



## Democratic Party (United States)

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The **Democratic Party** is one of the two major contemporary political parties in the United States, along with the Republican Party. Tracing its heritage back to Thomas Jefferson's and James Madison's Democratic-Republican Party, the modern-day Democratic Party was founded around 1828, making it the world's oldest active party.<sup>[9]</sup>

The Democrats' once dominant worldview was classical liberalism, while, especially in the rural South, populism was its leading characteristic. In the 1890s, under the influence of its three-time defeated presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan and the Populist Party, the party moved to the left from an economic point of view and, since Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal coalition in the 1930s, it has promoted a social-liberal platform,<sup>[4]</sup> supporting social justice.<sup>[10]</sup>

Well into the 20th century, the party had conservative pro-business and southern conservative-populist anti-business wings. The New Deal Coalition of 1932–1964 attracted strong support from voters of recent European extraction—many of whom were Catholics based in the cities.<sup>[11][12][13]</sup> After Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal the business wing withered outside the South. After the racial turmoil of the 1960s most southern whites and many northern Catholics moved into the Republican Party at the presidential level. The once-powerful labor union element became smaller and less supportive after 1970. White evangelicals and Southerners became heavily Republican at the state and local level in the 1990s. However, African Americans became a major Democratic element after 1964. After 2000, Latin Americans, Asians, single women and professional women moved toward the party as well. The Northeast and West Coast became Democratic strongholds by 1990 after the Republicans stopped appealing to socially liberal voters there. Overall the Democratic Party has retained a membership lead over its major rival the Republican Party (GOP).

Today, the House Democratic caucus is composed mostly of progressives and centrists,<sup>[14]</sup> with a smaller minority of conservative Democrats.

The party's philosophy of modern liberalism advocates social and economic equality, along with the welfare state.<sup>[15]</sup> It seeks to provide government intervention and regulation in the economy.<sup>[16]</sup> These interventions, such as the introduction of social programs, support for labor unions, moves toward universal health care and equal opportunity, consumer protection, and environmental protection form the core of the party's economic policy.<sup>[15][17]</sup> The party has united with smaller left-wing regional parties throughout the country such as the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota and the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota.

There have been 15 Democratic presidents: the first was Andrew Jackson, who served from 1829 to 1837. The most recent is current U.S. President Barack Obama, who has been in office since 2009.

In the 114th Congress, following the 2014 elections, Democrats hold a minority of seats in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The party also holds 18 governorships and control of a minority of state legislatures, as well as the mayoralty of Washington, D.C.

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### History

The Democratic Party traces its origins to the inspiration of the Democratic-Republican Party, founded by Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and other influential opponents of the Federalists in 1792. That party also inspired the Whigs and modern Republicans. Organizationally, the modern Democratic Party truly arose in the 1830s, with the election of Andrew Jackson. Since the nomination of William Jennings Bryan in 1896, the party has generally positioned itself to the left of the Republican Party on economic issues. They have been more liberal on civil rights issues since 1948. On foreign policy both parties changed position several times.<sup>[18]</sup>

#### 1828–60

The Democratic Party evolved from the Jeffersonian Republican or Democratic-Republican Party organized by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in opposition to the Federalist party of Alexander Hamilton and John Adams. The party favored republicanism, a weak federal government, states' rights, agrarian interests (especially Southern planters) and strict adherence to the Constitution; it opposed a national bank, close ties to Great Britain, and business and banking interests. That party, the Democratic-Republican Party, came to power in the election of 1800.

After the War of 1812 the Federalists virtually disappeared and the only national political party left was the Democratic-Republicans. The era of one-party rule in the United States, known as the Era of Good Feelings, lasted

#### Democratic Party



<b>Chairperson</b>	Donna Brazile (LA)
<b>Secretary</b>	Stephanie Rawlings-Blake (MD)
<b>President of the United States</b>	Barack Obama (IL) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Vice President of the United States</b>	Joe Biden (DE) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Presidential nominee</b>	Hillary Clinton (NY) <sup>[2]</sup>
<b>Vice Presidential nominee</b>	Tim Kaine (VA)
<b>Senate leader</b>	Minority Leader Harry Reid (NV)
<b>Founded</b>	1828
<b>Preceded by</b>	Democratic-Republican Party
<b>Headquarters</b>	430 South Capitol St. SE, Washington, D.C., 20003
<b>Student wing</b>	College Democrats of America
<b>Youth wing</b>	Young Democrats of America
<b>Women's wing</b>	National Federation of Democratic Women
<b>Overseas wing</b>	Democrats Abroad
<b>Membership (2012)</b>	43.1 million <sup>[3]</sup>
<b>Ideology</b>	Modern liberalism <sup>[4][5]</sup> Progressivism <sup>[6]</sup> Social liberalism <sup>[7]</sup>
<b>International affiliation</b>	Progressive Alliance <sup>[8]</sup>
<b>Colors</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Blue
<b>Seats in the Senate</b>	45 / 100
<b>Seats in the House</b>	186 / 435
<b>Governorships</b>	18 / 50
<b>State Upper House Seats</b>	835 / 1,972
<b>State Lower House Seats</b>	2,344 / 5,411
<b>Territorial Governorships</b>	2 / 6
<b>Territorial Upper Chamber Seats</b>	31 / 97
<b>Territorial Lower Chamber Seats</b>	0 / 91
<b>Website</b>	www.democrats.org (http://www.democrats.org/)
	Politics of United States
	Political parties
	Elections

from 1816 until the early 1830s, when the Whig Party became a national political group to rival the Democratic-Republicans. The Democratic-Republican party still had its own internal factions, however. They split over the choice of a successor to President James Monroe, and the party faction that supported many of the old Jeffersonian principles, led by Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, became the modern Democratic Party. As Norton explains the transformation in 1828:

Jacksonians believed the people's will had finally prevailed. Through a lavishly financed coalition of state parties, political leaders, and newspaper editors, a popular movement had elected the president. The Democrats became the nation's first well-organized national party ... and tight party organization became the hallmark of nineteenth-century American politics.<sup>[19]</sup>

Opposing factions led by Henry Clay helped form the Whig Party. The Democratic Party had a small but decisive advantage over the Whigs until the 1850s, when the Whigs fell apart over the issue of slavery. In 1854, angry with the Kansas–Nebraska Act, anti-slavery Democrats left the party and joined Northern Whigs to form the Republican Party.<sup>[20][21]</sup>

Behind the platforms issued by state and national parties stood a widely shared political outlook that characterized the Democrats:

The Democrats represented a wide range of views but shared a fundamental commitment to the Jeffersonian concept of an agrarian society. They viewed the central government as the enemy of individual liberty. The 1824 "corrupt bargain" had strengthened their suspicion of Washington politics. ... Jacksonians feared the concentration of economic and political power. They believed that government intervention in the economy benefited special-interest groups and created corporate monopolies that favored the rich. They sought to restore the independence of the individual—the artisan and the ordinary farmer—by ending federal support of banks and corporations and restricting the use of paper currency, which they distrusted. Their definition of the proper role of government tended to be negative, and Jackson's political power was largely expressed in negative acts. He exercised the veto more than all previous presidents combined. Jackson and his supporters also opposed reform as a movement. Reformers eager to turn their programs into legislation called for a more active government. But Democrats tended to oppose programs like educational reform mid the establishment of a public education system. They believed, for instance, that public schools restricted individual liberty by interfering with parental responsibility and undermined freedom of religion by replacing church schools. Nor did Jackson share reformers' humanitarian concerns. He had no sympathy for American Indians, initiating the removal of the Cherokees along the Trail of Tears.<sup>[22]</sup>

## 1860–1900

The Democrats split over the choice of a successor to President James Buchanan along Northern and Southern lines; factions of the party provided two separate candidacies for President in the election of 1860, in which the Republican Party gained ascendancy. The radical pro-slavery Fire-Eaters led a walkout at both the April Democratic convention in Charleston's Institute Hall and the June convention in Baltimore when the national party would not adopt a resolution supporting the extension of slavery into territories even if the voters of those territories did not want it. These Southern Democrats nominated the pro-slavery incumbent Vice President, John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, for President and General Joseph Lane, former Governor of Oregon, for Vice President. The Northern Democrats proceeded to nominate Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois for President and former Governor of Georgia Herschel V. Johnson for Vice President, while some southern Democrats joined the Constitutional Union Party, backing its nominees (who had both been prominent Whig leaders), former Senator, Speaker of the House, and Secretary of War John Bell of Tennessee for President and the politician, statesman, and educator Edward Everett of Massachusetts for Vice President. This fracturing of the Democrats led to a Republican victory, and Abraham Lincoln was elected the 16th President of the United States.

As the American Civil War broke out, Northern Democrats were divided into War Democrats and Peace Democrats. The Confederate States of America, whose political leadership, mindful of the welter prevalent in antebellum American politics and with a pressing need for unity, largely viewed political parties as inimical to good governance; consequently the Confederacy had none, or at least none with the wide organization inherent to other American parties. Most War Democrats rallied to Republican President Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans' National Union Party in the election of 1864, which featured Andrew Johnson on the Republican ticket even though he was a Democrat from the South. Johnson replaced Lincoln in 1865, but stayed independent of both parties. The Democrats benefited from white Southerners' resentment of Reconstruction after the war and consequent hostility to the Republican Party. After Redeemers ended Reconstruction in the 1870s, and following the often extremely violent disenfranchisement of African Americans led by such white supremacist Democratic politicians as Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina in the 1880s and 1890s, the South, voting Democratic, became known as the "Solid South." Though Republicans won all but two presidential elections, the Democrats remained competitive. The party was dominated by pro-business Bourbon Democrats led by Samuel J. Tilden and Grover Cleveland, who represented mercantile, banking, and railroad interests; opposed imperialism and overseas expansion; fought for the gold standard; opposed bimetallism; and crusaded against corruption, high taxes, and tariffs. Cleveland was elected to non-consecutive presidential terms in 1884 and 1892.<sup>[23]</sup>

## 1900–60

Agrarian Democrats demanding Free Silver overthrew the Bourbon Democrats in 1896 and nominated William Jennings Bryan for the presidency (a nomination repeated by Democrats in 1900 and 1908). Bryan waged a vigorous campaign attacking Eastern moneyed interests, but he lost to the Republican William McKinley. The Democrats took control of the House in 1910 and elected Woodrow Wilson as president in 1912 and 1916. Wilson effectively led Congress to put to rest the issues of tariffs, money, and antitrust, which had dominated politics for 40 years, with new progressive laws. The Great Depression in 1929 that occurred under Republican President Herbert Hoover and the Republican Congress set the stage for a more liberal government; the Democrats controlled the House of Representatives nearly uninterrupted from 1930 until 1994 and won most presidential elections until 1968. Franklin D. Roosevelt, elected to the presidency in 1932, came forth with government programs called the New Deal. New Deal liberalism meant the regulation of business (especially finance and banking) and the promotion of labor unions, as well as federal spending to aid to the unemployed, help distressed farmers, and undertake large-scale public works projects. It marked the start of the American welfare state.<sup>[24]</sup> The opponents, who stressed opposition to unions, support for business, and low taxes, started calling themselves "conservatives."<sup>[25]</sup>

Until the 1980s, the Democratic Party was a coalition of two parties divided by the Mason–Dixon line: liberal Democrats in the North and culturally conservative voters in the South, who though benefiting from many of the New Deal public works projects, opposed increasing Civil Rights initiatives advocated by Northeastern liberals. The polarization grew stronger after Roosevelt died. Southern Democrats formed a key part of the bipartisan conservative coalition in an alliance with most of the Midwestern Republicans. The economically activist philosophy of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which has strongly influenced American liberalism, shaped much of the party's economic agenda after 1932. From the 1930s to the mid-1960s, the liberal New Deal coalition usually controlled the Presidency while the conservative coalition usually controlled Congress.<sup>[26]</sup>

Issues facing parties and the United States after World War II included the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement. Republicans attracted conservatives and white Southerners from the Democratic coalition with their use of the Southern strategy and resistance to New Deal and Great Society liberalism. African Americans had traditionally supported the Republican Party because of the anti-slavery policies of Abraham Lincoln and the civil rights policies of his successors, such as Ulysses S. Grant. But they began supporting Democrats following the ascent of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, the New Deal, the integration of the military and embrace of proposed civil rights legislation by President Harry Truman in 1947–48, and the postwar Civil Rights movement. The Democratic Party's main base of support shifted to the Northeast, marking a dramatic reversal of history.

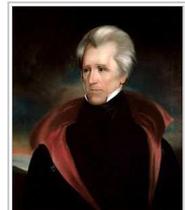
## 1960–80

The election of President John F. Kennedy from Massachusetts in 1960 was a partial reflection of this shift. In the campaign, Kennedy attracted a new generation of younger voters. In his agenda dubbed the New Frontier, Kennedy introduced a host of social programs and public works projects, along with enhanced support of the space program, proposing a manned spacecraft trip to the moon by the end of the decade. He pushed for civil rights initiatives and proposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but with his assassination in November 1963, was not able to see its passage. Kennedy's successor Lyndon B. Johnson was able to persuade the largely conservative congress to pass civil rights bill in 1964 and with a more progressive congress in 1965 passed much of the Great Society, which consisted of an array of social programs designed to help the poor. Kennedy and Johnson's advocacy of civil rights further solidified black support for the Democrats, but had the effect of alienating southern whites, who would eventually gravitate towards the Republican party, particularly after the election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in 1980. The United States' involvement in the Vietnam War in the 1960s was another divisive issue that further fractured the fault lines of the Democrats' coalition. After Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964, President Johnson committed a large contingency of combat troops to Vietnam, but the escalation failed to drive the Viet Cong from south Vietnam, resulting in an increasing quagmire, which by 1968 had become the subject of widespread anti-war protests in the United States and elsewhere. With increasing casualties and nightly news reports bringing home troubling images from Vietnam, the costly military engagement became increasingly unpopular, alienating many of the kinds of young voters that the Democrats had attracted the early 1960s. The protests that year along with assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (younger brother of John F. Kennedy) climaxed in turbulence at the hotly-contested Democratic National Convention that summer in Chicago (which, amongst the ensuing turmoil inside and outside of the convention hall, nominated Vice President Hubert Humphrey), in a series of events that proved to mark a significant turning point in the decline of the Democratic party's broad coalition.

Republican presidential nominee Richard Nixon was able to capitalize on the Democrat's confusion that year and won the 1968 election to become the 37th president, and would win again in 1972 against Democratic nominee George McGovern, who like Robert Kennedy reached out to the younger anti-war and counterculture voters, but unlike Kennedy, was not able to appeal to the party's more traditional white working class constituencies. During Nixon's second term, his presidency was rocked by the Watergate scandal, which forced him to resign in 1974, being succeeded by vice president Gerald Ford, who served a brief tenure. Watergate offered the Democrats an opportunity to recoup, and their nominee Jimmy Carter won the 1976 presidential election. With the initial support of evangelical Christian voters in the South, Carter was temporarily able to re-unite the disparate factions within the party, but inflation and the Iran Hostage Crisis of 1979-1980 took their toll, resulting in a landslide victory for Republican presidential nominee Ronald Reagan in 1980, which shifted the tectonic plates of the political landscape in favor of the Republicans for years to come.

## 1980–present

With the ascendancy of the Republicans under Ronald Reagan, the Democrats searched for ways to respond, but were unable to succeed by running traditional candidates, such as former Vice President and Democratic presidential nominee Walter Mondale who lost to Reagan in the 1984 presidential election. Many Democrats attached their hopes to the future star of Gary Hart, who had challenged Mondale in the 1984 primaries running on a theme of "New Ideas", and in the subsequent 1988 primaries, he became the de facto front-runner and virtual "shoe-in" for the Democratic presidential nomination, before his campaign was ended by a sex scandal. The



Andrew Jackson was the first Democratic President of the United States



The three leaders of the Democratic party during the first half of the 20th century: President Woodrow Wilson (nominated in 1912 and '16) Sec. of State William J. Bryan (nominated in 1896, 1900 and 1908), Josephus Daniels, Breckinridge Long, William Phillips, and Franklin D. Roosevelt (nominated for VP in 1920 and for president in 1932, '36, '40 and '44). Photo taken June 14, 1913



John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States (1961–1963)

party nevertheless began to seek out a younger generation of leaders, who like Hart had been inspired by the pragmatic idealism of John F. Kennedy and were sometimes dubbed "neo-liberals". Arkansas governor, Bill Clinton was one such figure and in 1992 after the Democratic nomination was elected president, labeling himself and governing as a "New Democrat". The party adopted a centrist economic but socially progressive agenda, with the voter base after Reagan having shifted considerably to the right. In an effort to appeal to appeal to both liberals and fiscal conservatives, Democrats began to advocate for a balanced budget and market economy tempered by government intervention (mixed economy), along with a continued emphasis social justice and affirmative action. The economic policy adopted by the Democratic Party, including the former Clinton administration, has been referred to as "Third Way". The Democratic Party lost control of Congress in the election of 1994 to the Republican Party. Re-elected in 1996, Clinton was the first Democratic President since Franklin Roosevelt to be elected to two terms. Following twelve years of Republican rule, the Democratic Party regained majority control of both the House and the Senate in the 2006 elections.

In the wake of the 2001 World Trade Center terrorist attacks and with growing concern over global warming, some of the party's key issues in the early 21st century have included the methods of how to combat terrorism, homeland security, expanding access to health care, labor rights, environmentalism, and the preservation of liberal government programs.<sup>[27]</sup> Barack Obama won the Democratic party's nomination and was elected as the first African American president in 2008. The Democrats gained control of congress in the wake of the 2007 economic recession. The Democratic Party under the Obama presidency moved forward reforms including an Economic Stimulus package, the Dodd-Frank financial reform act, and the Affordable Care Act. In the 2010 elections, the Democratic Party lost control of the House and lost its majority in state legislatures and state governorships. The 2012 elections re-elected President Obama, but the party kept its minority in the House of Representatives. Later, in 2014, the party lost control of the Senate for the first time since 2006.

According to a Pew Research poll, the Democratic Party has become more socially liberal and secular compared to how it was in 1987.<sup>[28]</sup> Based on a poll conducted in 2014, Gallup found that 30% of Americans identified as Democrats, 23% as Republicans, and 45% as Independents.<sup>[29]</sup> In the same poll, a survey of registered voters stated that 47% identified as Democrats or leaned towards the party; the same poll found that 40% of registered voters identified as Republicans or leaned towards the Republican party.

### Democratic presidents

Name	Portrait	State	Periods in office
Andrew Jackson		Tennessee	March 4, 1829 – March 4, 1837
Martin Van Buren		New York	March 4, 1837 – March 4, 1841
James K. Polk		Tennessee	March 4, 1845 – March 4, 1849
Franklin Pierce		New Hampshire	March 4, 1853 – March 4, 1857
James Buchanan		Pennsylvania	March 4, 1857 – March 4, 1861
Andrew Johnson		Tennessee	April 15, 1865 – March 4, 1869
Grover Cleveland		New York	March 4, 1885 – March 4, 1889 March 4, 1893 – March 4, 1897
Woodrow Wilson		New Jersey	March 4, 1913 – March 4, 1921
Franklin D. Roosevelt		New York	March 4, 1933 – April 12, 1945
Harry S. Truman		Missouri	April 12, 1945 – January 20, 1953
John F. Kennedy		Massachusetts	January 20, 1961 – November 22, 1963
Lyndon B. Johnson		Texas	November 22, 1963 – January 20, 1969
Jimmy Carter		Georgia	January 20, 1977 – January 20, 1981
Bill Clinton		Arkansas	January 20, 1993 – January 20, 2001
Barack Obama		Illinois	January 20, 2009 – present



Bill Clinton, 42nd President of the United States (1993–2001)



Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States (2009–present)

### Name and symbols

Initially calling itself the "Republican Party," Jeffersonians were labeled "Democratic" by the opposition Federalists, with the hope of stigmatizing them as purveyors of democracy or mob rule.<sup>[30]</sup> By the Jacksonian era, the term "The Democracy" was in use by the party; the name "Democratic Party" was eventually settled upon<sup>[31]</sup> and became the official name in 1844.<sup>[32]</sup> Members of the party are called "Democrats" or "Dems".

The term "Democrat Party" has also been in local use but has usually been used by opponents since 1952 as an epithet.

The most common mascot symbol for the party has been the donkey, or jackass.<sup>[33]</sup> Andrew Jackson's enemies twisted his name to "jackass" as a term of ridicule regarding a stupid and stubborn animal. However, the Democrats liked the common-man implications and picked it up too, so the image persisted and evolved.<sup>[34]</sup> Its most lasting impression came from the cartoons of Thomas Nast from 1870 in *Harper's Weekly*. Cartoonists followed Nast and used the donkey to represent the Democrats, and the elephant to represent the Republicans.

In the early 20th century, the traditional symbol of the Democratic Party in Indiana, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Ohio was the rooster, as opposed to the Republican eagle. This symbol still appears on Oklahoma, Kentucky, Indiana, and West Virginia<sup>[35]</sup> ballots. In New York, the Democratic ballot symbol is a five-pointed star.<sup>[36]</sup> For the majority of the 20th century, Missouri Democrats used the Statue of Liberty as their ballot emblem. This meant that, when Libertarian candidates received ballot access in Missouri in 1976, they could not use the Statue of Liberty, their national symbol, as the ballot emblem. Missouri Libertarians instead used the Liberty Bell until 1995, when the mule became Missouri's state animal. From 1995 to 2004, there was some confusion among voters, as the Democratic ticket was marked with the Statue of Liberty (used by Libertarians in other states) and the Libertarians' mule was easily mistaken for a Democratic donkey.

Although both major political parties (and many minor ones) use the traditional American colors of red, white, and blue in their marketing and representations, since election night 2000, blue has become the identifying color for the Democratic Party, while red has become the identifying color for the Republican Party. That night, for the first time, all major broadcast television networks used the same color scheme for the electoral map: blue states for Al Gore (Democratic nominee) and red states for George W. Bush (Republican nominee). Since then, the color blue has been widely used by the media to represent the party. This is contrary to common practice outside of the United States where blue is the traditional color of the right and red the color of the left. For example, in Canada, red represents the Liberals, while blue represents the Conservatives. In the United Kingdom, red denotes the Labour Party and blue symbolizes the Conservative Party. Blue has also been used both by party supporters for promotional efforts—ActBlue, BuyBlue, BlueFund, as examples—and by the party itself in 2006 both for its "Red to Blue Program", created to support Democratic candidates running against Republican incumbents in the midterm elections that year, and on its official website.

In September 2010, the Democratic Party unveiled its new logo, which featured a blue D inside a blue circle. It was the party's first official logo, as the donkey logo had only been semi-official.

Jefferson-Jackson Day is the annual fundraising event (dinner) held by Democratic Party organizations across the United States.<sup>[37]</sup> It is named after Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, whom the party regards as its distinguished early leaders.

The song "Happy Days Are Here Again" is the unofficial song of the Democratic Party. It was used prominently when Franklin D. Roosevelt was nominated for president at the 1932 Democratic National Convention and remains a sentimental favorite for Democrats today. For example, Paul Shaffer played the theme on the Late Show with David Letterman after the Democrats won Congress in 2006. "Don't Stop" by Fleetwood Mac was adopted by Bill Clinton's presidential campaign in 1992, and has endured as a popular Democratic song. Also, the emotionally similar song "Beautiful Day" by the band U2 has become a favorite theme song for Democratic candidates. John Kerry used the song during his 2004 presidential campaign, and several Democratic Congressional candidates used it as a celebratory tune in 2006.<sup>[38][39]</sup>

The 2016 campaign of US Democratic Party presidential candidate Bernie Sanders has started to use the hopeful Simon & Garfunkel song *America* for one of its campaign advertisements,<sup>[40]</sup> with the complete permission<sup>[41]</sup> of the still-active duo of popular American musicians. As a traditional anthem for its Presidential nominating convention, Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* is traditionally performed at the beginning of the Democratic National Convention.

## Current structure and composition

### National committee

The Democratic National Committee (DNC) is responsible for promoting Democratic campaign activities. While the DNC is responsible for overseeing the process of writing the Democratic Platform, the DNC is more focused on campaign and organizational strategy than public policy. In presidential elections, it supervises the Democratic National Convention. The national convention is, subject to the charter of the party, the ultimate authority within the Democratic Party when it is in session, with the DNC running the party's organization at other times. The DNC is chaired by Louisiana professor, author, and columnist Donna Brazile.<sup>[42]</sup>

### State parties

Each state also has a state committee, made up of elected committee members as well as ex-officio committee members (usually elected officials and representatives of major constituencies), which in turn elects a chair. County, town, city, and ward committees generally are composed of individuals elected at the local level. State and local committees often coordinate campaign activities within their jurisdiction, oversee local conventions and in some cases primaries or caucuses, and may have a role in nominating candidates for elected office under state law. Rarely do they have much funding, but in 2005, DNC Chairman Dean began a program (called the "50 State Strategy") of using DNC national funds to assist all state parties and pay for full-time professional staffers.<sup>[43]</sup>

### Major party groups

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) assists party candidates in House races; its current chairman (selected by the party caucus) is Rep. Steve Israel of New York. Similarly, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), headed by Senator Patty Murray of Washington, raises large sums for Senate races. The Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC), chaired by Mike Gronstal of Iowa, is a smaller organization with much less funding that focuses on state legislative races. The DNC sponsors the College Democrats of America (CDA), a student-outreach organization with the goal of training and engaging a new generation of Democratic activists. Democrats Abroad is the organization for Americans living outside the United States; they work to advance the goals of the party and encourage Americans living abroad to support the Democrats. The Young Democrats of America (YDA) is a youth-led organization that attempts to draw in and mobilize young people for Democratic candidates, but operates outside of the DNC. The Democratic Governors Association (DGA), chaired by Governor Peter Shumlin of Vermont, is an organization supporting the candidacies of Democratic gubernatorial nominees and incumbents. Likewise, the mayors of the largest cities and urban centers convene as the National Conference of Democratic Mayors.

## Ideology

Upon foundation, the Democratic Party supported agrarianism and the Jacksonian democracy movement of President Andrew Jackson, representing farmers and rural interests, and traditional Jeffersonian democrats.<sup>[44]</sup> Since the 1890s, the party has favored progressive and liberal positions (the term "liberal" in this sense describes modern liberalism, rather than classical liberalism or economic liberalism). In recent exit polls, the Democratic Party has had broad appeal across all socio-ethno-economic demographics.<sup>[45][46][47]</sup>

Historically, the party has represented farmers, laborers, labor unions, and religious and ethnic minorities; it has opposed unregulated business and finance, and favored progressive income taxes. In foreign policy, internationalism (including interventionism) was a dominant theme from 1913 to the mid-1960s. In the 1930s, the party began advocating welfare spending programs targeted at the poor. The party had a fiscally conservative, pro-business wing, typified by Grover Cleveland and Al Smith, and a Southern conservative wing that shrank after President Lyndon B. Johnson supported the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The major influences for liberalism were labor unions (which peaked in the 1936–1952 era), and the African American wing, which has steadily grown since the 1960s. Since the 1970s, environmentalism has been a major new component.

The Democratic Party, once dominant in the Southeastern United States, is now strongest in the Northeast (Mid-Atlantic and New England), Great Lakes region, and the Pacific Coast (including Hawaii). The Democrats are also very strong in major cities (regardless of region).

Social scientists Theodore Caplow et al. argue, "the Democratic party, nationally, moved from left-center toward the center in the 1940s and 1950s, then moved further toward the right-center in the 1970s and 1980s."<sup>[48]</sup>

### Liberals



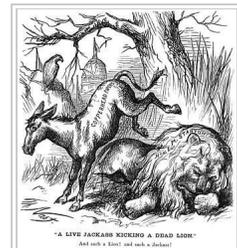
Eleanor Roosevelt at the 1956 Democratic National Convention in Chicago

Social liberals (modern liberals) and progressives constitute the majority of the Democratic voter base. Liberals thereby form the largest united demographic within the Democratic base. According to the 2012 exit poll results, liberals constituted 25% of the electorate, and 86% of American liberals favored the candidate of the Democratic Party.<sup>[49]</sup> White-collar college-educated professionals were mostly Republican until the 1950s; they now compose a vital component of the Democratic Party.<sup>[50]</sup>

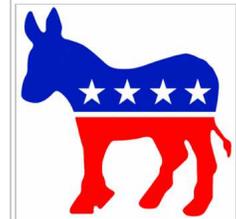
A large majority of liberals favor universal health care, with many supporting a single-payer system. A majority also favor diplomacy over military action, stem cell research, the legalization of same-sex marriage, stricter gun control, and environmental protection laws as well as the preservation of abortion rights. Immigration and cultural diversity is deemed positive; liberals favor cultural pluralism, a system in which immigrants retain their native culture in addition to adopting their new culture. They tend to be divided on free trade agreements and organizations such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Most liberals oppose increased military spending and the mixing of church and state.<sup>[51]</sup>

This ideological group differs from the traditional organized labor base. According to the Pew Research Center, a plurality of 41% resided in mass affluent households and 49% were college graduates, the highest figure of any typographical group. It was also the fastest growing typological group between the late 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>[51]</sup> Liberals include most of academia<sup>[52]</sup> and large portions of the professional class.<sup>[45][46][47]</sup>

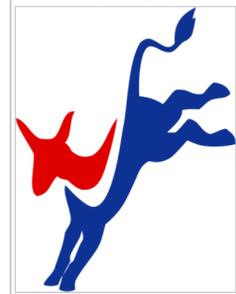
### Progressives



"A Live Jackass Kicking a Dead Lion" by Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, January 19, 1870.



The donkey party logo is still a well-known symbol for the Democratic Party, despite not being the official logo of the party.



The Democratic donkey party logo in a modernized "kicking donkey" form

Progressives are a left-leaning, pro-labor union faction in the party who have long supported a strong regulation of business, social-welfare programs, and workers' rights.<sup>[53][54]</sup> Many progressive Democrats are descendants of the New Left of Democratic presidential candidate Senator George McGovern of South Dakota; others were involved in the presidential candidacies of Vermont Governor Howard Dean, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, and U.S. Representative Dennis Kucinich of Ohio. In 2014, progressive Senator Elizabeth Warren set out an "Eleven Commandments of Progressivism", being tougher regulation on corporations, affordable education, scientific investment and environmentalism, network neutrality, increased wages, equal pay, collective bargaining rights, defending social safety-net programs, marriage equality, immigration reform, and unabridged access to reproductive healthcare.<sup>[55]</sup> Additionally, progressives strongly oppose political corruption, and therefore seek to advance electoral reform including campaign finance reform and voting rights.<sup>[56]</sup> Today many progressives have made a fight against economic inequality their top priority.<sup>[57]</sup> Progressives are generally considered to be synonymous with Liberals; however, the two groups differ on a variety of issues.<sup>[58]</sup>

The Congressional Progressive Caucus is a caucus of progressive Democrats, and is the single largest Democratic caucus in the House of Representatives. Its current chairs are Keith Ellison of Minnesota and Raúl Grijalva of Arizona. Its members have included Representatives Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, John Conyers of Michigan, Jim McDermott of Washington, John Lewis of Georgia, Barbara Lee of California, and the late Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota. Senators Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Mazie Hirono of Hawaii, and Ed Markey of Massachusetts were all members of the caucus when in the House of Representatives. Today, no Democratic Senators belong to the Progressive Caucus; however, Independent Senator Bernie Sanders is a member.

### Centrists

Centrist Democrats, or New Democrats, are an ideologically centrist faction within the Democratic Party that emerged after the victory of Republican George H. W. Bush in the 1988 presidential election. They are an economically liberal and "Third Way" faction which dominated the party for around 20 years starting in the late 1980s after the US populace turned much further to the political right. They are represented by organizations such as the New Democrat Network and the New Democrat Coalition.

The New Democrat Coalition is a pro-business, pro-growth, and fiscally conservative congressional coalition.<sup>[59]</sup> Compared to other Democratic factions, they are mostly more supportive of the use of military force, including the war in Iraq, are more supportive of free trade, and are more willing to reduce government welfare, as indicated by their support for welfare reform and tax cuts. One of the most influential factions was the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), a nonprofit organization that advocated centrist positions for the party. The DLC hailed President Bill Clinton as proof of the viability of "Third Way" politicians and a DLC success story, the DLC disbanded in 2011. Much of the former DLC is now represented in the think tank Third Way.<sup>[60]</sup>

While not representing a majority of the Democratic Party electorate, a decent amount of Democratic elected officials have self declared as being centrists. Some of these Democrats are former President Bill Clinton, former Vice President Al Gore, Senator Mark Warner, former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell, former senator Jim Webb, Vice President Joe Biden, and congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz.<sup>[61][62]</sup>

The Democratic Leadership Council was a group that supported centrist Democrats and called for the Democratic Party to be the party of centrism.<sup>[63]</sup> The New Democrat Network supports socially moderate, fiscally conservative Democratic politicians and operates the congressional New Democrat Coalition in the House and Senate. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton was a member of the coalition when in congress and Senator Barack Obama self-described as a New Democrat.

### Conservatives

A Conservative Democrat is a member of the Democratic Party with conservative political views, or with views relatively conservative with respect to those of the national party. While such members of the Democratic Party can be found throughout the nation, actual elected officials are disproportionately found within the Southern states, and to a lesser extent within rural regions of the United States generally, more commonly in the West. Historically, Southern Democrats were generally much more ideologically conservative than conservative Democrats are now.

Many conservative Southern Democrats defected to the Republican Party, beginning with the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the general leftward shift of the party. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, Billy Tauzin of Louisiana, Kent Hance and Ralph Hall of Texas, and Richard Shelby of Alabama are examples of this. The influx of conservative Democrats into the Republican Party is often cited as a reason for the GOP's shift further to the right during the late 20th century, as well as the shift of its base from the Northeast and Midwest to the South.

The Democratic Party had a conservative element, mostly from the South and Border regions, into the 1980s. Their numbers declined sharply as the Republican Party built up its Southern base. They were sometimes humorously called "Yellow dog Democrats," or "boll weevils," "Dixiecrats." In the House, they form the Blue Dog Coalition, a caucus of fiscal conservatives and social conservatives and moderates, primarily southerners, willing to broker compromises with the Republican leadership. They have acted as a unified voting bloc in the past, giving its forty plus members some ability to change legislation.

There was a split vote among many conservative Southern Democrats in the 1970s and 1980s. Some supported local and statewide conservative Democrats while simultaneously voting for Republican presidential candidates.<sup>[64]</sup>

## Political positions

#### Economic policy:

- Expand social security and safety net programs.<sup>[65]</sup>
- Increase top capital gains tax and dividend tax rates to above 28%.<sup>[66]</sup>
- Across the board tax-cuts for the low and middle class and small businesses.<sup>[67]</sup>
- Change tax rules to not encourage shipping jobs overseas.<sup>[67]</sup>
- Increase federal minimum wage.
- Modernize and expand access to public education, and provide universal preschool education.<sup>[68][69]</sup>
- Support for universal health care.<sup>[70]</sup>
- Greater investment in infrastructure development.<sup>[69]</sup>
- Increase investments in scientific and technological research and development.<sup>[71]</sup>
- Expand the use of renewable energy and diminish the use of fossil fuels.<sup>[72]</sup>
- Implement a carbon tax.<sup>[73]</sup>
- Support for cuts in defense spending.<sup>[69][74]</sup>
- Uphold labor protections and the right to unionize.<sup>[75][76]</sup>
- Reform the student loan system and allow for refinancing student loans.<sup>[77]</sup>
- Mandate equal pay for equal work regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity.<sup>[78]</sup>

#### Social policy:

- Uphold network neutrality.<sup>[79]</sup>
- Implement campaign finance reform and electoral reform.<sup>[80]</sup>
- Uphold voting rights and easy access to voting.<sup>[81][82]</sup>
- Supports for same-sex marriage and civil unions.
- Allow legal access to abortions and women's reproductive health care.
- Reform the immigration system and allow for a pathway to citizenship.
- Support for gun background checks and stricter gun control regulations.
- Improve privacy laws and curtail government surveillance.
- Opposition to the use of torture.<sup>[83][84]</sup>
- Recognize and defend Internet freedom worldwide.<sup>[67]</sup>

### Economic issues

Equal economic opportunity, a base social safety net provided by the welfare state, and strong labor unions have historically been at the heart of Democratic economic policy.<sup>[15]</sup> The welfare state supports a progressive tax system, higher minimum wages, social security, universal health care, public education, and public housing.<sup>[15]</sup> They also support infrastructure development and government sponsored employment programs in an effort to achieve economic development and job creation, while stimulating private sector job creation.<sup>[85]</sup> Additionally however, since the 1990s the party has at times supported centrist economic reforms, which cut the size of government and reduced market regulations.<sup>[86]</sup> The party has continuously rejected laissez-faire economics as well as market socialism, instead favoring Keynesian economics within a capitalist market-based system.

#### Fiscal policy

Democrats support a more progressive tax structure to provide more services and reduce economic inequality by making sure that the wealthiest Americans pay the highest amount in taxes.<sup>[87]</sup> Democrats support more government spending on social services while spending less on the military.<sup>[88][89]</sup> They oppose the cutting of social services, such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and various other welfare programs.<sup>[90]</sup> believing it to be harmful to efficiency and social justice. Democrats believe the benefits of social services, in monetary and non-monetary terms, are a more productive labor force and cultured population, and believe that the benefits of this are greater than any benefits that could be derived from lower taxes, especially on top earners, or cuts to social services. Furthermore, Democrats see social services as essential towards providing positive freedom, i.e. freedom derived from economic opportunity. The Democratic-led House of Representatives reinstated the PAYGO (pay-as-you-go) budget rule at the start of the 110th Congress.<sup>[91]</sup>

### Minimum wage

The Democratic Party favors raising the minimum wage and believes that all Americans have the right to a fair wage. They call for a \$10.10/hour national minimum wage and think the minimum wage should be adjusted regularly.<sup>[92]</sup> The Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 was an early component of the Democrats' agenda during the 110th Congress. In 2006, the Democrats supported six state ballot initiatives to increase the minimum wage; all six initiatives passed.<sup>[93]</sup>

### Health care

Democrats call for "affordable and quality health care," and many advocate an expansion of government intervention in this area. Democrats favor national health insurance or universal health care in a variety of forms to address the rising costs of modern health insurance. Some Democrats, such as Representatives John Conyers and John Dingell, have called for a single-payer program of Medicare for All. The Progressive Democrats of America, a group operating inside the Democratic Party, has made single-payer universal health care one of their primary policy goals.<sup>[94]</sup> The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, signed into law by President Obama on March 23, 2010, has been one of the most significant pushes for universal health care to become a reality. As of April 2014, more than 10 million Americans have enrolled in healthcare coverage since the launch of the Affordable Care Act.<sup>[95]</sup>



President Barack Obama signing the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act into law at the White House on March 23, 2010.

### Education

Democrats favor improving public education by raising school standards and reforming the head start program. They also support universal preschool and expanding access to primary education, including through charter schools. They call for slashes in student loan debt and support reforms to force down tuition fees.<sup>[96]</sup> Other proposed reforms have included nationwide universal preschool education, tuition-free college, and reform of standardized testing. Democrats have the long-term aim of having low-cost, publicly funded college education with low tuition fees (like in much of Europe and Canada), which should be available to every eligible American student. Alternatively, they encourage expanding access to post-secondary education by increasing state funding for student financial aid such as Pell Grants and college tuition tax deductions.<sup>[97]</sup>

### Environment

Democrats believe that the government should protect the environment and have a history of environmentalism. In more recent years, this stance has had as its emphasis alternative energy generation as the basis for an improved economy, greater national security, and general environmental benefits.<sup>[98]</sup>

The Democratic Party also favors expansion of conservation lands and encourages open space and rail travel to relieve highway and airport congestion and improve air quality and economy; it "believe[s] that communities, environmental interests, and government should work together to protect resources while ensuring the vitality of local economies. Once Americans were led to believe they had to make a choice between the economy and the environment. They now know this is a false choice."<sup>[99]</sup>

The most important environmental concern of the Democratic Party is climate change. Democrats, most notably former Vice President Al Gore, have pressed for stern regulation of greenhouse gases. On October 15, 2007, he won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to build greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and laying the foundations for the measures needed to counteract these changes asserting that "the climate crisis is not a political issue, it is a moral and spiritual challenge to all of humanity."<sup>[100]</sup>

### Renewable energy and fossil fuels

Democrats have supported increased domestic renewable energy development, including wind and solar power farms, in an effort to reduce carbon pollution. The party's platform calls for an "all of the above" energy policy including clean energy, natural gas and domestic oil, with the desire of becoming energy independent.<sup>[93]</sup> The party has supported higher taxes on oil companies and increased regulations on coal power plants, favoring a policy of reducing long-term reliance on fossil fuels.<sup>[101][102]</sup> Additionally, the party supports stricter fuel emissions standards to prevent air pollution.

### Trade agreements

Many Democrats support fair trade policies when it comes to the issue of international trade agreements, and some in the party have started supporting free trade in recent decades.<sup>[103]</sup> In the 1990s, the Clinton administration and a number of prominent Democrats pushed through a number of agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Since then, the party's shift away from free trade became evident in the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) vote, with 15 House Democrats voting for the agreement and 187 voting against.<sup>[104][105]</sup>

### Social issues



Shirley Chisholm was the first major party African-American candidate to run nationwide primary campaigns.

The modern Democratic party emphasizes egalitarianism and social equality through liberalism. They support voting rights and minority rights, including LGBT rights, multiculturalism, and religious secularism. A longstanding social policy is upholding civil rights, which affect ethnic and racial minorities and includes voting rights, equal opportunity, and racial equality. The party championed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which for the first time outlawed segregation. Democrats made civil rights and anti-racism a core party philosophy. Carmines and Stimson say, "the Democratic Party appropriated racial liberalism and assumed federal responsibility for ending racial discrimination."<sup>[106][107][108]</sup>

Ideological social elements in the party include cultural liberalism, civil libertarianism, and feminism. Other Democratic social policies are internationalism, open immigration, electoral reform, and women's reproductive rights.

#### Equal opportunity

The Democratic Party supports equal opportunity for all Americans regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, or national origin. Many Democrats support affirmative action programs to further this goal. Democrats also strongly support the Americans with Disabilities Act to prohibit discrimination against people based on physical or mental disability. As such, the Democrats pushed as well the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, a legal expansion that became law.<sup>[109]</sup>

#### Voting rights

The party is very supportive of improving voting rights as well as election accuracy and accessibility.<sup>[110]</sup> They support ending voter ID laws and increasing voting time, including making election day a holiday. They support reforming the electoral system to eliminate gerrymandering as well as passing comprehensive campaign finance reform.<sup>[80]</sup> They supported the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and as a party have often been pioneers for democracy in the United States.<sup>[82]</sup>

#### Abortion and reproductive rights

The Democratic Party believe that all women should have access to birth control, and support public funding of contraception for poor women. The Democratic Party, in its national platforms from 1992 to 2004, has called for abortion to be "safe, legal and rare"—namely, keeping it legal by rejecting laws that allow governmental interference in abortion decisions, and reducing the number of abortions by promoting both knowledge of reproduction and contraception, and incentives for adoption. The wording changed in the 2008 platform. When Congress voted on the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in 2003, Congressional Democrats were split, with a minority (including current Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid) supporting the ban, and the majority of Democrats opposing the legislation.<sup>[111]</sup>

The Democratic Party opposes attempts to reverse the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, which declared abortion covered by the constitutionally protected individual right to privacy under the Ninth Amendment, and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, which lays out the legal framework in which government action alleged to violate that right is assessed by courts. As a matter of the right to privacy and of gender equality, many Democrats believe all women should have the ability to choose to abort without governmental interference. They believe that each woman, conferring with her conscience, has the right to choose for herself whether abortion is morally correct.

Current Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid self-identifies as 'pro-life', while President Barack Obama and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi self-identify as 'pro-choice'. Groups such as Democrats for Life of America represent the pro-life faction of the party, while groups such as EMILY's List represent the pro-choice faction. A *Newsweek* poll from October 2006 found that 25% of Democrats were pro-life while a 69% majority was pro-choice.<sup>[112]</sup>

### Immigration

Many Democratic politicians have called for systematic reform of the U.S. immigration system such that residents that have come into the U.S. illegally have a pathway to legal citizenship. President Obama remarked on November 2013 that he felt it was "long past time to fix our broken immigration system", particularly to allow "incredibly bright young people" that came over as students to become full citizens. The Public Religion Research Institute found in a late 2013 study that 73% of Democrats supported the pathway concept, compared to 63% of Americans as a whole.<sup>[113]</sup>

In 2013, Democrats in the Senate passed S.744, which would reform immigration policy to allow citizenship for illegal immigrants in the US and improve the lives of all immigrants currently living in the United States.<sup>[114]</sup>

### LGBT rights

The Democratic Party is supportive of LGBT rights. Most support for same-sex marriage in the United States has come from Democrats, although some favor civil unions instead or oppose same-sex marriage. Support for same-sex marriage has increased in the past decade according to ABC News. An April 2009 ABC News/Washington Post public opinion poll put support among Democrats at 62%,<sup>[115]</sup> while a June 2008 *Newsweek* poll found that 42% of Democrats support same-sex marriage while 23% support civil unions or domestic partnership laws and 28% oppose any legal recognition at all.<sup>[116]</sup> A broad majority of Democrats have supported other LGBT-related laws such as extending hate crime statutes, legally preventing discrimination against LGBT people in the workforce, and repealing Don't ask, don't tell. A 2006 Pew Research Center poll of Democrats found that 55% supported gays adopting children with 40% opposed while 70% support gays in the military with only 23% opposed.<sup>[117]</sup> Gallup polling from May 2009 stated that 82% of Democrats support open enlistment.<sup>[118]</sup>

The 2004 Democratic National Platform stated that marriage should be defined at the state level and it repudiated the Federal Marriage Amendment.<sup>[119]</sup> The 2008 platform, while not stating support of same-sex marriage, called for repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act, which banned federal recognition of same-sex marriage and removed the need for interstate recognition, supported antidiscrimination laws and the extension of hate crime laws to LGBT people, and opposed the don't ask, don't tell military policy.<sup>[120]</sup> The 2012 platform included support for same-sex marriage and for the repeal of DOMA.<sup>[121]</sup>

President Barack Obama became the first sitting U.S. president to say he supports same-sex marriage, announcing his position on May 9, 2012.<sup>[122][123]</sup> Previously, he had opposed restrictions on same-sex marriage such as the Defense of Marriage Act, which he promised to repeal,<sup>[124]</sup> California's Prop 8,<sup>[125]</sup> and a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage (which he opposed saying that "decisions about marriage should be left to the states as they always have been."<sup>[126]</sup>) but also stated that he personally believed marriage to be between a man and a woman and that he favored civil unions that would "give same-sex couples equal legal rights and privileges as married couples".<sup>[124]</sup> Earlier, when running for the Illinois Senate in 1996, he said that he "unequivocally support(ed) gay marriage" and "favor(ed) legalizing same-sex marriages, and would fight efforts to prohibit such marriages."<sup>[127]</sup> Senator John Kerry, Democratic presidential candidate in 2004, did not support same-sex marriage. Former President Bill Clinton and former Vice President Al Gore also support gay marriage.<sup>[128][129]</sup>



President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Immigration Act of 1965 as Sen. Edward Kennedy, Sen. Robert Kennedy, and others look on.

## Legal issues

### Gun control

With a stated goal of reducing crime and homicide, the Democratic Party has introduced various gun control measures, most notably the Gun Control Act of 1968, the Brady Bill of 1993, and Crime Control Act of 1994. However, some Democrats, especially rural, Southern, and Western Democrats, favor fewer restrictions on firearm possession and warned the party was defeated in the 2000 presidential election in rural areas because of the issue.<sup>[130]</sup> In the national platform for 2008, the only statement explicitly favoring gun control was a plan calling for renewal of the 1994 Assault Weapons Ban.<sup>[131]</sup>

### Death penalty

The Democratic Party supports the death penalty far less than the Republican Party. Though most Democrats in Congress have never seriously moved to overturn the rarely used federal death penalty, both Russ Feingold and Dennis Kucinich have introduced such bills with little success. Democrats have led efforts to overturn state death penalty laws, particularly in New Jersey and in New Mexico. They have also sought to prevent reinstatement of the death penalty in those states which prohibit it, including Massachusetts and New York. During the Clinton administration, Democrats led the expansion of the federal death penalty. These efforts resulted in the passage of the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, signed into law by President Clinton; the law heavily limited appeals in death penalty cases.

In 1992, 1993, and 1995, Democratic Texas Congressman Henry González unsuccessfully introduced the Death Penalty Abolition Amendment which prohibited the use of capital punishment in the United States. Democratic Missouri Congressman William Lacy Clay, Sr. cosponsored the amendment in 1993.

During his Illinois Senate career, now-President Barack Obama successfully introduced legislation intended to reduce the likelihood of wrongful convictions in capital cases, requiring videotaping of confessions. When campaigning for the presidency, Obama stated that he supports the limited use of the death penalty, including for people who have been convicted of raping a minor under the age of 12, having opposed the Supreme Court's ruling in *Kennedy v. Louisiana* that the death penalty was unconstitutional in child rape cases.<sup>[132]</sup> Obama has stated that he thinks the "death penalty does little to deter crime", and that it is used too frequently and too inconsistently.<sup>[133]</sup>

In June 2016, the Democratic Platform Drafting Committee unanimously adopted an amendment to abolish the death penalty, marking the first time the party had done so in its history.<sup>[134]</sup>

### Torture

Many Democrats are opposed to the use of torture against individuals apprehended and held prisoner by the U.S. military, and hold that categorizing such prisoners as unlawful combatants does not release the U.S. from its obligations under the Geneva Conventions. Democrats contend that torture is inhumane, decreases the United States' moral standing in the world, and produces questionable results. Democrats largely spoke out against waterboarding.

Torture became a very divisive issue in the party after Barack Obama was elected president. Many centrist Democrats and members of the party's leadership supported the use of torture while the liberal wings continued to be steadfastly opposed to it.<sup>[135]</sup>

### Patriot Act

Many Democrats are opposed to the Patriot Act, however when the law was passed most Democrats were supportive of it and all but two Democrats in the U.S. Senate voted for the original Patriot Act legislation in 2001. The lone nay vote was from Russ Feingold of Wisconsin; Mary Landrieu of Louisiana did not vote. In the House the Democrats voted for the Act by 145 yea and 62 nay. Democrats split on the renewal in 2006. In the Senate, Democrats voted 34 for the 2006 renewal, and 9 against. In the House, Democrats voted 66 voted for the renewal, and 124 against.<sup>[136]</sup>

### Right to privacy

The Democratic Party believes that individuals should have a right to privacy. For example, many Democrats have opposed the NSA warrantless surveillance of U.S. citizens.

Some Democratic officeholders have championed consumer protection laws that limit the sharing of consumer data between corporations. Most Democrats oppose sodomy laws and believe that government should not regulate consensual noncommercial sexual conduct among adults as a matter of personal privacy.<sup>[137]</sup>

## Foreign policy issues

In foreign policy the voters of the two major parties have largely overlapped since the 1990s. The Gallup poll in early 2013 shows broad agreement on the top issues, albeit with some divergence regarding as human rights and international cooperation through agencies such as the UN.<sup>[138]</sup>

In June 2014 the Quinnipiac Poll asked Americans which foreign policy they preferred:

*A) The United States is doing too much in other countries around the world, and it is time to do less around the world and focus more on our own problems here at home. B) The United States must continue to push forward to promote democracy and freedom in other countries around the world because these efforts make our own country more secure.*

Democrats chose A over B by 65–32%; Republicans chose A over B by 56% to 39%; independents chose A over B by 67% to 29%.<sup>[139]</sup>

## Iraq War

In 2002, Congressional Democrats were divided on the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq; 147 voted against it (21 in the Senate and 126 in the House) and 110 voted for it (29 in the Senate, 81 in the House). Since then, many prominent Democrats, such as former Senator John Edwards, have expressed regret about this decision, and have called it a mistake, while others, such as Senator Hillary Clinton have criticized the conduct of the war but not repudiated their initial vote for it (though Clinton later went on to repudiate her stance during the 2008 primaries). Referring to Iraq, in April 2007 Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid declared the war to be "lost" while other Democrats (especially during the 2004 presidential election cycle) accused the President of lying to the public about WMDs in Iraq. Amongst lawmakers, Democrats are the most vocal opponents of Operation Iraqi Freedom and campaigned on a platform of withdrawal ahead of the 2006 midterm elections.

A March 2003 CBS News poll taken a few days before the invasion of Iraq found that 34% of Democrats nationwide would support it without United Nations backing, 51% would support it only with its backing, and 14% would not support it at all.<sup>[140]</sup> *The Los Angeles Times* stated in early April 2003 that 70% of Democrats supported the decision to invade while 27% opposed it.<sup>[141]</sup> The Pew Research Center stated in August 2007 that opposition increased from 37% during the initial invasion to 74%.<sup>[142]</sup> In April 2008, a CBS News poll found that about 90% of Democrats disapprove of the Bush administration's conduct and want to end the war within the next year.<sup>[143]</sup>

Democrats in the House of Representatives near-unanimously supported a non-binding resolution disapproving of President Bush's decision to send additional troops into Iraq in 2007. Congressional Democrats overwhelmingly supported military funding legislation that included a provision that set "a timeline for the withdrawal of all US combat troops from Iraq" by March 31, 2008, but also would leave combat forces in Iraq for purposes such as targeted counter-terrorism operations.<sup>[144][145]</sup> After a veto from the president, and a failed attempt in Congress to override the veto,<sup>[146]</sup> the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq

Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 was passed by Congress and signed by the president after the timetable was dropped. Criticism of the Iraq War subsided after the Iraq War troop surge of 2007 led to a dramatic decrease in Iraqi violence. The Democratic-controlled 110th Congress continued to fund efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Presidential candidate Barack Obama advocated a withdrawal of combat troops within Iraq by late 2010 with a residual force of peacekeeping troops left in place.<sup>[147]</sup> He stated that both the speed of withdrawal and the amount of troops left over would be "entirely conditions-based."<sup>[147]</sup>

On February 27, 2009, President Obama announced, "As a candidate for president, I made clear my support for a timeline of 16 months to carry out this drawdown, while pledging to consult closely with our military commanders upon taking office to ensure that we preserve the gains we've made and protect our troops ... Those consultations are now complete, and I have chosen a timeline that will remove our combat brigades over the next 18 months."<sup>[148]</sup> Around 50,000 non-combat related forces will remain.<sup>[148]</sup> Obama's plan drew wide bipartisan support, including that of defeated Republican Presidential candidate Senator John McCain.<sup>[148]</sup>

#### Iran sanctions

The Democratic Party has been critical of the Iran's nuclear weapon program and supported economic sanctions against the Iranian government. In 2013, the Democratic led administration worked to reach a diplomatic agreement with the government of Iran to halt the Iranian nuclear weapon program in exchange for international economic sanction relief.<sup>[149]</sup> As of 2014 negotiations had been successful and the party called for more cooperation with Iran in the future.<sup>[150]</sup> In 2015, the Obama administration agreed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which provides sanction relief in exchange for international oversight of the Iranian nuclear program.

#### Invasion of Afghanistan

Democrats in the House of Representatives and in the Senate near-unanimously voted for the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Terrorists against "those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States" in Afghanistan in 2001, supporting the NATO coalition invasion of the nation. Most elected Democrats continue to support the Afghanistan conflict, and some, such as a Democratic National Committee spokesperson, have voiced concerns that the Iraq War shifted too many resources away from the presence in Afghanistan.<sup>[151][152][153]</sup> Since 2006, Democratic candidate Barack Obama has called for a "surge" of troops into Afghanistan and, since 2008, Republican candidate John McCain has also called for a "surge".<sup>[153]</sup> As President, Obama sent a "surge" force of additional troops to Afghanistan. Troop levels were 94,000 in December 2011, and are falling, with a target of 68,000 by final 2012. Obama plans to bring all the troops home by 2014.<sup>[154]</sup>

Support for the war among the American people has diminished over time, and many Democrats have changed their opinion and now oppose a continuation of the conflict.<sup>[155][156]</sup> In July 2008, Gallup found that 41% of Democrats called the invasion a "mistake" while a 55% majority disagreed; in contrast, Republicans were more supportive of the war. The survey described Democrats as evenly divided about whether or not more troops should be sent—56% support it if it would mean removing troops from Iraq and only 47% support it otherwise.<sup>[156]</sup> A CNN survey in August 2009 stated that a majority of Democrats now oppose the war. CNN polling director Keating Holland said, "Nearly two thirds of Republicans support the war in Afghanistan. Three quarters of Democrats oppose the war."<sup>[155]</sup> An August 2009 *Washington Post* poll found similar results, and the paper stated that Obama's policies would anger his closest supporters.<sup>[157]</sup>

#### Israel

The Democratic Party has both recently and historically supported Israel.<sup>[158][159]</sup> Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in 2009, "When it comes to Israel, Republicans and Democrats speak with one voice."<sup>[160]</sup> A 2008 Gallup poll found that 64% say that they have a favorable image of Israel while only 16% say that they have a favorable image of the Palestinian Authority.<sup>[158]</sup> Democratic National Committee chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz said in 2014 that the perception of a split within the party on the topic of Israel is unfounded.<sup>[161]</sup> Within the party, the majority view is held by the Democratic leadership although some members such as John Conyers Jr., George Miller, Nick Rahall, Dave Obey, Pete Stark, Dennis Kucinich, and Jim McDermott as well as former President Jimmy Carter are less or not supportive of Israel.<sup>[159]</sup> The party leadership refers to the few Democrats unsympathetic to Israel as a "fringe".<sup>[159]</sup>

The 2008 Democratic Party Platform acknowledges a "special relationship with Israel, grounded in shared interests and shared values, and a clear, strong, fundamental commitment to the security of Israel, our strongest ally in the region and its only established democracy." It also included:

It is in the best interests of all parties, including the United States, that we take an active role to help secure a lasting settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a democratic, viable Palestinian state dedicated to living in peace and security side by side with the Jewish State of Israel. To do so, we must help Israel identify and strengthen those partners who are truly committed to peace, while isolating those who seek conflict and instability, and stand with Israel against those who seek its destruction. The United States and its Quartet partners should continue to isolate Hamas until it renounces terrorism, recognizes Israel's right to exist, and abides by past agreements. Sustained American leadership for peace and security will require patient efforts and the personal commitment of the President of the United States. The creation of a Palestinian state through final status negotiations, together with an international compensation mechanism, should resolve the issue of Palestinian refugees by allowing them to settle there, rather than in Israel. All understand that it is unrealistic to expect the outcome of final status negotiations to be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949. Jerusalem is and will remain the capital of Israel. The parties have agreed that Jerusalem is a matter for final status negotiations. It should remain an undivided city accessible to people of all faiths.<sup>[162]</sup>

A January 2009 Pew Research Center study found that, when asked "which side do you sympathize with more", 42% of Democrats and 33% of liberals (a plurality in both groups) sympathize most with the Israelis. Around half of all political moderates and/or independents sided with Israel.<sup>[163]</sup>

Recent years have brought more discussion of the party's stance on Israel as polls reported declining support for Israel among the party faithful.<sup>[164]</sup> Gallup suggested that the decline in support might be due to tensions between Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Barack Obama.

## Voter base

### Professionals

Professionals, those who have a college education, and those whose work revolves around the conceptualization of ideas have supported the Democratic Party by a slight majority since 2000. Between 1988 and 2000, professionals favored Democrats by a 12-percentage point margin. While the professional class was once a stronghold of the Republican Party, it has become increasingly split between the two parties, leaning in favor of the Democratic Party. The increasing support for Democratic candidates among professionals may be traced to the prevalence of social liberal values among this group.<sup>[165]</sup>

“ Professionals, who are, roughly speaking, college-educated producers of services and ideas, used to be the most staunchly Republican of all occupational groups ... now chiefly working for large corporations and bureaucracies rather than on their own, and heavily influenced by the environmental, civil-rights, and feminist movements—began to vote Democratic. In the four elections from 1988 to 2000, they backed Democrats by an average of 52 percent to 40 percent. ”

A study on the political attitudes of medical students, for example, found that "U.S. medical students are considerably more likely to be liberal than conservative and are more likely to be liberal than are other young U.S. adults. Future U.S. physicians may be more receptive to liberal messages than current ones, and their political orientation may profoundly affect their health system attitudes."<sup>[166]</sup> Similar results are found for professors, who are more strongly inclined towards liberalism and the Democratic Party than other occupational groups.<sup>[52]</sup> The Democratic Party also has strong support among scientists, with 55% identifying as Democrats, 32% as independents, and 6% as Republicans and 52% identifying as liberal, 35% as moderate, and 9% as conservative.<sup>[167]</sup>

### Academia

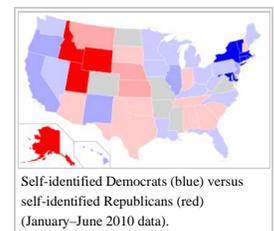
Academics, intellectuals, and the highly educated overall constitute an important part of the Democratic voter base. Academia in particular tends to be progressive. In a 2005 survey, nearly 72% of full-time faculty members identified as liberal, while 15% identified as conservative. The social sciences and humanities were the most liberal disciplines while business was the most conservative. Male professors at more advanced stages of their careers as well as those at elite institutions tend to be the most liberal.<sup>[52]</sup> Another survey by UCLA conducted in 2001/02, found 47.6% of scholars identifying as liberal, 34.3% as moderate, and 18% as conservative.<sup>[168]</sup> Percentages of professors who identified as liberal ranged from 49% in business to over 80% in political science and the humanities.<sup>[52]</sup> Social scientists, such as Brett O'Bannon of DePauw University, have claimed that the "liberal" opinions of professors seem to have little, if any, effect on the political orientation of students.<sup>[169][170]</sup> As of July 2008 the Students for Academic Freedom arm of the David Horowitz Freedom Center, a conservative organization, posted a list of 440 student complaints, most of which pertain to perceived liberal bias of college professors.

Those with graduate education, have become increasingly Democratic beginning in the 1992,<sup>[171]</sup> 1996,<sup>[171]</sup> 2000,<sup>[45]</sup> 2004,<sup>[46]</sup> and 2008<sup>[172]</sup> elections. Intellectualism, the tendency to constantly reexamine issues, or in the words of Edwards Shields, the "penetration beyond the screen of immediate concrete experience," has also been named as an explanation why academia is strongly democratic and liberal.<sup>[173][174]</sup>

In the past, a self-identified Republican was more likely to have a 4-year college degree; however, according to some recent surveys, similar percentages of Republicans and Democrats are likely to have 4-year college degrees, and Democrats are more likely to hold post-graduate degrees.<sup>[175]</sup>

An analysis of 2008 through 2012 survey data from the General Social Survey, the National Election Studies, and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press led to a slightly different assessment of the overall educational status of self-identified Democrats and Republicans:

On average, self-identified Republicans have more years of education (4 to 8 months each, depending on the survey) and are probably more likely to hold, at the least, a 4-year college degree. (One major survey indicates that they are more likely, while the results of another survey are statistically insignificant.) It also appears that Republicans continue to out-test Democrats in surveys that assess political knowledge and/or current events. With respect to post-graduate studies, the educational advantage is shifting towards self-identified Democrats. They are now more likely to hold post-graduate college degrees. (One major



survey indicates that they are more likely, while the results of another survey are statistically insignificant.)<sup>[176]</sup>

**Youth**

Studies have shown that younger voters tend to vote mostly for Democratic candidates in recent years. Despite supporting Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, the young have voted in favor of the Democratic presidential candidate in every election since Bill Clinton in 1992, and are more likely to identify as liberals than the general population.<sup>[177]</sup> In the 2004 presidential election, Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry received 54% of the vote from voters of the age group 18–29, while Republican George W. Bush received 45% of the vote from the same age group. In the 2006 midterm elections, the Democrats received 60% of the vote from the same age group.<sup>[46][47]</sup> Polls suggest that younger voters tend to be more liberal than the general population and have more liberal views than the public on same-sex marriage and universal healthcare, helping Barack Obama carry 66% of their votes in 2008. The Young Democrats of America are an affiliated organization of members of the party younger than 36 that advocates for youth issues and works for youth voter turnout.

**Women**

Although the "gender gap" has varied over many years, women of all ages are more likely than men to identify as Democrats. Recent polls have indicated that 41% of women identify as Democrats while only 25% of women identify as Republicans and 26% as independents, while 32% of men identify as Democrats, 28% as Republicans and 34% as independents. Among ethnic minorities, women also are more likely than males to identify as Democrats. Also, American women that identified as single, living with a domestic partner, divorced, separated, or widowed are more likely than men in these categories to vote Democratic, in contrast to married Americans, which split about equally between Democrat and Republican. Again, women in these categories are significantly more likely than males in these categories to vote Democratic.<sup>[178]</sup> The National Federation of Democratic Women is an affiliated organization meant to advocate for women's issues. The Woman's National Democratic Club works to promote the Democratic party. National women's organizations that support Democratic candidates are Emily's List, which aims to help elect pro-choice Democratic female candidates to office, and often but not always the National Organization for Women.



Jerry Brown at a campaign rally in Sacramento two days before the election

**Relation to marital status and parenthood**

Americans that identify as single, living with a domestic partner, divorced, separated, or widowed are more likely to vote Democratic, in contrast to married Americans, which split about equally between Democrat and Republican.<sup>[178]</sup>

GSS surveys of more than 11,000 Democrats and Republicans conducted between 1996 and 2006 came to the result that the differences in fertility rates are not statistically significant between these parties, with the average Democrat having 1.94 children and the average Republican having 1.91 children.<sup>[179]</sup> However, there is a significant difference in fertility rates between the two related groups liberals and conservatives, with liberals reproducing at a much lower rate than conservatives.<sup>[179]</sup>

**LGBT Americans**



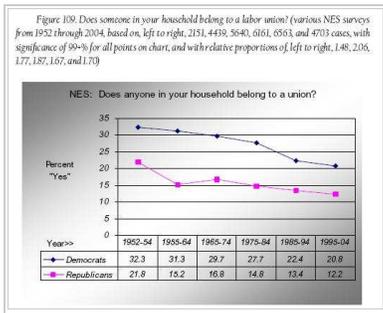
"Gay Rights are Human Rights", a quote by Democratic Secretary of State and U.S. Senator from New York Hillary Clinton.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans typically vote Democratic in national elections within the 70–77% range, according to national media exit polling. In heavily gay precincts in large cities across the nation, the average was higher, ranging from 85–94%. This trend has continued since 1996, when Bill Clinton won 71% of the LGBT vote compared to Bob Dole's 16% and 13% for others. In 2000, Al Gore won 70% to George W. Bush's 25% with 5% for others, in 2004 John Kerry won 77% to George W. Bush's 23%, in 2008 Barack Obama won 70% to John McCain's 27% with 3% to others and in 2012 Barack Obama won 76% to Mitt Romney's 22% with 2% to others. Patrick Egan, a professor of politics at New York University specializing in LGBT voting patterns, calls this a "remarkable continuity". Saying "about three-fourths vote Democratic and one-fourth Republican from year to year."<sup>[180]</sup> Notable LGBT Democrats include current Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin and current Representatives Jared Polis of Colorado and David Cicilline of Rhode Island. The late activist and San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk was a Democrat as is former Representative Barney Frank of Massachusetts. The National Stonewall Democrats is an LGBT advocacy group associated with the Democratic Party. The LGBT Equality Caucus is a congressional caucus of 97 Democrats and 3 Republicans that work and advocate for LGBT rights within the House of Representatives.<sup>[182]</sup>

**LGBT votes for Democratic presidential candidates**

Year <sup>[180][181]</sup>	Candidate	Vote
1996	Bill Clinton	71%
2000	Al Gore	70%
2004	John Kerry	77%
2008	Barack Obama	70%
2012	Barack Obama	76%

**Labor**



Since the 1930s, a critical component of the Democratic Party coalition has been organized labor. Labor unions supply a great deal of the money, grass roots political organization, and voting base of support for the party. Democrats are far more likely to be represented by unions, although union membership has declined, in general, during the last few decades. This trend is depicted in the following graph from the book, *Democrats and Republicans—Rhetoric and Reality*.<sup>[183]</sup> It is based on surveys conducted by the National Election Studies (NES).

The historic decline in union membership over the past half century has been accompanied by a growing disparity between public sector and private sector union membership percentages. The three most significant labor groupings in the Democratic coalition today are the AFL-CIO and Change to Win labor federations, as well as the National Education Association, a large, unaffiliated teachers' union. Both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win have identified their top legislative priority for 2007 as passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. Other important issues for labor unions include supporting industrial policy (including protectionism) that sustains unionized manufacturing jobs, raising the minimum wage and promoting broad social programs such as Social Security and universal health care.

**Working class**

While the American working class has lost much of its political strength with the decline of labor unions,<sup>[184]</sup> it remains a stronghold of the Democratic Party and continues as an essential part of the Democratic base. Today, roughly a third of the American public is estimated to be working class with around 52% being either members of the working or lower classes.<sup>[185][186]</sup> Yet, as those with lower socioeconomic status are less likely to vote, the working and lower classes are underrepresented in the electorate. The working class is largely distinguished by highly routinized and closely supervised work. It consists mainly of clerical and blue-collar workers.<sup>[185]</sup> Even though most in the working class are able to afford an adequate standard of living, high economic insecurity and possible personal benefit from an extended social safety net, make the majority of working class person left-of-center on economic issues. Most working class Democrats differ from most liberals, however, in their more socially conservative views. Working class Democrats tend to be more religious and likely to belong to an ethnic minority. Socially conservative and disadvantaged Democrats are among the least educated and lowest earning ideological demographics. In 2005, only 15% had a college degree, compared to 27% at the national average and 49% of liberals, respectively. Together socially conservative and the financially disadvantaged comprised roughly 54% of the Democratic base.<sup>[51]</sup> The continued importance of the working class votes manifests itself in recent CNN exit polls, which shows that the majority of those with low incomes and little education vote for the Democratic Party.<sup>[45][46][47]</sup> However, there has been a noticeable decline in support for the Democratic Party among white working class voters.<sup>[187][188][189]</sup> In the 2012 presidential election, Barack Obama only carried 36% of white working class voters to Mitt Romney carrying 61%, and in the 2014 midterms, Democratic candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives only carried 34% of the white working class vote compared to 64% for the Republican candidates.<sup>[190][191][192]</sup>

**Secular Americans**

The Democratic Party receives support from secular organizations such as the Secular Coalition for America,<sup>[193]</sup> and many agnostic and atheist Americans. Exit polls from the 2008 election showed that voters with a religious affiliation of "none" accounted for the 12% of the electorate and overwhelmingly voted for Obama by a 75–25% margin.<sup>[194]</sup> In his inaugural address, Obama acknowledged atheists by saying that the United States is not just "Christians and Muslims, Jews and Hindus but non-believers as well."<sup>[195]</sup> In the 2012 election cycle, Obama has moderate to high rankings with the Secular Coalition for America, whereas the majority of the Republican candidates have ratings in the low-to-failing range.<sup>[196]</sup>

Atheists and secular people, although a diverse group themselves, may include individuals who are fiscally conservative. In this case, fiscally conservative atheists and secularists will come together due to their opposition to the religiously-bound social policies of the Christian right.<sup>[197]</sup>

There is still a social stigma relating to atheism in the nation and polls show that a majority of the American people would be more comfortable voting for a Muslim or gay candidate than an atheist.<sup>[198]</sup>

**African Americans**

From the end of the Civil War, African Americans primarily favored the Republican Party due to its overwhelming political and more tangible efforts in achieving abolition, particularly through President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>[199]</sup> The south had long been a Democratic stronghold, favoring a state's right to legal slavery. In addition, the ranks of the fledgling Ku Klux Klan were composed almost entirely of white Democrats angry over poor treatment by northerners and bent on reversing the policies of Reconstruction.<sup>[200]</sup> However, African Americans began drifting to the Democratic Party when Franklin Roosevelt was elected president.<sup>[199]</sup> Support for the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s by Democratic presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson helped give the Democrats even larger support among the African-American community, which consistently vote between 85–95% Democratic.<sup>[199]</sup>

Prominent modern-day African-American Democratic politicians include Jim Clyburn, Elijah Cummings, Maxine Waters, John Lewis, Barbara Lee, Charles Rangel, John Conyers, Senator Cory Booker, and the current President of the United States, Barack Obama, who managed to net over 95% of the African-American vote in the 2008 election.<sup>[201]</sup> Despite being unaffiliated, the NAACP often participates in organizing and voter turnout drives and advocates for progressive causes, especially those that affect people of color.<sup>[202]</sup> Within the House of Representatives, the Congressional Black Caucus, consisting of 44 black Democrats, serves to represent the

interests of African Americans and advocate on issues that affect them.

### Hispanic and Latino Americans

The Hispanic population, particularly the large Mexican American population in the Southwest and the large Puerto Rican and Dominican populations in the Northeast, have been strong supporters of the Democratic Party. In the 1996 presidential election, Democratic President Bill Clinton received 72% of the Hispanic vote.<sup>[203]</sup> In following years, however, the Republican Party gained increasing support from the Hispanic community, especially among Hispanic Protestants and Pentecostals. With his much more liberal views on immigration, President Bush was the first Republican president to gain 40% of the Hispanic vote (he did so in the 2004 presidential election). Yet the Republican Party's support among Hispanics eroded in the 2006 midterm elections, dropping from 44% to 30%, with the Democrats gaining in the Hispanic vote from 55% in 2004 to 69% in 2006.<sup>[46][47]</sup> Democrats increased their share of the Hispanic vote in the 2008 presidential election, with Barack Obama receiving 67%. According to exit polls by Edison Research, Obama increased his support again in 2012, winning 71% of Hispanic voters.<sup>[204]</sup>



Bill Clinton at a Democratic "Get out the vote" rally in Los Angeles

Cuban Americans still tend to vote Republican, though there has been a noticeable change starting with the 2008 elections. During the 2008 elections Barack Obama received 47% of the Cuban American vote in Florida.<sup>[205]</sup> According to Bendixen's exit polls, 84% of Miami-Dade Cuban American voters 65 or older backed McCain, while 55% of those 29 or younger backed Obama,<sup>[206]</sup> showing that the younger Cuban-American generation has become more liberal.

Throughout the decade of the 2000s, 60% or more of Hispanic Roman Catholics who were registered to vote identified as either Democratic or leaning towards the Party.<sup>[207]</sup>

Unaffiliated Hispanic advocacy groups that often support progressive candidates and causes include the National Council of La Raza and the League of United Latin American Citizens. In the House of Representatives, the Democratic caucus of Hispanic Americans is the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

### Native Americans

The Democratic Party also has strong support among the Native American population, particularly in Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Oklahoma<sup>[208]</sup> and North Carolina. Though now a small percentage of the population (virtually non-existent in some regions), most Native American precincts vote Democratic in margins exceeded only by African-Americans.<sup>[209]</sup>

Modern-day Democratic Native American politicians include former Congressman Brad Carson of Oklahoma and Lieutenant Governor Byron Mallott of Alaska, as well as Principal Chief Bill John Baker of the Cherokee Nation and Governor Bill Anoatubby of the Chickasaw Nation.

### Jewish Americans



Democratic President Barack Obama, at a Conference with Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Jewish American communities tend to be a stronghold for the Democratic Party, with more than 70% of Jewish voters having cast their ballots for the Democrats in the 2004 and 2006 elections.<sup>[46][47]</sup> Al Gore received 79% of the Jewish votes in 2000, and Barack Obama won about 77% of the Jewish vote in 2008.<sup>[210]</sup> Support tends to vary among specific sectarian groups. For example, only 13% of Orthodox Jews supported Barack Obama in 2008 while around 60% of Conservative Jews and Reform Jews did so.<sup>[211]</sup> A 2010 poll by the Pew Research Center found that 60% of self-described Jews identified as Democratic or leaning towards the party, compared to 33% with those feelings towards Republicans.<sup>[207]</sup>

Jews as an important Democratic constituency are especially politically active and influential in large cities such as New York City, Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago; and play critical roles in large cities within presidential swing states, such as Philadelphia, Miami, and Las Vegas. Many prominent national Democrats in recent decades have been Jewish, including Chuck Schumer, Carl Levin, Abraham Ribicoff, Ben Cardin, Henry Waxman, Martin Frost, Joseph Lieberman, Bernie Sanders, Dianne Feinstein, Barney Frank, Barbara Boxer, Paul Wellstone, Rahm Emanuel, Russ Feingold, Herb Kohl, and Howard Metzenbaum.<sup>[211]</sup>

### Arab and Muslim Americans

Arab Americans and Muslim Americans have leaned Democratic since the Iraq War.<sup>[212]</sup> Zogby found in June 2007 that 39% of Arab Americans identify as Democrats, 26% as Republicans, and 28% as independents.<sup>[212]</sup>

Arab Americans, generally socially conservative but with more diverse economic views, historically voted Republican until recent years, having supported George W. Bush over Al Gore in 2000.<sup>[213]</sup>

A 2012 poll found that 68% of Muslim Americans surveyed support Barack Obama.<sup>[214]</sup>

### Asian Americans

The Democratic Party also has considerable support in the small but growing Asian American population. The Asian American population had been a stronghold of the Republican Party until the United States presidential election of 1992 in which George H. W. Bush won 55% of the Asian American vote, compared to Bill Clinton winning 31%, and Ross Perot winning 15% of the Asian vote. Originally, the vast majority of Asian Americans consisted of strongly anti-communist, pro-democracy Vietnamese refugees, Chinese Americans, Taiwanese Americans, Korean Americans, and socially conservative Filipinos who fled Ferdinand Marcos in the 1960s through the 1980s, and the general Republican Party's socially conservative, fervently anti-communist position strongly resonated with this original demographic. The Democratic party made gains among the Asian American population starting with 1996 and in 2006, won 62% of the Asian American vote. Exit polls after the 2008 presidential election indicated that Democratic candidate, Barack Obama won 62% of the Asian American vote nationwide.<sup>[215]</sup> In the 2012 Presidential election, 73% of the Asian American electorate voted for Obama's re-election.<sup>[216]</sup>

Barack Obama has the support of 85% of Indian Americans, 68% of Chinese Americans, and 57% of Filipino Americans.<sup>[217]</sup> The Asian American community's increasing number of young voters has also helped to erode traditionally reliably Republican voting blocs such as Vietnamese and Filipino Americans, leading to an increase in support for Democrats. Prominent Asian-American Democrats include Senators Daniel Inouye, Daniel Akaka and Mazie Hirono, former Governor and Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, and Representatives Mike Honda, Judy Chu, Doris Matsui, and Norman Mineta.

## Recent electoral history



Carl Venne, Crow Indian Tribal Chairman, shows support for Democratic Presidential nominee Barack Obama in 2008.

House of Representatives			President	Senate		
Election year	# of seats won	+/-		# of seats won	+/-	Election year
1950	235 / 435	▼28	Harry S. Truman	49 / 96	▼5	1950
1952	213 / 435	▼22		47 / 96	▼2	1952
1954	232 / 435	▲19	Dwight D. Eisenhower	49 / 96	▲2	1954
1956	234 / 435	▲2		49 / 96	—0	1956
1958	283 / 435	▲49		64 / 98	▲15	1958
1960	262 / 435	▼21		64 / 100	▼1	1960
1962	258 / 435	▼4	John F. Kennedy	66 / 100	▲3	1962
1964	295 / 435	▲37		68 / 100	▲2	1964
1966	248 / 435	▼47	Lyndon B. Johnson	64 / 100	▼3	1966
1968	243 / 435	▼5		57 / 100	▼5	1968
1970	255 / 435	▲12	Richard Nixon	54 / 100	▼3	1970
1972	242 / 435	▼13		56 / 100	▲2	1972
1974	291 / 435	▲49	Gerald Ford	60 / 100	▲4	1974
1976	292 / 435	▲1	Jimmy Carter	61 / 100	—0	1976
1978	277 / 435	▼15		58 / 100	▼3	1978
1980	243 / 435	▼34	Ronald Reagan	46 / 100	▼12	1980
1982	269 / 435	▲26		46 / 100	▲1	1982
1984	253 / 435	▼16		47 / 100	▲2	1984
1986	258 / 435	▲5		55 / 100	▲8	1986
1988	260 / 435	▲2	George H.W. Bush	55 / 100	▲1	1988
1990	267 / 435	▲7		56 / 100	▲1	1990
1992	258 / 435	▼9	Bill Clinton	57 / 100	—0	1992
1994	204 / 435	▼54		48 / 100	▼8	1994
1996	206 / 435	▲2		45 / 100	▼2	1996
1998	211 / 435	▲5		45 / 100	—0	1998
2000	212 / 435	▲1	George W. Bush	50 / 100	▲4 <sup>[218]</sup>	2000
2002	204 / 435	▼7		49 / 100	▼2	2002
2004	202 / 435	▼2		45 / 100	▼4	2004
2006	233 / 435	▲31		51 / 100	▲6 <sup>[219]</sup>	2006
2008	257 / 435	▲21	Barack Obama	59 / 100	▲8 <sup>[219]</sup>	2008
2010	193 / 435	▼63		53 / 100	▼6 <sup>[219]</sup>	2010
2012	201 / 435	▲8		55 / 100	▲2 <sup>[219]</sup>	2012
2014	188 / 435	▼13		46 / 100	▼9 <sup>[219]</sup>	2014

## See also

- 2016 Democratic National Convention
- Democratic organizations
- List of United States Democratic Party presidential tickets
- Political party strength in U.S. states
- Politics of the United States

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  - "85% Indian-Americans support Obama for second term: Survey ([http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-05-06/us-canada-news/31596885\\_1\\_indian-americans-asian-american-pacific-islander](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-05-06/us-canada-news/31596885_1_indian-americans-asian-american-pacific-islander))". *The Times Of India*. May 6, 2012.
  - Vice President Dick Cheney provided tie breaking vote, giving Republicans a majority
  - Includes two Independents caucusing with the Democrats.

## Further reading

- Bartlett, Bruce (2008). *Wrong on Race: The Democratic Party's Buried Past*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. Retrieved August 4, 2015.
- Michael Todd Landis, "Dinesh D'Souza Claims in a New Film that the Democratic Party Was Pro-Slavery. Here's the Sad Truth" (<http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/162250#sthash.UBHwqonI.dpuf>) (March 13, 2016), *History News Network*
- Michael Todd Landis, *Northern Men with Southern Loyalties: The Democratic Party and the Sectional Crisis*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.

## External links

### Organizations

- Democrats.org (<http://www.democrats.org/>) – Official website of the Democratic National Committee
- Democratic Senate Caucus (<http://democrats.senate.gov/>)
- Democratic House Caucus (<http://www.housedemocrats.gov/>)
- Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (<http://www.dscc.org/>)
- Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (<http://www.dccc.org/>)
- Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (<http://www.dlcc.org/>)
- Democratic Governors Association (<http://www.democraticgovernors.org/>)
- Democratic Attorneys General Association (<http://www.democraticag.org/>)
- National Conference of Democratic Mayors (<http://democraticmayors.org/>)
- National Federation of Democratic Women (<http://www.nfdw.com/>)
- College Democrats of America (<http://www.collegedems.com/>)
- Young Democrats of America (<http://www.yda.org/>)
- Democrats Abroad (<http://www.democratsabroad.org/>)
- Progressive Democrats of America (<http://www.pdamerica.org/>)
- Democrats.com (<http://www.democrats.com/issues/>) ——"Aggressive Progressive" Democrats, not to be confused with the official Democratic Party site Democrats.org

### Platforms, charter, and bylaws

- 2012 National Platform ([http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers\\_pdf/101962.pdf](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers_pdf/101962.pdf)) PDF, HTML version (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=101962>)
- 2008 National Platform ([http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers\\_pdf/78283.pdf](http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/papers_pdf/78283.pdf)) PDF (434 KB), HTML version (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=78283>)
- 2004 National Platform (<http://www.webcitation.org/5hk7MXZHi>) PDF (111 KB), HTML version (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29613>)
- Charter and Bylaws of the Democratic Party of the United States ([https://assets.democrats.org/pdfs/CHARTERS\\_BYLAWS\\_my07.pdf](https://assets.democrats.org/pdfs/CHARTERS_BYLAWS_my07.pdf)), as amended through September 7, 2012
  - Previous Charter & Bylaws ([http://a9.g.akamai.net/7/9/8082/v001/democratic1.download.akamai.com/8082/pdfs/20060119\\_charter.pdf](http://a9.g.akamai.net/7/9/8082/v001/democratic1.download.akamai.com/8082/pdfs/20060119_charter.pdf)) PDF (1.63 MB) as amended through December 3, 2005
- Democratic Party ([https://www.dmoz.org/Regional/North\\_America/United\\_States/Society\\_and\\_Culture/Politics/Parties/Democratic/](https://www.dmoz.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Society_and_Culture/Politics/Parties/Democratic/)) at DMOZ

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Categories: Democratic Party (United States) | Progressive Alliance

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