

Getting the Big Things Right

How Democrats Can Come Back in 2004

Presentation by Al From

Democratic Leadership Council's

Congressional Staff Retreat

March 7, 2003

www.ndol.org



Reality Therapy

- Democrats face an uphill, but not impossible, battle to win the White House in 2004.
- Difficult because incumbent Presidents are hard to beat. Only 4 of 17 incumbent Presidents in the 20th Century lost re-election

But Not Impossible

Big Turnarounds Happen in American Politics

- Nixon won in 1968 four years after Goldwater's shellacking
- Clinton won in 1996 just two years after the Republican landslide in 1994

The Key to Turnaround

To win in 2004, Democrats need to recapture the vital center we held during most of the last decade:

- Win the battle of ideas
- Seize the mantle of reform
- Restore our sense of national purpose

The Optimistic View

Democrats Suffered Small Losses

- **Two Senate Seats**
- **Six House Seats**
- **We gained three Statehouses**

The Pessimistic View

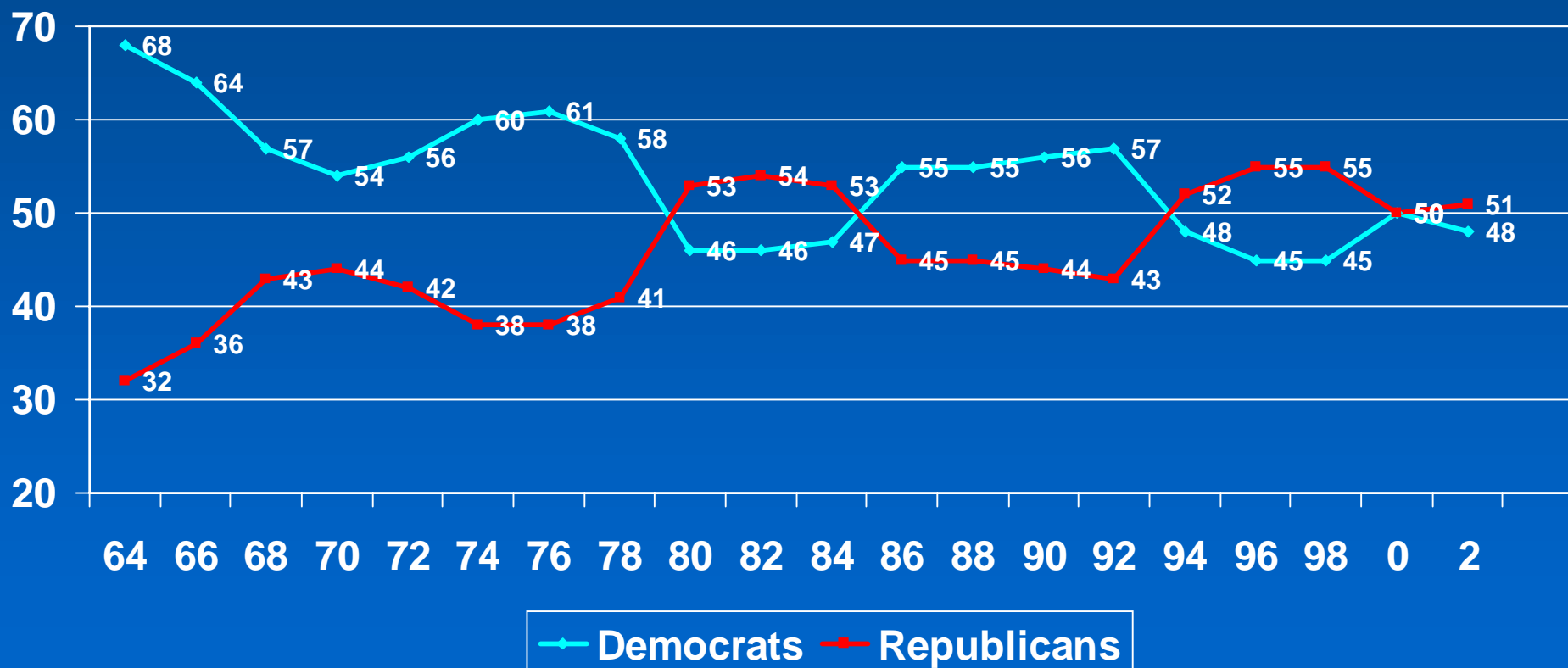
Republicans Control Political Landscape

	1992	2002
White House	D	R
U. S. Senate	D	R
U. S. House	D	R
Governorships	D	R
Legislatures	D	R

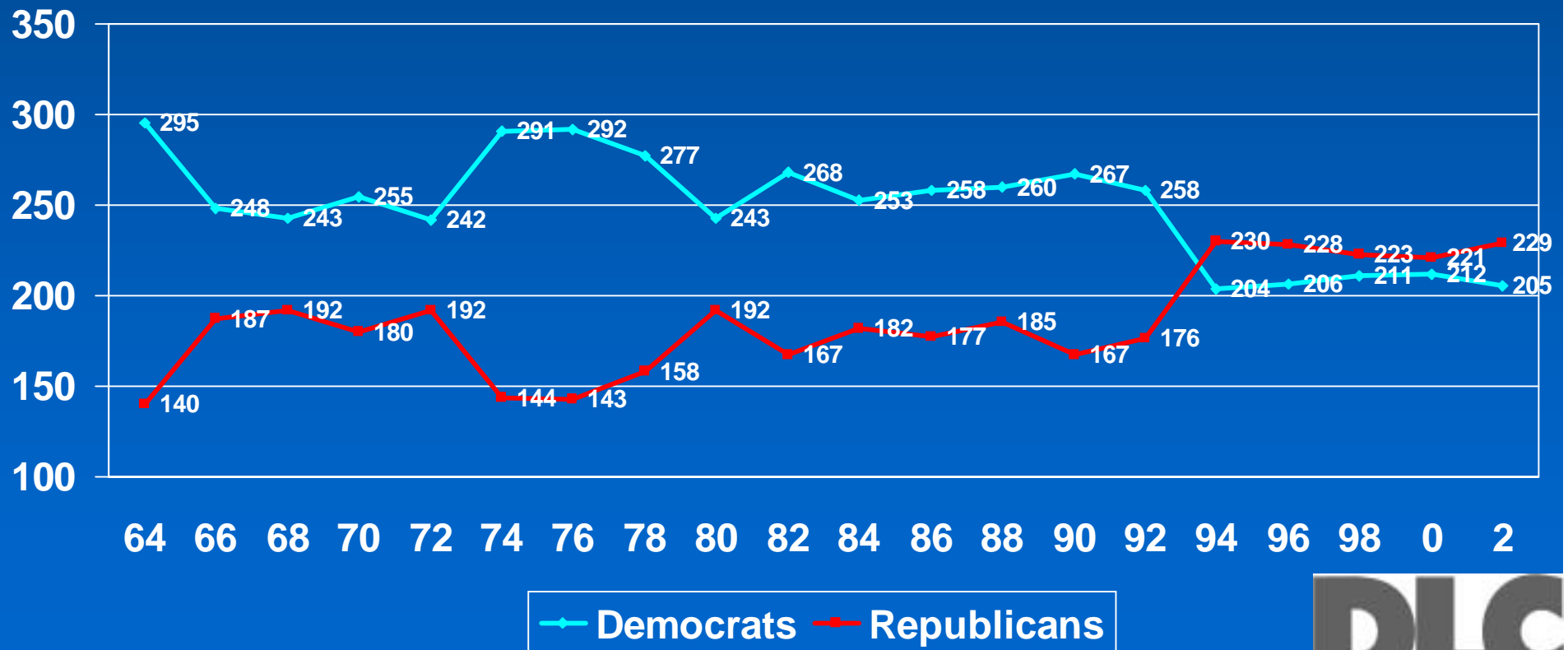
The Historical View

- 2002 Was the Latest Chapter in a Four Decade Swing to the Republicans That Began After Johnson's 1964 Landslide.

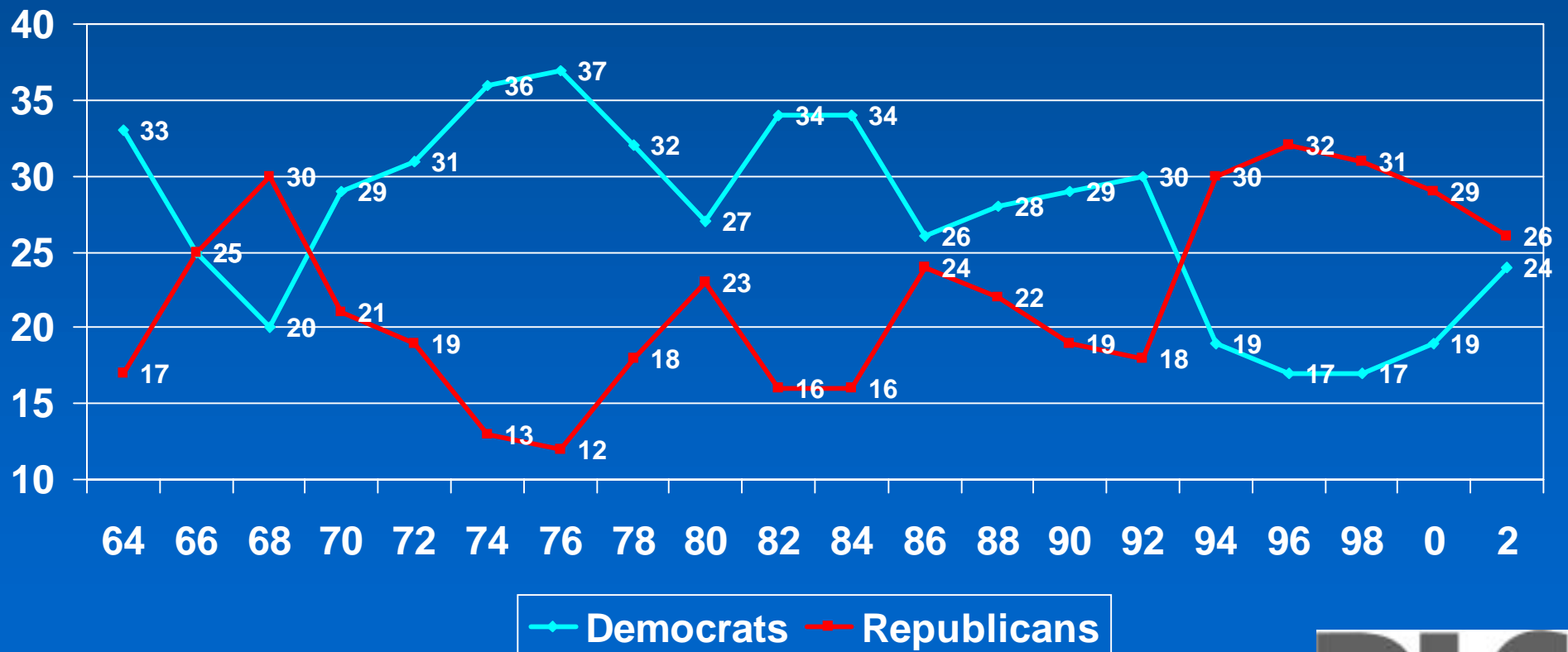
The Senate



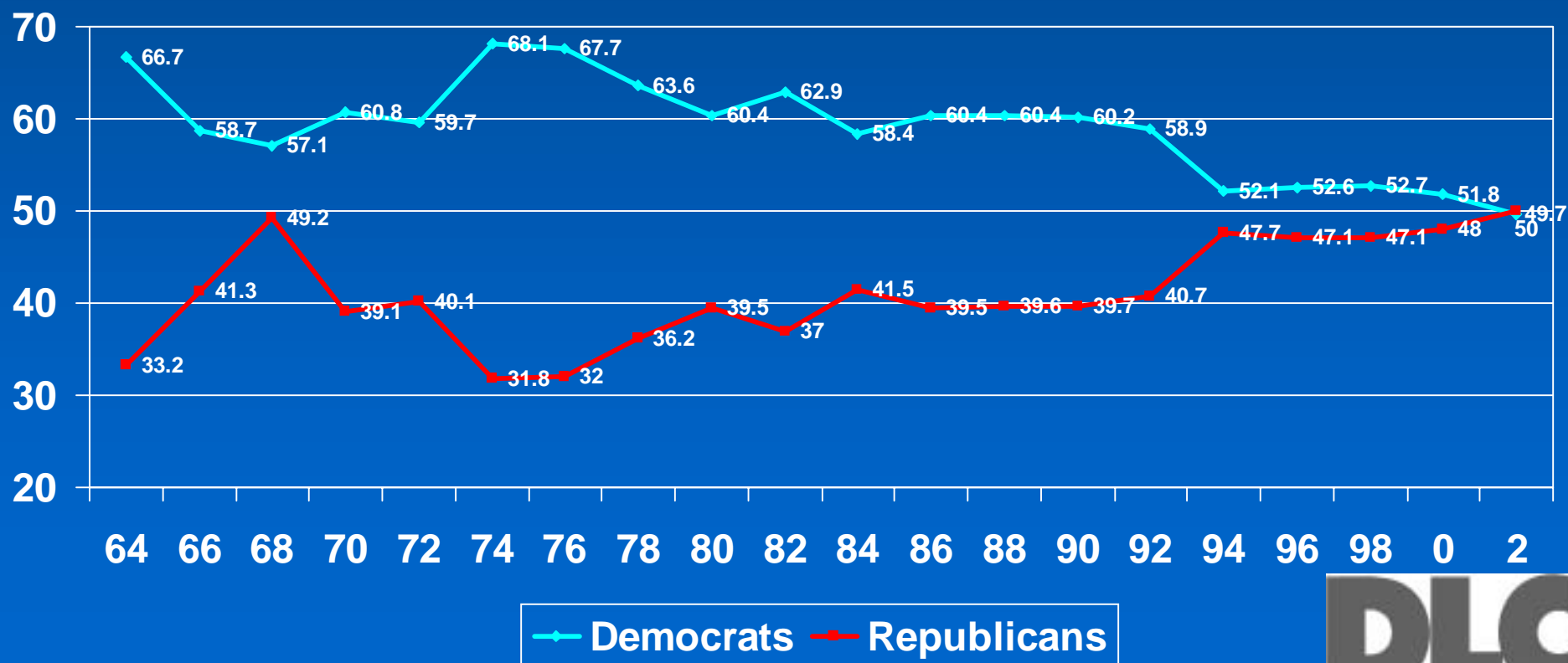
The House



Governorships

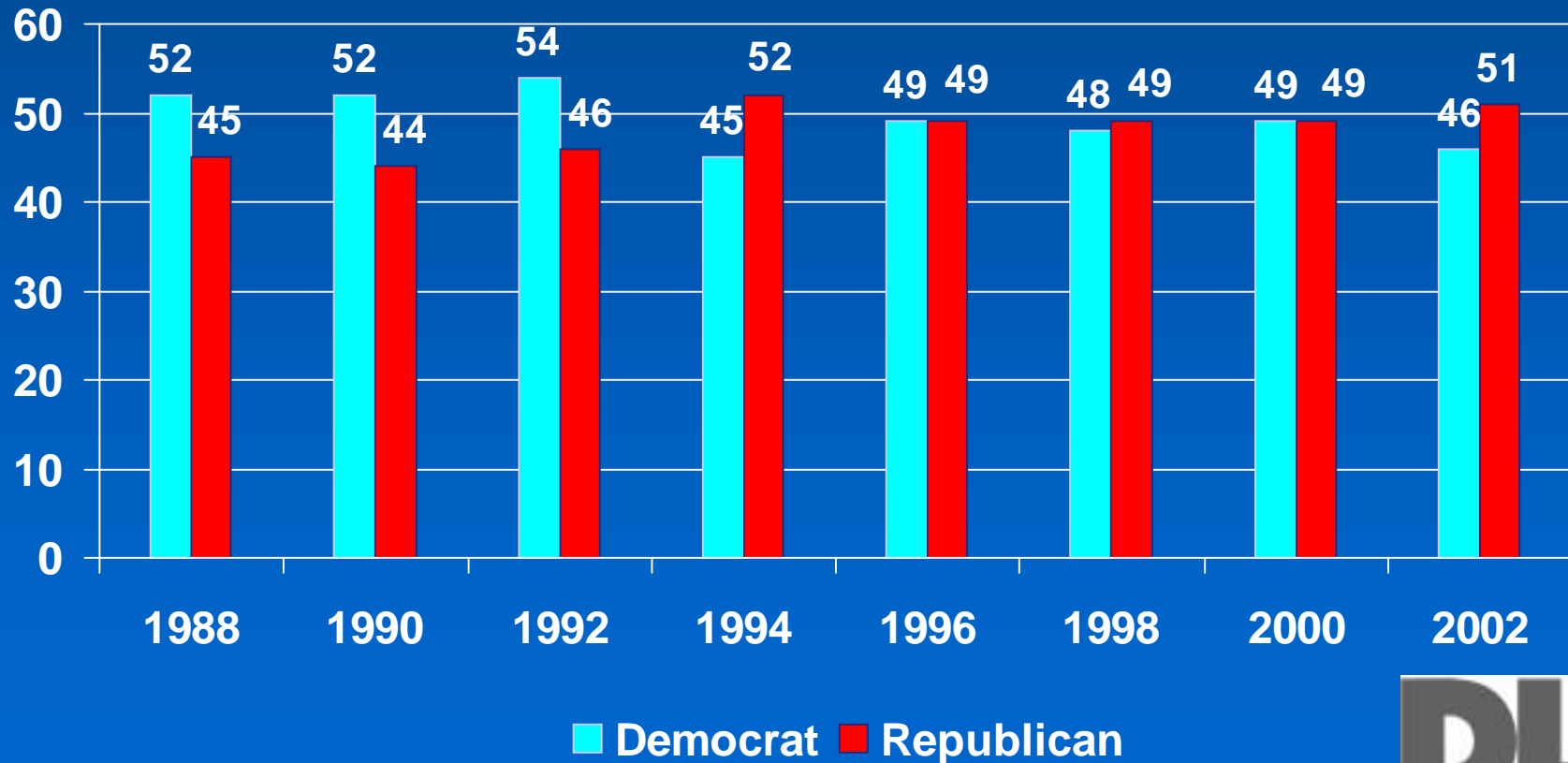


State Legislators

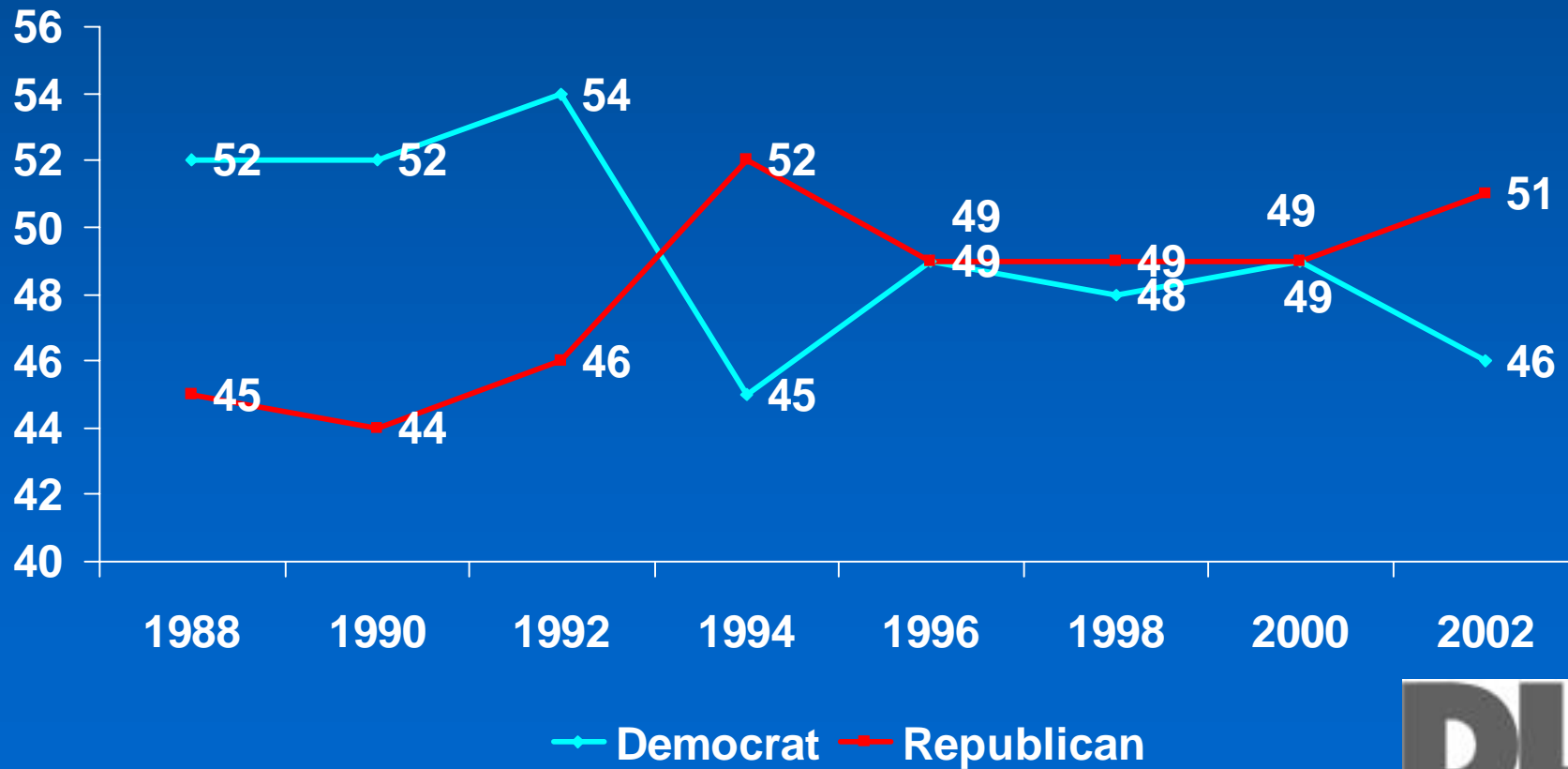


The Untold Story of 2002

Republicans Gain in National Vote for House



National Vote for the House



An Important Bellwether

- In the Last Two Presidential Elections the National House Vote has Tracked the Presidential Vote.
- The 1994 Election was “Truth in Packaging” Election – before 1994 Southern seats inflated Democratic strength.
- In 1989, Democrats held two-thirds of House and Senate Seats in the South; today that is nearly reversed.

The Democratic Decline

(Democrat/Republican)

1996

2000

2002

00/02

	Pres	Hse		Pres	Hse		Hse		Chg
National	49-41	49-49		48-48	49-49		46-51		-5
Coasts	54-35	53-44		55-40	56-41		54-42		-3
South	46-46	45-54		43-55	42-54		41-56		-3
Heartland	47-42	48-49		47-50	46-51		44-54		-5

Courtesy of Michael Barone



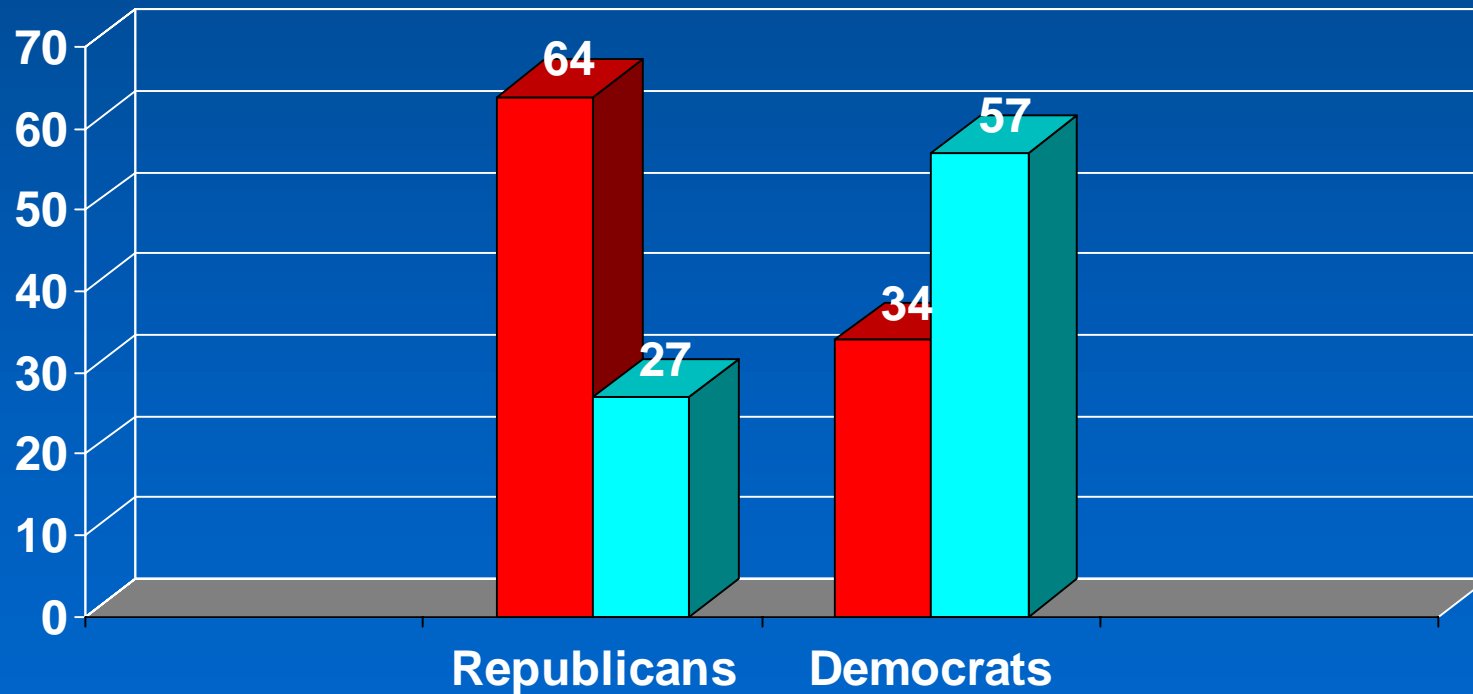
The “Forgotten” Middle Class

Pre-Clinton Voting Patterns Reappear

- Like in the 1980s, Democrats lose among key middle class voters.
- Democrats win coalition of overeducated and undereducated.
- Democrats do well among base voters, falter in growing outer suburbs.

The Security Gap

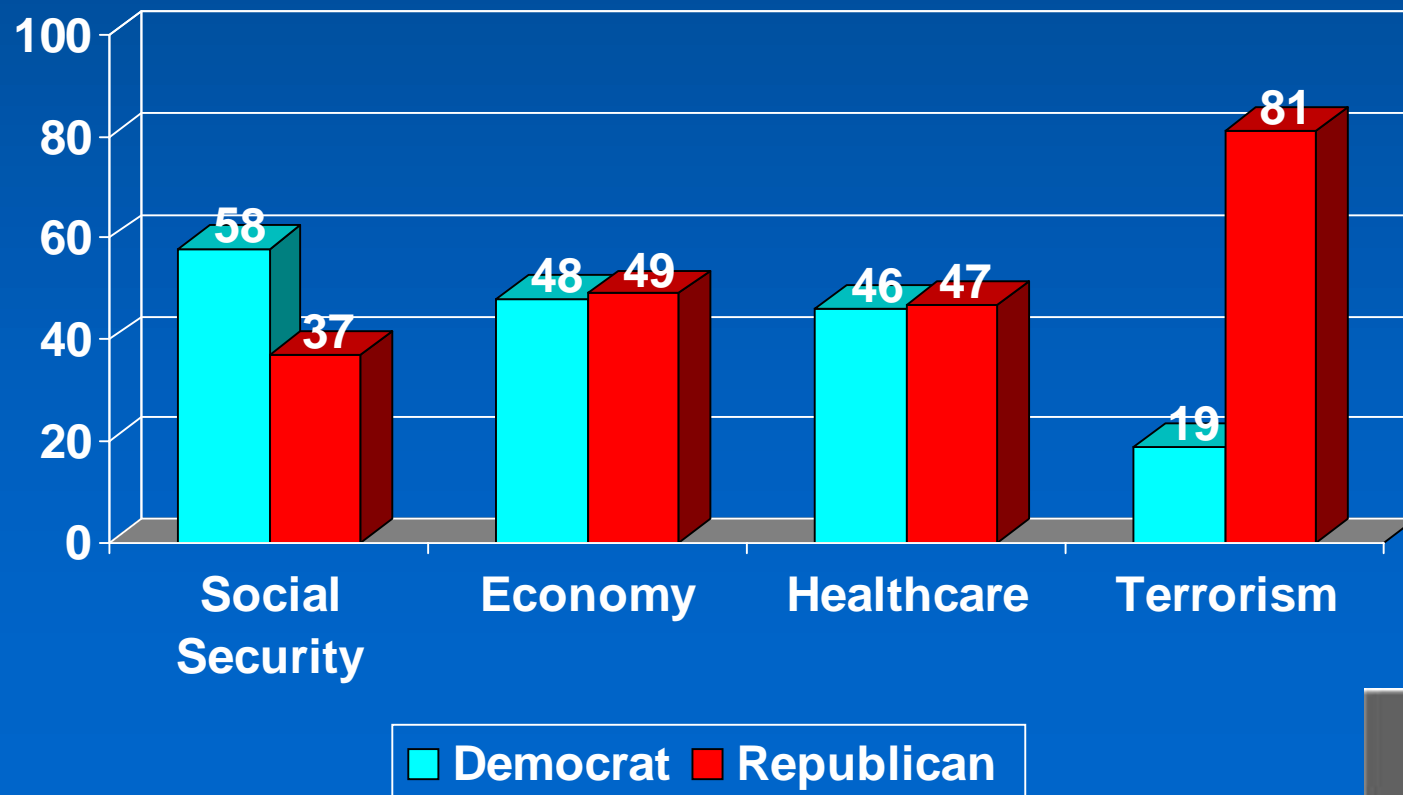
Policies Regarding Threat of Terrorism



■ Tough Enough ■ Not Tough Enough

“Mommy” and “Daddy” Parties

Voter Choice by Most Important Issues

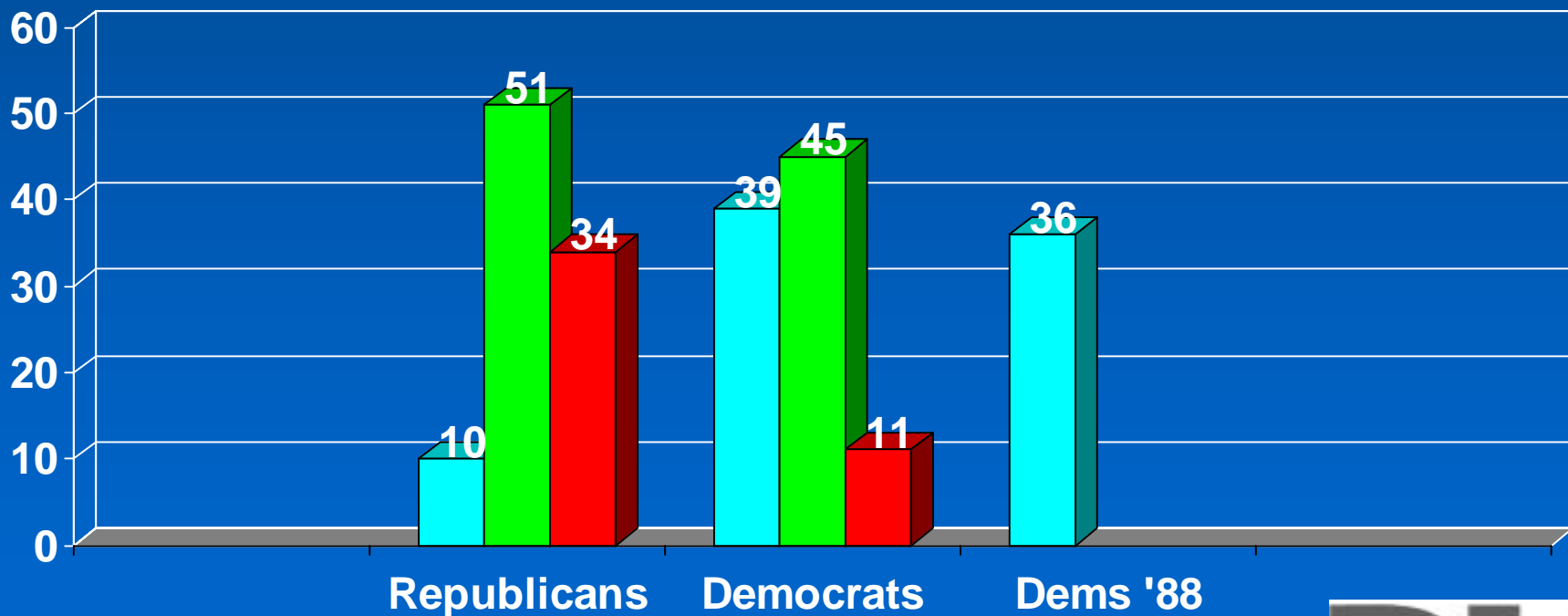


Gallup Poll

DLC
Democratic Leadership Council

Too Liberal Again

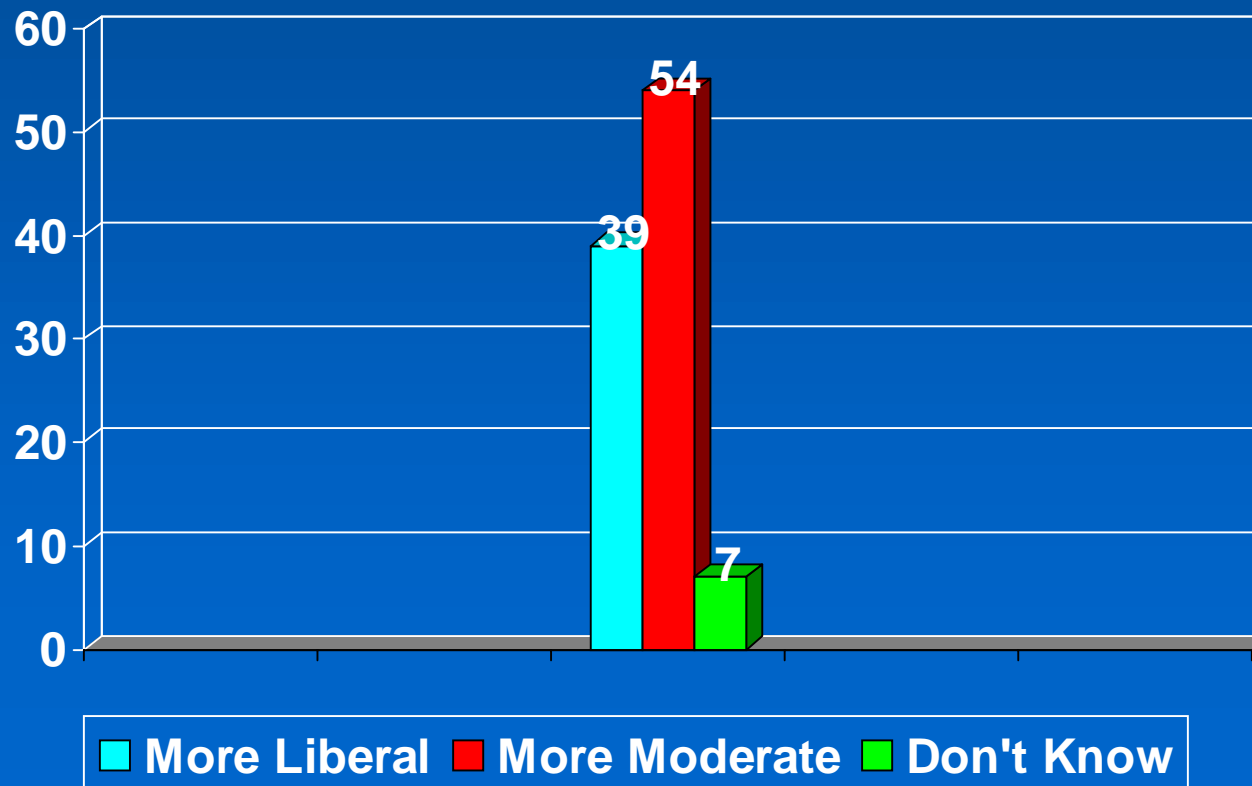
Perception of Political Views of Two Parties



■ Too Liberal ■ About Right ■ Too Conservative

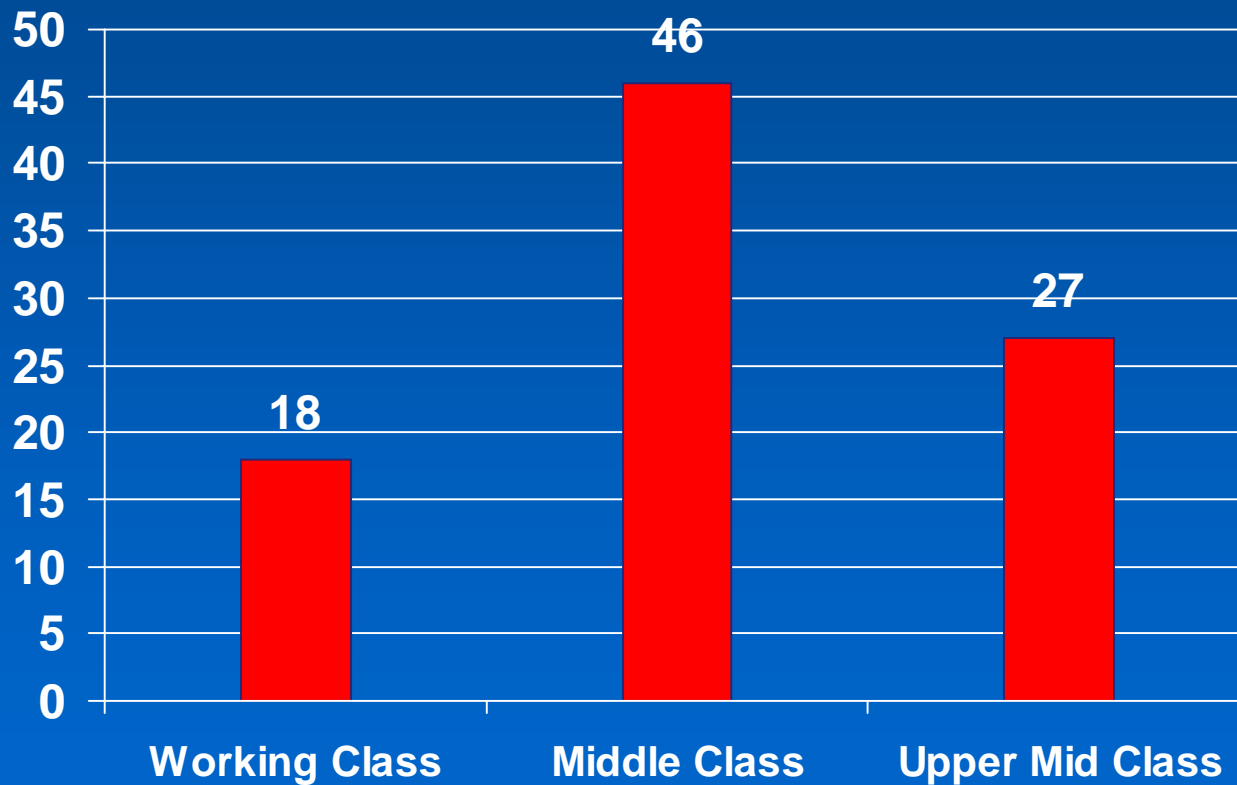
Perception of Democrats

Should Democrats Pursue Policies



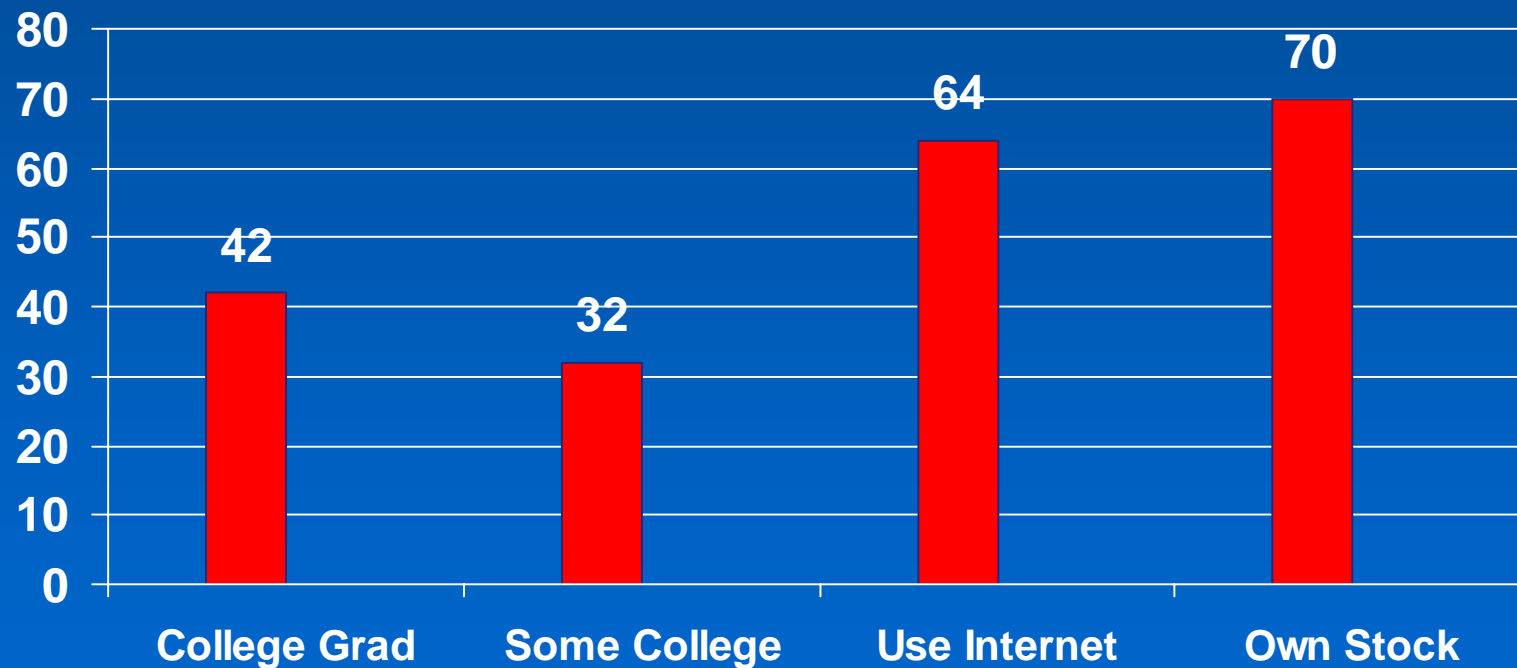
An Affluent Electorate

Characteristics of 2000 Voters



A Sophisticated Electorate

Characteristics of 2000 Voters



The New Electorate

PERIOD

DOMINANT VOTERS

Industrial Era

Working Class

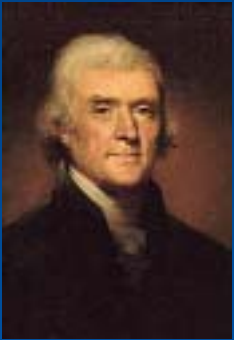
Information Age

Rising Learning Class

The New Democrat Approach

- ▶ New Democrats are the modernizers of the Democratic Party
- ▶ We further our party's enduring values with new and innovative ideas

The Traditions We Honor



- Jefferson's belief in individual liberty and the capacity for self government

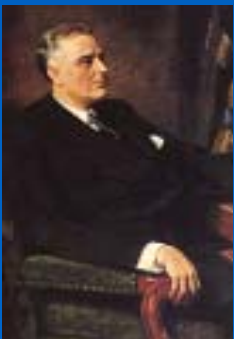


- Jackson's credo of equal opportunity for all, special privileges for none



- Roosevelt's thirst for innovation

- Kennedy's call for national strength and his summons to civic duty



- Clinton's insistence upon new means to achieve progressive ideals



Core Principles



The Winning Coalition

Energize Our Base and Expand Our Appeal

- ▶ **The Democratic Base and Beyond**
- ▶ **Men and Women**
- ▶ **Multi-Racial and Multi-Ethnic**
- ▶ **Urban, Suburban and Exurban**
- ▶ **Moderates as well as Liberals**
- ▶ **Working Class and the “Forgotten”
Middle Class**

The Challenge Ahead

What Democrats Must Do to Win

- ▶ **Cross the national and domestic defense threshold.**
- ▶ **Avoid Reverting to pre-Clinton perceptions of party.**
- ▶ **Close the Culture Gap.**
- ▶ **Bridge Racial Divisions**
- ▶ **Win critical independent and swing voters.**

Meeting the Challenge

A Five Point Strategy

- Demonstrate a new sense of national purpose that talks to all Americans, not just narrow interests
- Expand the base, don't just energize it
- Get the big things right
- Offer bold innovative reforms, not incremental change
- Look outside Washington for ideas that work

The 2004 Formula

A New Politics of Common Purpose

- **Put Security First**
- **Stand Up for the Forgotten Middle Class**
- **Ask More of America and her Leaders**