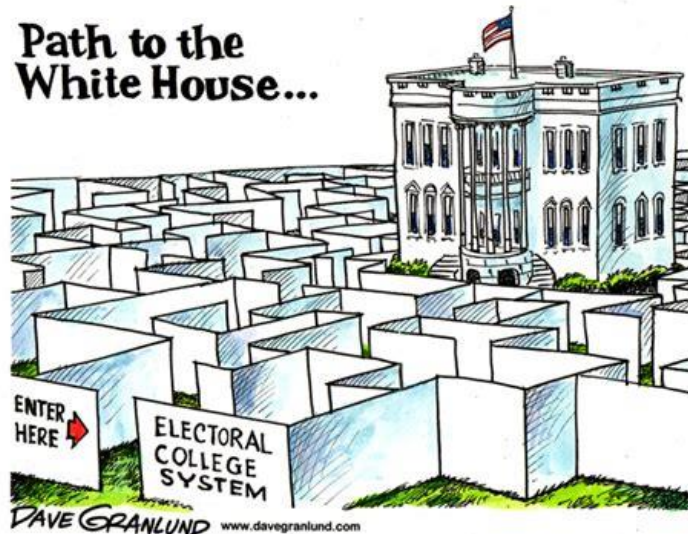
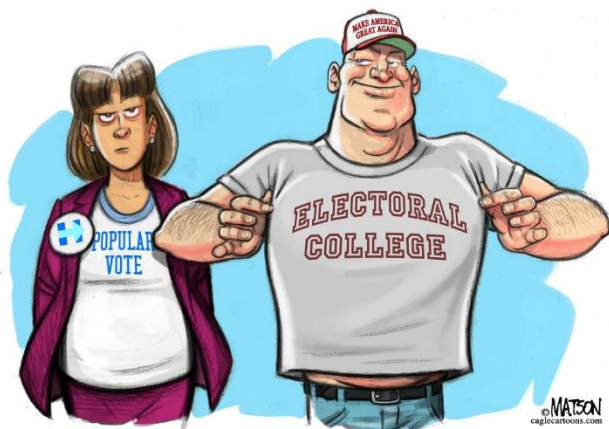


The Swing States - The Electoral College



Useful Resources – Batch n°1

- The website / poll aggregator that people flock to for clarity

<https://www.270towin.com/>

- Others prefer 538

<https://abcnews.go.com/538>

- Here you can visualise the 2020 results in detail

<https://uselectionatlas.org/RESULTS/>

- **The Electoral College Explained – Vox Video- 2020**

Why some Americans' votes count more than others.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajavsMbCapY&ab_channel=Vox

- The Swing states Why 0.008% of the U.S. population might determine the election

CBC News, Sept 2024

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IscC7bedAmM&ab_channel=CBCNews

- Why US elections only give you two choices

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqWwV3xk9Qk&ab_channel=Vox

- https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2024/09/20/tout-comprendre-a-l-organisation-de-l-election-presidentielle-americaine_6325533_3210.html

- A series on France Culture on four of the swing states

<https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceculture/podcasts/serie-la-presidentielle-americaine-vue-de>

- A very thorough survey of the sociology and demographics of party identification (cf document 1)

<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2024/04/09/changing-partisan-coalitions-in-a-politically-divided-nation/>

Changing Partisan Coalitions in a Politically Divided Nation

Party identification among registered voters, 1994-2023

Pew Research Center, Report, April 9, 2024

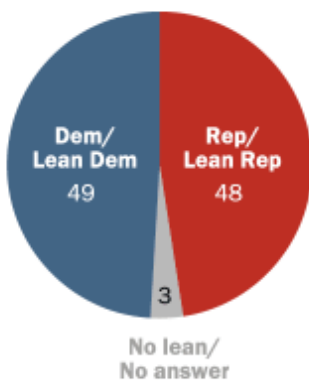
How we did this

The contours of the 2024 political landscape are the result of long-standing patterns of partisanship, combined with the profound demographic changes that have reshaped the United States over the past three decades.

5 Many of the factors long associated with voters' partisanship remain firmly in place. For decades, gender, race and ethnicity, and religious affiliation have been important dividing lines in politics. This continues to be the case today.

Voters are roughly evenly split between the parties

% of registered voters who are ...



Note: Based on registered voters.
Source: 2023 American Trends Panel annual profile survey conducted Aug. 7-27, 2023.

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10 Yet there also have been profound changes – in some cases as a result of demographic change, in others because of dramatic shifts in the partisan allegiances of key groups.

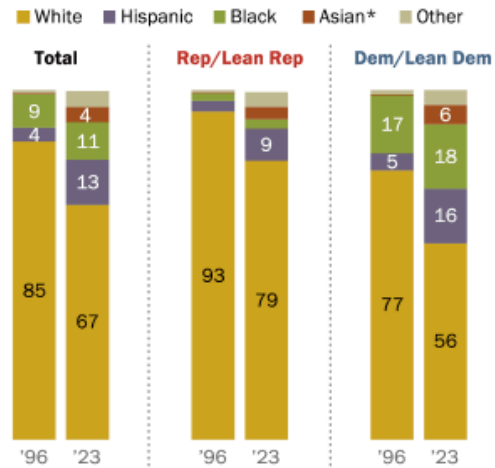
The combined effects of change and continuity have left 15 the country's two major parties at virtual parity: About half of registered voters (49%) identify as Democrats or lean toward the Democratic Party, while 48% identify as Republicans or lean Republican.

In recent decades, neither party has had a sizable 20 advantage, but the Democratic Party has lost the edge it maintained from 2017 to 2021. (*Explore this further in Chapter 1.*)

Pew Research Center's comprehensive analysis of party 25 identification among registered voters – based on hundreds of thousands of interviews conducted over the past three decades – tracks the changes in the country and the parties since 1994. Among the major findings:

The nation's growing diversity has had a much larger impact on the Democratic than Republican coalition

% of registered voters who are ...



* Estimates for Asian voters are representative of English speakers only.

Note: Based on registered voters. Telephone data adjusted for survey mode; details in Appendix A. White, Black and Asian voters include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic voters are of any race. No answer responses not shown. Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center telephone surveys (1996) and American Trends Panel annual profile online survey (2023).

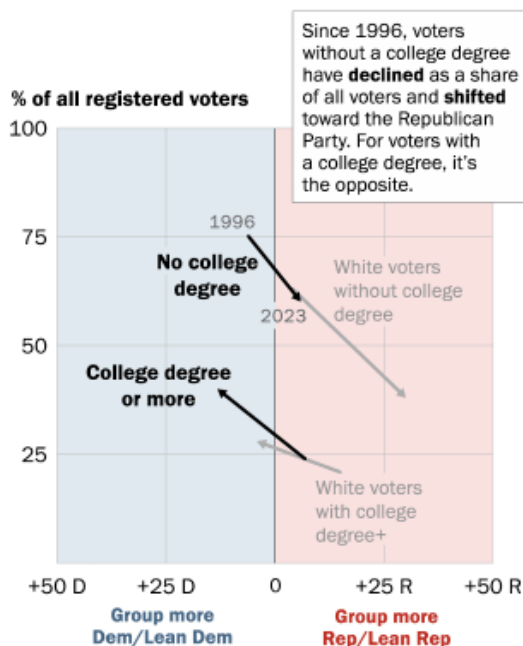
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The partisan coalitions are increasingly different. Both 30 parties are more racially and ethnically diverse than in the past. However, this has had a far greater impact on the composition of the Democratic Party than the Republican Party.

The share of voters who are Hispanic has roughly 35 tripled since the mid-1990s; the share who are Asian has increased sixfold over the same period. Today, 44% of Democratic and Democratic-leaning voters are Hispanic, Black, Asian, another race or multiracial, compared with 20% of Republicans and Republican leaners. However, the 40 Democratic Party's advantages among Black and Hispanic voters, in particular, have narrowed somewhat in recent years. (*Explore this further in Chapter 8.*)

College grads grow as a share of voters, have moved more Democratic; those without a degree have shifted to GOP

Change in partisan affiliation and share of registered voters with and without college degree, 1996 to 2023



Note: Based on registered voters. Telephone data adjusted for survey mode; details in Appendix A. White voters include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic.
Source: Annual totals of Pew Research Center telephone surveys (1996) and American Trends Panel annual profile online survey (2023).

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Education and partisanship: The share of voters with a four-year bachelor's degree keeps increasing, reaching 40% in 2023. And the gap in partisanship between voters with and without a college degree continues to grow, especially among White voters. More than six-in-ten White voters who do not have a four-year degree (63%) associate with the Republican Party, which is up substantially over the past 15 years. White college graduates are closely divided; this was not the case in the 1990s and early 2000s, when they mostly aligned with the GOP. (Explore this further in Chapter 2.)

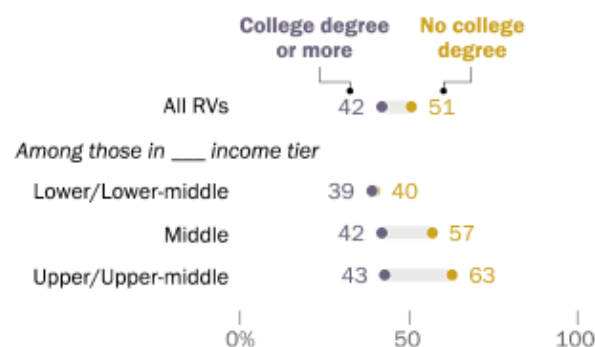
Beyond the gender gap: By a modest margin, women voters continue to align with the Democratic Party (by 51% to 44%), while nearly the reverse is true among men (52% align with the Republican Party, 46% with the Democratic Party). The gender gap is about as wide among married men and women. The gap is wider among men and women who have never married; while both groups are majority Democratic, 37% of never-married men identify as Republicans or lean toward the GOP, compared with 24% of never-married women. (Explore this further in Chapter 3.)

A divide between old and young: Today, each younger age cohort is somewhat more Democratic-oriented than the one before it. The youngest voters (those ages 18 to 24) align with the Democrats by nearly two-to-one (66% to

34% Republican or lean GOP); majorities of older voters (those in their mid-60s and older) identify as Republicans or lean Republican. While there have been wide age divides in American politics over the last two decades, this wasn't always the case; in the 1990s there were only very modest age differences in partisanship. (Explore this further in Chapter 4.)

Non-college voters tilt Republican overall, but wide differences by income

Among registered voters in each income tier, % who are Republican/lean Republican



Note: Based on registered voters. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2022 earnings. No answer responses not shown.
Source: 2023 American Trends Panel annual profile survey conducted Aug. 7-27, 2023.

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Education and family income: Voters without a college degree differ substantially by income in their party affiliation. Those with middle, upper-middle and upper family incomes tend to align with the GOP. A majority with lower and lower-middle incomes identify as Democrats or lean Democratic. There are no meaningful differences in partisanship among voters with at least a four-year bachelor's degree; across income categories, majorities of college graduate voters align with the Democratic Party. (Explore this further in Chapter 6.)

Rural voters move toward the GOP, while the suburbs remain divided: In 2008, when Barack Obama sought his first term as president, voters in rural counties were evenly split in their partisan loyalties. Today, Republicans hold a 25 percentage point advantage among rural residents (60% to 35%). There has been less change among voters in urban counties, who are mostly Democratic by a nearly identical margin (60% to 37%). The suburbs – perennially a political battleground – remain about evenly divided. (Explore this further in Chapter 7.)

Growing differences among religious groups: Mirroring movement in the population overall, the share of voters who are religiously unaffiliated has grown dramatically over the past 15 years. These voters, who have long aligned with the Democratic Party, have become even more Democratic over time: Today 70% identify as Democrats or lean Democratic. In contrast, Republicans have made gains among several groups of religiously

affiliated voters, particularly White Catholics and White evangelical Protestants. White evangelical Protestants now align with the Republican Party by about a 70-point margin (85% to 14%). *(Explore this further in Chapter 5.)*

5 What this report tells us – and what it doesn't

In most cases, the partisan allegiances of voters do not change a great deal from year to year. Yet as this study shows, the long-term shifts in party identification are substantial and say a great deal about how the country –

10 and its political parties – have changed since the 1990s.

Republican and Democratic strengths – and weaknesses – among some key demographic groups

% of registered voters in each group who are ...

Key groups where the Republican Party has wide advantages ...

Share of the electorate	Group	Dem/Lean Dem	Rep/Lean Rep
17	White evangelical Protestant	14	85
1	Latter-day Saint (Mormon)	23	75
38	White voters without a college degree	33	63
11	Veterans	35	63
14	Rural	35	60
33	White men	39	60
10	Born in 1940s	43	54

Key groups where the Democratic Party has wide advantages ...

Share of the electorate	Group	Dem/Lean Dem	Rep/Lean Rep
21	Women with a college degree	60	37
29	Urban	60	37
13	Hispanic	61	35
14	Born in 1990s	62	35
4	Asian*	63	35
26	Religiously unaffiliated	70	27
11	Black	83	12

* Estimates for Asian voters are representative of English speakers only.
 Note: Based on registered voters. White, Black and Asian voters include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanic voters are of any race. No answer responses not shown.
 Source: 2023 American Trends Panel annual profile survey conducted Aug. 7-27, 2023.

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Opinion

The way we talk about politics does not describe America

The electoral college distorts the voting process and how we see the country

By Perry Bacon Jr., The Washington Post, September 16, 2024

The U.S. presidential election system — with **winner-take-all** states and **the electoral college** — warps the political process and even the way people see their own country. **I would prefer the United States move to a national popular vote to choose its president.** But even if that never happens, it's critically important that Americans not understand the country based on our weird, distorting presidential campaigns.

The most obvious problem with our system is that we end up portraying states and even entire regions as politically monolithic. All states but Maine and Nebraska are winner-take-all in presidential elections: The candidate who finishes in first place gets all the electoral votes. So Texas and the rest of the South is firmly red, you learn from political coverage. But 5.3 million people in Texas voted for Joe Biden in 2020, more than the total he received in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont *combined* (4.9 million).

The steadily growing alignment between demographics and partisanship reveals an important aspect of steadily growing partisan polarization. Republicans and Democrats do not just hold different beliefs and opinions about major issues, they are much more different racially, ethnically, geographically and in educational attainment than they used to be.

Yet over this period, there have been only modest shifts in overall partisan identification. Voters remain evenly divided, even as the two parties have grown further apart. The continuing close division in partisan identification among voters is consistent with the relatively narrow margins in the popular votes in most national elections over the past three decades.

Partisan identification provides a broad portrait of voters' affinities and loyalties. But while it is indicative of voters' preferences, it does not perfectly predict how people intend to vote in elections, or whether they will vote. In the coming months, Pew Research Center will release reports analyzing voters' preferences in the presidential election, their engagement with the election and the factors behind candidate support.

The 3.3 million New Yorkers (state not city) who voted for Donald Trump are more backers than he had in Indiana and Kentucky (3.1 million) put together. Trump won about the same amount of votes (around 1 million) in Oklahoma and Los Angeles County.

15 Yes, big cities and states have lots of people, and many of them back the nondominant party where they live. Duh. But these red-blue stereotypes seep into our perceptions more than we admit. When I moved from D.C. to Louisville a few years ago, I repeatedly had to explain to my friends and professional contacts who lived on the coasts that my life had not dramatically changed. I was still surrounded by people who hated Trump; a coffee shop was a four-minute walk from my new home. Kentucky is not one land mass of
20 Republicans, but instead many small masses of liberals and even more masses of conservatives.

I suspect Republicans in California and New York are similarly sick of hearing their states described as entirely Democratic.

25 There is a real red-blue state *policy* divide, because Republican politicians have almost no power in states such as Massachusetts; same for Democratic officials in Tennessee. But American voters are less divided by the state they live in than other factors, such as urban versus rural, Black versus White and evangelical versus nonevangelical.

30 The second problem caused by our state-by-state, winner-take-all system is that the interests of a few swing states become the center of presidential politics and therefore national discourse, while tens of millions of other Americans are ignored because they live in the wrong place. No offense to their residents, but Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin aren't special. There are people in the 43 other states who wish Trump or Vice President Kamala Harris would campaign where they live, instead of making another stop in the Atlanta or Philadelphia areas.

35 We are in the middle of a presidential campaign in which fracking is being discussed more than education, an issue that affects way more people, because Pennsylvania is a major hub of natural gas production. If Kentucky were a swing state, candidates would end up talking about coal too much.

Michigan and Wisconsin are among the states with the highest percentages of people working in manufacturing, which in part explains why presidents and presidential candidates are constantly touting the creation of new factory jobs, as opposed to focusing on hospitality and other industries that employ millions of Americans.

40 A third problem is that we link regions and states to one another based on their voting patterns in presidential races, as opposed to more logical and stronger connections. The best way to understand the United States in 2024 is that we have more than a dozen booming metropolitan areas (think Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, New York and San Francisco) that companies and people are flocking to; other metro areas that aren't seeing such economic gains (Baltimore, Louisville, St. Louis); and many rural places and states that are struggling.

45 You could also think of the country by race and region: New England and Appalachia are disproportionately White; the Southeast has more Black residents than other parts of the country; the Southwest is heavily Latino.

50 But in presidential elections, Wisconsin is connected to Pennsylvania, because they are both swing states, even though Wisconsin has more in common economically and culturally with Minnesota and Iowa. When I lived in D.C., no one thought their trip on Amtrak to Philadelphia was an adventure to the Midwest. It drives me crazy to read about the "Rust Belt" (Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin) and "Sun Belt" (Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina and Nevada.) Do Arizona and Nevada have much in common? Not really.

I assume we will keep our current system for the long term. Change would be controversial, and a constitutional amendment would be needed to get rid of the electoral college. So it's vital, particularly in
55 these last weeks before the presidential election, to remember that the America of the campaign trail, the debates and political news is not the real America. You are normal if you *don't* have strong views on fracking or the best way to woo rural voters in Wisconsin. No one in Atlanta or Charlotte talks about their life in the Sun Belt.

60 Follow the campaign, vote for your favorite candidate — and then forget basically everything that was said about America during election season by the politicians and the people who cover them.

Pennsylvania, the crucial battleground in America's election

Buckets of money, vicious advertising and consultants galore have left the race for the state a virtual tie

The Economist, Sep 19th 2024|HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

ON JULY 21st Matt Roan, chair of the Cumberland County Democratic Committee, hosted a meeting with volunteers. The event took a turn when Mr Roan stopped to read a statement from Joe Biden announcing his departure from the presidential race. “There was this sort of sense of sadness—and then immediate hope,” Mr Roan recalls in his office, which overlooks the Pennsylvania state capitol. The activist speaks highly of Mr Biden but acknowledged that “things were not looking good” at the time. The rise of Kamala Harris attracted a surge of volunteers to a county that favoured Donald Trump by around 18 points in 2016 but only 11 points in 2020. If such improvements hold there and in other areas like it, Ms Harris would probably win the state and the presidency.

Both campaigns see Pennsylvania as a fulcrum of the 2024 election, and for good reason. *The Economist's* 10 forecast model suggests that the state—with its 19 electoral-college votes, the most of any swing state—is the tipping-point in 27% of the model's updated simulations, meaning it decides the election more often than any other state. Mr Trump wins only 7% of the time when he loses the Keystone State. Indeed, he narrowly won Pennsylvania in 2016, and then he lost by 80,000 votes out of nearly 7m cast in his unsuccessful re-election bid four years later.

15 No state has drawn more money. Of the \$839.5m that the Harris campaign and allied organisations already have spent or committed to advertising, \$164.1m has gone to this state of 13m people. The less well-heeled Trump operation has directed \$135.7m of \$458.8m to Pennsylvania. Turn on the television, watch a YouTube video or listen to the radio inside Pennsylvania and it won't be long before spots for Ms Harris or Mr Trump begin to play.

The messaging war is a study in contrasts. Ms Harris seeks to define herself in uplifting ads while warning in others 20 about Mr Trump's effect on the economy, reproductive rights and American democracy. As one of the most famous people in human history, Mr Trump doesn't spend time introducing himself to voters. His ads and rhetoric relentlessly seek to paint Ms Harris as an out-of-touch leftist responsible for inflation and migrant crime. Such fear campaigns have found success before in presidential elections, but J.J. Abbott, a Pennsylvania Democratic strategist, argues that “there may be some limitations on how much these dark, brutal ads on those issues may work” this time, citing similar 25 unsuccessful efforts mounted by Republicans in recent statewide races.

Mr Trump has also drawn attention to Ms Harris's past opposition to natural-gas fracking, an important industry in western Pennsylvania, which she now supports. The issue may be top of mind in those energy-producing regions but elsewhere voters often express indifference. “It is not a slam dunk for any politician...to think that Pennsylvania is monolithically in support of further energy exploration,” says Stephen Bloom, vice-president of the Commonwealth 30 Foundation, a centre-right think-tank. “No one has ever said the word fracking to me” while campaigning, says Stella Sexton, vice-chair of the Lancaster County Democratic Committee. She says she hears more about the cost of living and reproductive rights.

For many years a blue state that also elected moderate Republicans, Pennsylvania voted about three points to the right 35 of the country in 2016 and 2020. Since 2008, the percentage of voters registered as Democrats has declined while the share of Republicans has grown. Republican registrations outpaced Democratic ones this year until Ms Harris entered the race (see charts). Democrats argue that some of the Republican gains have been offset by a rise in left-leaning independents.

If Mr Trump wins Pennsylvania, it will show that he put together a coalition of low-propensity white working-class 40 voters and religious voters, says Ryan Shafik, a Republican strategist, and would probably also have attracted “a good amount of newer minority voters”. Ms Harris will have to reassemble Mr Biden's coalition built on strength among urban and minority voters, as well as continuing to make inroads into the state's suburbs. Her current lead in Pennsylvania, according to a polling average maintained by FiveThirtyEight, a data-journalism outfit, is less than two percentage points. For all the money pouring in, the race remains a virtual tie. ■

America's election is mired in conflict

The Economist, September 14th 2024

Sep 12th 2024

Even without Donald Trump on the ballot, American elections tend to create conflict. America is the only proper presidential democracy in which the person who wins the most votes does not necessarily win power. The two-month gap between voting and election certification in Congress is the most drawn-out anywhere. Complexity invites legal challenges, which add to the complexity. For all those reasons, American elections demand patience and trust. Unfortunately, the country comes joint last among the G7 on trust in the judiciary and dead last on belief that its elections are honest.

And then there is Mr Trump. At the [debate](#) in Philadelphia this week the former president was angry and aggrieved. He repeated his false and outrageous claim that the election in 2020 was stolen—an assertion that nearly 70% of Republican voters say they endorse. He and his party are gearing up to wage the post-election war [a second time](#). Both parties argue that victory for the other side would threaten American democracy. For Mr Trump personally the stakes are even higher: if he loses he could go to prison. If the election is not close, perhaps America might avoid another toxic transfer of power. Unfortunately for America's increasingly beleaguered democracy, by our reckoning this presidential race is tighter today than any since polling began.

How messy will it get? There are three possible outcomes. Start with the extremely unlikely one, which is a vote so close that Kamala Harris and Mr Trump tie in the electoral college. Were this to happen, the next president would be picked by the House of Representatives, with each state wielding one vote. Even if Ms Harris won the popular vote on November 5th, Mr Trump would almost certainly become president. That would be fair in the sense that it would follow the rules, but Democrats would be furious.

The second outcome is a Trump win. Democrats could bring legal challenges in close states where Ms Harris lost. Some of these might end up at the Supreme Court, where three justices appointed by Mr Trump would have to adjudicate their merits. Three of the conservative justices worked on George W. Bush's legal team back in 2000 on *Bush v Gore*. That would make it hard to persuade Ms Harris's supporters that decisions favouring the Trump campaign were impartial. After the court's rulings on abortion and presidential immunity, Democrats have come to view the justices as Republican politicians in robes. Nevertheless, most elected Democrats would probably accept the rulings, if more grudgingly than in 2000.

However, if enough Democratic lawmakers were really convinced the courts had acted unfairly, they could try to block certification of the result in Congress, following the precedent set by Republicans in 2021. Then, 139 House members and eight senators (all Republicans) voted to reject the results. A reform of the Electoral Count Act, passed two years ago, raises the threshold, so that 20 senators and 87 members of the House would have to object. In the unlikely scenario that those preliminary votes passed, Democrats would probably lose the subsequent full votes of both chambers. All this is possible, but the most probable outcome, if Mr Trump were to win the election, is that Ms Harris would concede, taking the wind out of any Democratic challenge to the result.

If Ms Harris wins, Mr Trump will not be so gracious. **In that third scenario,** the complexity of America's voting system collides with the MAGA conspiracy machine. The Republican National Committee has pre-emptively filed more than 100 election lawsuits in the states to create a paper trail in preparation to fight the result. As a legal strategy this would probably fail again, as it did in 2020. Fortunately, the governors of key swing states are not election-deniers. Lawyers who might be tempted to bring conspiracy theories to court ought to be deterred by the example of Rudy Giuliani, a Trump bagman who was bombarded by lawsuits. If some cases do get to the Supreme Court, John Roberts and the three Trump-appointed justices may well be keen to demonstrate their independence by rejecting weak challenges. Democrats might yet come to see the Supreme Court as a guarantor of democracy.

Yet a new "stop the steal" movement could fail legally while succeeding politically. In the last election a shocking number of House Republicans voted to reject the result. Since then the party has only become more beholden to Mr Trump. Members either sincerely believe the other side wins only when it steals elections, or go along with that idea in public. Those who refuse—Liz Cheney, Mitch McConnell, Mike Pence, Mitt Romney—have been sidelined. If congressional Republicans did indeed secure a vote to overturn the election, they would probably lose. But the retailing of conspiracies could make the stolen-election myth even stronger.

One possible consequence of this myth is political violence. The Capitol will be so well policed in January 2025 that there will be no repeat of the riots on January 6th. But local police, the Secret Service and the FBI will have to prepare for protesters descending on statehouses, and for the risk of assassination attempts against lawmakers. About

50 20% of American adults say that they are open to the possibility of using violence for a political end. In a large, well-armed country you do not need many of them to mean it for that threat to be scary.

Cheater-in-chief

The other consequence of the stolen-election myth is the continuing degradation of American democracy. To be clear, America will still see a peaceful transfer of power in January 2025. Neither side will be able to install a president who lost by the rules. But that is a minimal definition of democratic success. In the broader sense, elections are meant to generate the consent of the people to be governed, even by a president for whom they did not vote. That requires voters to believe that the process is fair and can be trusted, so that their side has a decent shot in four years. Each time people feel that an election lacks legitimacy, the day draws closer when one side or the other breaks the system rather than accept the result. ■

See also:

- American democracy is in trouble — even if Harris wins

<https://wapo.st/4eklm5a>

