

WHO ARE THE SWING VOTERS?

Key Groups that Decide
National Elections

The Democratic Leadership Council

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DLC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If the history of recent general elections is a guide, the key to putting a Democrat back into the White House this fall will likely depend on how he fares with white voters with at least a high school education but no college degree.

White men and women who have received their high school diplomas—and those who graduated from high school and have attended some college while never getting a four-year degree—have been critical swing voters in recent national elections. While Democrats rarely win a majority of them, those key voters vote significantly more Democratic in elections Democrats win than in elections they lose.

Our estimate is that together white men and women with at least a high school education but no college degree swing the outcome of a general election by an astonishing average of 6.7 percentage points between elections that Democrats win and lose, respectively.

That is more than double the margin by which President Bush defeated John Kerry in 2004. Cutting into Republicans' traditional margin with these voters could well mean the difference between a broad Democratic triumph and a narrow Democratic defeat.

On average, white men with at least a high school diploma but no college degree swing the outcome 3.7 percentage points, and white women with the same education swing it 3 percentage points.

To estimate the impact of swing voting among various categories of votes, we used exit poll results from six recent national elections. We first computed for each voter category the average marginal shift in Democratic voting between elections Democrats won and those they lost. Since the impact of shifting on the outcomes of

elections depends on the relative size of the group, we then used the estimate of the categories relative size (among all voters in 2004) to calculate how many percentage points a Democratic candidate would win from the shift.

For example, take white men with at least a high school education but no college degree. On average Democrats lost them in both winning and losing elections, but in losing elections they lost them by about 20 percentage points more than in winning elections. When that 20 percent shift is adjusted for size (white men with at least a high school education but no college degree made up 18 percent of all voters in 2004), the impact of their swing is 3.7 percentage points on the outcome of an election.

A typical male voter in that category will likely be between 30 and 59 years old, live in a suburb or small town in the South or Midwest, and be married with no children living at home. He's likely to be a Republican or independent, moderate or conservative, not a member of a labor union, pro-life, and in favor smaller government. Finally, he's most likely to be Protestant but not a weekly churchgoer.

His female counterpart has an only slightly different profile. She's also likely to be between the ages of 30 and 59, married with no children living at home, a Republican or independent, moderate or conservative, not a member of a union, pro-life, and for smaller government. She's most likely to live in a suburb in the South and have a gun in

her household. Finally, she's more likely to be Catholic and a weekly churchgoer.

Those conclusions and profiles are the principal findings of a study undertaken by the Democratic Leadership Council that analyzed exit poll data from the last five presidential elections and the 2006 Congressional election—three national elections that the Democrats won and three that they lost. The purpose of this study was to identify voters who if recent historical patterns hold would most likely make the difference between a Democratic victory and defeat and who could be the key to a long-term Democratic majority.

Among the other principal findings of our study were:

- Despite all the talk about a rapidly changing electorate, there have been relatively small changes in the makeup of the voting electorate over the past 20 years, and the voting electorate in 2004 and 2006 remains remarkably similar to the electorate in 1988.
- Certain categories of voters—African-Americans, self-identified liberals, and voters who are strongly pro-choice—voted overwhelmingly Democratic in every election regardless of which party won. Based on voting history, those three categories of voters constitute the Democratic Party's base.
- About 40 percent of voters are part of the Democratic base (i.e., in one or more of the base categories in 2004). In 2004, John Kerry won about 80 percent of voters in those categories.
- To get to a majority, Democrats must make up the difference by being competitive among categories of voters who swing back and forth between the two parties.
- While African-American voters vote consistently and overwhelming Democratic, key segments of white voters tend to swing back and forth between the two parties. Overall, white voters are likely to swing the outcome of a national election by an average of 10 percentage points—voting more Democratic in elections Democrats win and more Republican in elections Republicans win.
- Two-thirds of that swing among white voters is accounted for by the white voters, profiled above, who have at least a high school education but no college degree.
- To win a national election, Democrats don't need to win those key categories of swing voters, but they cannot be blown out among them. Losing them by 5 percentage points is likely to yield a Democratic victory; losing them by 25 percentage points is likely to yield a very different outcome.
- In the 2004 election, base voters seemed more driven by issues and candidate characteristics that demonstrated compassion, while swing voters seemed more driven by issues and characteristics that showed toughness. To win over both groups and build an enduring majority, Democrats must demonstrate both the compassion to care and the toughness to govern.

These findings are not intended to be predictive of the 2008 election, but rather to demonstrate how voters have cast their ballots in national elections. If recent patterns hold, the ability of Democrats to run competitively among key categories of swing voters could prove to be the difference between victory and defeat.

INTRODUCTION

For all the ways in which the 2008 primary season drove unprecedented turnout, the people who go to the polls changed remarkably little over the course of the six national elections studied in the analysis below. Increased

voter registration and turnout may give Democrats an extra advantage this fall. But Democrats should not count on a record-breaking spike in the turnout of reliably Democratic voters alone to change the outcome of the presidential election.

This finding suggests that to win, Democrats need to persuade some voters who have voted Republican in the past to vote Democratic this time.

We studied voting patterns in the five most recent presidential elections and the 2006 congressional election to identify the types of voters most likely to swing Democratic.

The elections of 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004 and the midterm congressional election of 2006 produced, for Democrats, three wins, two losses and a tie:

- **Democratic Wins:** 1992, 1996, 2006
- **Republican Wins and the Tie:** 1988, 2000,¹ 2004

In those elections, voters in categories that make up about 40 percent of the voting electorate voted overwhelming Democratic in every election.

Voters in those categories—African-Americans, self-identified liberals, and voters who are strongly pro-choice—make up the base of the Democratic Party. At best estimate in 2004, no more than four in five of those vot-

ers cast ballots for John Kerry. That means that the Democratic base only provided Democrats with 32 percent of the ballots cast in the last presidential election—and getting past 50 percent in the next one will require votes from other categories of voters.

So how do Democrats build a winning majority? This study answers that question by identifying what changed between winning and losing years.

Our results suggest that the big change is among white voters who switch their vote from Republican to Democratic, and, in a real sense, decide which party wins national elections. Grouping voters by electoral characteristics and tracking their voting over recent elections, this analysis reveals that the prototypical swing voter is a white man or woman between 30 and 59 years old, living in a suburb in the South or Midwest, who is married with no children living at home, has a high school education and perhaps some college but no college degree, does not belong to a labor union, is a Republican or Independent, moderate or conservative, pro-life, and believes in smaller government.

No statistical analysis can compute a strategy, but on the basis of electoral arithmetic, history suggests that one thing is clear: Democrats cannot win the presidency with base voters alone—but they can win if they hold their base and also win swing voters.

SECTION I: A REMARKABLY CONSTANT VOTING ELECTORATE

The people who go to the polls in national elections changed remarkably little over the course of the six national elections studied (covering the period from 1988 to 2006).

Of course, that could change in 2008. There is no doubt that there were unprecedented increases in turnout this year in the hotly contested Democratic presidential primaries. And increased voter registration and turnout could give Democrats an extra advantage this fall. But historical voting patterns indicate that Democrats should not count on a record-breaking spike in turnout of reliably Democratic voters alone to change the outcome of the presidential election.

Exit poll data from real voters in recent elections suggest that the makeup of the electorate does not change radically from election to election.

The table on page 5 shows that there have been few changes among the voting electorate over the last two decades in terms of political attitudes, demographics, and other characteristics related to voting. (Note that the apparent increase in the proportion of Hispanic voters cannot be interpreted as a change since the survey questions about race and Hispanicity changed during those years.)

The data in the table illustrate why strategies that depend on increased voting by one category of voters are often fraught with dangers. Voter increases in one category of the electorate are often matched by increases in other categories—so that the relative size

that each category in the entire voting electorate is little changed.

And, the size of each category as a percentage of the electorate greatly affects the impact an increase in that category has on the outcome of the election. A 10 percent increase among black voters, for example, works out to about 1 percentage point in the total number of voters, assuming the turnout among all other voters stays the same. By contrast, a 10 percent increase among white voters works out to about 8 percentage points of the total voting electorate. That's because the size of the white vote as a percentage of the total electorate is eight times as great as the black vote.

That's why if African-Americans had participated in the 2004 election at the same rate as non-Hispanic whites (an ambitious goal in any standard)—raising their voter participation rate from 60 percent to 67.2 percent—and *all* of those additional votes had been cast for John Kerry—1.7 million additional votes—Kerry *still* would have lost the popular vote.²

None of this means that the 2008 election could not be decided because of a radical shift in the electorate—by a dramatically increased turnout among critical constituencies or by a sharp shift in party identification, for example. But historical voting patterns say that would be an unusual occurrence.

No Big Changes in National Voting Electorate (percentage of overall voting electorate)

Voter	1988	1992	1996	2000	2004	2006
Male	47.6	47.2	47.9	47.6	46.0	48.2
Female	52.4	52.8	52.1	52.4	54.0	51.8
Age: 18 - 29	20.3	20.7	17.1	16.7	16.9	12.5
Age: 30 - 59	57.6	58.7	59.3	61.3	58.7	58.7
Age: 60 +	22.1	20.6	23.7	22.0	24.5	28.9
White	85.1	87.4	83.0	80.6	77.1	79.0
Black	10.2	8.1	10.1	9.7	11.4	9.7
Hispanic	3.2	2.3	4.5	6.5	8.4	8.0
Married	66.8	66.1	65.7	65.2	62.7	68.0
Not married	33.2	33.9	34.3	34.8	37.3	32.0
Child in the household	31.8	33.9	36.4	38.8	37.0	34.1
No child in the household	68.2	66.1	63.6	61.2	63.0	65.9
Lives in city	26.0	24.7	30.9	28.8	29.5	29.8
Lives in suburbs	42.3	41.0	39.2	43.4	45.8	46.6
Lives in small town or rural area	31.7	34.3	29.9	27.8	24.7	23.5
East	24.7	23.5	23.2	22.8	22.4	22.0
Midwest	27.6	26.7	26.2	25.8	25.5	27.0
South	28.4	29.4	30.2	30.8	31.6	29.5
West	19.3	20.4	20.4	20.5	20.4	21.5
Did not complete high school	7.6	7.2	6.3	4.8	4.2	3.2
High school graduate	27.0	25.3	23.6	21.4	21.9	20.7
Some college, but no degree	30.1	29.0	27.1	32.0	31.7	31.1
College graduate	18.8	23.0	25.6	24.2	25.6	26.8
College plus post-graduate study	16.5	15.6	17.4	17.5	16.5	18.2
Union member in household	25.5	41.3	45.6	38.8	39.6	44.8
Liberal	18.3	21.3	19.6	20.4	21.0	20.4
Moderate	47.1	48.9	47.2	50.2	45.5	47.4
Conservative	34.7	29.8	33.2	29.4	33.5	32.2
Democratic	38.1	37.9	39.4	38.6	36.5	37.7
Republican	35.5	34.7	34.7	34.7	37.1	35.5
Independent	26.4	27.4	25.9	26.7	26.3	26.8

SECTION 2: THE BASE VOTERS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

There was a time when white Southerners and ethnic voters in the big cities were among the most reliable Democratic voters in national elections. But as voting patterns have changed over the past six decades, the base of the Democratic Party has changed dramatically.

Using exit polls to classify voters by common characteristics, we found three types of voters that consistently voted Democratic by overwhelming majorities in the elections we studied. These three categories of voters are (some of whom overlap):

1. **African-Americans**
2. **Liberals**
3. **Voters Who Believe Abortion Should be Legal in All Circumstances**

Voters in those categories, based on voting performance, constitute the base of today's Democratic Party. Taken together and adjusting for overlap, those three categories represent about 40 percent of the electorate.

The table at left shows the categories of voters that have provided Democrats the largest average margin in the six elections studied.

After analyzing those 10 categories for overlap, we concluded that the categories of voters most reliably Democratic are African-Americans, self-identified liberals, and voters who believe abortion should be legal all of the time. Other categories like Hispanics and union households also voted reliably Democratic but this pattern is a function of their overlap with the three base categories. For example, non-liberal Hispanics did not, as a group, support Democrats in all six elections. And, on average, white men in union households voted more Republican than Democratic in years the Republicans won.

The charts that follow show election by election, and on average, the percentage of support that these three categories of base vot-

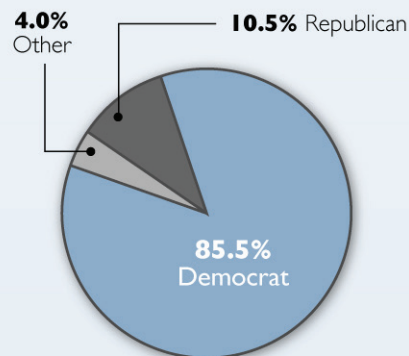
Reliable Democratic Voters		
Class of Voter	Proportion of all voters in 2004	Average Margin for the Democrat vs. the Republican (in percentage points)
Black	11.4%	75
Liberal	21%	65.5
Abortion should be legal in all cases	21.3%	44.4 ³
Hispanic	8.4%	32.8
Member of union in household	23.8%	23.9
No high school degree	4.2%	19.6
Not married	37.3%	19.3
Abortion legal in most cases	35.4%	19.1
Lives in a city	29.5%	18.6
Does not attend religious services weekly	57.3%	15.8

The Democratic Base

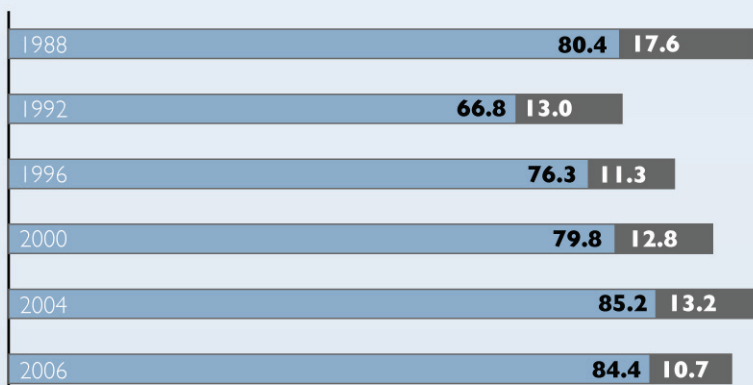
African-American Vote by Party, 1988-2006 ■ DEM ■ GOP



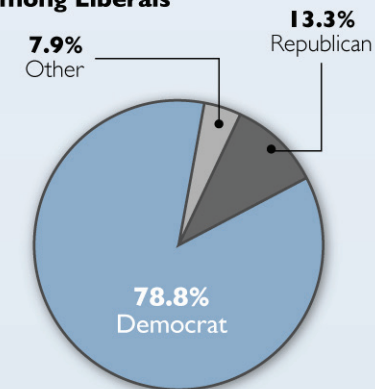
Average Party Voting Among African-Americans



Liberal Vote by Party, 1988-2006 ■ DEM ■ GOP

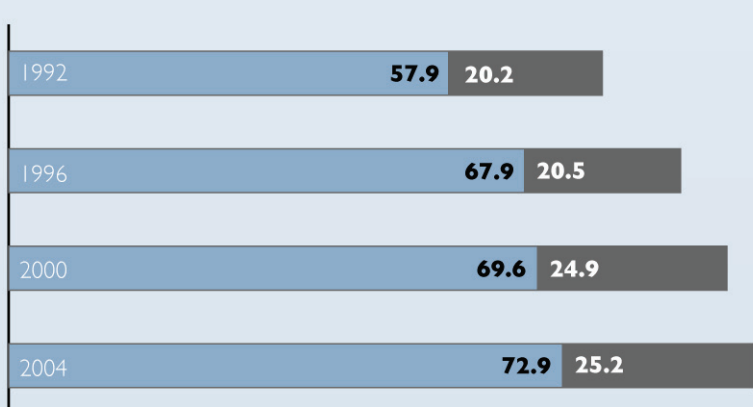


Average Party Voting Among Liberals

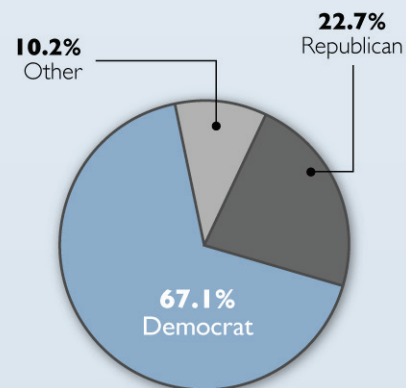


Party Voting Among Those Who Believe Abortion Should be Legal in All Circumstances³

■ DEM ■ GOP



Average Party Voting Among Those Who Believe Abortion Should be Legal in All Circumstances, 1988-2006

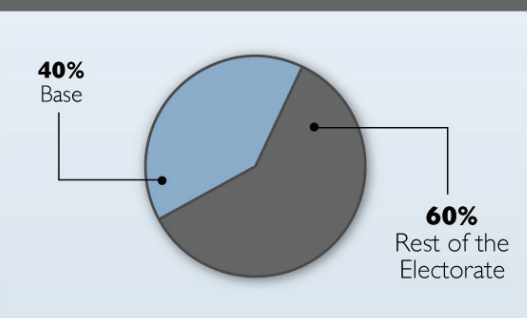


ers gave the Democratic Party in the six elections we examined.

With overlap eliminated, the three categories of voters who make up the Democratic base constitute 40 percent of the electorate.

In 2004, John Kerry won four of five voters in the base vote categories, so the most reliable Democratic voters accounted for about 32 percent of the total vote.

The Democratic Base: African-Americans, Liberals, and Strongly Pro-Choice Voters as Part of the Electorate



SECTION 3: THE SWING VOTERS

If the categories of voters who make up the Democratic base represent just four in 10 voters, to win national elections and build a long-term majority, Democrats must win the support of voters who sometimes vote for them but other times vote Republican. We define those voters as swing voters.

In this study, we tried to answer a simple question: Which are the most significant categories of voters who voted more Democratic in Democratic years and more Republican in Republican years. By the way they actually cast their ballots, they are the true swing voters in the voting electorate.

This study strives to identify those voters. To estimate the impact of swing voting among various categories of voters, we first computed for each voter category the average marginal shift in Democratic voting between elections Democrats won and those they lost. Since the impact of shifting on the outcomes of elections depends on the relative size of the group, we then used the estimate of the categories' relative size (among all voters in 2004) to calculate how many percentage points a Democratic candidate would win from the shift.

For example, a voter category that swings on

average by 20 percentage points but is only 5 percent of the voter electorate will have an impact of 1 percentage point on the whole voting electorate, while a category that swings by 10 percent but is one-third of electorate will have an impact of about 3.3 percentage points.

Our analysis identified white voters with at least a high school education but no college degree as the most significant group of swing voters.

Taken together, these two categories—white men and women who have received their high school diplomas, and those who graduated from high school and have attended some college while never completing a four-year degree—swing the outcome of a general election by an astonishing average of 6.7 percentage points between elections that Democrats win and lose. That is more than double—and almost triple—the margin by which George

Swing Voters										
Class of Voter (percent of the 2004 electorate)	1988	2000	2004	Average	1992	1996	2006	Average	Impact of Shift	
White men with a high school diploma, but no bachelor's degree (18%)	-24.8	-30.6	-29.5	-28.3	0.5	-9.8	-14.3	-7.9	3.7	
White women with a high school diploma, but no bachelor's degree (22%)	-16.9	-8.5	-18.9	-14.8	-3.4	6.1	-6.3	-1.2	3.0	

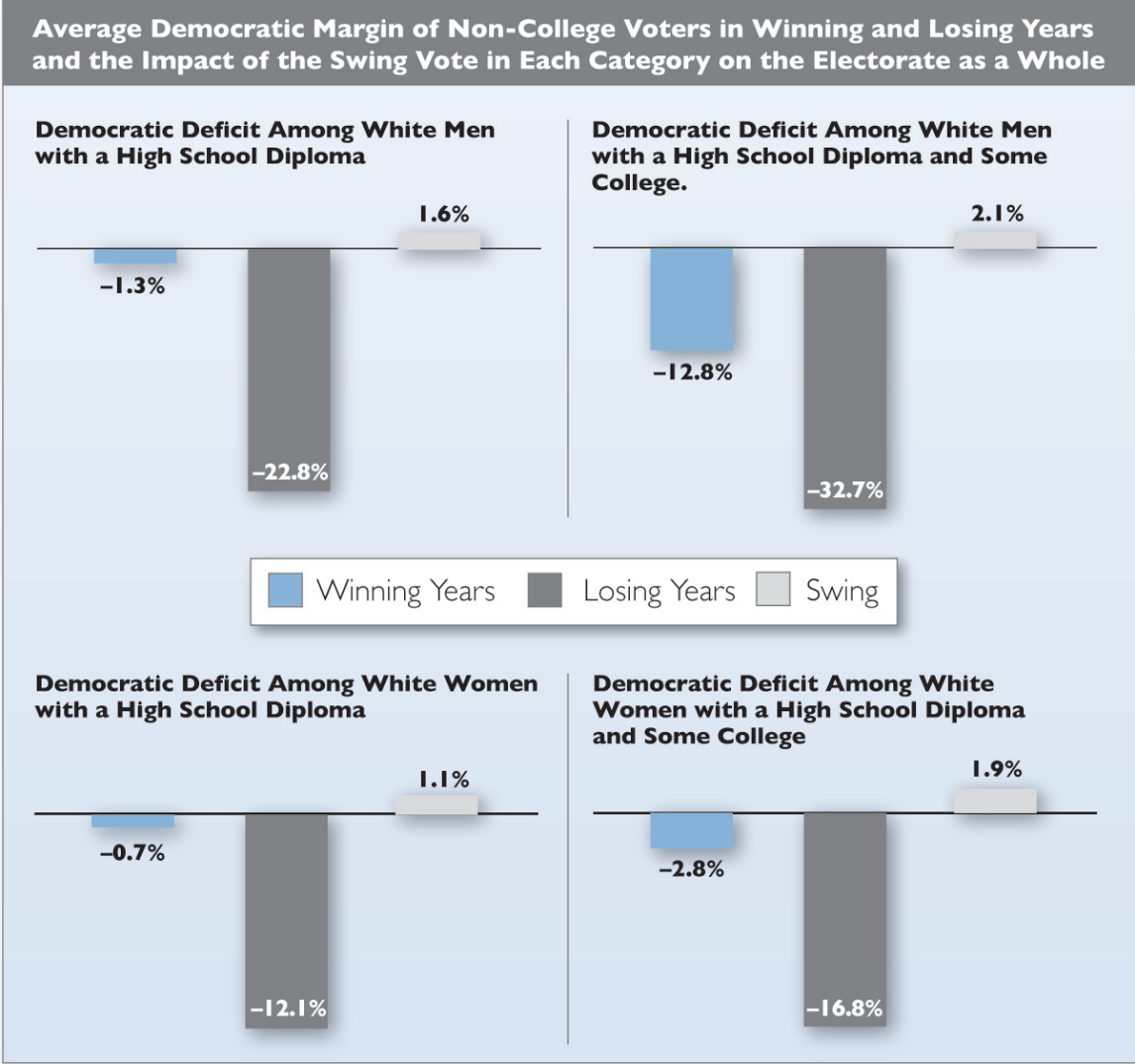
Bush defeated John Kerry in 2004. The two groups constituted two of every five voters in 2004, and while Democrats rarely win either group, it is the magnitude of their loss that has so much bearing on an election's outcome.

We've further broken down these categories of swing voters into their component parts.

- White men with a high school diploma only:** Democrats won white men with only a high school education just once in the elections we studied: Bill Clinton won them in 1992. Overall, in elections Democrats won, they lost these voters by an average margin of just 1.3 percentage points. But in elections Democrats lost, they lost white males with high school degrees by an average margin of almost 23 percentage points. White male high school graduates comprised 8 percent of the voting electorate in 2004—and on average swing the outcome of a national election by 1.6 percentage points.
- White men with some college, but no four-year degree:** Democrats have, on average, lost white men with a high school degree and some college (10 percent of the voting electorate in 2004) by more than 32 percent in years that their candidate lost—the worst defeat coming in 1988, when Michael Dukakis lost them by 34.2 percentage points. But in years that the Democratic candidate won, that deficit

has been cut to 12.8 percentage points. The swing amounts to a full 2.1 percent swing in the general election results—roughly the size of John Kerry's loss to George W. Bush in 2006.

- White women with a high school diploma only:** In 1992, Bill Clinton won white women with a high school degree by 10 percentage points—and on average Democrats have done slightly better than break even with these voters in winning years. But in losing years, women with high school degrees have voted Republican by an average of 12.1 percentage points—John Kerry lost them by 18 percentage points in 2004. In 2004, they made up 8 percent of the voting electorate. Their swing on average is worth 1.1 percentage points in national elections.
- White women with a high school diploma and some college, but no four-year degree:** Michael Dukakis and John Kerry lost white women with a high school diploma and some college by a similar margin: 20.3 percentage points and 19.4 percentage points, respectively. But Bill Clinton managed to win the group in 1996 by 2.8 percentage points, and in the 2006 mid-term elections, Democrats lost them by 6 percentage points. In winning elections, Democrats have lost them, on average, by 2.8 percentage points. In losing elections, Democrats have lost them by 16.8 percent-



age points. The swing among white women with high school and some college has on average accounted for 1.9 percentage points in general elections.

Unlike African-American voters who consistently and overwhelmingly vote Democratic in national elections, key segments of white voters swing back and forth between the two parties. Overall white voters are likely to swing the outcome of a national election by an average of 10 percentage points—voting more Democratic in elections Democrats win and more Republican in elections Republicans win.

As we have shown above, two-thirds of that

swing among white voters is accounted for by voters with at least a high school education, but no college degree.

Because those voters are so significant, we examined that data to see if we could construct a profile of these key voters. Here is what we concluded.

A typical male voter with at least a high school education but no college degree will likely be between 30 and 59 years old, live in a suburb or small town in the South or Midwest, and be married with no children living at home. He's likely to be a Republican or independent, moderate or conserva-

tive, not a member of a labor union, pro-life, and in favor smaller government. Finally, he's most likely to be Protestant but not a weekly churchgoer.

for smaller government. She's most likely to live in a suburb in the South and have a gun in her household. Finally, she's more likely to be Catholic and a weekly churchgoer.

His female counterpart is also likely to be between the ages of 30 and 59, married with no children living at home, a Republican or independent, moderate or conservative, not a member of a union, pro-life, and

Democrats don't have to win these key swing voters to win an election. Indeed, as our data show, they seldom do win them. But they must keep their deficits down. Doing that is often the difference between victory and defeat.

SECTION 4: HOW TO WIN BOTH BASE AND SWING VOTERS

To build an enduring majority, Democrats must find a way to appeal simultaneously to base and swing voters. That is a difficult challenge.

In 2004, for example, base and swing voters gave very different answers when asked what issues and candidate characteristics were most important to them.

—like fighting terrorism—and moral values. (A significant percentage of liberal voters, a key base group, said Iraq was the most important issue, likely a reflection of their anti-war sentiments. Other data show that most voters who said that Iraq was the most important issue were against the war.)

As the chart below shows, base voters tended to say that economic issues and issues like education and health care were most important, while swing voters opted for the security issues

There was a similar dichotomy when it came

Voters by Their Most Important Issue in 2004

Voter	Education	Health Care	Economy & Jobs	Taxes	Iraq	Terrorism	Moral Values
Liberal	6.8	9.5	29.1	4.8	23.0	8.0	12.1
Black	9.2	13.9	32.6	5.1	12.0	7.6	11.0
White women: high school degree	3.2	11.3	15.3	6.1	13.0	16.5	26.0
White women: some college, but no degree	2.1	7.9	18.6	3.9	13.0	19.2	28.0
White men: high school degree	1.5	12.4	19.7	6.0	11.0	23.2	20.7
White men: some college, but no degree	2.3	4.1	21.2	5.2	12.0	25.4	24.6

Candidate Quality That Matters Most for Selected Base and Swing Voter Groups (2004)

	Cares About People Like Me	Strong Leader	Honest and Trustworthy	Clear Stand on the Issues
Selected Base Voters				
Black	18.6	7.5	6.2	10.2
Liberal	12.5	7.2	7.2	8.0
Selected Swing Voters				
White men: high school degree	12.8	21.0	11.4	20.3
White men: some college, but no degree	8.4	20.3	14.6	24.1
White women: high school degree	11.8	17.7	11.3	16.8
White women: some college, but no degree	7.5	19.5	12.3	18.1

component was where Democrats often fell short.

But successful Democratic candidates have demonstrated both compassion and toughness. Bill Clinton did it in 1992—and that was essential to both his election to the White House and the success of his presidency.

Clinton demonstrated his toughness to govern by running on a set of compassionate ideas—like welfare reform, tough law enforcement, charter schools, and national service—that challenged Democratic Party orthodoxy and interest groups. That allowed him to appeal to both base and swing voters with a single message.

to which candidate qualities mattered most. Base voters opted for compassion—“cares about people like me.” Most swing voters chose toughness—“strong leader” and “clear stand on the issues.”

So the challenge for Democrats to find a political formula that appeals to the compassion concerns of base voters and the toughness concerns of swing voters. That challenge is daunting, but not impossible.

The late Rep. Gillis W. Long, former chairman of the House Democratic Caucus and godfather of the New Democrat movement, once said that to win Democrats needed to demonstrate the compassion to care and toughness to govern. Long added that few voters doubted Democrats compassion, indicating that the toughness

In essence, Clinton ran as what political analyst Bill Schneider once called a “tough liberal” in the mold of Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson—tough guys who “couldn’t be pushed around by the Russians or the special interests in Washington.”

Today’s challenges require a new set of compassionate and tough ideas.

The central promise of Barack Obama’s campaign is that he will offer a set of ideas that will define a new politics that challenges and moves beyond the orthodoxies and partisanship that have polarized Washington. If he carries out that promise, he will be the new “tough liberal” who can unite base and swing voters and lay the foundation for an enduring Democratic majority.

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

Data and Inferential Limitations:

Survey data are subject to error arising from a variety of sources, collectively referred to as sampling and non-sampling error. Comprehensive reports on errors and methodologies

errors as estimates of the sampling error and part of some non-sampling errors (response and enumeration), but given the availability of methodological reports on the datasets

Year	Name	Survey Firm	Sample Size
1988	National Day Exit Poll	CBS News/ Election New York Times	11,645
1992	National Election Day Exit Poll	Voter Research and Surveys	15,490
1996	National Election Day Exit Poll	Voter Research and Surveys	16,637
2000	National Election Day Exit Poll	Voter News Surveys	13,225
2004	National Election Pool Poll	Edison Media Research/ Mitofsky International	13,719
2006	National Election Pool Poll	Edison Media Research Mitofsky International	13,866

are available from sites offering this data (e.g., <http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/elections/common/exitpolls.html>). In brief, however, sampling errors occur because observations are made on a sample, not on the entire population, meaning that different samples could have led to different estimates. Non-sampling errors can occur from the following sorts of circumstances: sampling statisticians do not cover the universe of voters; sampled voters do not participate or make mistakes when they do respond; and data collectors or programmers make errors recording or coding the data. It is possible to compute standard

used in this project, we do not report such estimates. The full extent of the non-sampling error is generally unknowable but can be evaluated by comparison to counts from administrative databases (e.g., http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/electionInfo/index.html). Unfortunately, administrative data have errors too, and it is not clear which sources of information are more accurate and whether the accuracy varies by sub-population.

The accuracy of findings discussed in this report depends on the analytical methods as well both types of survey error. Analysis was

done according to standard methods using SAS and the weighting and estimation procedures specified in the dataset documentation. Analytical error is minimized through automation and standard quality control procedures used in projects manipulating and analyzing survey data.

Inferential limitations should particularly be borne in mind when interpreting results for relatively uncommon types of voters and changes over time. Although the exit polls used for this report have relatively large sample sizes, results for uncommon types of voters are usually computed from relatively few cases, and

are subject to more variability. And although the questionnaire items used for this report were quite consistent over the years, even minor changes in the phrasing or sequencing of survey questions affects response.

Disclaimer

This report is released to inform interested parties of ongoing research and to encourage discussion. Any views expressed are those of the authors and no official endorsement by any other party is intended or should be inferred.

Endnotes

1. For the purposes of this study, the controversial election of 2000 is treated as a loss for Democrats because George W. Bush assumed the presidency. Preliminary analysis suggests this decision does not affect the implications of the study results.
2. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2006pubs/p20-556.pdf>.
3. This statistic is not directly comparable to others in this table because the abortion question was not asked in 1988 and 2006.

About the Authors

Al From is the founder and CEO of the DLC and chair of the Third Way Foundation and Progressive Policy Institute. He leads a national movement that, since the mid-1980s, has provided both the action agenda and the ideas that have helped redefine the center of the Democratic Party. From played a prominent role in the 1992 election of President Bill Clinton, serving as Clinton's personal representative on the 1992 Democratic Platform Drafting Committee and as deputy director for domestic policy for the Presidential Transition Team. Prior to the creation of the DLC, From was executive director of the House Democratic Caucus, served in President Jimmy Carter's White House, and was staff director of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations.

Victoria Lynch is a survey researcher specializing in voting behavior and statistical modeling from integrated data. Her political experience includes being a liaison and speechwriter in the Clinton administration (White House, Department of Labor) and speechwriter for Hillary Rodham Clinton's first senate campaign. Her research has been published by the Democratic Leadership Council and presented at conferences of the American Statistical Association and Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology. She has an M.S. in Survey Methodology from the Joint Program in Survey Methodology (University of Maryland/University of Michigan/Westat) and a B.A. in Politics from Princeton University.



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