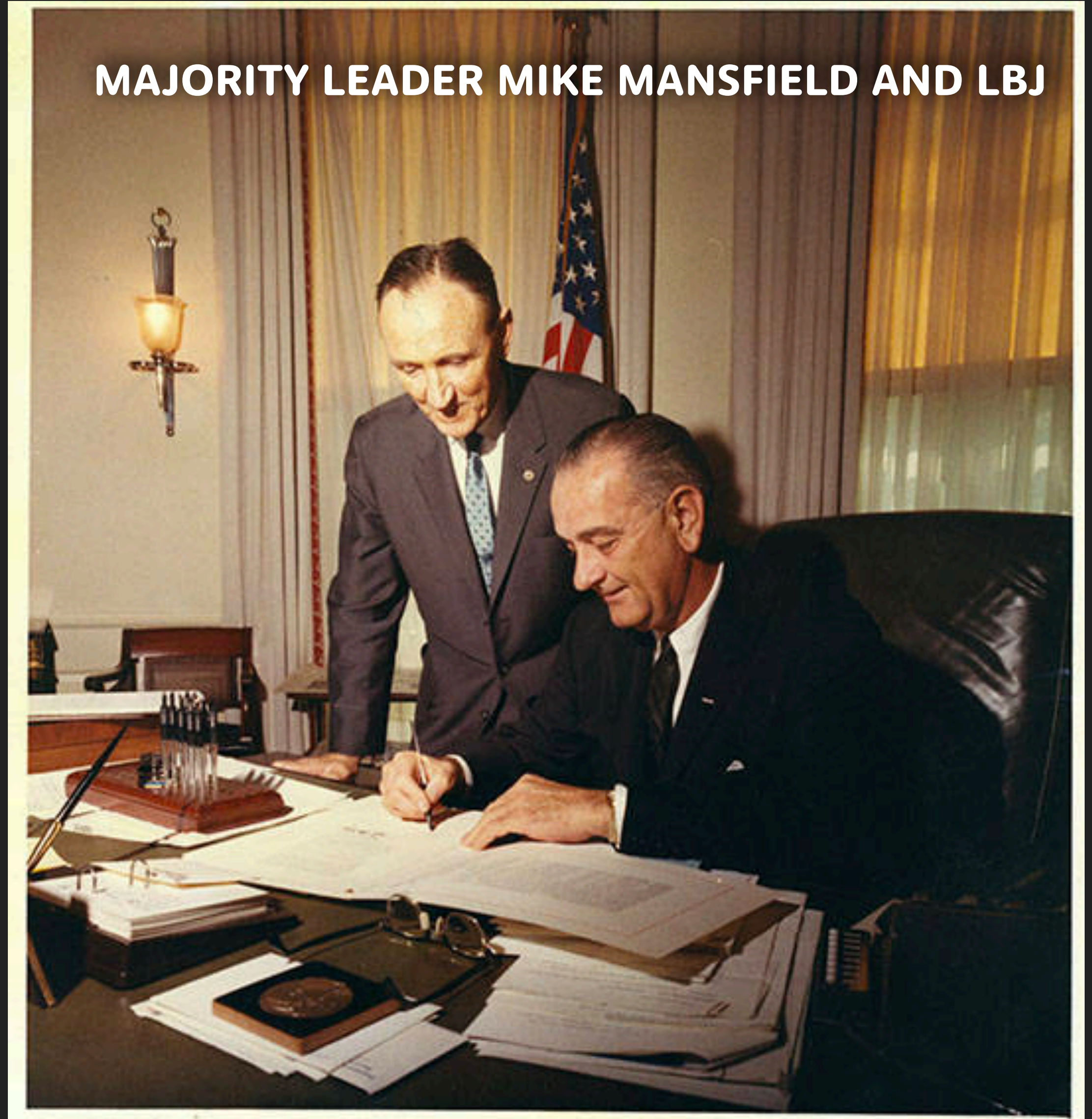
**UNIT 8: THE GREAT SOCIETY  
& THE '68 ELECTION**



## JOHNSON AS PRESIDENT

- ▶ Johnson was a master at the kind of **political dealmaking** necessary to get things done in Washington.
- ▶ In the first three years of administration, he **passed and signed more bills** than any President since FDR.
- ▶ Johnson benefited from public grief over the death of Kennedy and a huge Democratic majority created in the 1964 election.
- ▶ In '64, Johnson crushed conservative **Barry Goldwater**, winning 45 states, but Goldwater articulates a new conservative direction for the GOP that will win over voters later.

MAJORITY LEADER MIKE MANSFIELD AND LBJ





## THE GREAT SOCIETY

- ▶ Johnson declares a **War on Poverty**. **White Flight** hollowed out urban areas, leaving behind poverty in areas often damaged by highway construction.
- ▶ Johnson calls for a new **Great Society**, one that will address the needs of the poorest members of society.
- ▶ Medical assistance had stalled in the US while European countries built nationalized systems.
- ▶ **Medicare** (1965) provided federal aid to the elderly for healthcare and **Medicaid** (1966) extended medical assistance to those in poverty.



**LBJ SIGNS MEDICARE INTO LAW**

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**“I’M SICK OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO TALK ABOUT THE THINGS WE CAN’T DO,” LYNDON JOHNSON TOLD AN AIDE IN ONE OF HIS PATENTED EXHORTATIONS. “HELL, WE’RE THE RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD, THE MOST POWERFUL. WE CAN DO IT ALL.” THE GREAT SOCIETY WAS THE NAME JOHNSON GAVE HIS AMBITION. IT “RESTS ON ABUNDANCE AND LIBERTY FOR ALL,” HE SAID IN A MAY 22 SPEECH, “A SOCIETY OF SUCCESS WITHOUT SQUALOR, BEAUTY WITHOUT BARRENNESS, WORKS OF GENIUS WITHOUT THE WRETCHEDNESS OF POVERTY.”**

**Rick Perlstein, Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America**



## THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

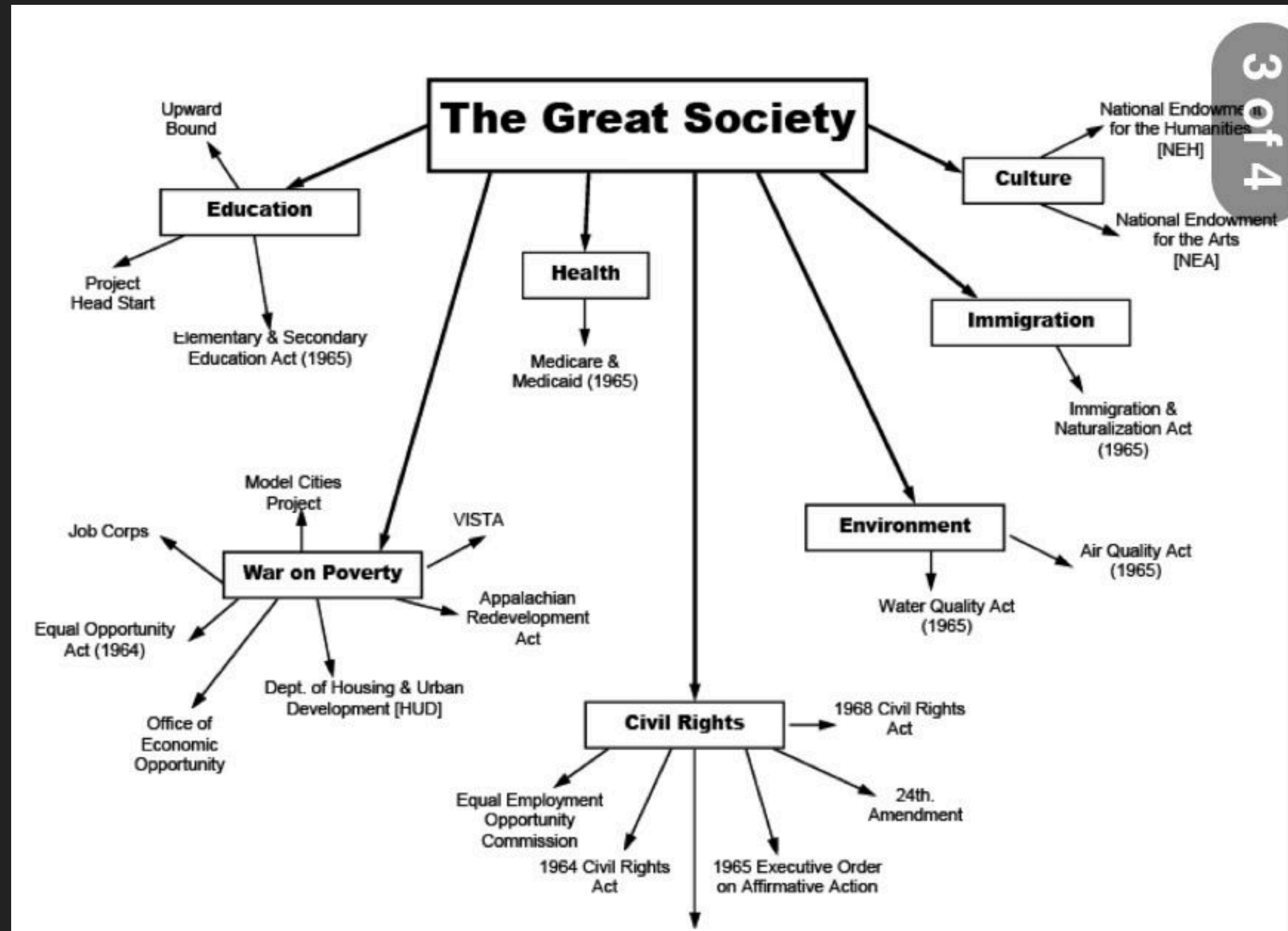
- ▶ Johnson created the **Office of Economic Opportunity**, a program to build economic, educational, and housing opportunities. It relied on **Community Action**, which empowered local community members.
- ▶ The program suffered from mismanagement, but it was fatally wounded by the costs of the war in Vietnam.
- ▶ Historians noted that Johnson's effort to have both **guns and butter** doomed some social programs like the OEO.





# CITIES, SCHOOLS, AND IMMIGRATION

- ▶ Johnson created the **Department of Housing and Urban Development** to provide a sustainable loan program and rebuild urban areas.
- ▶ Kennedy fought for aid to public schools, but Johnson delivered it with the the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act** of 1965. Today, the federal government provides 8.3% of federal school funding.
- ▶ He also creates the federal **Head Start** program and **Higher Education Act**.
- ▶ **The Immigration Act of 1965:**
  - ▶ Eliminated national origins provisions from the 1920s
  - ▶ Allowed "equal" access to immigration from Africa, Asia, and Europe.



THE GREAT SOCIETY



## LEGACY OF THE GREAT SOCIETY

- ▶ Johnson's Great Society was **the greatest reduction in American poverty** (from 21% in 1959 to 12% in 1969).
- ▶ However, **it came with a high cost.** Federal expenditures went from \$94 billion in 1961 to \$196.6 billion in 1970.
- ▶ The expenses of the Great Society contribute to a new conservative movement headed by **Ronald Reagan** that broke down the liberal orthodoxy of the post-war period.
- ▶ President Obama expanded Medicare in 2010 in an effort to get universal healthcare coverage in the US.





## THE CRISIS OF 1968

- ▶ Deeply unpopular, Johnson decides not to run for re-election in 1968.
- ▶ '68 was tumultuous year, with the assassination of **Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert F. Kennedy,** riots in American cities, and violent clashes at the **Democratic National Convention.**
- ▶ Nixon defeats **Vice President Hubert Humphrey** (43%-42%), but **segregationist George Wallace** wins 13% as an independent.



NIXON CAMPAIGN RALLY



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**“IT IS A LESSON OF THE SIXTIES: LIBERALS GET IN THE BIGGEST POLITICAL TROUBLE—WHETHER INSTITUTING OPEN HOUSING, CIVILIAN COMPLAINT REVIEW BOARDS, OR SEX EDUCATION PROGRAMS—WHEN THEY PRESUME THAT A REFORM IS AN INEVITABLE CONCOMITANT OF PROGRESS. IT IS THEN THAT THEY ARE MOST LIKELY TO ESTABLISH THEIR REFORMS BY TOP-DOWN BUREACRATIC MEANS. A BLINDSIDING BACKLASH OFTEN ENSUES.”**

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## HOW DID NIXON WIN?

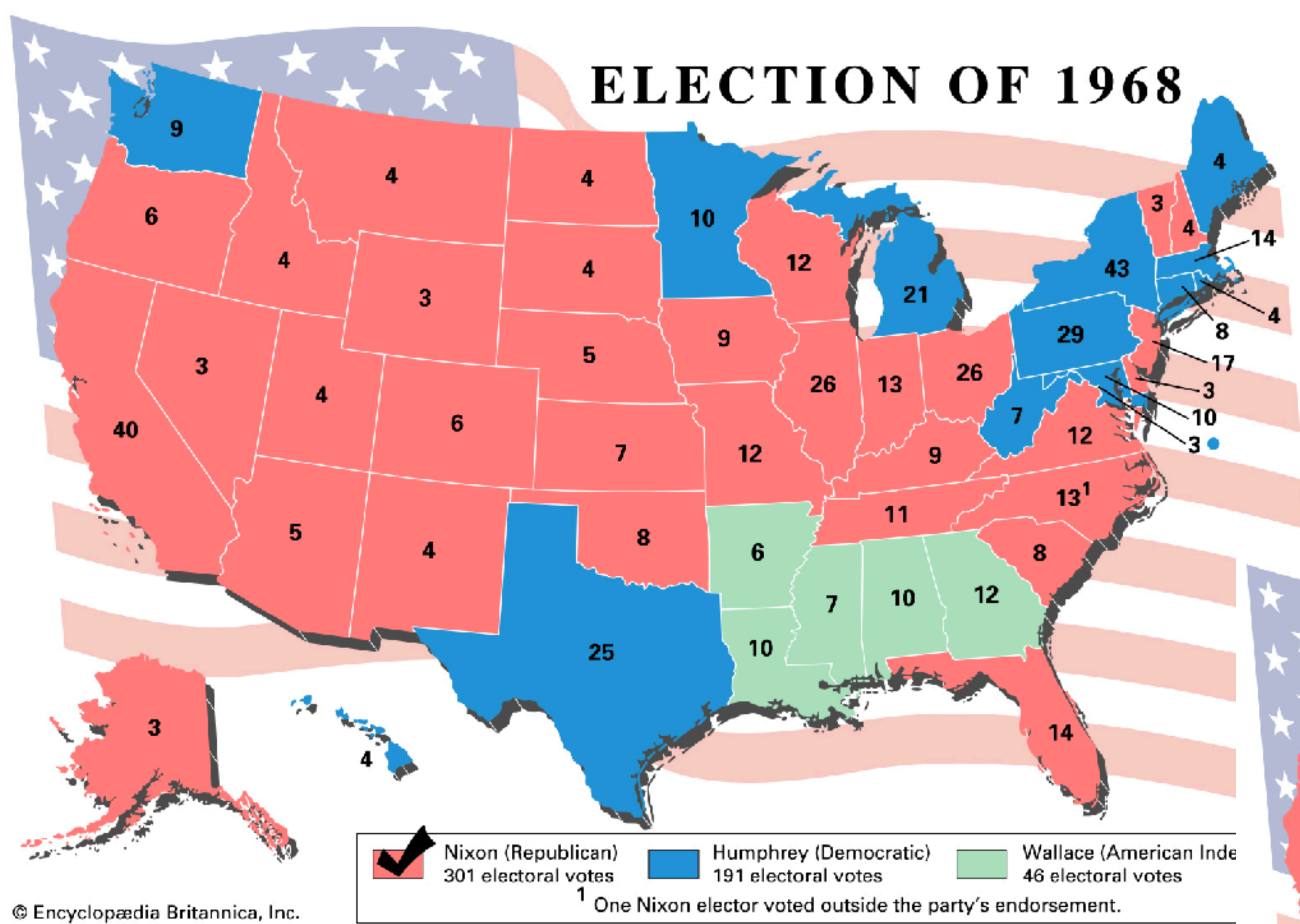
- ▶ Nixon appealed to what he called “**the silent majority**,” middle-class white Americans nervous about the fraying of the country and radical change in civil rights and the anti-war movement.
- ▶ Nixon also began the **realignment of American politics**, appealing to Southern white voters opposed to desegregation. Republicans would dominate Presidential elections, winning in '72, '80, '84, and '88.
- ▶ Like 1800 and 1896, 1968 represented a **major shift in the two-party system**.



OUTSIDE THE 1968 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION



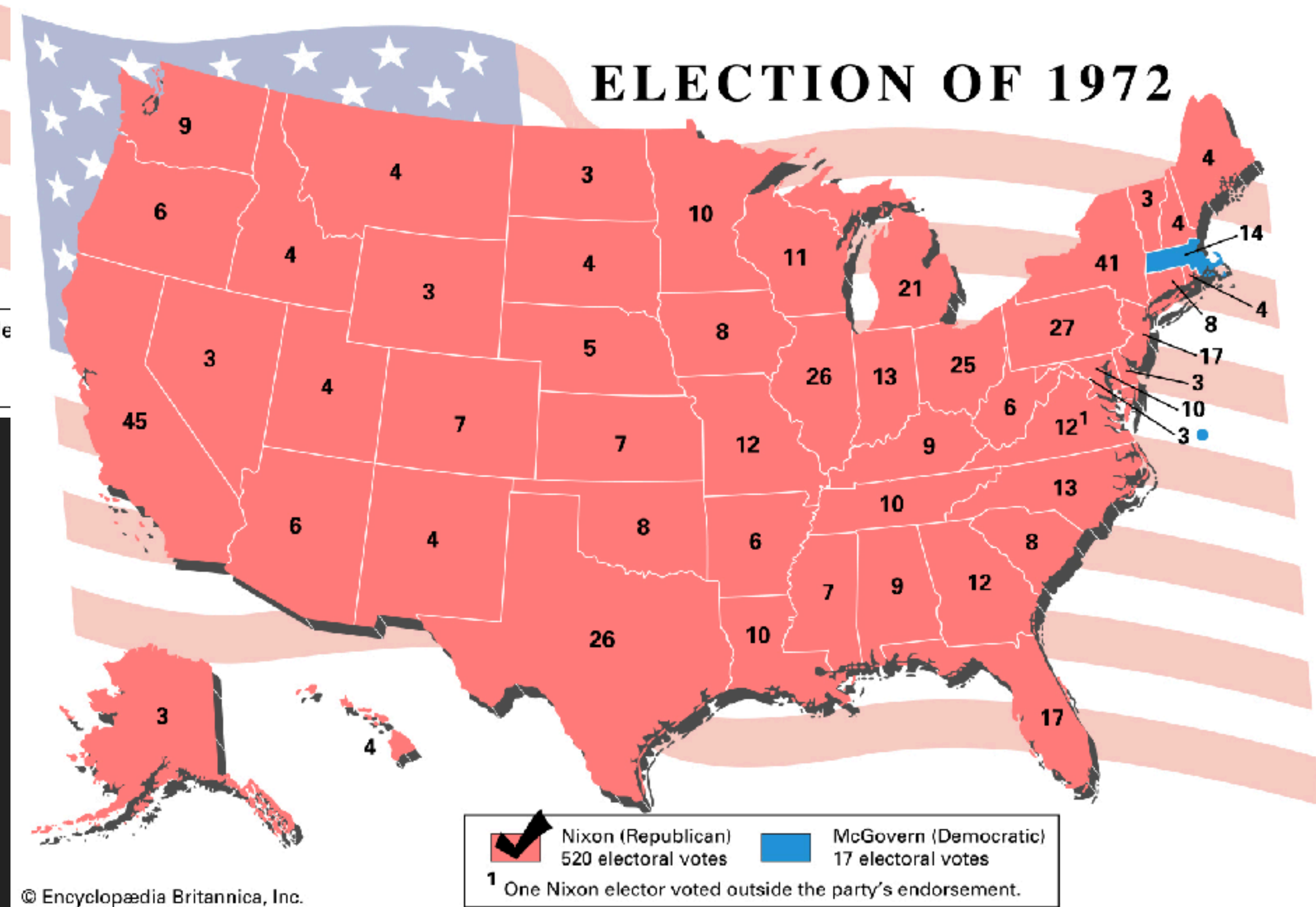
# ELECTION OF 1968



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# 1968 & 1972 ELECTIONS REALIGN AMERICAN POLITICS

# ELECTION OF 1972



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