

MR. POGREBA, PARKER SCHOOL

Unit 7: Political Ideologies & Beliefs

Parties, Partisanship and Interest Groups



"However [political parties] may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people and to usurp for themselves the reins of government, destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion."

Washington's Farewell Address, 1796

I'm an FDR Democrat, and I really believe that the most important thing is the institutions of political parties, and engaging in those institutions, and, where you disagree with them, speaking up and sharing your disagreement.

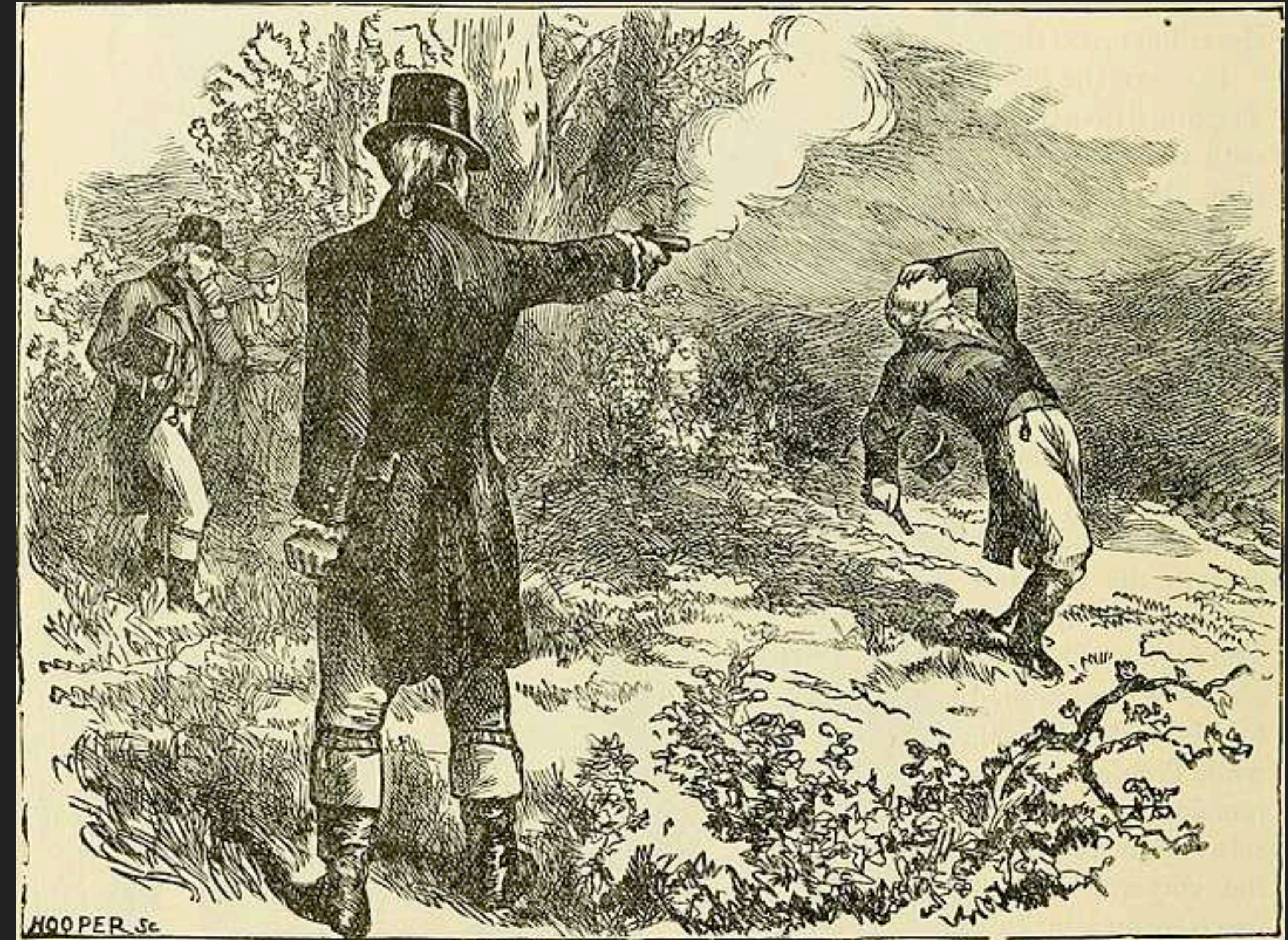
Zephyr Teachout



History of Political Parties

HISTORY OF POLITICAL PARTIES

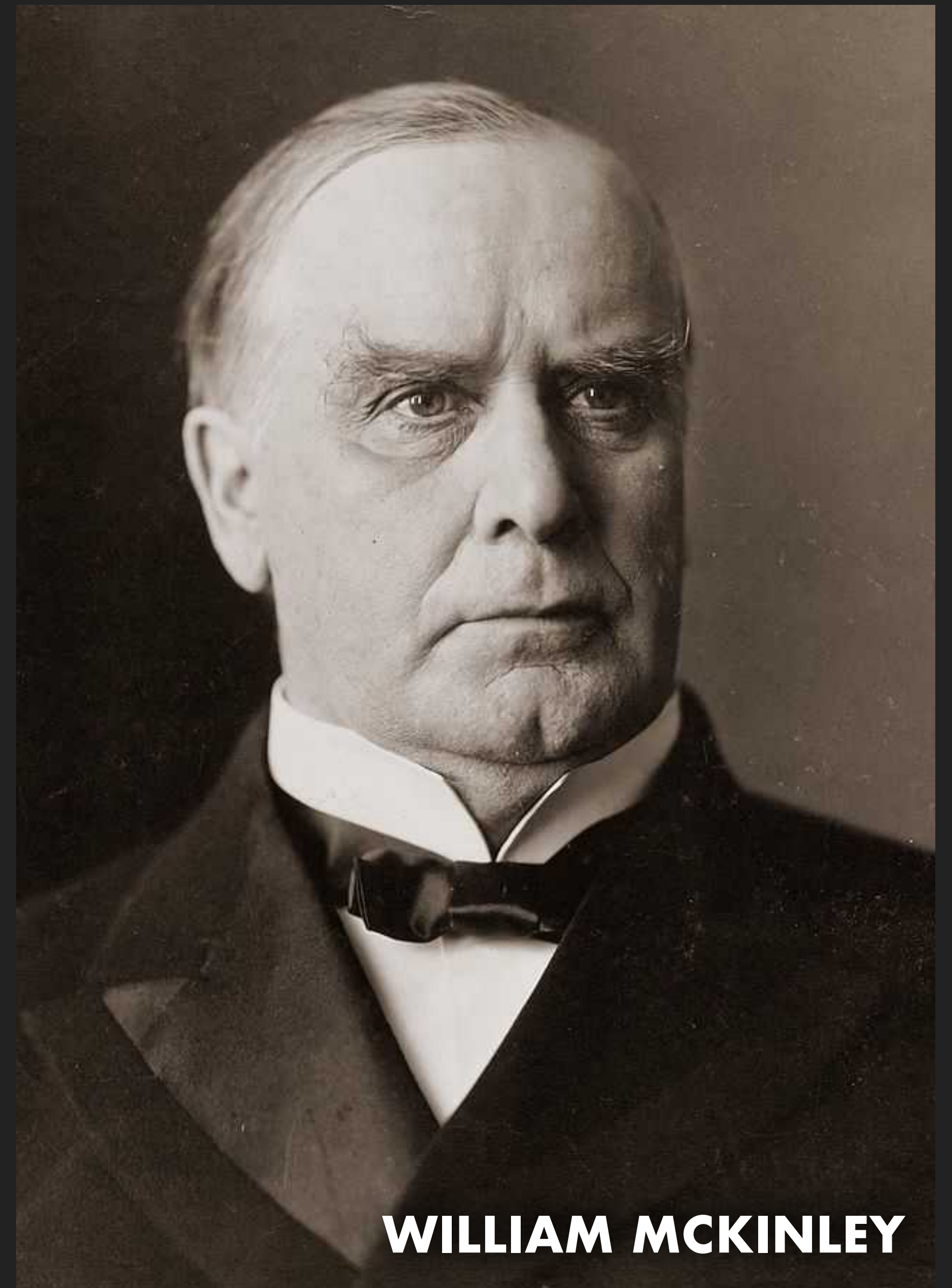
- ▶ The founders did not want **political parties**. Remember their concerns about **factions** in the Federalist papers?
- ▶ Jefferson and Hamilton, though, did not just help to create a great musical. They were the main instigators of early parties.
- ▶ America's political parties are the oldest in the world.
 - ▶ Republicans since 1856, Democrats since 1828.
 - ▶ Third parties have played an important role but rarely win in American politics.



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HISTORY OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN US

- ▶ **The Founding (1790-1824):** Democratic-Republicans versus the Federalists in loose, mostly local parties.
- ▶ **The Jacksonian Era (1824-1860):** Increased popular vote grew the power of parties as politics became a mass phenomenon.
 - ▶ Shift from caucus system to national conventions.
- ▶ **The Sectional Era (1860-1896):** the peak of power for parties as one party rule was the norm in most states.
 - ▶ **Patronage system, spoils, machine politics**
- ▶ **Modern era (1896-1980):** Decreased power of parties as areas become more competitive, party lines blur.
- ▶ **Polarized era (1980-today):** Deep divisions between the two major parties harden, increasing the power of parties once again.



WILLIAM MCKINLEY

REALIGNMENTS

- ▶ Five major realignments in American political parties:
 - ▶ 1800: when the Dem/Rep wiped out the Federalists
 - ▶ 1828: emergence of the Jacksonian Democrats
 - ▶ 1860: the rise of the Republican Party
 - ▶ 1932: the Roosevelt New Deal Democratic coalition emerges
 - ▶ 1968: realignment of the Republican Party and the collapse of Southern Democrats



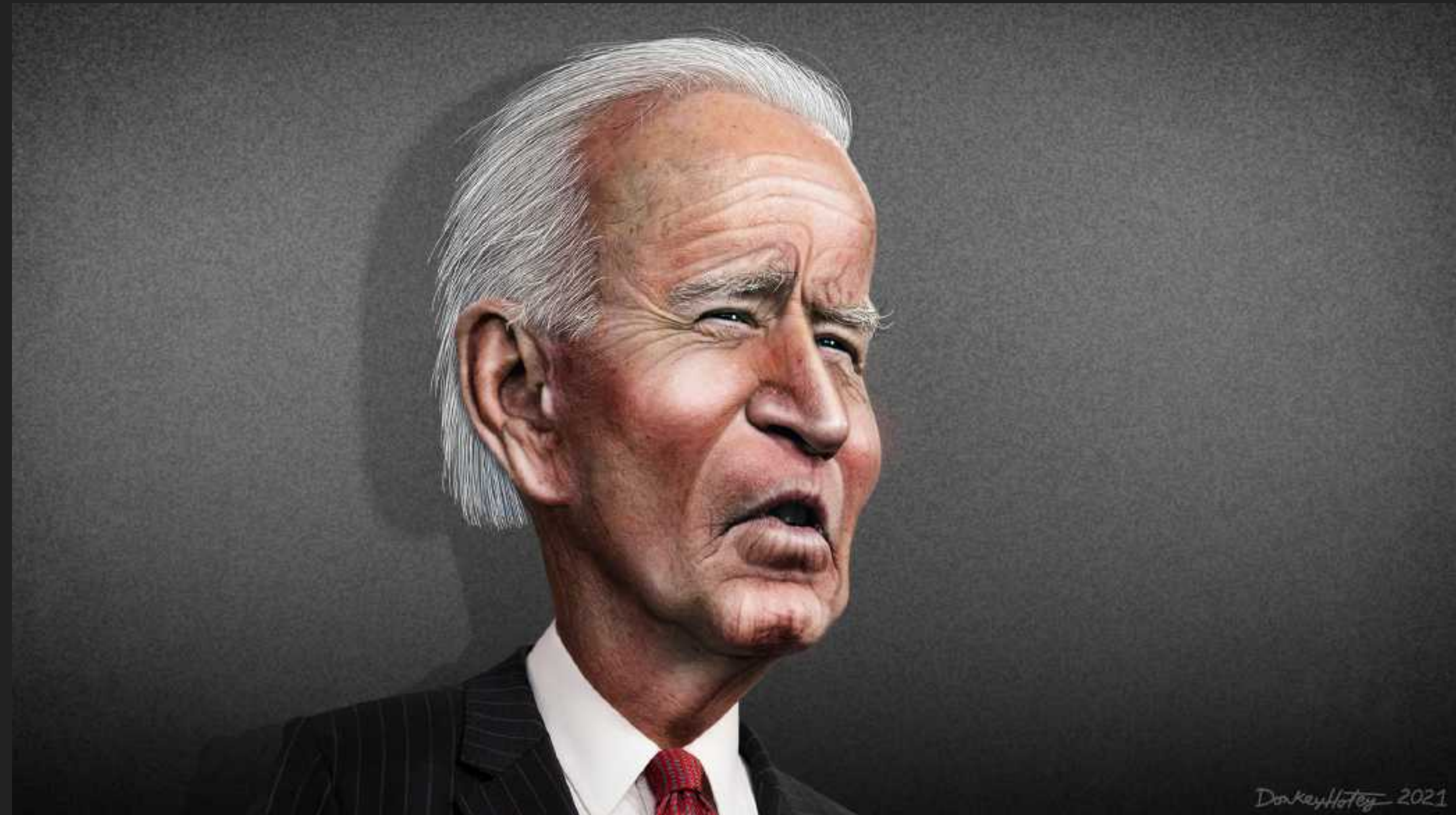
FDR



The Functions of Political Parties

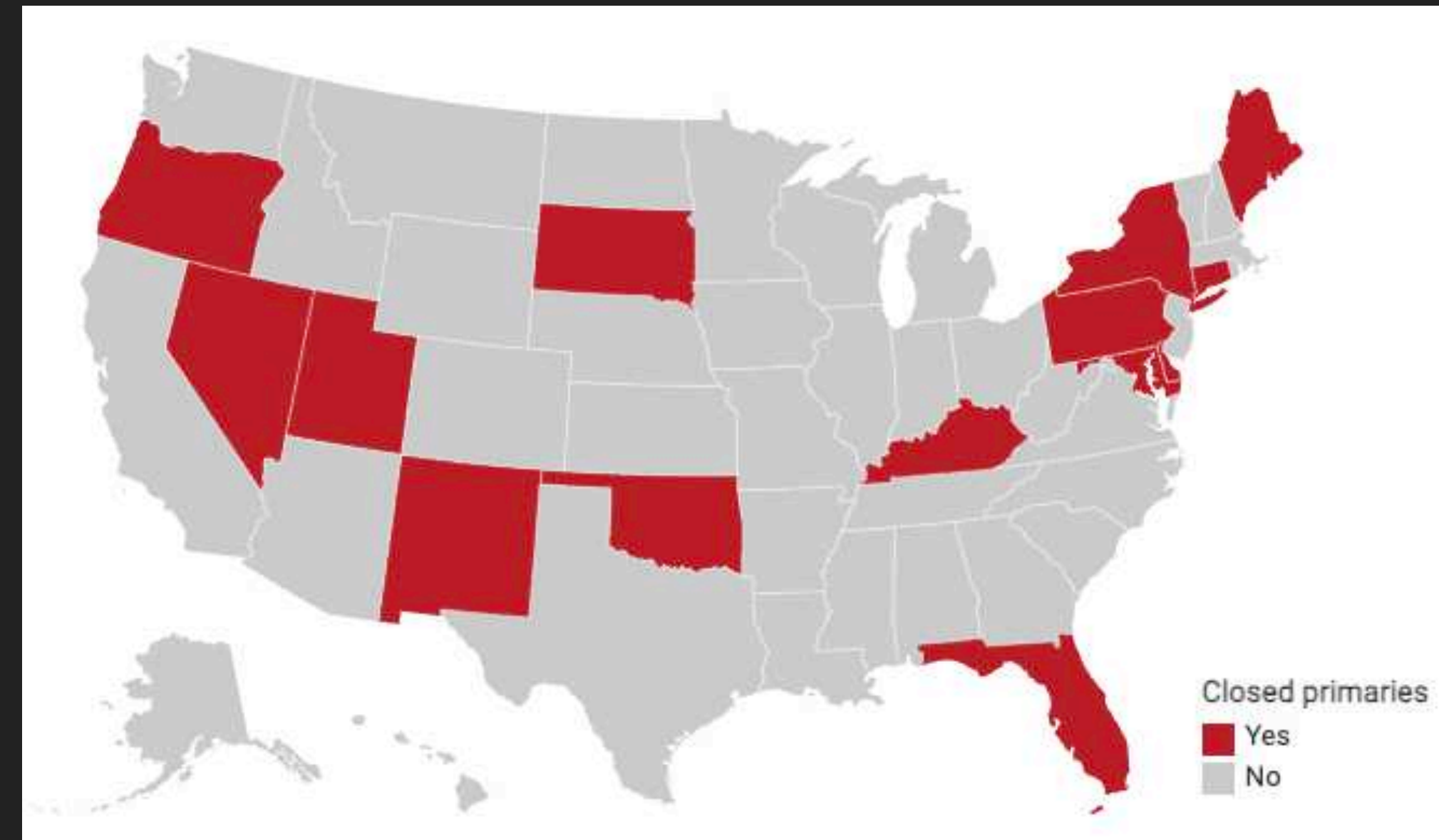
FUNCTIONS OF PARTIES

- ▶ Political parties play three important roles:
 1. As **organizations** that recruit, nominate and support candidates
 2. As **ideas** in the minds of voters.
 3. And as **leaders** who coordinate behavior among elites.



NOMINATING CANDIDATES

- ▶ One of the roles for parties is simply to **recruit candidates**.
- ▶ Since the progressive era, most nominations have taken place in **primary elections**—the elections in which parties choose their **general election** candidates.
 - ▶ Some states have **closed primaries**, in which only registered voters of each party can vote.
 - ▶ Others have **open primaries**, in which a voter receives both ballots but can only vote one.
 - ▶ Some states have moved to a **top-two** or **jungle primary**, in which the top two vote-getters, regardless of party, advance to the general.
- ▶ What are the benefits and drawbacks of each system?



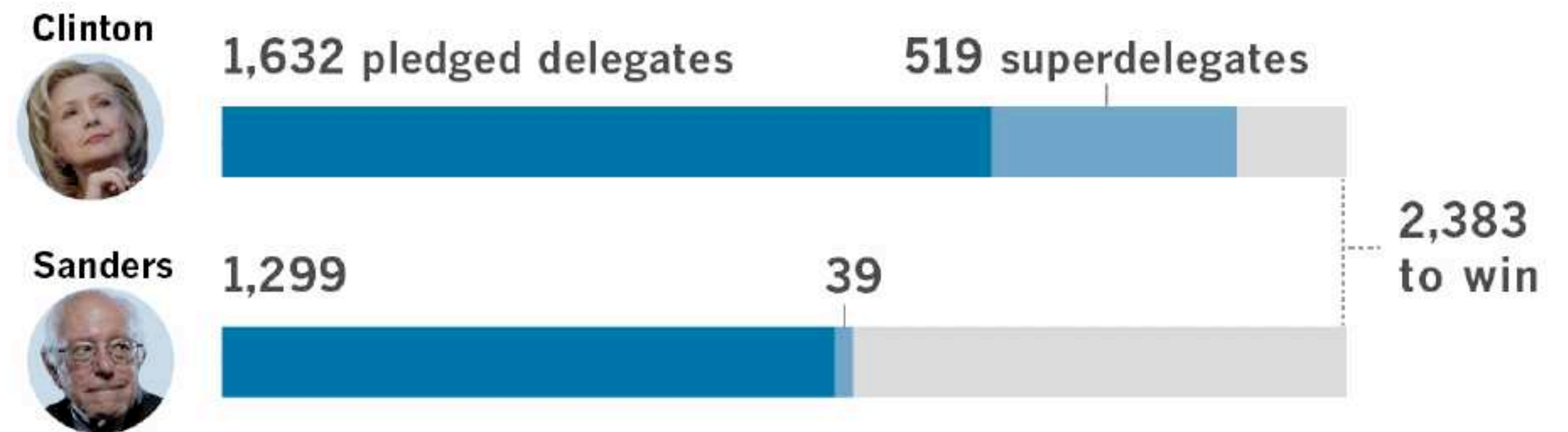
NOMINATING CANDIDATES

NOMINATING CONVENTIONS FOR PRESIDENT

- ▶ Each of the two parties holds a **nominating convention** to select its presidential nominees.
- ▶ When you vote in a Presidential **primary** or **caucus**, you are voting for delegates to attend these conventions. These people are **pledged delegates**, who must vote for the candidate who won their state.
- ▶ Both parties also have **super-delegates**—party leaders and officials who can choose how they vote.
- ▶ Reforms reducing the power of super delegates has empowered **activist voters** like Sanders and Trump voters.
- ▶ The tension between party elites and grassroots activists has grown in recent elections.

Democratic delegate math

To win the Democratic nomination, contenders need to clinch a majority of delegates, both those awarded in primaries and caucuses as well as superdelegates who can side with a candidate of their choosing.



Note: Totals above reflect the current stated preference of superdelegates who have sided with a candidate.

Sources: Associated Press, Times research

@latimesgraphics

HELPING CANDIDATES WIN

- ▶ Parties provide candidates a **label** voters can understand. Some of this is found in party **platforms**.
- ▶ Parties help candidates **get out the vote**.
 - ▶ In recent years, this has become an incredibly sophisticated, data-driven process.
- ▶ Parties raise money beyond the individual campaign limits.
- ▶ Parties can create **coordinating committees** to use the resources from high-profile campaigns to help **down ballot candidates**.



LOCAL AND STATE PARTIES

- ▶ The power of local and state parties has diminished as **patronage** was outlawed.
- ▶ Parties often draw constituents from various social movements who can pull the parties in different, and even conflicting, directions.
- ▶ As national parties funnel more and more money to state parties, though, some argue they are becoming vibrant again.

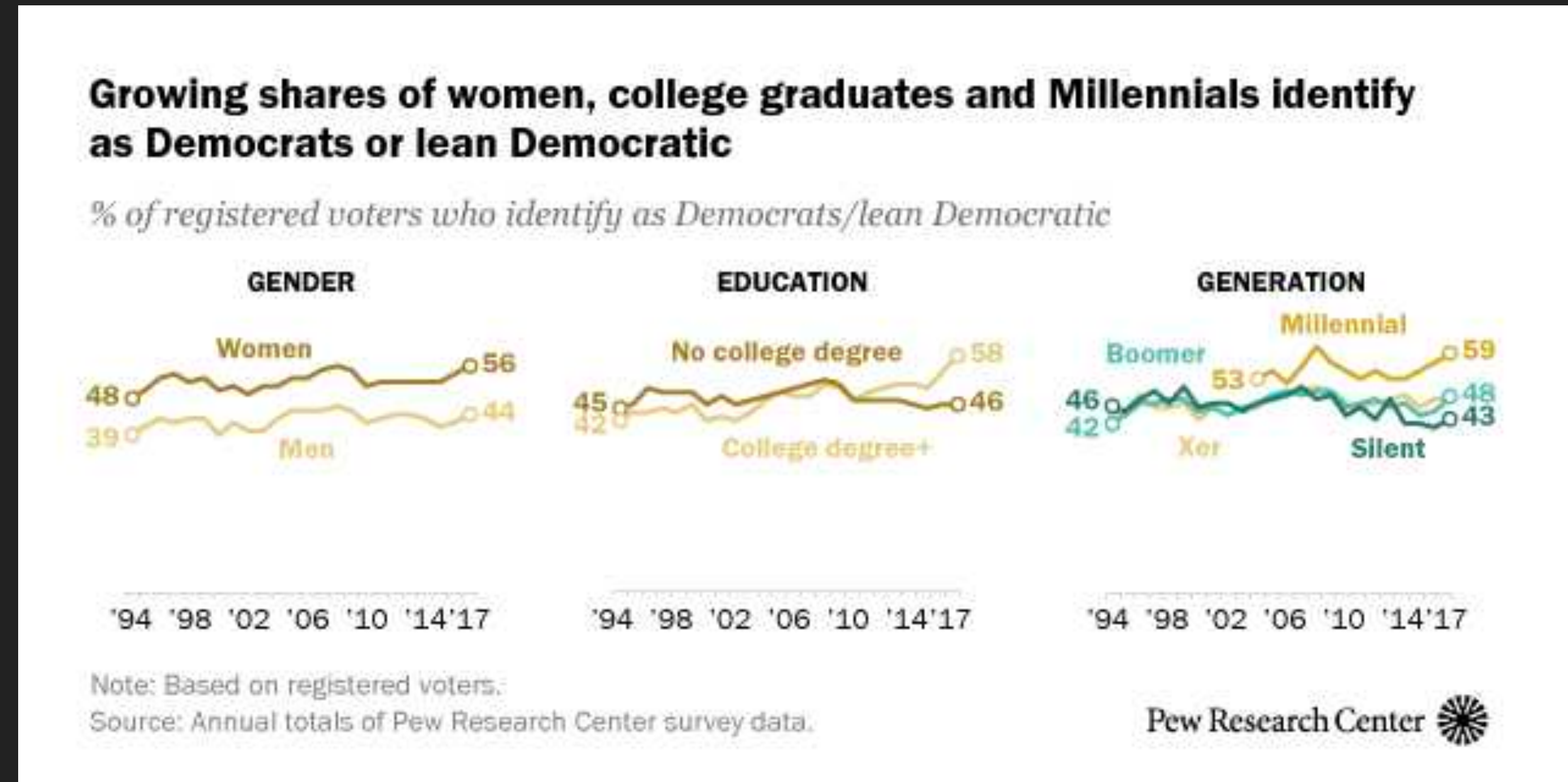




Partisanship

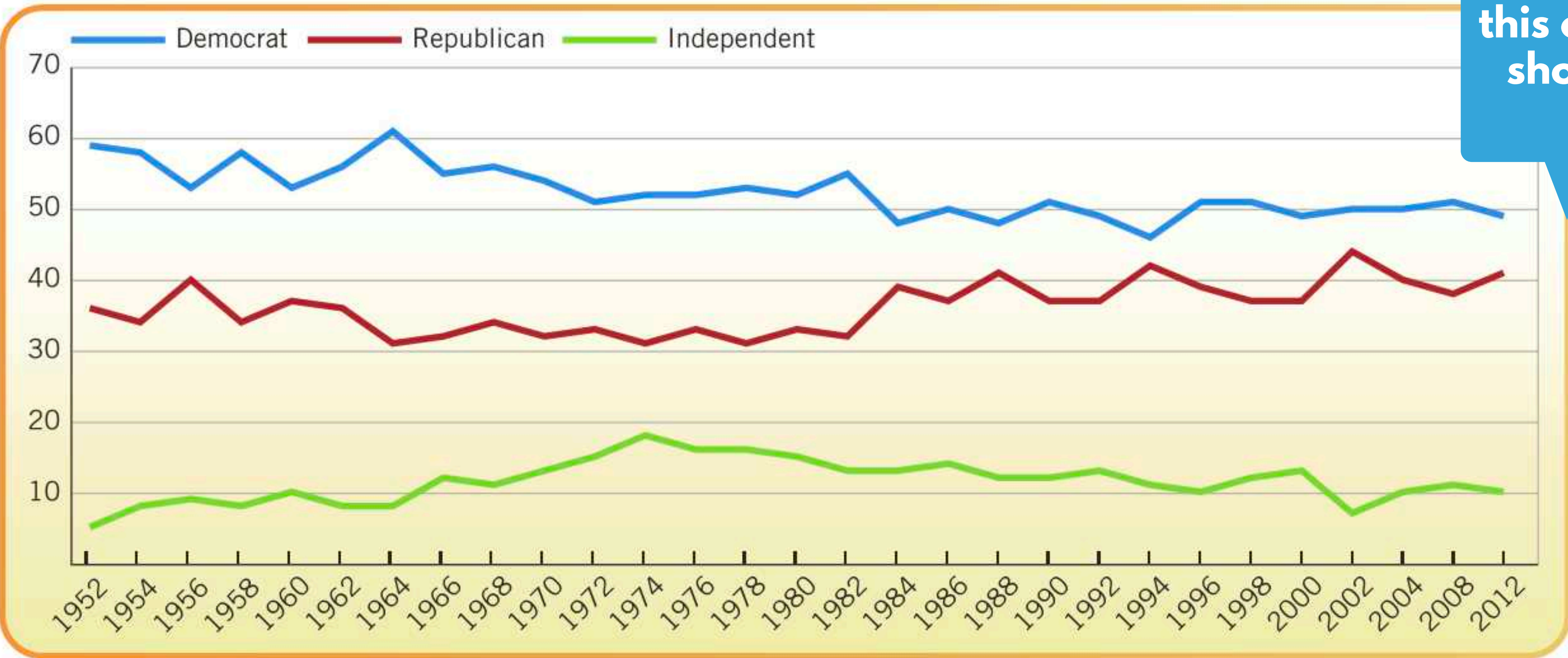
PARTISANSHIP

- ▶ **Partisanship (or partisan identification)** refers to a voter's long term, stable attachment to a party.
- ▶ Party affiliation has hardened: only about 10 percent of voters are truly **independent**.
- ▶ **Both Republican and Democratic voters vote their respective parties about 90% of the time.**
- ▶ Despite this, **party identification shifts in American politics.**
- ▶ What are the most important factors that determine individual partisanship?
 - ▶ Family partisanship
 - ▶ Race, Gender, Religion
 - ▶ Region
- ▶ Which factors seem most important?



PARTISAN SHIP OVER TIME

FIGURE 7-1 Voters' Partisanship, 1952-2012



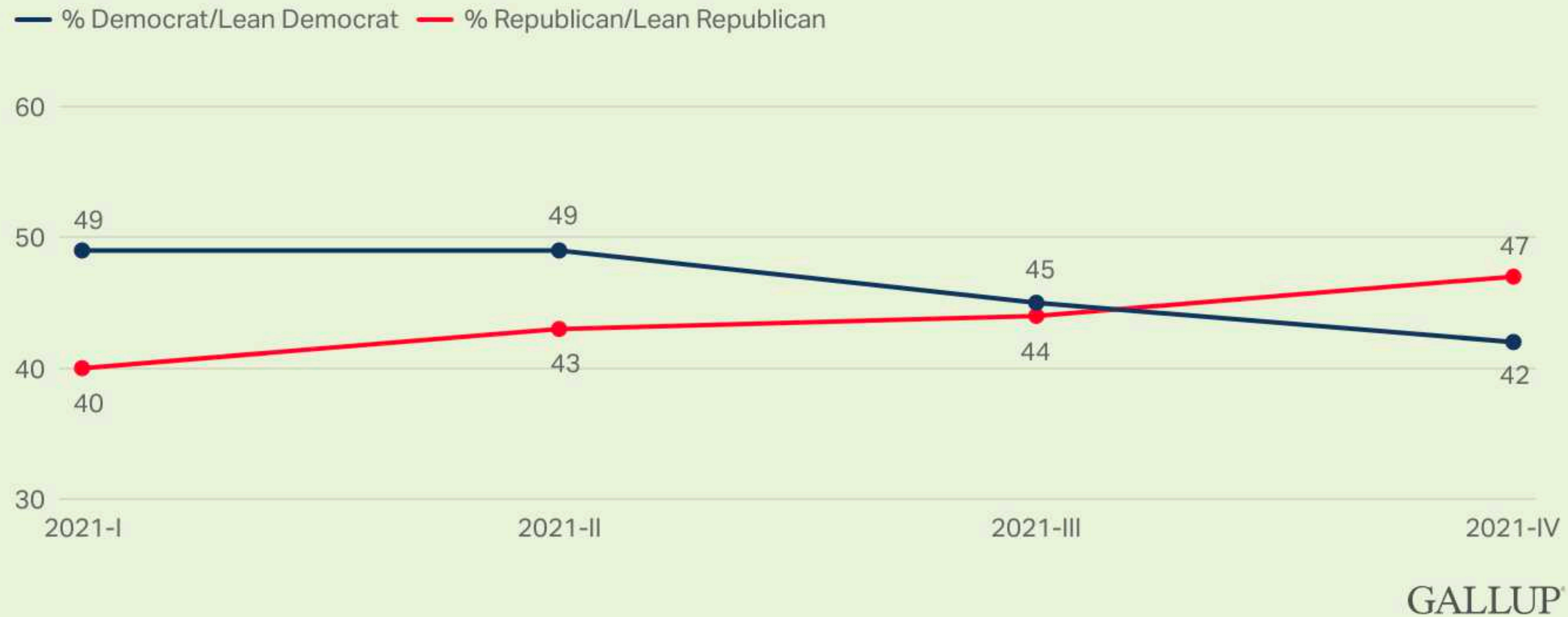
What does this chart show?

Source: ANES Guide to Public Opinion and Electoral Behavior, 1952-2008; 2012 provided by author's analysis of NES Cumulative Data File, 1952-2012.

PARTISANSHIP IN 2021

U.S. Party Identification and Leaning, 2021 Quarterly Averages

In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself -- [a Republican, a Democrat] -- or an independent?
[If independent:] As of today, do you lean more to the -- [Republican Party or the Democratic Party]?



**Explain
this shift
in
partisan
identificati
on in the
US.**

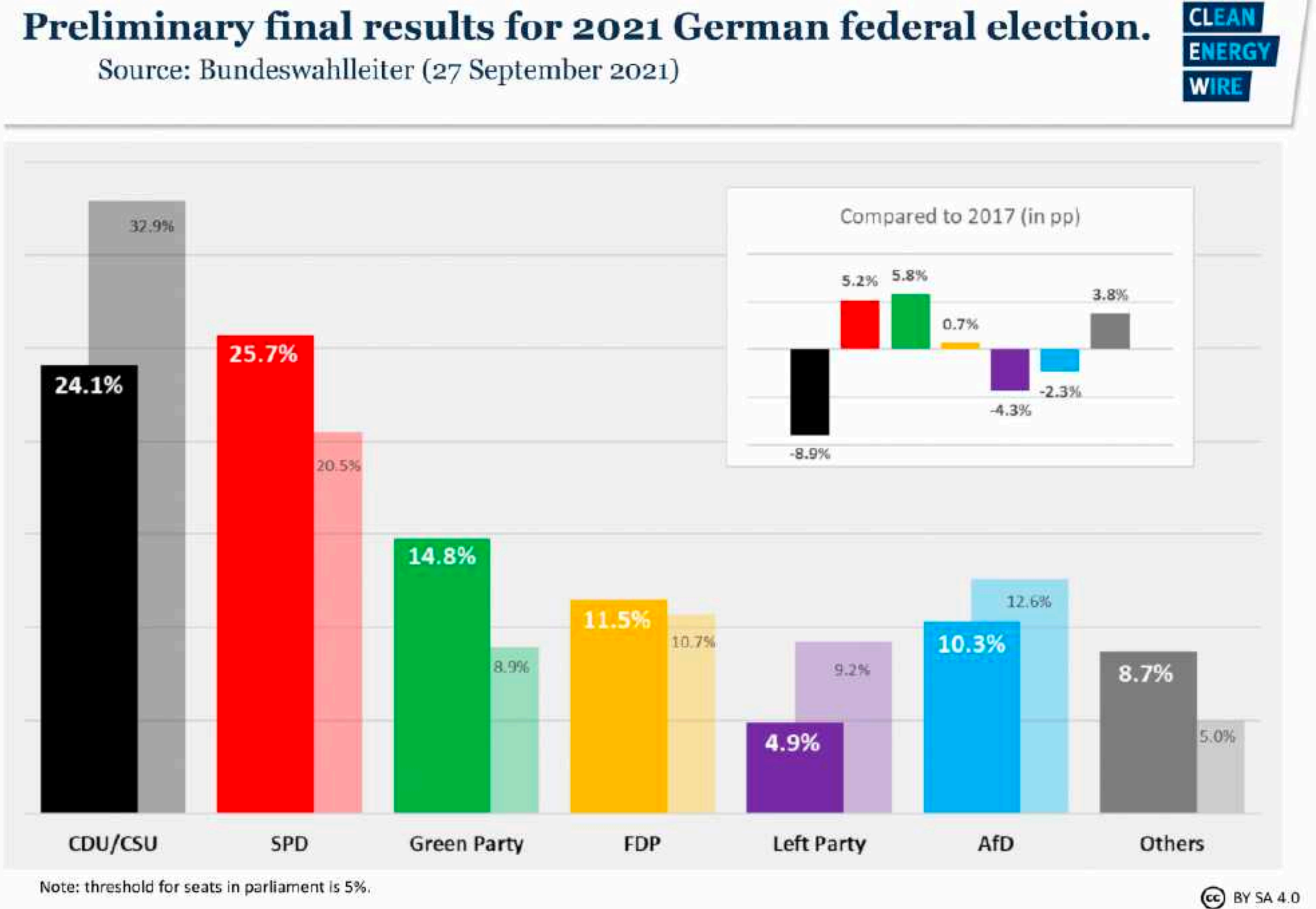


MAKE AMERICA
GREAT AGAIN
AGAIN

The Two Party System

THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

- ▶ The two-party system in the U.S. is rare. Most democracies in the world are **multiparty systems**.
- ▶ There are two reasons:
 - ▶ The **plurality system** elects the candidate with the most votes, not a majority of votes.
 - ▶ In many European nations, Parliament seats are determined by **proportional representation**.
 - ▶ Despite deep divisions, Americans have never had a successful religious/race/regional-based political party.
 - ▶ **Minor parties** have played a more important role driving the policy of the major parties.
 - ▶ **TEA Party and Greens**





Interest Groups

INTEREST GROUPS

- ▶ **Interest groups** are organized groups who seek to influence public policy.
- ▶ Many interest groups arise from **social movements**, but these movements are hard to sustain.
- ▶ Political scientists say they rely on
 - ▶ **Material incentives** (AARP)
 - ▶ **Solidarity incentives** (Sierra Club)
 - ▶ **Purposive incentives** (NARAL)



NEWT GINGRICH

ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST GROUPS

- ▶ Interest groups issue **ratings** of politicians that can be really powerful.
- ▶ The most important function of interest groups is **lobbying**.
- ▶ While there are certainly abuses, most lobbying comes in the form of providing **information**—specialized, detailed information about **political cues** and policy implications.
- ▶ Most lobbying is small, one or two lobbyists working on **niche policy implications**.



BRIAN SCHATZ: WHAT ARE HIS RATINGS?

BUSINESS GROUPS DOMINATE

- ▶ 3/4 of lobbying comes from business and trade associations.
 - ▶ K Street
- ▶ The 55 largest corporations that paid \$0 in federal corporate income taxes in 2020 spent \$450 million on lobbying and political contributions in recent years, according to a Public Citizen report.
- ▶ One major concern in American politics today is the **revolving door**, in which members of Congress and their staffers move between Congress and lobbying firms.



"THANK YOU FOR SMOKING" 2005

REGULATING INTEREST GROUPS

- ▶ In 1995, Congress passed legislation requiring strict registration and reporting requirements for lobbyists.
- ▶ In 2007, Congress passed more regulation:
 - ▶ No gifts of any value from registered lobbyists
 - ▶ No reimbursement for travel costs



GRASSROOTS LOBBYING

- ▶ As media access has grown, the importance of **grassroots lobbying** has grown, too.
- ▶ The people can connect with members of Congress directly to pressure them.
- ▶ Grassroots lobbying, though, is subject to the **astroturf problem**.



POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES

- ▶ **Political action committees (PACs)** are committees set up by corporations, unions, and interest groups to raise money for candidates.
 - ▶ Connected PACs are those directly associated with organizations.
 - ▶ SuperPACs can raise \$, but they are **forbidden from coordinating** with candidates directly.
- ▶ PACs spent **\$310 million supporting candidates for Congress in 2020**, leading to some suggest we have the “best Congress money can buy.”
- ▶ Others argue that PACS rarely influence voting by members.

