

## Congress Reform

| Year | Pres. | House | Senate | Democrats  | Republicans   |  | House   | Senate  |
|------|-------|-------|--------|--|---|--|---------|---------|
| 1900 | R     | R     | R      | We favor an amendment to the Federal Constitution, providing for the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people, and we favor direct legislation wherever practicable.  |   |  | 52.7% R | 60.2% R |
| 1904 | R     | R     | R      | We favor the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people.  | we demand that representation in Congress and in the electoral college shall be proportionately reduced as directed by the Constitution of the United States. |  | 54.4% R | 62.9% R |
| 1908 | R     | R     | R      | We demand that the House of Representatives shall again become a deliberative body, controlled by a majority of the people's representatives, and not by the Speaker; and we pledge ourselves to adopt such rules and regulations to govern the House of Representatives as will enable a majority of its members to direct its deliberations and control legislation. . . We favor the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people, and regard this reform as the gateway to other national reforms.  |   |  | 57.1% R | 66.3% R |
| 1910 | R     | R     | R      |  |   | Republicans limit the power of Speaker of House    | 54.7% R | 64.8% R |
| 1912 | R     | D     | R      | We congratulate the country upon the triumph of two important reforms demanded in the last national platform, namely, the amendment of the Federal Constitution authorizing an income tax, and the amendment providing for the popular election of senators, and we call upon the people of all the States to rally to the support of the pending propositions and secure their ratification. . . The movement toward more popular government should be promoted through legislation in each State which will permit the expression of the preference of the electors for national candidates at presidential primaries. . . We favor a single Presidential term, and to that end urge the adoption of an amendment to the Constitution making the President of the United States ineligible to reelection, and we pledge the candidates of this Convention to this principle. |   |  | 58.9% D | 52.6% R |
| 1913 | D     | D     | D      |  |   | 17th Amendment passes. Direct election of Senators | 66.5% D | 55.2% D |
| 1916 | D     | D     | D      | We favor such alteration of the rules of procedure of the Senate of the United States as will permit the prompt transaction of the Nation's legislative business.  |   |  | 52.3% D | 57.3% D |

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| 1917 | D | D |   |  | Senate adopts cloture to prevent filibusters   | 50.2% D  | 53.1% D            |
| 1920 | D | R | R | We favor such alteration of the rules of procedure of the Senate of the United States as will permit the prompt transaction of the nation's legislative business.  | amended the rules of the Senate and House, which will reform evils in procedure and guarantee more efficient and responsible government.   |  | 55.8% R<br>52.1% R |
| 1922 | R | R | R |  |  | Permanent Appointment Act                              | 69.1% R<br>61.5% R |
| 1924 | R | R | R | We pledge the democratic party to a policy which will prevent members of either house who fail of re-election from participating in the subsequent sessions of congress.   |  |  | 51.3% R<br>54.2% R |
| 1928 | R | R | R | We favor legislation to prevent defeated members of both houses of Congress from participating in the sessions of Congress by fixing the date for convening the Congress immediately after the biennial national election. |  |  | 54.2% R<br>51.6% R |
| 1932 | R | R | R |  |  |  | 51.4% D<br>50.5% R |
| 1936 | D | D | D |  |  |  | 73.7% D<br>75% D   |
| 1940 | D | D | D |  | To insure against the overthrow of our American system of government we favor an amendment to the Constitution providing that no person shall be President of the United States for more than two terms. |  | 59.8% D<br>70.8% D |
| 1944 | D | D | D |  | We favor an amendment to the Constitution providing that no person shall be President of the United States for more than two terms of four years each.   |  | 49.8% D<br>58.3% D |
| 1948 | D | R | R |  | We favor a revision of the procedure for the election of the President and Vice President which will more exactly reflect the popular vote.  |  | 56.7% R<br>53.1% R |
| 1951 | D | D | D |  |  | 22nd Amendment ratified. Presidents limited to 2 terms | 60.4% D<br>55.2% D |

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|--------|---|---|---|---|--|---------|---------|
| 1952 D | D | D | We recommend that Congress provide for a non-partisan study of possible improvements in the methods of nominating and electing Presidents and in the laws relating to Presidential succession. . . Democrats know that voter identification laws can disproportionately burden young voters, people of color, low-income families, people with disabilities, and the elderly, and we refuse to allow the use of political pretexts to disenfranchise American citizens. . . In order that the will of the American people may be expressed upon all legislative proposals, we urge that action be taken at the beginning of the 83rd Congress to improve Congressional procedures so that majority rule prevails and decisions can be made after reasonable debate without being blocked by a minority in either House. |   |  | 53.4% D | 51% D*  |
| 1956 R | D | D | In order that the will of the American people may be expressed upon all legislative proposals, we urge that action be taken at the beginning of the 85th Congress to improve Congressional procedures so that majority rule prevails and decisions can be made after reasonable debate without being blocked by a minority in either House.   |   |  | 53.3% D | 51% D*  |
| 1960 R | D | D | In order that the will of the American people may be expressed upon all legislative proposals, we urge that action be taken at the beginning of the 87th Congress to improve Congressional procedures so that majority rule prevails and decisions can be made after reasonable debate without being blocked by a minority in either House.   | We favor a change in the Electoral College system to give every voter a fair voice in presidential elections. |  | 65% D   | 66% D   |
| 1961 D | D | D |   |   | Amendment passes to allow DC to vote for President | 59.9% D | 62.6% D |
| 1964 D | D | D | The Congress of the United States should revise its rules and procedures to assure majority rule after reasonable debate and to guarantee that major legislative proposals of the President can be brought to a vote after reasonable consideration in committee.   |   |  | 58.8% D | 66% D   |

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|--------|---|---|--|---|---|---------|-------|
| 1968 D | D | D | <p>We fully recognize the principle of one man, one vote in all elections. We urge that due consideration be given to the question of presidential primaries throughout the nation. We urge reform of the electoral college and election procedures to assure that the votes of the people are fully reflected. . . We will support a Constitutional amendment lowering the voting age to 18.</p>  | <p>The strengthening of citizen influence on government requires a number of improvements in political areas. For instance, we propose to reform the electoral college system, establish a nation-wide, uniform voting period for Presidential elections, and recommend that the states remove unreasonable requirements, residence and otherwise, for voting in Presidential elections. . . Democrats in control of Congress have opposed Republican efforts for Congressional reform and killed legislation embodying the recommendations of a special bipartisan committee. We will again press for enactment of this measure. . . We believe that states which have not yet acted should reevaluate their positions with respect to 18-year-old voting, and that each such state should decide this matter for itself. We urge the states to act now.</p> |   | 57% D   | 62% D |
| 1971 R | D | D |  |   | 26th amendment passes lowering vote age to 18 | 58.6% D | 54% D |
| 1972 R | D | D | <p>The seniority system is one of the principal reasons that party platforms—and parties themselves—have lost meaning and importance in our political life. Seniority has weakened Congress as an effective and responsive institution in a changing society. It has crippled effective Congressional leadership and made it impossible to present and enact a coherent legislative program. It has permitted the power of the Democratic majority to be misused and abused. It has stifled initiative and wasted the talents of many members by making length of service the only criterion for selection to the vital positions of Congressional power and leadership. . . Universal voter registration by post card; Bilingual means of registration and voting; Bilingual voter education programs; Liberalized absentee voting . . . We favor a Constitutional change to abolish the Electoral College and to give every voter a direct and equal voice in Presidential elections. The amendment should provide for a run-off election, if no candidate received more than 40 percent of the popular vote</p> |   |   | 58.6% D | 54% D |
| 1976 R | D | D | <p>providing for registration by mail in federal elections to erase existing barriers to voter participation</p>   | <p>We encourage full participation in our electoral process. We further recognize the sanctity and value of the ballot. In that regard, we oppose "federal post card registration." The possibilities of fraud are inherent in registration by mail. Such possibilities could not only cheapen our ballot, but in fact threaten the entire electoral process.</p>   |   | 66% D   | 61% D |

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|--------|---|---|--|---|---|---------|-------|
| 1980 D | D | D | Encourage voter participation in elections through use of simplified procedures for registration in states that lack mail or election day registration procedures, and by resisting efforts to reduce access to bilingual ballots  | Republicans support public policies that will promote electoral participation without compromising ballot-box security. We strongly oppose national postcard voter registration schemes because they are an open invitation to fraud.   |   | 63.1% D | 55% D |
| 1984 R | D | R |  |   |   | 61.5% D | 55% R |
| 1988 R | D | D | <b>WE BELIEVE</b> that this country's democratic processes must be revitalized: by securing universal, same day and mail-in voter registration as well as registration on the premises of appropriate government agencies; by preventing the misuse of at-large elections, the abuse of election day challenges and registration roll purges, any undercounting in the national census, and any dilution of the one-person, one-vote principle; by ending discrimination against public employees who are denied the right to full political participation | Support citizen efforts in the Senate to defeat the gerrymanders that steal seats for Democrat congressmen by denying fair representation to the voters. . . We favor a constitutional amendment which would place some restriction on the number of consecutive terms a man or woman may serve in the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate.  |   | 58.9% D | 55% D |
| 1992 R | D | D |  | Every Republican Senator voted twice to end the filibuster, while more than 70 percent of the Democrats voted, twice, to keep the filibuster going. Their nominee this year for the Vice Presidency supported the filibuster and spurned the Balanced Budget Amendment. . . We reaffirm our support for a constitutional amendment to limit the number of terms House Members and Senators may serve. We want a citizens' Congress, free of bloated pensions and perpetual perks. . . Republicans vigorously support a balanced budget, a Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment, and a line-item veto for the President. . . We also support "sunset laws" that require government agencies to be reviewed periodically and reauthorized only if they can be rejustified. . . Throughout the 1980s, voters were cheated out of dozens of seats in the House of Representatives and in State legislatures because districts were oddly shaped to guarantee election of Democrats. It was swindle by law. We support State-level appointment of non-partisan redistricting commissions to apply clear standards for compactness of districts, competitiveness between the parties, and protection of community interests. . . After more than a half-century of distortion by power-hungry Democrats, the political system is increasingly rigged. | 27th amendment passes prevents mid-term pay increases | 61.4% D | 58% D |

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|--------|---|---|--|---|--|---------|-------|
| 1996 D | R | R |  | <p>brought to a vote, in both the House and Senate, a constitutional amendment to impose term limits on Members of Congress. It failed to secure the necessary two-thirds vote in the House, where 80 percent of Republicans voted for it and 80 percent of Democrats voted against it. Every Senate Republican voted to allow a vote on term limits, but the Democrats killed it by a filibuster. . . We will continue our fight against gerrymandered congressional districts designed to thwart majority rule.</p> |  | 54.3% R | 53% R |
| 2000 R | R | R |  | <p>The principal cure for the ills of democracy is greater participation in the political process by more citizens. To that end, we have one guiding principle in the development of laws to regulate campaigns: Will any particular proposal encourage or restrict the energetic engagement of Americans in elections? . . . Gerrymandered congressional districts are an affront to democracy and an insult to the voters. We oppose that and any other attempt to rig the electoral process.</p>                   |  | 51.2% R | 54% R |

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|        |   |   |  |   |  |         |         |
|--------|---|---|--|---|--|---------|---------|
| 2004 R | R | R | <p>Voting is the foundation of democracy, a central act of civic engagement, and an expression of equal citizenship. Voting rights are important precisely because they are protective of all other rights. We will call for legislative action that will fully protect and enforce the fundamental Constitutional right of every American to vote -- to ensure that the Constitution's promise is fully realized and that, in disputed elections, every vote is counted fully and fairly. . . To advance these goals, and to guarantee the integrity of our elections and to increase voter confidence, we will seek action to ensure that voting systems are accessible, independently auditable, accurate, and secure. We will support the full funding of programs to realize this goal. Finally, it is the priority of the Democratic Party to fulfill the promise of election reform, reauthorize the expiring provisions of the Voting Rights Act, and vigorously enforce all our voting rights laws. . . Our voting procedures are observed by people and nations around the world. Every vote must count and every vote must be counted, including absentee ballots. To achieve all of our goals, we support moving toward a census that duly counts every American. And we support the election of candidates who express the many voices of America. . . Because our democracy thrives on public access to diverse sources of information from multiple sources, we support measures to ensure diversity, competition, and localism in media ownership.</p> | <p>Many African Americans, Hispanics, and others fear they may lose the right to vote because of inaccurate or insecure technology or because of a rolling back in the gains made by the passage of civil rights legislation. Our national commitment to a voting process that has integrity was underscored in 2002 when the Congress passed and the President signed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). We will continue to do all we can to ensure that every lawful vote counts for all Americans.</p>   |  | 52% R   | 51% R   |
| 2008 R | D | D | <p>We will fully fund the Help America Vote Act and work to fulfill the promise of election reform, including fighting to end long lines at voting booths and ensuring that all registration materials, voting materials, polling places, and voting machines are truly accessible to seniors, Americans with disabilities, and citizens with limited English proficiency.</p>   | <p>We oppose attempts to distort the electoral process by wholesale restoration of the franchise to convicted felons, by makeshift or hurried naturalization procedures, or by discretionary ballot-reading by election boards. . . Preventing voting fraud is a civil rights issue. We support the right of states to require an official government-issued photo identification for voting and call upon the Department of Justice to deploy its resources to prevent ballot tampering in the November elections. We support efforts by state and local election officials to ensure integrity in the voting process and to prevent voter fraud and abuse, particularly as it relates to voter registration and absentee ballots.</p> |  | 54.3% D | 50.5% D |

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|        |   |   |   |   |  |         |       |
|--------|---|---|---|---|--|---------|-------|
| 2012 D | R | D | <p>We believe the right to vote and to have your vote counted is an essential American freedom, and we oppose laws that place unnecessary restrictions on those seeking to exercise that freedom.</p> | <p>We oppose the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact or any other scheme to abolish or distort the procedures of the Electoral College. We recognize that an unconstitutional effort to impose "national popular vote" would be a mortal threat to our federal system and a guarantee of corruption as every ballot box in every state would become a chance to steal the presidency. . . we applaud legislation to require photo identification for voting and to prevent election fraud, particularly with regard to registration and absentee ballots. We support State laws that require proof of citizenship at the time of voter registration to protect our electoral system against a significant and growing form of voter fraud. Every time that a fraudulent vote is cast, it effectively cancels out a vote of a legitimate voter. . . Voter fraud is political poison. . . We strongly support the policy that all electronic voting systems have a voter verified paper audit trail. . . States or political subdivisions that use all-mail elections cannot ensure the integrity of the ballot. When ballots are mailed to every registered voter, ballots can be stolen or fraudulently voted by unauthorized individuals because the system does not have a way to verify the identity of the voter. We call for States and political subdivisions to adopt voting systems that can verify the identity of the voter.</p> |  | 55.7% R | 53% D |
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|        |   |   |   |  |  |         |       |
|--------|---|---|---|--|--|---------|-------|
| 2016 D | R | R | <p>We must restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act. We will bring our democracy into the 21st century by expanding early voting and vote-by-mail, implementing universal automatic voter registration and same day voter registration, ending partisan and racial gerrymandering, and making Election Day a national holiday. We will restore voting rights for those who have served their sentences. And we will continue to fight against discriminatory voter identification laws, which disproportionately burden young voters, diverse communities, people of color, low-income families, people with disabilities, the elderly, and women. . . Republicans have enacted various voter suppression tactics from Ohio to Florida, and even though some federal courts have already found that these measures go too far, Democrats will continue to fight these laws to preserve the fundamental right to vote.</p>  | <p>We oppose the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact and any other scheme to abolish or distort the procedures of the Electoral College. An unconstitutional effort to impose National Popular Vote would be a grave threat to our federal system and a guarantee of corruption, as every ballot box in every state would offer a chance to steal the presidency. . . we support legislation to require proof of citizenship when registering to vote and secure photo ID when voting. . . we urge that electronic voting systems have a voter-verified paper audit trail. We urge every state to join the Interstate Voter Registration Cross Check Program to keep voter rolls accurate and to prevent people from voting in more than one state in the same election. To guard against foreign involvement in our elections, we call for vigilance regarding online credit card contributions to candidates and campaigns. . . In order to preserve the principle of one person, one vote, we urge our elected representatives to ensure that citizenship, rather than mere residency, be made the basis for the apportionment of representatives among the states. . . Our national platform has repeatedly endorsed term limits for Members of Congress.</p> |  | 56.8% R | 54% R |
| 2020 R | D | R | <p>Democrats are committed to the sacred principle of "one person, one vote"—and we will fight to achieve that principle for every citizen, regardless of race, income, disability status, geography, or English language proficiency. We stand united against the determined Republican campaign to disenfranchise voters through onerous voter ID laws, unconstitutional and excessive purges of the voter rolls, and closures of polling places in low-income neighborhoods, on college campuses, and in communities of color. Americans should never have to wait in hours-long lines to exercise their voting rights. . . We will make voting easier and more accessible for all Americans by supporting automatic voter registration, same-day voter registration, early voting, and universal vote-from-home and vote-by-mail options. . . We must give voters the confidence that their ballot was counted as cast by supporting mandatory, statistically meaningful post-election audits and full transparency of all election results and data. . . Gerrymandering distorts our democracy, and Democrats will enact measures to end partisan gerrymandering in federal elections.</p> |  |  | 54.2% D | 52% R |

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| * Party Control changed<br>mid-term |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |