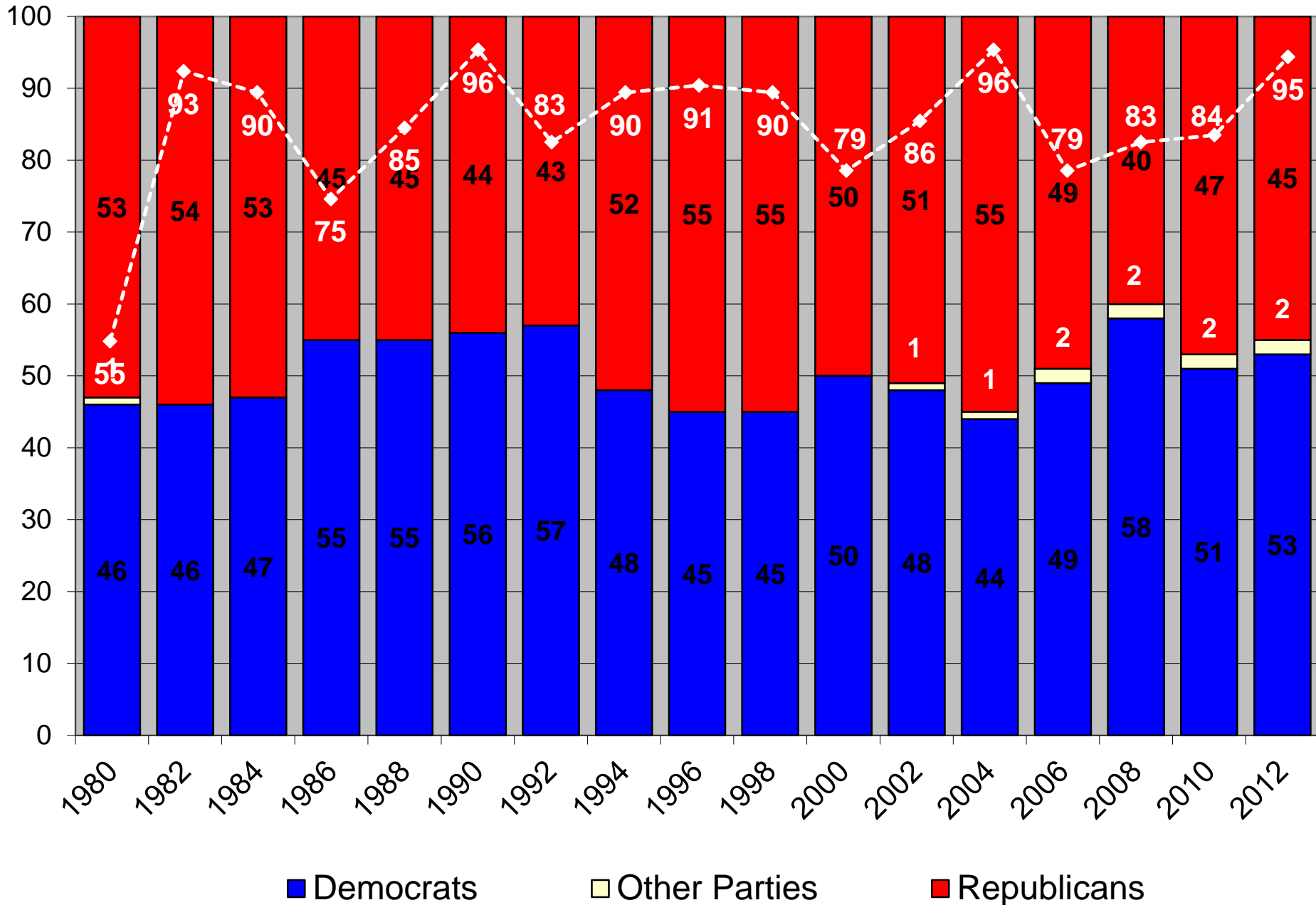


★ US ELECTIONS ★

CONGRESSIONAL
ELECTIONS

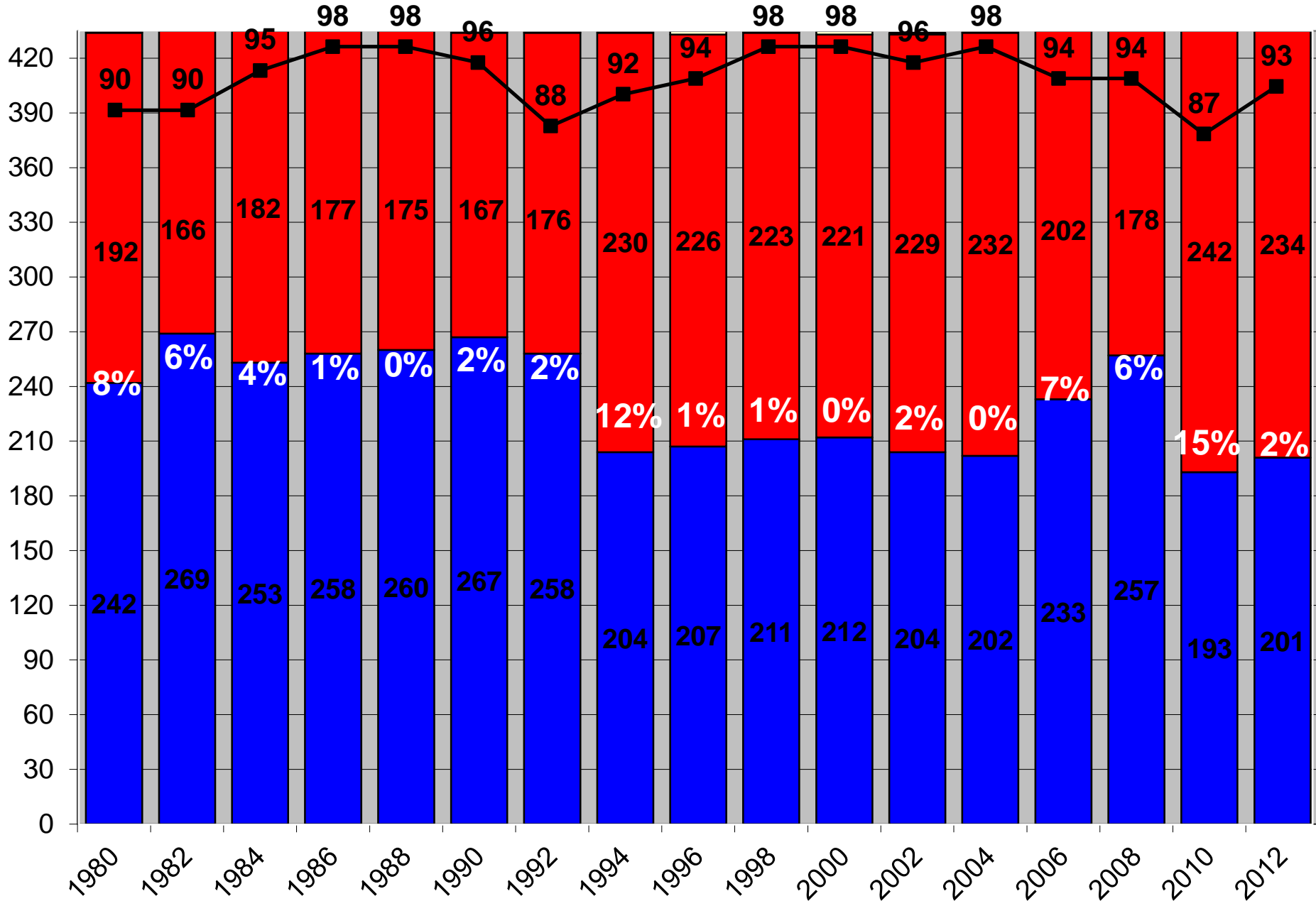
Senate

With incumbent re-election rates - %



House of Representatives

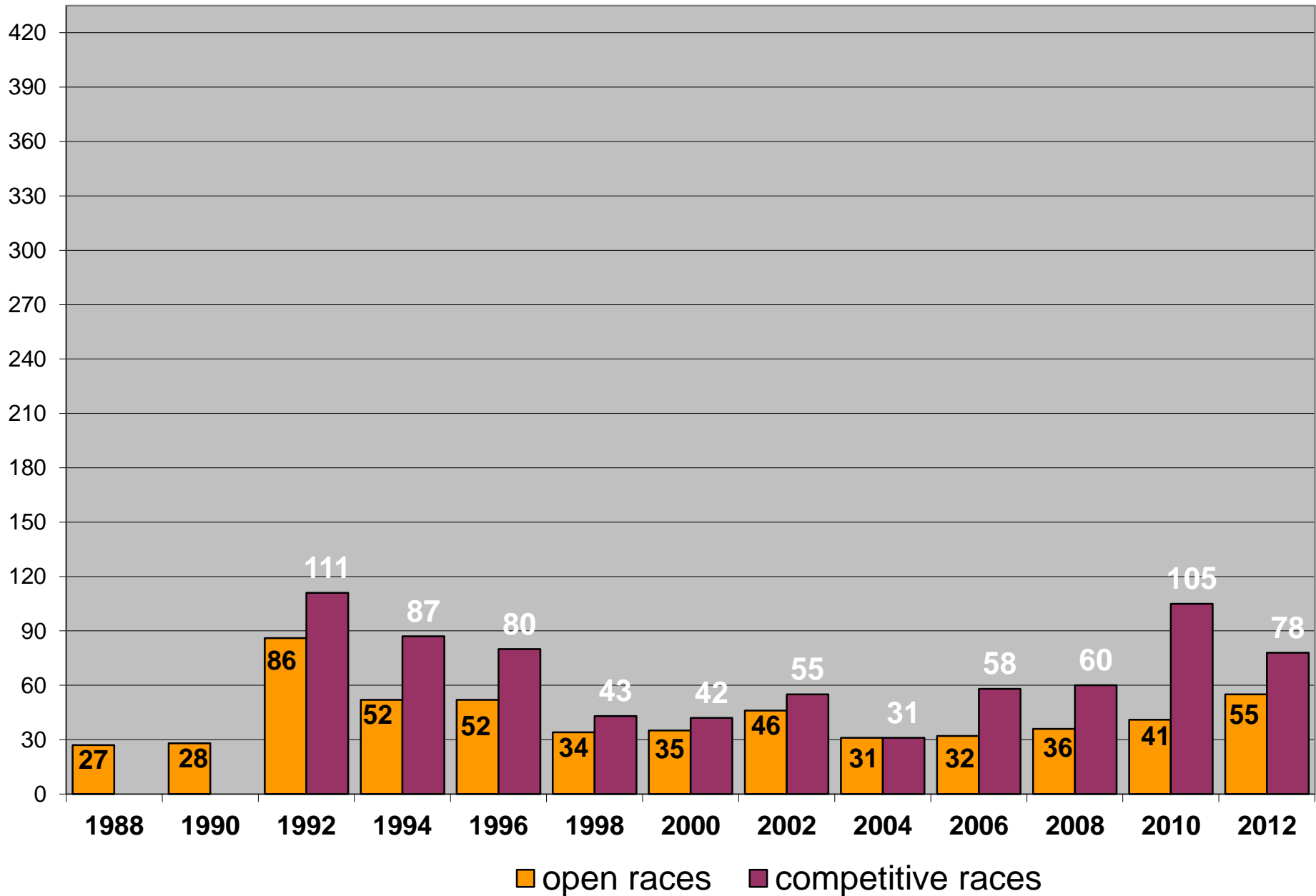
With incumbent re-election rates - %



Comparison point – Incumbency re-election rates in UK House of Commons:

1997 -	76%
2001 -	96%
2005 –	93%
2010 –	91%

Open and Competitive House Races



Why do incumbent Congressmen almost always get re-elected?

- 7-10 % average advantage calculated for incumbents – although only 5% in 2012 (redistricting effect? Highly partisan Pres–election year?)

Benefits of office

- **Staff:** Congressmen/women get a substantial office budget, allowing them to employ quite large staffs in both their district/state, and in Washington
 - average House Rep has 14 staff, average Senator has 34 staff
 - > allows them to serve their constituents, responding to letters/emails, dealing with their problems and making them look like an effective, hard-working rep
 - > helps stay in touch with constit opinion and to shape their legisl activities in response
- **Travel:** Congrmen get free travel to/from Washington, plus within their district/state
- **Postage:** Congrmen are able to send postage-free mailings to constits from time to time.

Why do incumbent Congressmen almost always get re-elected?

Time

- Congressmen paid to be in politics full-time, whereas challengers usually have to hold another job down while trying to campaign (or give up job and go into debt to campaign full-time)
- Part of Congressmen's job is to meet many voters, attend special events, appear on the media, etc. – so easy to campaign for re-election while serving constituents. Challengers find it harder to generate such opportunities.

Visibility

- Incumbents have good name-recognition among constituents due to previous campaign and 2+ / 6+ years of service.
- Local media also give them much attention – no obligation to be balanced in coverage or to provide public hearings as in UK
- although public often has low opinion of Congress collectively, they often have a much higher opinion of their own Representative or Senator

Why do incumbent Congressmen almost always get re-elected?

Campaign organisation

- Every incumbent has the exp of running at least one successful campaign already – so more likely than challenger to build and manage an effective campaign org in subseq races.
- + incumbents usually have network of donors & volunteers already in place to call upon.
- + challengers may be less “battle-hardened” and media savvy
 - Tea Party-backed primary winners in 2010 (Angle, O’Donnell, Buck) and 2012 (Mourdock, Mandel) lost the GOP Senate seats due to gaffes and inept performances.

Why do incumbent Congressmen almost always get re-elected?

Money - 2012 Congressional races estimated to have cost c\$1 Bn

- Incumbents enjoy a huge advantage in raising money compared to challengers:

– House races involving incumbents:	<u>2008</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2012</u>
• Average Incumbent Spending =	\$1.3 M	\$1.6 M	\$1.7 M
• Average Challenger Spending =	\$0.6 M	\$0.7 M	\$0.6 M
– Senate races involving incumbents:	<u>2008</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2012</u>
• Average Incumbent Spending =	\$ 7.8 M	\$9.5 M	\$10.7 M
• Average Challenger Spending =	\$ 3.8 M	\$5.3 M	\$ 7.2 M

- <http://www.opensecrets.org/bigpicture/cost.php>
- DNC/RNC & Congr leadership committee money v largely directed to incumbents rather than challengers
- Money buys a better campaign organisation and greater spending on ads.
- BUT - http://www.cfinst.org/Press/PReleases/10-11-05/Non-Party_Spending_Doubled_But_Did_Not_Dictate_Results.aspx

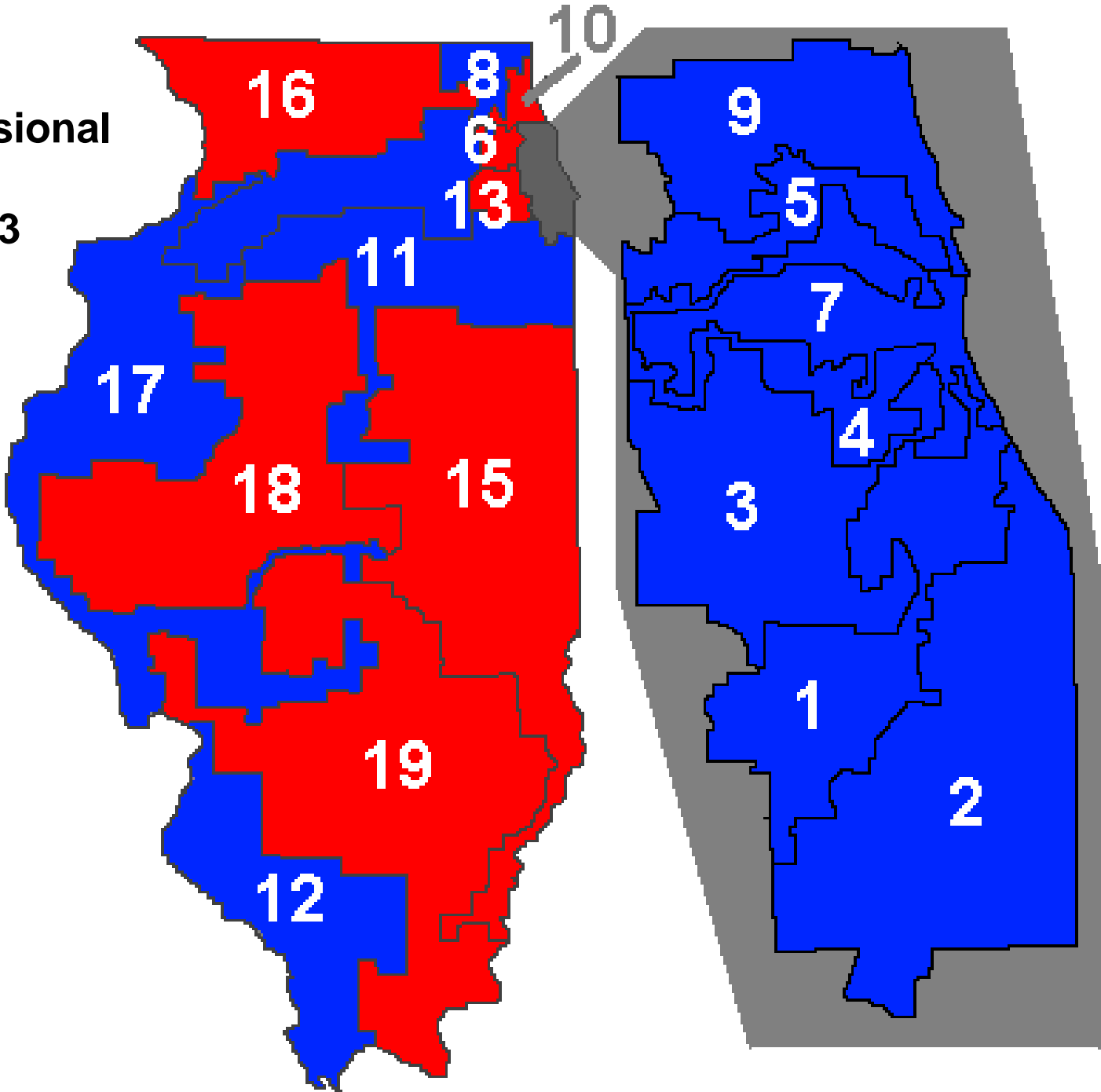
When incumbent hit by scandal or departs from constits in voting record challengers (in primary or gen election) can quickly gain funding to run competitive race vs them

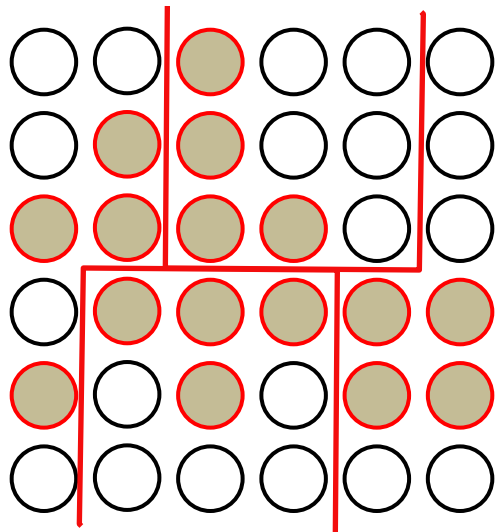
Why do incumbent Congressmen almost always get re-elected?

Redistricting

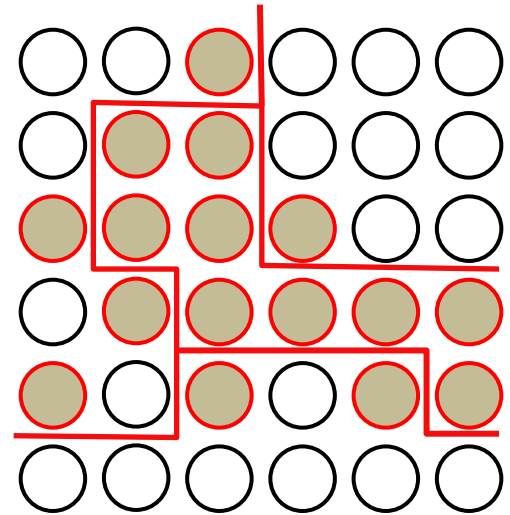
- After every census many House districts have their boundaries redrawn – this is governed by state law and in 37 / 45 states legislators in the State Congress control or strongly influence the process. When districts redrawn to partisan advantage it is called *gerrymandering* – politicians choosing their voters.
 - some House incumbents have had their position strengthened after redistricting by allied state legislators – (Tom Delay)
 - sometimes new “safe” seats are created – once won, these will promote incumbency - <http://www.nationaljournal.com/columns/against-the-grain/the-gop-redistricting-advantage-20110621>
- BUT most legislators elected pre-redistricting, recent academic study argues that it has little impact on future electoral outcomes (and as a result, handing over redistricting to non-partisan state commissions – new in California for 2011 - will not do anything / much to address the issue of incumbency).
- <http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/jfriedm/incumbents.pdf>
- Controversy & Court intervention in 2011 Texas redistricting - <http://www.economist.com/node/21541059>

**Illinois
Congressional
Districts
2003-2013**





Cracking



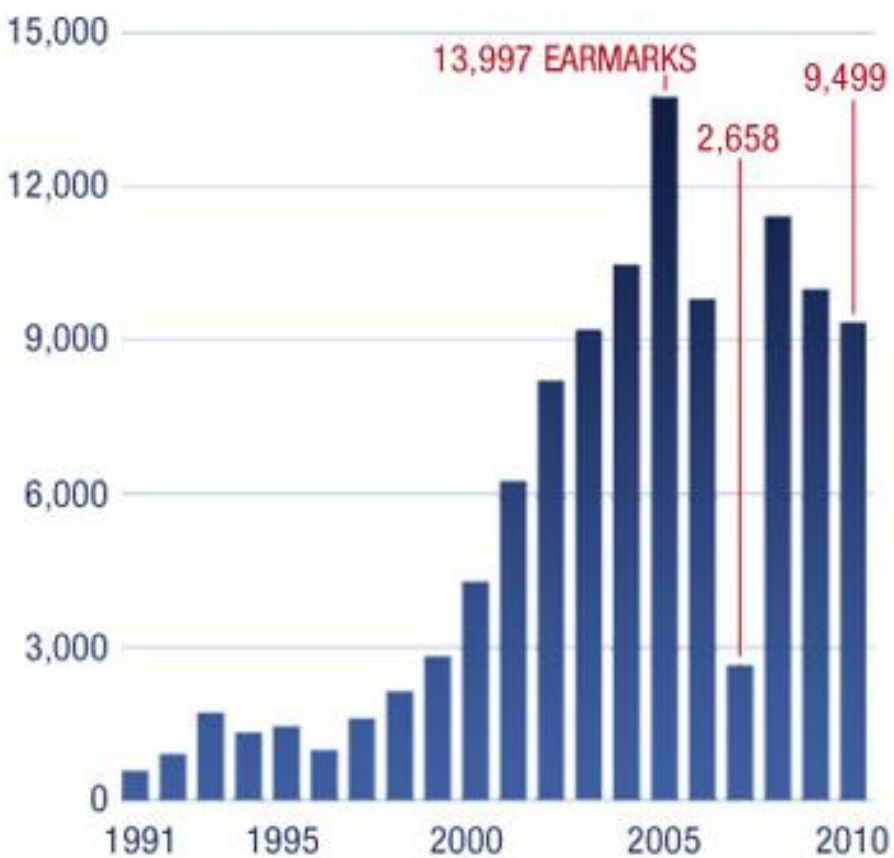
Packing

Why do incumbent Congressmen almost always get re-elected?

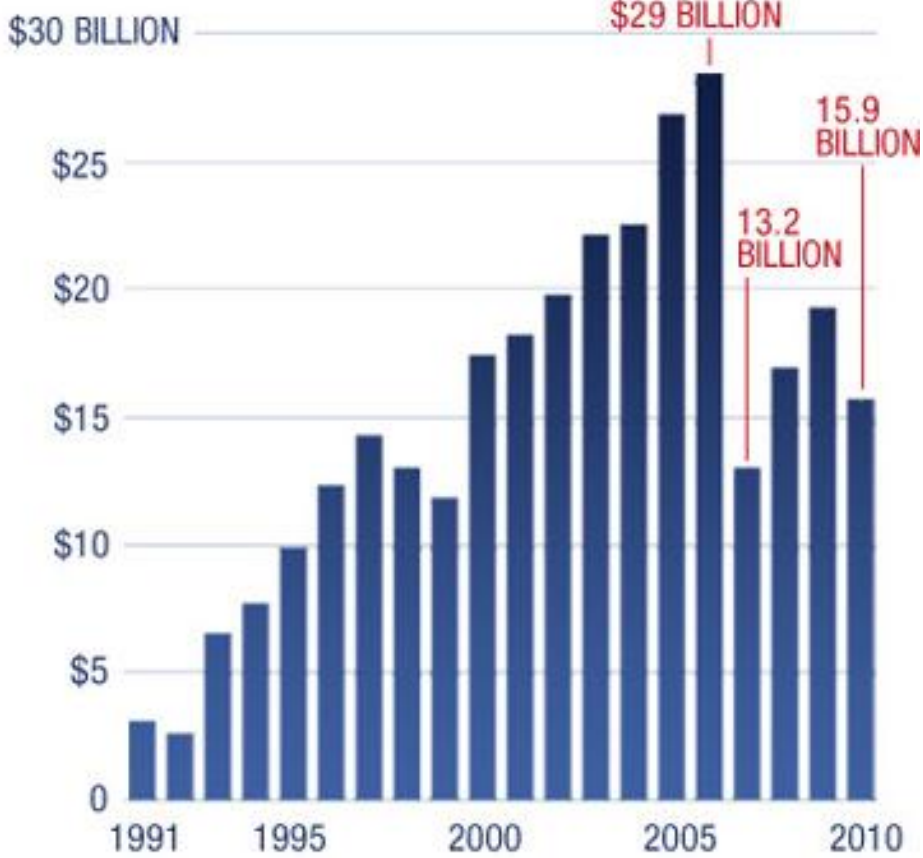
The Pork Barrel

- = using amendments and earmarks to insert provisions into Bills that favour the Congressmen's constituents
- can be used to build stronger base of support at home, proving to constituents that their rep is working hard on their behalf. Common for incumbents to boast of their success in exploiting their "insider" status at election time.
- <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/meet-congress-king-of-pork/>
- <http://archive.today/z4Cly>
- BUT moratorium on the use of earmarks introduced in 2011 - <http://tpmdc.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/04/congress-shackles-itself-zeroes-out-earmarks-to-nowhere.php>
- http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/after-earmark-ban-lawmakers-try-to-direct-money-to-hundreds-of-pet-projects/2011/11/29/gIQA2L2WAO_story.html

NUMBER OF EARMARKS



COST OF EARMARKS



SOURCE: CITIZENS AGAINST GOVERNMENT WASTE AND TAXPAYERS FOR COMMON SENSE AND THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION.

Why do incumbent Congressmen almost always get re-elected?

- **BUT N.B.-** statistics can be misleading
 - one important reason for retirement is fear that running again might result in defeat
 - may account for 6 /18 Democrat Senators up for re-election in 2010 choosing to retire
e.g. Chris Dodd of Connecticut, Evan Bayh of Indiana
 - And 4 Dem Senators up for re-election in 2014 have already announced retirements.

What other factors affect the outcome of Congressional races?

- incumbency v imp, but not only factor: always some competitive seats, incl open ones –
 - 105 House & 15 Senate seats competitive in 2010 (defined as winner getting 55% or less of the vote – i.e. < 10% lead in a 2-horse race)
 - 78 House and 20 Senate seats were competitive in 2012
- Other factors include:
 - Finance – cand with > \$\$\$ will often win – reinforces incumbency, but also allows self-funding cand to become competitive
BUT – limits on this – min spend nec to gain recogn, but limited additional adv above this level. – see http://www.cfinst.org/Press/PReleases/12-11-09/Early_Post-Election_Look_at_Money_in_the_House_and_Senate_Elections_of_2012.aspx
 - “Coat-tails” effect in Pres election years – varies but can be substantial – e.g. Reagan in 1980s, Bush 2004, Obama 2008, Obama 2012?
 - Timing – Pres party often loses seats in mid-terms: Reps in 2006, Dems 1994, 2010 – but not always (Dems gained in 1998, Reps in 2002)
 - Inf Tech – Republicans had big adv in early 2000s in use of “Voter Vault” software to target segments of voters with carefully-crafted messages, Dems have now largely caught up and may now have an advantage as Obama’s high-tech social media campaign methods are adopted more widely.

ARE ELECTIONS CANDIDATE-CENTRED, WITH LITTLE ROLE FOR PARTIES?

Conventional wisdom says YES

- **Candidates win or lose on**
 - personal characteristics
 - Personal policy positions
 - + record of service to constituents (favours incumbents but also those who have held other local elected office, e.g. FL & WV Govs running for Senate seat)
 - + ability to fundraise (incl spending their own fortunes – e.g. Jon Corzine 2000 in NJ, Carly Fiorina challenging in CA 2010).
 - & Often distance themselves from party as a whole, esp if it is in power (Reps in 2008, Dems 2010)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIJORBRpOPM>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6SjrXMOFjs&feature=related>

ARE ELECTIONS CANDIDATE-CENTRED, WITH LITTLE ROLE FOR PARTIES?

...YES cont. - Why?

- primaries mean politicians have to run their own campaigns, dev distinctive personal message
- partisan dealignment 1950s -> meant more split-ticket voting
- death of old, C19th “spoils system” of party boss patronage
- huge diversity of USA, esp rural/heartland vs urban/coastal divide, means candidates toeing a strong party line would fail to win any seats in whole regions – so candidates for the same party adopt quite diff agenda depending on where they are running.

ARE ELECTIONS CANDIDATE-CENTRED, WITH LITTLE ROLE FOR PARTIES?

Counter-argument: NO - parties still play signif role

- Congressional leadership committees imp in fundraising & directing funding into particular races – e.g. DSCC may put \$9M into PA race
- Senior party figures can influence primary races, by endorsements & by encouraging or discouraging donors from backing a candidate – e.g. 2006 Dem leaders backed 11 veterans for fed office in 2006 – BUT rel failure of Republican establ candidates in 2010 vs Tea Party surge; & Dems unable to get Arlen Specter chosen as Senate cand in PA
- Rise in partisan alignment in Clinton/ Bush years? Obama too? White evangelicals now clearly loyal Reps, blacks to Dems
- Pres can often influence races, esp when Pres is v pop (Bush 2002, 2004) cand wish to be assoc with them.
Even unpop Pres can shape debate & may boost party cand by visiting key seats (Ob visiting DE Oct 2010)

Table 5 The District-Level Presidential Vote and House Results, 2000-2012

House Election Year	Presidential Vote Year	House/President Vote Correlation	% Winners Correctly Predicted	Value of Incumbency
2000	2000	.80	80.4	12.1
2002	2000	.81	86.2	12.6
2004	2004	.84	86.4	11.3
2006	2004	.84	83.5	9.9
2008	2008	.85	80.7	9.6
2010	2008	.92	91.3	6.8
2012	2008	.94	93.3	4.8

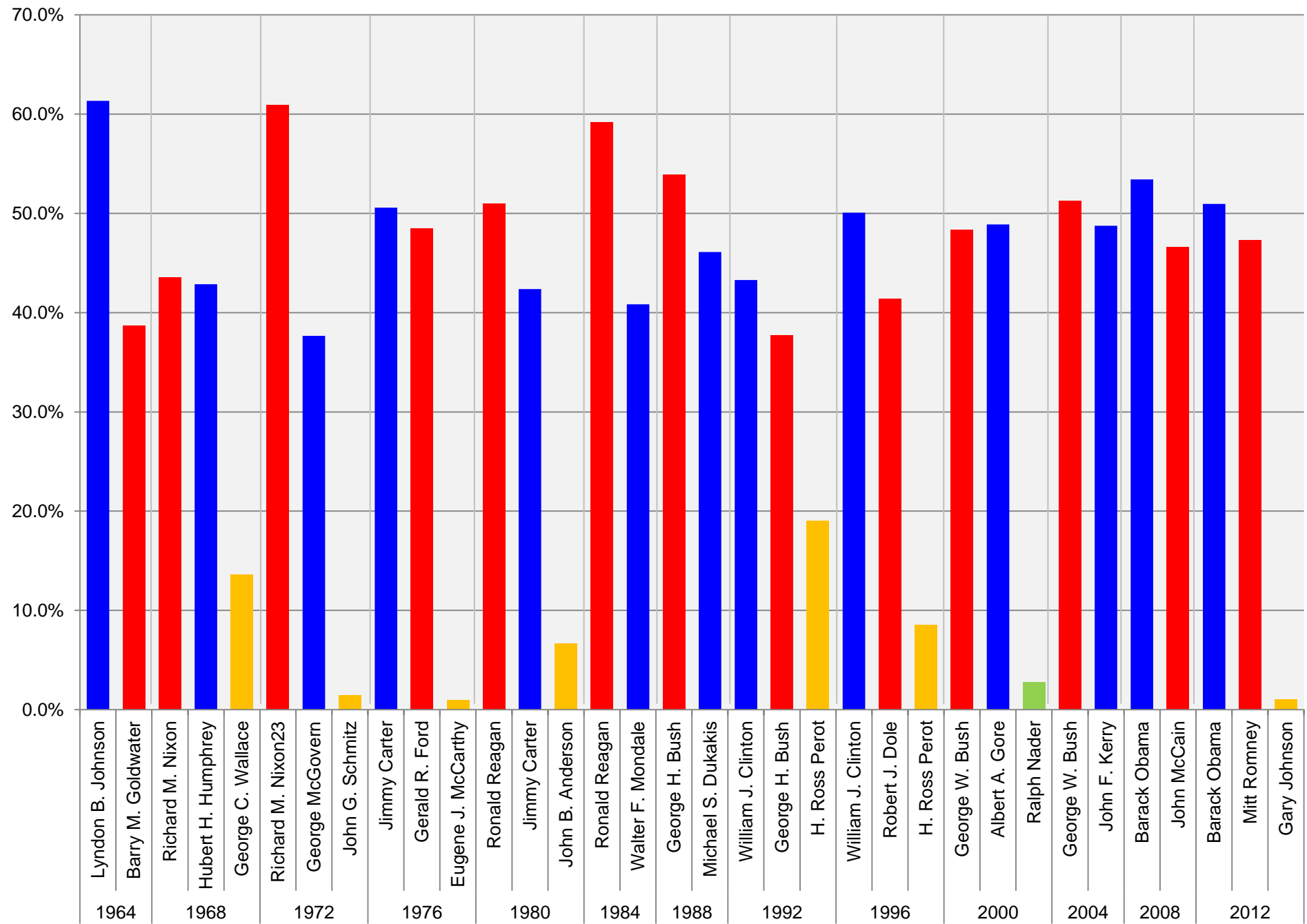
Source: Compiled by author.

Source: *VoteView blog*

★ US ELECTIONS ★

THIRD PARTIES
IN 2012 ELECTIONS

Share of popular vote



Third parties in 2012

- In no state did Obama or Romney win less than 50% of the popular vote, so third party candidates did not influence the election outcome.
- Gary Johnson's highest state % was in New Mexico, where he had been Governor 1995-2003 – 3.5%.
 - Elsewhere he only got above 2% in Montana, Alaska and Wyoming
- Jill Stein of the Green Party only got above 1% in Maine and Oregon

SENATE RACES 2012 – winner securing less than 50% + Indep win

State	Result	Winner	2nd placed	3rd place (and others)
Arizona (GOP incumbent retired)	Republican hold	Jeff Flake (R) 49.7%	Richard Carmona (D) 45.74%	Marc Victor (L) 4.4%
Indiana Republican incumbent defeated in primary	Democratic gain	Joe Donnelly (D) 49.9%	Richard Mourdock (R) 44.4%	Andy Horning (L) 5.8%
Montana Jon Tester (D)	Democratic hold	Jon Tester (D) 48.7%	Denny Rehberg (R) 44.8%	Dan Cox (L) 6.5%
Nevada Republican apptee following Republican retirement	Republican hold	Dean Heller (R) 45.9%	Shelley Berkley (D) 44.7%	David Lory Vanderbeek (Ind American) 4.9% None of these candidates 4.5%
Maine (Republican incumbent retired)	Independent gain (caucusing with Democrats in Senate)	Angus King (I) 52.9%	Charlie Summers (R) 30.7%	Cynthia Dill (D_ 13.1%

HOUSE RACES 2012 – winner securing less than 50%

Arizona 1 (new seat)	New seat - Democratic gain	Ann Kirkpatrick (D) 48.8%	Jonathan Paton (R) 45.1%	Kim Allen (L) 6.0%
Arizona 9 (new seat)	New seat - Democratic gain	Kyrsten Sinema (D) 48.5%	Vernon Parker (R) 44.8%	Powell Gammill (L) 6.6%
Colorado 6	Republican re- elected	Mike Coffman (inc.) (R) 48.7%	Joe Miklosi (D) 45.1%	Kathy Polhemus (I) 3.9% Patrick Provost (L) 2.4%
Indiana 2 (open race due to retirement)	Republican gain	Jackie Walorski (R) 49.0%	Brendan Mullen (D) 47.6%	Joe Ruiz (L) 3.4%
Louisiana 3 (redistricted seat with two incumbents)	Running for re- election in Dec 8 run-off	Charles Boustany (R) 44.7%	Jeff Landry (R) 30.0%	Ron Richard (D) 21.5% Bryan Barrilleaux (R) 2.54% Jim Stark (L) 1.2%
Massachusetts 6	Democrat re- elected	John Tierney inc. (D) 48.3%	Richard Tisei (R) 47.3%	Daniel Fishman (L) 4.5%
Michigan 1	Republican re- elected	Dan Benishek inc. (R) 48.2%	Gary McDowell (D) 47.5%	Emily Salvette (L) 3.2% Ellis Boal (G) 1.2%
New Hampshire 1	Democratic gain	Carol Shea-Porter (D) 49.7%	Frank Guinta inc. (R) 46.0%	Brendan Kelly (L) 4.3%
New York 24 (redistricted)	Democratic gain	Dan Maffei (D) 48.4%	Ann Marie Buerkle inc. (R) 43.8%	Ursula Rozum (G) 7.9%
Utah 4	Democrat re- elected	Jim Matheson inc. (D) 49.3%	Mia Love (R) 48.1%	Jim Vein (L) 2.6%

GOVERNORS' RACES 2012 – winner securing less than 50%

State	Result	Winner	2nd placed	3rd place (and others)
Indiana Governor Republican term-limited retiree	Republican hold	Mike Pence (R) 49.5%	John Gregg (D) 46.6%	Rupert Boneham (L) 4%
Montana Governor Democratic term-limited retiree	Democratic hold	Steve Bullock (D) 49.1%	Rick Hill (R) 47.2%	Ron Vandevender (L) 3.7%